www.unece.org/coalmine/about.html

Coal production, transportation, storage and use account for roughly 40% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Projections suggest coal use will increase in coming years due to growing demand for electric power. Greater focus is therefore being directed at minimizing the carbon footprint of the entire coal industry value chain from production through utilization.

One of the more effective near-term options at the production stage is the capture and use of methane from coal mines. This not only mitigates climate change, but delivers other important co-benefits including improvement of mine safety and productivity, localized energy production, and improvement in local/regional air quality. In addition, such projects can result in positive cash flows to the mine and serve as catalyst for investment.

The UNECE is active in facilitating the development and profitable recovery and use of CMM. With UNECE member countries producing 38% of the world's coal and generating 40% of coal mine methane (CMM) emissions, successful project implementation will benefit the regional and global environment and the economies of the ECE region.

In this respect, the UNECE's Committee on Sustainable Energy at its 14th session in 2005 established the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts carries out, under the Committee's guidance, activities related to development and profitable recovery and use of CMM and abandoned mine methane (AMM), with a specific focus on the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Recovery and use of CMM otherwise emitted mitigates climate change, improves mine safety and productivity, and generates revenues and cost savings.