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Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane

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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Work plan for 2016–2017

Draft 2016-17 Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane

I. Mandate

1. In its decision on matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy of 25 March 2014 (ECE/EX/7, Annex II, Chapter V), the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (EXCOM) mandated the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane until December 2015, with a possibility of extension, to carry out concrete, result-oriented activities that promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from coal mines through recovery and use of methane. The Group of Experts has successfully delivered on the concrete activities of the mandate and work plan for 2014 and 2015.
2. The Group of Experts recommends that the mandate be extended to December 2017.

II. Areas of work

3. Best practice guidance for effective drainage, recovery and usage of coal mine methane.

III. Concrete activities in 2016-17

4. The Bureau of the Group of Experts, on the basis of the outcomes and lessons learned during the implementation of the work plan for 2014-2015, and following inclusive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, is proposing to undertake the following activities to be carried out in 2016 and 2017:



(a) **Disseminate the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines**

Description: Over the past seven years the Group of Experts has collaborated with the Global Methane Initiative (GMI), a voluntary, multilateral partnership that aims to reduce global methane emissions and to advance the abatement, recovery and use of methane. In partnership with GMI, in 2010 the Group of Experts published and has since disseminated the "Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines". Dissemination of the Best Practice Guidance has become a core, long-term activity of the Group of Experts. On 30 June 2015 the EXCOM approved a new extrabudgetary project "Dissemination of best practices in the abatement, recovery, and use of methane", to be implemented in 2016 and 2017. This activity seeks to disseminate the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines to a targeted audience of potential beneficiaries in coal mining industry in the UNECE region and beyond, in accordance with the ECOSOC Decision 2011/222 that gives the Group of Experts a global mandate. The beneficiary countries of the extrabudgetary project are China, India, Kazakhstan, and Turkey.

Work to be undertaken:

- (i) Carry out and report on fact-finding missions in critical coal mining regions.
- (ii) Plan, organize, and execute demand-driven capacity-building workshops, in accordance with the work plan and budget of this extrabudgetary project.
- (iii) Continue the collaboration with the Global Methane Initiative (GMI), including through participating in the GMI Global Methane Forum planned for March 2016. In addition, the Group of Experts may consider holding its next session during the GMI Global Methane Forum.
- (iv) Explore how to further expand and deepen the collaboration with GMI in the context of the Committee of Sustainable Energy and in collaboration with other Groups of Experts in UNECE.

Deliverables:

- (i) Two to three demand-driven workshops on practical application of best practices in various coal mining regions, targeted at coal mining professionals and policy makers dealing with sustainable use of coal mine and coalbed methane. Some of the workshops could be expanded into multi-day seminars, organised in collaboration with the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane, once the Centre becomes operational.
- (ii) Participation in the GMI Global Methane Forum in March 2016.
- (iii) A new framework for collaboration between the UNECE Groups of Experts and the Global Methane Initiative.

Timeline:

- (i) The workshops and other project outputs are to be delivered by 31 December 2017, in accordance with the work plan and budget of this extrabudgetary project.
- (ii) Participation in the GMI Global Methane Forum in March 2016.

(b) **Launch and support the work of the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane**

Description: In 2014-15, the Group of Experts worked to establish the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane (ICE-CMM). The deliverable for 2014-15 was selection of a host organization and signing a Memorandum of Understanding on ICE-

CMM with it. An ICE-CMM is a non-profit entity to be established in a United Nations Member State under the national laws of that Member State that, under the auspices of and in close collaboration with the Group of Experts, supports capacity-building activities through dissemination of best practices in economically viable methane abatement and utilisation, socially acceptable underground coal mine practices, and environmentally responsible methane management.

Work to be undertaken:

- (i) Inaugurate the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane.
- (ii) Once the ICE-CMM is operational, assist the ICE-CMM in carrying out its work, as requested or needed in accordance with the ICE-CMM's Terms of Reference.

Deliverables:

- (i) Inaugural conference/workshop at the host organisation, combined with appropriate public relation activities.
- (ii) Status reports on the activities of the ICE-CMM.

Timeline:

- (i) Inaugural conference/workshop by September 2016.
- (ii) Status reports, November 2016 and November 2017.

(c) **Collect and disseminate case studies on the application of best practice guidance in specific coal mines in different regions of the world**

Description: Case studies are needed to demonstrate how the principles outlined in the Best Practice Guidance can be implemented at operating coal mines around the world. The original Best Practice Guidance contained seven case studies organized in a common framework (Initial Conditions—Gas Control Problems—Solution) for comparison purposes. In 2014-15 the Bureau of the Group of Experts reviewed this framework and found it a useful tool to describe various coal mine problems and their solutions. Extra-budgetary funds could be used to expand the case study database by elaborating concrete, in-depth case studies and analyses that demonstrate the benefits of applying best practices.

Work to be undertaken:

- (i) Demonstrate application of the best practice guidance by the Group of Experts at operating coal mines, if accepted, using extra-budgetary funds.
- (ii) Reach out to various coal mining institutions and coal mine operators to encourage them to share relevant case studies on the application of best practices;
- (iii) Review case studies by the Group of Experts through electronic exchanges and discuss them, as applicable, at the annual sessions planned for 2015 and 2016; and
- (iv) Publish case studies on the ECE coal mine methane website.

Deliverables: Case studies on implementation of best practices in methane management.

Timeline: Case studies are reviewed and approved as they arrive. This is a continuing activity of the Group of Experts.

(d) **Expand the Group of Experts' scope of work to cover integrated methane management in the context of sustainable development**

Description: In January 2015 the Group of Experts offered to participate in the Task Force on methane management in extractive industries that reports to the Bureau of the Committee on Sustainable Energy. The Group of Experts stands ready to assist the UNECE member States – and other United Nations Member States – in their efforts on reducing carbon energy intensity of the coal mine industry through development of coal mine and coalbed methane projects.

Work to be undertaken:

- (i) Expand the scope of work of the Group of Experts to cover integrated coal mine methane management, including early pre-mining drainage and related unconventional natural gas extraction.
- (ii) Look into other economic, environmental and social aspect on coal mine methane, with a view to treat coal mine methane management in the context of sustainable development, green economy, and green job creation.
- (iii) Develop recommendations on the enabling role of coal mine methane projects in restructuring coal mining industry through adopting new business models that facilitate transition from a single community producer to an integrated energy company.

Deliverables:

- (i) Contribution to the Committee on Sustainable Energy's report on methane management in extractive industries.
- (ii) Recommendations on the enabling role of coal mine methane projects in restructuring coal mining industry.

Timeline:

- (i) Report on methane management by November 2016
- (ii) Recommendations on the enabling role of coal mine methane projects by October 2017.

(e) **Continue to provide advice on coal mine methane related standards to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and other international, national and regional market-based coal mine methane emission reduction mechanisms**

Description: In the past the Group of Experts advised UNFCCC on the matters related to methane standards and methodologies, namely ACM0008 (Consolidated methodology for coal bed methane, coal mine methane and ventilation air methane capture and use for power (electrical or motive) and heat and/or destruction through flaring or flameless oxidation). The Group of Experts also provide comments on other international, national and regional market-based coal mine methane emission reduction mechanisms, such as the California Air Resources Board Mine Methane Capture Protocol or the ISO Technical Committee 263 (Coalbed methane).

Work to be undertaken: Continue to liaise with the above-mentioned and similar organizations and actively solicit the Group of Experts' advice and services.

Deliverables: Advice and comments on coal mine and coalbed methane related standards.

Timeline: To provide advice as requested.
