



Economic Commission for Europe**Committee on Sustainable Energy****Thirtieth session**

Geneva, 22-24 September 2021

Item 7(d) of the provisional agenda

Future work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy:**Approval of documents****Proposal to change the name, mandate and terms of reference of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane****Prepared by the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane****I. Introduction**

1. The request of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (CMM) to change its name, mandate and terms of reference is prompted by:

(a) requests of the Committee on Sustainable Energy to its subsidiary bodies, and the Group of Experts on CMM in particular, to focus on just transition, integrated methane management and carbon neutrality as outlined in Section II of this document;

(b) discussions at workshops organized by the Group Experts and other events at which the Group of Experts has participated on modernization of the coal industry, the future of the coal industry, just transition, and/or mine closure and repurposing;

(c) requests of workshop and meeting participants for support from the Group of Experts as indicated in Section II of this document; and;

(d) the need and urgency expressed by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

II. Request to the Committee on Sustainable Energy

2. Following the discussions that took place at the sixteenth session of the Group of Experts on CMM (Geneva, 3-4 March 2021), and:

(a) *Noting* the request of the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-ninth session (25-27 November 2020) that its expert groups consider in their work the changing social, environmental, and economic contexts for their activities and the principles of a just transition (ECE/ENERGY/133, paragraph 18(b));

(b) *Noting* the request of the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-ninth session to the Group of Experts that it address, where possible, methane emission issues in the broader context of the whole coal life cycle along the entire value chain (ECE/ENERGY/133, paragraph 20(e));

(c) *Noting* that the Committee at its twenty-ninth session reiterated its request for closer cooperation among the expert groups to address cross-cutting issues, notably related to the project on “Enhancing the understanding of the implications and opportunities of moving to carbon neutrality in the ECE region across the power and energy intensive industries by 2050” (Carbon Neutrality project) (ECE/ENERGY/133, paragraph 18(d));

(d) *Noting* the decision of the Committee on Sustainable Energy taken at its twenty-ninth session to request the Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-ninth session to consider a decision on near-term acceleration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through action on gases and buildings (ECE/ENERGY/133, paragraph 7);

(e) *Noting* the parliamentary document “Effective actions to reduce methane emissions” (ECE/ENERGY/2020/11) submitted to the twenty-ninth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy as background for the discussions under Item 5(b) “Action agenda for the Economic Commission for Europe: International decade of methane management” and, in particular section III “Uncharted paths in the transition of the energy sector” and section IV “The problem is clear - how can the Economic Commission for Europe be a part of the solution?”. Further noting that this parliamentary document was reviewed by the Group of Experts on CMM and the other groups of experts reporting to the Committee prior to submission;

(f) *Recalling* the request of the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-fifth session (28-30 September 2016) that the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane make a proposal to the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on expanding the mandate of the Group of Experts to encompass work on the transition of traditional mining companies to become integrated service companies and to explore the impact this transition might have on the contributions of the energy sector on sustainable development. (ECE/ENERGY/107, paragraph 26);

(g) *Recalling* that the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-sixth session (25-28 September 2017) whilst noting with appreciation the progress made on the cross-cutting project on the transformation of the energy sector and endorsing development of a case-specific model for transition of a specific old industrial site, requested all its subsidiary bodies to contribute to this initiative (ECE/ENERGY/113, paragraph 74);

(h) *Recalling* the request of the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-sixth session to the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane to contribute, in cooperation with other Groups of Experts and under the leadership of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, to the work on integrated methane management in the context of sustainable development (ECE/ENERGY/113, paragraph 75);

(i) *Recalling* that the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-seventh session (26-27 September 2018) whilst noting with appreciation the progress made on the cross-cutting project on the transformation of the energy sector, endorsed development of a case-specific model to demonstrate how to modernize an industrial complex that evolved over time to embrace up-stream energy production, industrial facilities, and accompanying residential/urban infrastructure. The work would bring to bear the range of expertise found in the ECE energy subprogramme (managing methane accumulations, efficient energy production from coal and gas, improving industrial and end-use energy efficiency, optimizing resource management, and enabling the introduction of renewable energy technology) to enhance the environmental, social, and economic performance of the site in line with the 2030 Agenda. The Committee further requested all its subsidiary bodies to contribute to this initiative and invited countries to engage in the project to identify an industrial site for the pilot stage of the venture (ECE/ENERGY/119, paragraph 38);

(j) *Recalling* the request of the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-eighth session (25-27 September 2019) that the secretariat and the groups of experts consider the findings of the Pathways to Sustainable Energy Project in preparing their future work plans (ECE/ENERGY/123, paragraph 24(f));

(k) *Noting* the many calls for the work of the Committee on Sustainable Energy to reflect the scale, scope, role, and values of the United Nations in making concrete, measurable

progress on energy, and the fact that to that end the Committee had encouraged closer cooperation among the subsidiary bodies on cross-cutting issues;

(l) *Noting* the discussions on modernization of the coal industry, the future of the coal industry, just transition, and/or mine closure and repurposing at the numerous workshops organized by the Group of Experts and the requests for support from participants on just transition, and/or mine closure and repurposing;

(m) *Recognizing* that many ECE member States and non-ECE member States have closed coal mines or have set dates for cessation of mining activities;

(n) *Recognizing* global efforts to lower the emissions originating from the coal sector;

(o) *Recognizing* the importance of the social aspect of the ongoing transformation of the energy industry in general, and of the coal sector in particular;

(p) *Noting* that the work of the Group of Experts on methane has a notable near-term benefit for both climate and quality of life;

(q) *Acknowledging* the request of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and the need to better align its mandate with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and embrace the principles of a just transition.

3. Taking into account the above, the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane requests the Committee on Sustainable Energy to approve its change of name to the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition to: (i) respond to the above-mentioned requests of the Committee on Sustainable Energy; and (ii) orient the work of the Group of Experts to deliver better on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

III. Current mandate and Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane

4. As decided by the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) at its 108th Meeting (Geneva, 16 December 2019), the current mandate of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane is until December 2021 (EXCOM/CONCLU/108, paragraph 22).

5. The current mandate and Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts are contained in documents ECE/ENERGY/2017/7 and ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2017/3 (as approved by EXCOM at its ninety-fifth meeting (11 December 2017, Geneva, EXCOM/CONCLU/95, paragraph 9)) with the objective and areas of work as follows:

A. Objective

6. To promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from coal mines by means of concrete, results-oriented activities that may help the recovery and use of methane to reduce the risks of explosions in coal mines, mitigate climate change, and support sustainable development.

B. Areas of Work

7. Best practices for effective drainage, recovery and usage of coal mine methane (CMM).

IV. Proposed revised name, mandate and Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane

8. For the reasons outlined in Section II of this document, the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane requests the Committee on Sustainable Energy to approve:

- (a) the change the name of the Group to the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition; and
- (b) revision of the mandate and Terms of Reference of the Group as follows.

A. Objective

9. To promote efficient transition of industries along the coal value chain ensuring the reduction of associated greenhouse gas emissions and social equity of the process through substantive, results-oriented activities that may help the recovery and use of methane in order to reduce the risks of explosions in coal mines; mitigate climate change; and support sustainable development, and that may support communities, local economies and the environment in the just transition process.

B. Areas of Work

10. The areas of work of the Group of Experts are:

- (a) Recovery and use of methane from active, closed, or/and abandoned coal mines aimed at reducing the risks of explosions, mitigating climate change, and supporting sustainable development;
- (b) For those countries or regions/states that choose to cease coal mining and related activities, offer support on request on preparation of coal mines and coal mining regions and communities for mine closure and reorientation of the local economies;
- (c) Repurposing of mines and existing mining infrastructure and facilitating development of new profiles of economic activity and business models that preserve social cohesion and cultural heritage of the affected localities.

C. Mandate

11. The Group of Experts requests the Committee on Sustainable Energy to renew its mandate until 31 December 2023, with the possibility of extension.
