

Methane Mondays

First meeting, Monday, 16 August 2021, 15:00-16:30 Geneva time

Summary of the meeting

- The hosts (UNECE Group of Experts on CMM and EMBER) welcomed the participants and presented some **housekeeping rules** applicable to the whole series:
 - The events will be held in **English in Russian**.
 - They will be held on **Zoom** platform (except of the meeting on 8 October that will be organized through Interprefy)
 - For 2021 two more meetings are planned: on **8 October** and at the beginning of **December** (the exact date is still to be decided). As for the **next year**, the events could restart in February and continue on bi-monthly basis. However, it will all depend on their success. If the sessions attract enough attention and serve the purpose that they were set up for, then they will continue for as long as necessary. If not, the sessions will have to either stop or the format will be adapted to fit better expectations of the stakeholders.
 - They will be **recorded** only for the sake of preparing a summary. The recordings will not be published anywhere, and they **will not be made public** in any other way.
 - The **summary** of each meeting will be published on the UNECE page dedicated to Methane Mondays (<https://unece.org/methane-mondays>) and it will be rather general, not linking any speaker with any particular statement.
 - Participants are encouraged to **be active** and take the floor. To take the floor participants are asked to raise their hand so that the moderator is aware of their willingness to intervene.
 - Participants who wish to raise some issue but prefer not to take the floor are encouraged to **use the chat**.
 - Participants are asked to **refrain from using anything that has been said during the discussions** in any statements, reports, or communications issued by their respective organizations or institutions, unless it is a jointly agreed “official” document or communication resulting from the meetings,
 - Participants are asked to **be respectful** to one another.
 - The organizers reserve the right to remove from the meeting anyone who does not follow the rules.
 - In case of any questions or comments related to Methane Mondays please contact Mr. Michal Drabik at michal.drabik@un.org
 - Please also visit the webpage dedicated to the events at unece.org/methane-Mondays
- The organizers presented the **results of the survey** which was conducted before the session
 - The survey aimed to help the organizers to identify problems that participants would like to see addressed during the meetings, and the format in which they would like the sessions to be held.
 - Great majority of respondents indicated to be ready to **actively participate in the debates**.
 - Many of respondents also offered to **prepare and deliver presentations**.
 - The majority of respondents opted for a format of meetings including a few **thematic presentations followed by debate** on the subjects that were covered by the presentations. Each session will therefore feature **2-3 presentations** lasting no longer

than **10-15 minutes**. After the presentations there will be approximately **an hour for discussion**.

- **The sessions will end with a short update** on the new things related to CMM going on worldwide. It will be a time for the participants to present the new projects, initiatives, regulations, or solutions that are being tested, planned, implemented, etc. by their country, organization, or institution. As the time will be limited, there will also be a possibility to inform others about something that might be of interest to the rest of the Group in writing by **sending the relevant information to organizers who will post it** on the website dedicated to Methane Mondays under a “news” bookmark.
- **The topics of interest** mentioned most frequently in the survey were the following:
 - *Environmental aspects of CMM* / methane emissions - sources and mitigation / methane as a pollutant and GHG not a resource / emission projections /emissions scenarios / emissions management especially related to VAM and open pit coal mines
 - *CMM capture and utilization* / technical feasibility and applicability of capturing and utilizing methane from coal mines / safety aspect of capture and utilization of VAM / experience in coal seam and coal bed degasification / electricity production from CMM
 - *Regulatory / legal issues* (including incentives and barriers for development of the CMM and AMM projects) / CMM policies / regulatory obligations to mitigate CMM and AMM emissions (incl. who owns the gas post-closure) / new EU proposal
- A significant number of respondents mentioned also
 - *Safety aspect* of CMM
 - *MRV* / underground and surface monitoring of emissions / quantification including airborne methods for quantifications / scientific methane measurements / leak detection / emission inventories / data availability / transparency initiatives
 - *Financial aspects* / Funding mechanisms for the projects / financing AMM mitigation where capture is not commercially viable (incl. role of carbon markets) / financing CMM under Paris Agreement / Value creation from 100% capture of methane - methods, markets, business models
 - *AMM*
- Big majority of respondents expressed an interest in developing a **final document** reflecting both: the common ground, as well as the differences in views and opinions of participants, which were identified throughout the sessions. The document can start being at any point at which the Group decides to engage in such activity. The meetings can lead to developments of as many documents as the Group decides. The topics of such communications is to be decided jointly by the participants.
- While discussing **the purpose of the series** it was observed that nowadays ever more events addressing methane are being delivered. They tend to comprise a certain number of presentations, without leading, however, to any meaningful exchange of opinion. In majority of cases people who attend such meetings join them with certain beliefs, defend those positions during the debates, and leave without any true reflection on what they heard from the others, i.e. they adopt certain positions and stick with them regardless of the received feedback. Methane Mondays would like to avoid that. The goal is to attract stakeholders with different views, learn about their opinions, problems, and concerns, and confront them with others representing different points of view, or approaching the matter from different perspectives. In other words, the whole idea of the meetings is to create a platform where stakeholders, with often opposite, or conflicting beliefs, could talk with one another, defend their respective arguments on the basis of the solid data, and look for a middle ground.

- In that context, the organizers said that upon choosing the topics for each session, they were going to ask participants representing relatively opposite views to prepare **joint presentations** on given subjects.
 - The idea is to give presenters an opportunity to learn about one another's position and arguments ahead of the session so that they come to the meeting with an understanding of the interests and concerns of the "other side". Working on joint presentations is to lower the tension and a potential animosity between actors representing conflicting convictions, and to provide a basis for meeting the differences.
- CMM emission reduction opportunities were recognized as a low hanging fruit due to the fact that the existing and tested technologies allow to significantly lower emissions in a rapid manner, provided that proper regulations incentivizing their application are in place.
- It was noted that in an environmental debate on an overall fuel cycle related to power production from coal there is an evident focus on CCS/CCUS, without much of an attention being given to activities further upstream, i.e. to emission reduction opportunities at the extraction stage.
 - The same was said to hold true with regard to discussions on emission reduction opportunities in the cement and steel industries. The focus was found to be on greening the actual processes of production, and the opportunities to lower the emissions at the level of extraction of coal, which is heavily used in both sectors, were said to be most of the time overlooked.
- During the debate the following matters were suggested by participants as **subjects for the substantive sessions**:
 - Next **negotiations at COP**, with focus on how methane is to be addressed at the conference.
 - **Voluntary emission reduction commitments in the coal industry**; what coal companies are doing to limit the emissions, and how high on the list of priorities methane emission mitigation is for them.
 - In that context the following statements were made:
 - Methane is typically discussed as a resource and not climate pollutant, what immediately brings the discussion on the subject to the wrong track because it leads to questions about profitability and commercial viability of the CMM projects.
 - On a face value it is difficult to say that an emission reduction project is going to change the economics of the coal mine. However, there are no well-developed studies showing one way or another. The specific information about the economics of the particular coal mine is necessary to see how big of a burden any such project would be to the operator of the given mine. Operators' data on that matter would be therefore much welcomed.
 - **Adaptation of the coal industry to the new reality** of diminishing coal demand, including in particular **social aspect** of the sector's transition and a responsibility of authorities to minimize the negative social impacts of the ongoing and upcoming processes.
 - The following questions were asked in that context
 - What comes next after mine closure?
 - To what extent can jobs related to development and operation of CMM projects substitute those lost in coal mining?

- How is the transition process seen by different stakeholders: which problems constitute their priorities; how would they like to see them solved?
- **Eligibility of CMM projects in the context of the environmental integrity under CDM and its additionality aspect.**
 - The following questions were asked in that context
 - What direction is this discussion taking?
 - How those emissions reductions will be valued on the market, provided that CMM projects installed on the existing operations might be seen as prolonging the use of coal?
 - What about AMM projects? Would they be seen differently?
- **Awareness of CMM**
 - A need to educate people about methane and its effect on the environment was underlined, as was also a very low knowledge of the general public about the issue in question.
 - Raising awareness was said to be necessary not only among the general public, but also among the decision makers.
 - The question about what exactly the public should be educated about was made. Only about the environmental harm caused by methane, or also about the fact that it is an efficient and accessible energy resource? Should the information campaign mention also benefits of coal and the costs of its phaseout?
 - The burden of disseminating knowledge about CMM was said to be on relevant institutions dealing with the subject and not on coal companies that need to devote their time and attention to actually addressing the issue of methane in the real world, i.e. they have to develop projects, find money to implement them, and manage methane to the extent that allows them to produce their main product, i.e. coal.
 - It was observed that low awareness about methane leads also to accidents and to a waste of a valuable resource.
- **Satellite technology for methane detection and measurement.**
 - It was observed that nothing persuades more coal companies to undertake methane reduction efforts than capacity of new technologies allowing to independently monitor the scale and sources of emissions at a mine level
- **VAM.**
 - 70% of emissions were said to come from mines' ventilations systems (in concentration of less than 1%), and therefore the problem was indicated as important and in need of addressing.
- **Property rights of AMM.**
- During the discussion it was also brought to the participants' attention that Mitigation Division of UNFCCC develops methodologies for mitigation projects under CDM of Kyoto Protocol. It was said that there were around 100 of such projects (already implemented, mostly in China) that jointly lead to 62 million certified emission reduction. It was suggested that the knowledge gathered in the said database could provide a useful information and added value to the planned and ongoing projects elsewhere.
- The topics for the next session was said to be indicated by the organizers shortly after the meeting.