

On changing the mandate and organization of activities of the Coal Mine Methane Expert Group of the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy

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Request from the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy

The Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition (hereinafter referred to as the CMM Group) is requested to «consider the suggested clarifications in its mandate and terms of reference and to **submit a revised version to the Thirty-first session of the Committee»**

(p.79 of the Report of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on its thirtieth session)

https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/ECE_ENERGY_137_e.pdf

The current structure of subsidiary bodies of the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy

Committee on Sustainable Energy : The Committee on Sustainable Energy's activities are conceived with a view to ensuring access to affordable and clean energy to all and to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector.

Subsidiary bodies :

Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems (CES)

Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (CMM)

Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency (GEEE)

Group of Experts on Gas (GEG)

Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE)

Expert Group on Resource Management (EGRM)

UN Climate Change

The Committee on Environmental Policy focuses its efforts on preventing environmental damage, including from climate change

- Subgroup on CO₂;
- Subgroup on Greenhouse Gases;

Why it is not advisable to create a Coal Mine Closure Group

1. The issues of closing coal mines have already been resolved both in theory and in practice.
2. Full-scale closure of coal mines has already taken place in most European countries.
3. In countries of Western, Central and Eastern Europe closure of coal mines took place in Belgium, Great Britain, Hungary, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, France. About 1,000 mines have been closed in China over past 5 years.
4. The World Bank has extensive experience in implementing projects aimed to restructuring of coal industry associated with closure of coal mines in different countries.
5. Detailed recommendations of international organizations, including UN, are already developed and are widely used.

Regulatory documents of different countries on closure of coal mines

- **“Mining for closure; policies and guidelines for sustainable mining practice and closure of mines”**. UNECE .
- **«Mine closure checklist for governments»**. APEC. Prepared within the framework of the intergovernmental forum of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (<https://www.apec.org/publications/2018/03/mine-closure---checklist-for-governments>).
- **Managing Coal Mine Closure. Achieving a Just Transition for All**. World Bank, 2018.
- **Regulatory documents and manuals developed by Deutsche Montane Technologie Company (DMT) on mine closures in Germany**.
- **"Standard project for the liquidation of a coal mine (open pit mine)"**. The Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, 2001.
- Each country has its own legislation that governs various aspects of closure from technology, ecology to social impacts.

Options for establishing of Subsidiary Bodies of the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of experts on coal mine closures

- Subgroup of engineering (technological) solutions for closures of mines;
- Subgroup of environmental consequences of coal mine closures;
- Subgroup on monitoring closed mines;
- Sub-group for assessing the social impact of mine closures;
- Regulation subgroup (legislation) of mine closures;
- Others.

Working group on coal mines

- Underground coal mining subgroup;
- Open pit coal mining subgroup;
- Subgroup on coal mine methane;
- Subgroup on mine closures;
- Legislative regulation subgroup.

Group of Experts on Methane Emissions

(similar to GMI, but in status of an expert group)

- Subgroup on methane emissions from natural sources (world ocean, forests, swamps, etc.);
- Subgroup on Waste Management;
- Subgroup on Agricultural Methane;
- Subgroup on Methane from the Oil and Gas Industry;
- **Subgroup on Coal Mine Methane;**
- Subgroup on methane from other (non-mining) industries;

On changing the mandate of the Coal Mine Methane Expert Group

Proposed at the 30th session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy ECE/ENERGY/2021/13

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

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.

Proposed for approval by the 31st session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy

A. Objective

To promote (facilitate) the integration and dissemination of advanced technologies for degassing and utilizing methane from existing, closed and/or decommissioned coal mines in order to reduce the risk of explosions and deaths in coal mines, mitigate the effects of climate change by improving the efficiency of degassing and utilizing coal mine methane and support for sustainable development.

Areas of Work

The areas of work of the Group of Experts are:

- a) promoting exchange of experience on modern technologies for degassing coal seams, including based on unified Internet resource;
- b) discussion of perspective directions and results of scientific research and development on problems of coal mine methane;
- c) making recommendations on training and regulatory improvement programs;
- d) coordinating activities with the National Coal Mine Methane Centers and the UNECE Coal Mine Methane Expert Group/

Proposals to “Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the Seventeenth Session of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and Just Transition”

1. Maintain the group's focus on solving gas drainage problems and preventing severe accidents in coal mines;
2. Request opinion of participating countries about a need to establish a group for closing coal mines;
3. Submit to the 31st meeting of the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy proposals for revising the structure of subsidiary bodies in accordance with the goals of sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention

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