

# UNECE Group of Experts Coal Mine Methane Task Force on Safe Operations and Closure of Coal Mines

## First Meeting

14 June 2023

15:30 - 17:00 (Geneva time)

## SUMMARY

### Participants:

Task Force Chair:

- Alicja Krzemien

Task Force Members:

1. Jia Baoqiang
2. Bartłomiej Bezak
3. Peter Cain
4. Carles Debart
5. Jerzy Hadro
6. Sherry Heschuk
7. Shen Jin Ming
8. Stefan Moellerherm
9. Raymond Pilcher
10. Grzegorz Plonka
11. Pedro Riesgo Fernández
12. Qing Rong Jia
13. Volha Roshchanka
14. Andriy Shulga
15. Clark Talkington
16. Radoslav Vukas

Secretariat:

- Michal Drabik

### Draft agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting and welcome by the Chair of the Group
2. Introduction by the Chair of the TF
3. Tour de table
4. Discussion on activities, deliverables, and the mode of operation of the TF
5. Presentation of the RoP by the Secretariat
6. AOB
7. Next meeting
8. Closing the meeting

### Item 1. Opening of the meeting and welcome by the Chair of the Group

1. The Chair of the Group of experts, Mr. Raymond Pilcher, opened the session, underlined the importance of the work that the Task Force (TF) is to do, reminded participants that the Task force is a part of the UN system and therefore is bound by the UN rules, and asked TF members to be respectful and kind to one another.

### Item 2. Adoption of the agenda

2. The draft agenda was adopted without any changes.

### Item 3. Tour de table

3. Each participant briefly presented herself/himself.

### Item 4. Discussion on activities, deliverables, and the mode of operation of the TF

4. The Chair of the TF presented the result of the questionnaire that was distributed among TF members ahead of the meeting:

- a. 28 experts signed up to the TF;
- b. 17 experts provided answers to the questionnaire;
- c. It was decided that the meetings will be held on a quarterly basis;
- d. The two ideas for activities were proposed:
  - I. Disseminate and facilitate the application of best practices on safe operations and closure of coal mines;
  - II. Policies focused on alleviating the expected social shocks and providing protective measures for the affected communities to ensure social acceptance of the transition and the fairness of the process and its outcome, which are necessary for assuring the sustainability of the proposed environmentally oriented reconstruction strategies;
- e. For activity I. *Disseminate and facilitate the application of best practices on safe operations and closure of coal mines* 3 sub-activities were proposed:
  - i. Identification of mine closure risks.
  - ii Risk management methodologies for coal mine closure and post-closure.
  - iii Compiling a catalogue of mine closure case studies within European Union and non-EU countries.
- g. Among those, the respondents found the most interesting activity i. *Identification of mine closure risks* (32% votes). Activities iii. *Compiling a catalogue of mine closure case studies within European Union and non-EU countries*, and ii *Risk management methodologies for coal mine closure and post-closure* received, respectively 29% and 26% votes.
- i. As the votes were spread very evenly an idea was proposed to combine all 3 activities and first compile a catalogue of the mine closure case studies, then identify what risks were encountered in each case, as well as the methods in which they were addressed.
- h. For activity II. *Policies focused on alleviating the expected social shocks and providing protective measures for the affected communities to ensure social acceptance of the transition and the fairness of the process and its outcome, which are necessary for assuring the sustainability of the proposed environmentally oriented reconstruction strategies* 6 sub-activities were proposed:
  - i. Developing a comprehensive catalogue of business models based on renewable energy on the circular economy or scale energy storage to promote sustainable local economic growth and maximise the number of green, quality jobs.
  - ii. Creating a methodology to evaluate and select the most exciting business models for specific regions/countries, including non-European ones.
  - iii. A study on the adaptation of these business models to different environments.
  - iv. Constructing a catalogue of research projects that are/were developed within this area.
  - v. Compiling a catalogue of best practices within the European Union and non-EU countries.
  - vi. Developing a list of stakeholders' contacts.
- j. Among those, the respondents found the most interesting activity i. *Developing a comprehensive catalogue of business models based on renewable energy on the circular economy or scale energy storage to promote sustainable local economic growth and maximise the number of green, quality jobs* (20% votes), ii. *Creating a methodology to evaluate and select the most exciting business models for*

*specific regions/countries, including non-European ones (18%), and iv. Constructing a catalogue of research projects that are/were developed within this area (18%).*

- k. Some new ideas were also presented, including:
  - i. Disseminate how to ensure best practices in mine closure for consequent AMM utilization; and
  - ii. Adopt a cumulative effects strategy in the regulations that adequately addresses the consequences of numerous and ongoing industrial impacts on the landscape, and how these negatively affect water quality.  
In that context, it was observed that currently, the regulations fail to consider the impact that multiple coal mines have on a watershed. They also fail to effectively address the impacts of other activities on the same landscape; assessing multiple uses at a landscape-level is integral to understanding how coal mines further exacerbate regions that are already under pressure. This includes capturing the effects of forestry, agriculture, and recreational activities, in addition to those contributed by a current or future mine.
5. On the basis of the results of the questionnaire and the discussion at the meeting, the following activities were decided to be developed in the near time:
  - a. Compiling a catalogue of mine closure case studies within European Union and non-EU countries focusing on Identification of mine closure risks, and Risk management methodologies
  - b. Developing a comprehensive catalogue of business models based on renewable energy on the circular economy or scale energy storage to promote sustainable local economic growth and maximise the number of green, quality jobs
  - c. Work on analysing how risks related to mine closure affect the coal mining regions.
6. The Chair of the TF informed the members that she will shortly share with them by email certain ideas related to the above-mentioned activities.

#### **Item 5. Presentation of the RoP by the Secretariat**

7. The secretariat asked participants for their feedback on the draft Rules of Procedure that were shared with TF members ahead of the meeting. It was explained that the RoP are necessary to formally explain the relation between the Group of Experts and the Task Force, and to provide the framework for the work of the latter. As there were no immediate comments to the document, TF members were asked to provide comments (if any) in writing by COB Friday, 23 June 2023.

#### **Item 6. Any other business**

8. The secretariat underlined the importance of active engagement of TF members, stressing that the actual work of the TF takes place in between its meeting, and asking TF members to stay engaged and responsive.

9. The secretariat informed TF members about the fact that the website dedicated to TF had been created ([Task Force on Safe Operations and Closure of Coal Mines | UNECE](#)). It was stated that all relevant information related to TF's work, such as summaries of past meetings, polls to indicate availability for the future meetings, and a link to a shared folder, would be posted on that page.

#### **Item 7. Next meeting**

10. The next meeting of the TF will take place in September. The secretariat will distribute a doodle poll to identify the most convenient date and time.

#### **Item 8. Closing the meeting**

10. The Chair and the secretariat thanked participants for their time and involvement in the call, and closed the meeting.