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Global Methane Initiative: 20201 and Beyond

Discussion Paper

I. Introduction

The Global Methane Initiative (GMI) has been an extremely successful international voluntary public-private partnership focused on methane mitigation since its 2004 launch as the Methane to Markets Partnership. To date, GMI has reduced more than 370 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, grown from 14 to 45 partner countries, leveraged more than $610 million for projects and training, expanded to include more than 500 Project network members, conducted more than 600 resource assessments, feasibility studies, study tours, and site visits; provided trainings for more than 15,000 people in methane mitigation; and developed more than 50 tools and resources for methane mitigation.

GMI's current charter concludes in April 2021 and it is time for the Steering Committee to discuss what should happen next.

II. Background

In 2004, the Methane to Markets Partnership was officially launched at a Ministerial Meeting in Washington, DC with 14 country partners. Its objective was promoting voluntary ways to reduce methane emissions cost-effectively by capturing the methane and selling it "to market". The Partnership initially focused on three key sectors: coal mining, oil & gas systems, and landfills; agriculture (manure management) was added within the first year. The Partnership was structured as an "in-kind" collaborative partnership; i.e., there was not a trust fund to disseminate funds for various activities. Each Partner made independent commitments of resources and bilateral or multilateral collaborative efforts.

When Methane to Markets was established, there were no other global multilateral collaborative efforts to reduce methane emissions. In terms of activities, the work of the Methane to Markets partners focused on information sharing, capacity building, and identifying a "pipeline of projects" were the primary objectives of. Key partnership-wide efforts included high-profile events called "Partnership Expos" (held in Beijing in 2007, New Delhi in 2010, and Vancouver in 2013) that featured dozens of site-specific analyses of opportunities to reduce methane, as well as shared presentations about technological approaches and best practices.

The Partnership was re-chartered in 2010 and re-christened the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) at a Ministerial Meeting in Mexico City. Key changes to the Initiative included the following:

- Focus on action plans (each country was encouraged to provide a sector-specific or country-wide plan).
- Change landfill sector to municipal solid waste sector (more holistic perspective to include avoidance).
- Added wastewater as a sector.

In 2012, a new multilateral initiative emerged that focused on short-lived climate pollutants, including methane, the Climate & Clean Air Coalition. Today CCAC has over 100 state and non-state partners, including many GMI partners. Several of the CCAC's initiatives are focused on the same sectors that GMI focuses on: agriculture, municipal solid waste, oil & gas.

Between 2014 and 2016, the Steering Committee discussed and debated about the future GMI to determine if they should recharter GMI. They also convened a special task force to make specific recommendations to the Steering Committee. Several areas of consensus and other unique points emerged during the Steering Committee's discussions about the value of continuing the work of GMI, even in light of multiple multilateral voluntary partnerships that had emerged:

Areas of consensus, included:

- Support for GMI's mission and desire to see the Initiative continue post-2015
    - Agreement that the GMI brand offers value
    - Support for existing capacity-building measures, seminars, and expos.
- Interest in or support for [some degree of / close] cooperation with the CCAC – from countries that are already CCAC partners, those that are not yet partners (but see better collaboration / cooperation as a potential bridge mechanism to join CCAC in the future), and to those who are unlikely to join CCAC.
- Desire for higher level / national level participation in GMI.

Unique points, included:

- Support for Partners to develop national methane action plans.
- Support for continuing work on the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) approach.
- Diverging viewpoints on using GMI as a bridge towards joining CCAC.
- Support for adding GMI to the UN Climate Summit agenda (although it was noted that CCAC was already on the agenda).
- Suggestion to focus on policy/regulatory barriers in the future.

After nearly 2 years of Steering Committee discussions, GMI was once again re-chartered at a Global Methane Forum event in Washington DC in 2016. The focus of the re-launch was on emphasizing collaborative relationships with other multilateral organizations and partnerships that either did not exist or were not prominent actors in methane mitigation when GMI was

established. Specifically, the recharter celebrated collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and CCAC. The Steering Committee re-chartered GMI for an additional five years (through April 2021). The most important structural change was to explicitly create an opportunity for two Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee, rather than just a single Chair. Canada and Mexico are currently the two Steering Committee Co-Chairs for GMI.

In 2018, the GMI Steering Committee authorized the launch of a new campaign or initiative to focus on encouraging, incentivizing and recognizing actions to reduce methane voluntarily around the world. Dubbed the "Global Methane Challenge," this effort is intended to share information about ongoing or new efforts to reduce methane, whether site-specific, country-wide, or across a sector.

III. Opportunities for 2021 and Beyond

As the current Terms of Reference for GMI expire in April 2021, the Steering Committee has the opportunity to shape the future of the initiative. Options could include, but are not limited to:

I. Extend GMI for another [four] years with minor changes

Rationale:

There is more work to be done. Great work is still underway. If GMI is not extended this work would likely languish or end prematurely.

Desired outcome(s) from this scenario:

- Parties to the Paris agreement include methane mitigation strategies in their first national communications reports under the enhanced transparency framework, due in 2024.

Description of this scenario:

- At the very least, four years of time would allow GMI to influence the development of the 2024 mitigation strategies under the Paris agreement and would allow for a thoughtful transition of future methane-related convenings and engagement to other organizations as appropriate.
- Renewed emphasis on replicating methane reduction policy and technology best practices for inclusion in countries' energy, environmental and economic development strategies.
- Expansion of Strategic Alliance Partners to include additional organizations active on and relevant to methane mitigation (e.g., the International Energy Agency, World Health Organization).

II. Extend GMI for another [5-8] years with greater changes

Rationale:

There is an urgency to securing methane reductions, recovery and reuse that mitigates climate change, improves air quality, and delivers economic benefits. Great work is underway but much more needs to be done to improve the availability of credible emissions data; to integrate methane reduction activities into countries' long-term climate, air quality, health and economic development strategies; and to ensure that the impacts of mitigation activities are credibly measured and reported over time. If GMI is not extended, the value of methane reuse and recovery as a solution to energy, environmental, and economic challenges will be significantly impeded or excluded in countries' ongoing planning and mitigation activities.

Desired outcome(s) from this scenario:

- Majority of parties to the Paris agreement consider and include methane mitigation strategies in their first national communications reports under the enhanced transparency framework, due in 2024.
- Countries track emissions impacts and adapt or replicate methane mitigation strategies over time.

Description of this scenario:

- Renewed emphasis on documenting and sharing current and demonstrated policies, practices, tools and mitigation benefits to enable substantial methane emissions reductions in the near-to-mid/long term.
- Increased emphasis on replicating methane reduction policy and technology best practices for inclusion in countries' energy, environmental and economic development strategies.
- Targeted attention on improving availability, transparency, and credibility of emissions data and reduction opportunities to motivate and support the tracking of mitigation action over time.
- Expansion of Strategic Alliance Partners to include additional organizations active on and relevant to methane mitigation (e.g., the International Energy Agency, World Health Organization).

III. Allow GMI to sunset

Rationale:

GMI has had a long, successful history of collaborative partnership. It has achieved significant tangible emissions reductions, proven through extensive site-specific analysis and documentation that methane mitigation projects are cost-effective and technically

feasible, and developed a suite of products, tools, databases, best management practices, and country- and region- and sector-specific market analyses.

Desired outcome(s) from this scenario:

- GMI celebrates past success and mitigation achievements and smoothly wraps up their technical support and role as conveners. Other organizations take over to serve in this capacity.

Description of this scenario:

- Consequences would be unfulfilled potential to continue to reduce emissions; Recognition of the value of methane reuse and recovery as a solution to energy, environmental, and economic challenges could be significantly impeded and/or excluded from countries' and companies' planning and mitigation activities.
- Closeout of and plans to transition active projects and activities could begin in April 2020, after the Global Methane Forum 2020, and conclude by April 2021.
- The legacy of the ongoing work is sector-specific and will be dependent on other organizations' continued support for and focus on methane mitigation:
  - Legacy of Coal Mines Methane Sector work – would live on through UNECE Group of Experts, the International Centers of Excellence, and Clearinghouses.
  - Legacy of Oil & Gas Sector work – would live on through UNECE Group of Experts on Gas, the CCAC Mineral Methane Initiative, and other collaborative efforts.
  - Legacy of Agriculture Sector work – not a clear home, perhaps some of the work could be carried out through the CCAC Agriculture Initiative.
  - Legacy of Municipal Solid Waste Sector work – could most easily be carried out through CCAC MSW Initiative.
  - Legacy of Municipal Wastewater work – no real entity to carry this forward.

IV. Items for Steering Committee Consideration and Discussion

- With GMI set to expire in April 2021, what is your reaction about the range of possible options for the future?
- What information would be helpful for you to receive by the next Steering Committee meeting in March 2020 to help you make informed recommendations about the future of GMI? (e.g.. a summary of methane reduction policies included in country Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to date; information about methane emissions sources and trends by sector and country, etc.).