

Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee Meeting
Internet-Based
30 October 2013

Minutes

Summary

The Global Methane Initiative (GMI) Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee conducted a subcommittee meeting via the Internet on 30 October 2013. The Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee meeting focused on the development of country-specific municipal wastewater action plans and planning for the next in-person meeting proposed for March 2014 in Brazil. The subcommittee meeting also included an update from the GMI Administrative Support Group (ASG).

The GMI website includes links to the [subcommittee meeting agenda](#) and [meeting recording](#) (large file, may take a few minutes to download).

The Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee meeting was attended by 17 representatives from nine different countries: Brazil, Canada, Dominican Republic, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Pakistan, Serbia, and the United States. A list of attendees is included as [Annex 1](#) to these minutes.

Presiding over the meeting was Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee Co-chairs Federico Grullon (Dominican Republic), Elias Freig (Mexico), and Chris Godlove (United States).

Welcome

Charlie Goff (Eastern Research Group) began the meeting by providing an overview of the subcommittee meeting [agenda](#). Co-chair Chris Godlove (United States) then welcomed everyone and stated he was looking forward to a productive meeting. He introduced himself and his role within the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), and provided an update of U.S.-related wastewater activities. He stated EPA recently initiated support via grants for technical work in Mexico, Chile, China, and to a lesser extent, Indonesia. In Mexico, work is focused on development of a resource assessment to estimate current methane emissions and overall potential for methane mitigation at wastewater treatment facilities (WWTF). Partners are also working to identify a WWTF for a pre-feasibility assessment for methane abatement, as well as plan a national workshop to bring interested parties together to discuss emissions reduction, capture, and use opportunities at WWTFs. Mr. Godlove recognized the grant recipients from the University of Tennessee and University of West Virginia who are leading work in Chile and China. Mr. Godlove concluded his update by stating the United States is working on a U.S.-specific action plan for the wastewater sector, a topic that will be discussed in detail later in the meeting.

Co-chair Federico Grullon (Dominican Republic) introduced himself and stated that he, too, looked forward to a productive meeting. He indicated that current activity in the Dominican Republic could comprise development of a wastewater sector resource assessment (to take place next years) to better understand emissions and the potential for emissions reduction in the sector. Also, the Dominican Republic is working on the climate change law, which is expected to be finalized and approved by the legislative chamber in 2014. A training workshop is also possible in mid-2014 for the public/private sectors to promote a better understanding of the technologies available to capture and use wastewater biogas.

Co-chair Elias Freig (Mexico) introduced himself and stated that last year, Mexico passed a general law on climate change that established a platform for emissions reductions. However, Mexico is now working on the by-laws that will provide details on how the law will be implemented across sectors. Work related to developing the by-laws is dependent on the passage of an energy reform law, which is also under development. Final development on the climate change by-laws and final guidance for the wastewater sector is in progress.

Henry Ferland (United States, Co-Director of the GMI ASG) introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He expressed his appreciation for everyone's attendance and looked forward to a productive, interactive discussion.

All attendees were then given an opportunity to introduce themselves and provide a brief update on wastewater activities within their country and/or their interest in the Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee:

- Chris Cox (United States, University of Tennessee) stated he is supporting a new EPA-funded project to conduct technical and economic feasibility assessments of methane reduction, capture, and use projects at WWTFs in Chile.
- David Robbins (United States, RTI International) introduced himself and indicated he is very interested in the wastewater work being conducted by GMI.
- Eduardo Jordao (Brazil, UFRJ) stated he is very interested in the Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee's work and looked forward to participating in the meeting.
- Kim Domptail (United States, Tetra Tech) said she is supporting grant work in Mexico and Indonesia.
- Qiang He (United States, University of Tennessee) described his role in supporting the EPA-funded technical work in Chile.
- Seth Snyder (United States, Argonne National Laboratory) said he is not supporting EPA work related to wastewater, but is involved with biosolids work funded by the state of California.
- Vladica Bozic (Serbia, Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection) stated he looked forward to developing a wastewater-specific action plan for Serbia.
- Lance Lin (United States, West Virginia University) described his role in a grant project in China to estimate methane emissions potential from WWTFs.
- Dr. Basharat Bashir (Pakistan, Alternative Energy Development Board) provided an overview of the wastewater treatment situation in Pakistan. Only one percent of Pakistan's wastewater is treated. There is only one operational WWTF in Islamabad and one in Karachi, and most of the wastewater goes untreated into the sea. The Alternative Energy Development Board previously introduced a policy to facilitate private sector investment in energy production at WWTFs. The policy has been approved and in place since March 2013.
- Maria Clavijo (Canada, International Affairs branch of Environment Canada) mentioned the successful Methane Expo held in Vancouver in March 2013. She described that most WWTFs in Canada are owned by municipalities and that wastewater is treated in different ways across the country. She and her colleagues are in the process of better understanding Canada's wastewater issues.

Mr. Godlove thanked everyone for their introductions and stated he looked forward to working more closely with everyone.

Update from the Administrative Support Group (ASG)

Mr. Ferland provided an ASG update, and began by noting the diverse range of people participating in the meeting and thanking everyone for their participation.

Topics of Mr. Ferland's update included the following:

- **Outcomes from Methane Expo 2013** (see slide 5 of [presentation](#) for details). Mr. Ferland summarized the primary outcomes, which included: (1) continued engagement with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), (2) continued identification of financing barriers and international wastewater needs, (3) organization of the next GMI Partnership-wide meeting, and (4) continued focus on the action planning process across GMI sectors.
- **Action Planning** (see slide 6 of [presentation](#)). Mr. Ferland stated that a focus is for Partner Countries to develop country-specific action plans describing each country's current and future work related to methane reduction. Revised [action plan guidance for wastewater](#) is now available on the GMI website. He explained the benefits of developing action plans include identifying a country's needs and opportunities related to methane reduction and facilitating more communication within the global community.
- **GMI 10th Year Anniversary Activities** (see slide 7 of [presentation](#)). Mr. Ferland explained the ASG is producing a video and pamphlet to highlight country and project successes and is planning a Partnership-wide meeting in the latter part of 2014. The ASG is working to finalize a host for this meeting. Currently, the ASG is in talks with the Serbian government as a potential host. This meeting will include wastewater technical sessions and a subcommittee meeting. Most likely timing for the meeting is October or November 2014.
- **Next Wastewater Subcommittee Meeting** (see slide 9 of [presentation](#)). Mr. Ferland explained the next Wastewater Subcommittee meeting will most likely be part of a tri-sector meeting held in conjunction with the agriculture and (municipal solid waste) MSW sectors in March 2014 in Brazil. The ASG has been in discussions with partners in Santa Catarina to host the meeting, which will focus on cross cutting biogas issues that apply to all three sectors. Mr. Ferland encouraged attendees to suggest topics for this meeting.

Country-Specific Action Plans

Mr. Godlove explained the action planning process to date has focused on the development of a wastewater sector action plan. The [Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee Action Plan](#) was finalized during Methane Expo 2013, and is now available on the GMI website. This sector action plan establishes the focus of the Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee and outlines key activities for the subcommittee to pursue.

Mr. Godlove explained the next step in the action planning process is for countries to develop country-specific wastewater action plans. These country-specific action plans build off of the sector action plan to address country-specific opportunities, market drivers, and challenges to mitigating, capturing, and using methane in the wastewater sector. Mr. Godlove explained there are two primary purposes for developing these action plans:

- They serve as useful tools for thinking about how to address wastewater emissions and mitigation.
- They can help identify ways that others can help accomplish country-specific goals and actions.

He also pointed out some Partner Countries have climate legislation they are in the process of implementing, and that these action plans can help to advance these laws.

Mr. Godlove explained the country-specific wastewater action plans can serve as useful, living documents and don't need to be static. Mr. Ferland followed-up by stating that countries can title these plans however they want to facilitate the plan's release. Mr. Ferland recognized that sometimes getting approval from multiple government agencies might be required for an official document, but by naming the document something like "Draft Guidance for the Wastewater Sector in XX Country," it might help make a plan available that can be built on and developed over time by a country's relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Godlove acknowledged the geographical diversity of the meeting participants and noted that not all attendees represented national governments. He indicated, however, that everybody can have a role in development of the country-specific action plans.

Mr. Godlove stated the United States is in the process of finalizing the U.S. Municipal Wastewater Action Plan and will share its finished plan with the subcommittee as an example of what countries should be thinking about producing. He expressed hope to have several countries work on their action plans over the coming months and be able to share them during the proposed March 2014 in-person tri-sector meeting.

Mr. Godlove directed attendees to the [country-specific sector action plan guidance](#) available on the GMI website, and described the primary elements that countries should consider including in their action plans (specific guidance and details for each element is available in the online document). These elements include:

- Country Background and Overview of Methane Emissions
- Characterization of Public and Private Sector Involvement
- Challenges to Mitigation or Abatement of Methane Emissions
- Activities to Promote Methane Mitigation and Abatement (internally and externally)
- Policy, Market, and Legal Drivers to Advance Methane Project Development
- Country Priorities
- Additional Information - Emission Sources, Mitigation Potential and Successful or Potential Projects

Mr. Godlove acknowledged each country's action plan will be different, as they are intended to reflect that country's situation and priorities.

Mr. Godlove then provided an overview of the [U.S. MSW Action Plan](#) to serve as an example of what a final sector action plan might look like, highlighting the types of data sources that can be used and the level of detail most countries would find appropriate. He stated the ASG is available to consult with any country that has questions about how best to approach the development of their country-specific wastewater action plan. He then asked if there were any questions or comments.

Mr. Freig asked for clarification on whether the attendees should use the documents discussed as blueprints to help develop their own country plans. Mr. Godlove confirmed Partner Countries should use these documents and to feel free to contact the ASG for consultation.

Planning for Next In-Person Subcommittee Meeting

Mr. Ferland reiterated statements made earlier in the meeting that the next in-person Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee is planned for the second week of March 2014 in Santa Catarina, Brazil. The meeting will be part of a tri-sector meeting, held in conjunction with the agriculture and MSW sectors. Mr. Ferland explained that meeting planning is underway with Brazilian hosts to firm up details. He explained the current thinking is that the meeting will be a two-day event with eight to nine panel sessions focused on cross-cutting biogas issues affecting the wastewater, agriculture, and MSW sectors, along with sector-specific sessions. Subcommittee meetings would also take place over working lunches. The Brazilian organizers have indicated the event will draw between 200-400 people. Mr. Godlove stated the meeting's genesis arose from the [tri-sector meeting held in Singapore](#), and that he has visited and met with state officials in Brazil who are excited about hosting the meeting.

Mr. Ferland introduced a preliminary meeting agenda (see slide 10 of [presentation](#)), and encouraged attendees to suggest topics. The ASG will conduct initial discussions with Brazil about the meeting schedule and topics, and additional suggestions and feedback from this meeting's attendees are most welcome.

Mr. Godlove solicited question or comments about the proposed in-person meeting.

Mr. Freig expressed excitement for the meeting and indicated its potential to inject energy into wastewater project development by connecting the relevant stakeholders.

Ms. Clavijo (Canada) asked how the cross-cutting sessions will be organized and what format they will take. She recommended the sessions be interactive. Mr. Godlove agreed with the recommendation and would suggest it to the Brazilian organizers.

Mr. Jordao (Brazil) suggested the organizers check with the Society of Environmental Engineering in Brazil to make sure no other meetings are planned for the same time. Mr. Godlove encouraged Mr. Jordao to check with the Society on behalf of the ASG and check-in with him.

Conclusion

Mr. Godlove asked if there were any final questions or comments from attendees about topics addressed or not addressed during the meeting.

Mr. Freig asked if GMI was going to play a role at the upcoming COP meeting in Warsaw. Mer. Ferland said GMI was tentatively looking at providing a session, but there are no plans to participate at this time. CCAC, however, will be holding a high-level assembly.

Mr. Godlove reminded countries to start working on their country-specific wastewater action plans, and to come ready to discuss them at the next in-person meeting in Brazil. He then adjourned the meeting.

Summary of Action Items

The meeting action items include the following:

- Subcommittee members will draft country-specific wastewater action plans and come ready to discuss at the in-person tri-sector subcommittee meeting planned for March 2014 in Santa Catarina, Brazil.
- Mr. Godlove and the ASG will circulate the draft U.S. Wastewater Action Plan to subcommittee members as soon as it is available to serve as an example for countries to follow.
- The ASG and Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee co-chairs will keep subcommittee members informed on the status of the proposed tri-sector subcommittee meeting.
- Subcommittee members will suggest topics/panels for the proposed tri-sector subcommittee meeting.

Annex 1: Final Meeting Participation List

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