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M2M4/Doc. 3

Outreach & Communications Progress and Recommendations

Discussion Paper

1. Purpose

This paper provides an overview of the progress made thus far in achieving the outreach and communication goals set forth by the Steering Committee during the 2006 Rome meeting. This paper also provides suggested next steps for the Steering Committee's consideration for Year 4 of the Partnership.

2. Background

Following the first Ministerial Meeting in 2004, an Outreach and Communications Taskforce was created to develop a strategy for facilitating communication among the Partners and the Project Network members, recruiting new members to the Project Network and engaging their active participation, and providing general background information to the public and policy makers.

By mid-2005, the Taskforce had developed the Partnership's Outreach Strategy and begun executing various elements. The keystones to this outreach strategy are: website, printed background and outreach materials including the quarterly newsletter "Methane International." At the 2006 the Steering Committee meeting, it was agreed that the ASG should continue implement the key items in this outreach strategy. This paper provides a report on the ASG's efforts to update and/or expand each of these products, along with recommendations for next steps in each product area. This paper also provides an overview of website project tracking efforts.

3. Methane to Markets Web Site

The ASG launched the Methane to Markets Web site in October 2005. The overall goal and purpose of the Web site is to provide a one-stop location for all Methane to Markets information and activities.

Since 2006, the ASG has been monitoring and conducting Web Trends analysis on the Methane to Markets Web site to help quantify the number of users accessing the Methane to Markets Web site to find information or learn more about the Partnership. During the last quarter reported (April – June 2007), the Web Trends report indicated daily averages of more than 10,000 hits generated from search engines and more than 1,600 visits. This represents an increase more than double the average number of daily hits and more than triple the number of visits reported last year.

<p>Average Hits per Day - Number of successful hits divided by the total number of days in the log.</p> <p>Average Visits per Day - Number of visits divided by the total number of days in the log.</p>
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The latest Web trends report also identifies the United States, Australia, and Canada as the three most active countries with the greatest number of users that visit the Methane to Markets Web site (see Table 1

on next page). This is can most likely be attributed to the fact that the web site is only available in English.

Table 1. Most Active Countries (April – July 2007)

Country	Visits
United States	123,343
Australia	2,906
Canada	2,288
United Kingdom	1,853
Mexico	1,400
India	938
China	880
Italy	636
Germany	624
South Africa	546
All Others	5,893

To help increase usage among non-U.S. or non-English-speaking users, the ASG could work with other countries to help them develop Partner country language portals for the Methane to Markets Web site. As countries translate Partnership documents into other languages (see below), these documents can be uploaded to the Web site. There should also be a concerted effort to have Partners and Project Network members provide a link to the Methane to Markets Web site from their own Web sites.

The Methane to Markets Web site has also proven a useful outreach vehicle in communicating upcoming events and workshops as well as providing opportunities for users to view agendas and register online. Nearly two dozen Methane to Markets and related meetings and conferences have been posted to the Web site in 2007. According to the Web Trends reports from January to July 2007 (two consecutive quarters), the “Conference & Events” page routinely ranks in the top 20 most popular pages on the Web site.

The Web site also serves as a clearinghouse for presentations and other materials delivered at meetings and workshops. During the last quarter reported (April – July 2007), seven of the top 20 most downloaded files comprised Spanish translations of presentations from various Oil and Gas meetings and workshops.

Suggested Next Steps:

The Partners should be encouraged to utilize the Web site to its full potential (e.g., add news items, post agendas for upcoming meetings, white papers for review) and work directly with the ASG by suggesting other improvements and/or providing content and tools for users. Specific items that might be useful in order to accomplish this include:

- Publicize availability of “News” section as area where countries can post highlights of recent project and/or collaborative developments to capture and use methane.
- Encourage Partners and Project Network members to provide the ASG with information on potential sources of project funding and open Requests for Proposals (RFPs) posting on the “Funding Opportunities” portion of the Web site.

- Encourage Partners and Subcommittees to expand the content of the Methane to Markets Web site by providing links to relevant reports, reference documents, Web sites, or other tools. These should be included even if they are not in English so that the Web site becomes a useful portal for all Partner Countries.
- The ASG would be glad to post translations of key documents prepared by Partners as well as inviting them to provide copies of documents that they have translated for their own purposes (e.g., Spanish translations of workshop presentations).

In general, the ASG will continue to work closely with Partners to ensure that the Web site has the most up-to-date information on upcoming events, useful tools, and links to relevant information.

5. Printed Outreach Materials

In 2005, the ASG finalized several printed outreach materials on the Partnership including a full-color brochure and seven fact sheets. In 2006, the agriculture sector fact sheet was added. Since its development, more than 8,000 copies of the Methane to Markets brochure have been distributed at various conferences and meetings world-wide. All eight fact sheets have been translated into Chinese, Italian, Russian, and Spanish and posted to the Web site. Five of the eight Spanish fact sheets are among the 20 most downloaded documents from the Web site. In 2006, the ASG prepared and posted high-resolution, print-ready versions of all the fact sheets in Chinese, English Russian, and Spanish on the Web site. The ASG recently updated the partnership fact sheet to reflect the increase in membership.

As previously reported, the ASG procured a state-of-the-art display (e.g., series of vinyl banner stands) from which to distribute materials at various events. During the past year, the Methane to Markets banner stands have been displayed at the following venues:

- Carbon Expo: Cologne, Germany (2-4 May 2007)
- Longwall USA (Coal): Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA (5-7 June 2007)
- ISWA: Amsterdam, Netherlands (24-27 September 2007)

Prior to each Steering Committee meeting, the ASG updates and reproduces the banner displaying the Partner Countries to reflect new Partners.

Suggested Next Steps:

- The Steering Committee should continue to encourage Subcommittee and Project Network members to promote the Partnership by utilizing these informational materials when attending meetings, events, conferences, etc. The materials are available electronically (i.e., print resolution files online) and in some cases hard copy from the ASG and may be ordered by contacting the ASG at (202) 343-9683 or <asg@methanetomarkets.org>.

6. Newsletter

Since the third Steering Committee meeting, the ASG has completed and released two issues of the *Methane International* newsletter. The newsletter review procedures utilizing Administrative Liaisons from Partner countries has been working well and the ASG will continue this process.

- Sixth Edition (January 2007)
- Special Expo Edition (May 2007)

These newsletters and future newsletters are available on the Methane to Markets Web site.

Suggested Next Steps:

- The Steering Committee may wish to encourage Partner countries and Subcommittees to utilize the newsletter to highlight projects, conferences, or other success stories. The ASG will also work to actively solicit input for story ideas for future issues.

7. Press/Media Exposure

Over the last year, information about Partners and the Partnership in general has garnered international media exposure and nearly 10 press releases and/or methane-related announcements have been posted on “News” section of the Methane to Markets Web site. Partners are encouraged to continue to provide the ASG with information or updates about any media exposure for inclusion on the Web site.

8. Methane to Markets Project Tracking System

The Steering Committee charged the ASG with developing an online project tracking system and an initial system was launched in December of 2006. However, feedback from users was that the system was too cumbersome and thus did not encourage use. The ASG has now redesigned the site, available at: www.methanetomarkets.org/projects, with an emphasis on streamlining and improving usability. Additionally, the ASG has input multiple U.S. Government projects from all sectors and plans to also include all the projects on display at the Partnership Expo. Partners are encouraged to view the system and input their own projects so that the Partnership can more easily report on activities to the Steering Committee and so that projects can get more exposure. Partners are also encouraged to use the system so that project information can be more readily accessed for highlights in the planned Methane to Markets accomplishments report.

9. Goals for Outreach & Communications for Year 4

The Steering Committee may wish to consider including the following elements in the communication plan for Year 4 of the Partnership:

- Securing greater media exposure by getting more business, trade, environmental, and general press to write articles and op-ed pieces (similar to the oil/gas and landfill articles mentioned above). Also, arranging for television and/or radio interviews with appropriate media outlets in each Partner country to discuss the Partnership would be beneficial.
- Encouraging Partners to give presentations on the Partnership at relevant conferences, meetings, and events related to broader climate and sustainable development issues (e.g., United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development meeting). Partners could utilize the general Methane to Markets presentation available on the Web site as the basis for their presentation. This broad exposure would increase the general understanding about the Partnership and its goals, and help to recruit key members to the Project Network.

10. Items for Consideration

These items were presented for consideration in Rome and added to the charge to the Subcommittees. Given Subcommittee focus on the Partnership Expo over the last year, it is suggested these items once again be considered as suggested activities for the Subcommittees.

- Web site: Does the Steering Committee wish to have the ASG work with the Subcommittees to enhance the Web site as described above?
- Newsletter: Does the Steering Committee wish to encourage Partner countries and Subcommittees to utilize the newsletter to highlight projects, conferences, or other success stories?
- Tracking System: Does the Steering Committee wish to encourage Partner countries and the Project Network to utilize the newly revised system to facilitate greater information sharing on projects and activities to ensure the Methane to Markets Accomplishments Report highlights the most relevant and up-to-date project information?
- Publicizing the Partnership: Does the Steering Committee wish to charge Partners and Subcommittees with undertaking publicity activities and providing links to press releases or other new items to the ASG for inclusion on the Methane to Markets Web site?