

Global Methane Initiative Governance – Discussion Paper

Introduction

During its 13th meeting in December 2020, the GMI Steering Committee discussed options for potential changes to the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) governance structure that could be adopted as part of the GMI re-chartering process. The purpose of these contemplated changes is to ensure that GMI runs as efficiently as possible with maximum engagement of Partners and stakeholders. The Steering Committee directed the Secretariat to explore and identify specific options for the Steering Committee's consideration related to:

[\(1\) Governance structure for the GMI Steering Committee; should the GMI explore other leadership models?](#)

[\(2\) Size, composition, and term lengths for the Steering Committee; how to maintain an active Steering committee membership, and how to better engage interested organizations?](#)

[\(3\) Clarifications on how Subcommittee membership applies to Project Network members; are the Terms of Reference clear on Subcommittee membership eligibility?](#)

The Steering Committee will discuss the options and make decisions during the 13th Steering Committee meeting in March 2021. Following consensus of the Steering Committee, the Terms of Reference will be edited to reflect the decisions of the Steering Committee. This paper is intended to prepare Steering Committee members for the meeting by outlining proposed solutions for consideration.

1. GMI Steering Committee Governance Model

Key Issue:

The re-chartering process is an opportunity to examine the current governance model. Is the current Co-Chair model of GMI the most effective way for the organization to be led, or are there other models that could result in more active Partner engagement in leadership, greater continuity, and better sharing of responsibilities?

Key Questions for the Steering Committee:

- A. Should the GMI Steering Committee retain its current leadership structure of two Co-Chairs [status quo]?
- B. Should the GMI Steering Committee adopt a different leadership structure comprised of a Chair and up to two Vice-Chairs?

Background:

- For its first 12 years, the Steering Committee had a single Chair. In the 2016 re-chartering, the Terms of Reference were revised to provide for two Co-Chairs. This new leadership model was intended to diversify the leadership opportunities within GMI and offer more opportunities for participation in

the governance of the Initiative, while still maintaining a relatively “lean” governance structure that allows the Initiative to operate in a flexible manner.

- The current Terms of Reference specify a 2-year term for each Co-Chair and allow for Co-Chairs to serve multiple terms or extend terms based on consensus of the Steering Committee.
- Ideally, Co-Chairs are to have staggered terms to avoid both co-chairs leaving at the same time. It is also ideal for one co-chair to be from a developed economy, and the other from a developing economy or an economy in transition. Neither of these requirements are formalized in the Terms of Reference, but nevertheless guide the current best practice for GMI governance.
- For a span of approximately two years, there were two Co-Chairs (Canada and Mexico) actively engaged, which was an extremely productive and effective time for the Initiative. The Co-Chairs each hosted meetings and participated actively in the governance of GMI. Unfortunately, due to administration changes, Mexico has been unable to participate as Co-Chair for the past two years, leaving Canada effectively as the single Chair of the Steering Committee.
- Changes to the current governance structure would strengthen the GMI by providing greater clarity on governance roles and leadership continuity.

Current Terms of Reference (relevant sections)

Jump to [Section “3. Organization” and subsection 3.2 in the Terms of Reference.](#)

Options for Consideration:

Option 1.1 – Current Co-Chair Leadership Model [status quo].

- This scenario maintains the status-quo of two equal Co-Chairs with shared responsibilities.
- With two active Partners in the Co-Chair roles, this model has worked well for the GMI.
- However, in instances where one of the Co-Chairs is unable to fulfill their role, the Steering Committee is left with only a single Chair until another Co-Chair can be secured.
- Examples of organizations that operate using a co-chair model:
 - Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) Working Group
 - GMI Subcommittees

Option 1.2 – Alternate leadership model - Chair and Vice Chair(s).

- In this scenario, leadership is shared between two or three roles: a single Chair and up to two Vice Chairs.
- The Chair and Vice Chair(s) each serve specified terms [e.g., two years], which could be staggered such that a Vice Chair assumes the Chair role when the Chair term ends. In the scenario where there are two Vice Chairs, a succession plan will be established ahead of time. It would be ideal, though not required, for a Vice Chair to assume the role of Chair in future.
- The Chair leads the Steering Committee with the Vice Chair(s) assisting in meeting preparation and chairing certain agenda items. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting or portion thereof, a Vice Chair acts as the Chair.

- The arrangement of Vice Chair becoming Chair would allow for more continuity and seamless transitions of the Steering Committee leadership. It would also allow for a country taking on a new leadership role as Vice Chair to become familiar with the leadership position and GMI, before becoming Chair.
- The flexibility of allowing up to two Vice Chairs could enable greater engagement from Partners through shared leadership roles. The flexible nature of GMI's operation allow for terms to be extended or adapted as needed to maximize the benefits of shared leadership roles.
- In the two Vice Chair scenario, to avoid confusion about who should assume the role of Chair next, there would need to be early and clear communication amongst the Partners in leadership roles with respect to plans for future leadership transitions.
- Examples of organizations that use Chair / Vice Chair model
 - [The UN Global Compact Board](#)
 - [The Clinton Foundation](#)
 - [Kantara Initiative](#)

General Considerations:

- All leadership models, whether two Co-Chairs, or alternate models (e.g., Chair and Vice Chair(s)) require the active engagement and leadership of at least two or more countries.
- Outlining a minimum level of engagement required for the role of Co-Chair/Chair/Vice Chair in the Terms of Reference would help a Partner considering stepping into a leadership role assess their operational capacity to take on the role. It would also provide the Secretariat a clear path forward for opening up a leadership role to interested Partners when a sitting Co-Chair/Chair/Vice Chair becomes inactive.
- In the scenario where a Partner in a leadership role is inactive and cannot meet the minimum requirements listed below, the Secretariat may decide to seek out a new Partner to fill the role. The Secretariat will perform its due diligence in re-engaging an inactive Co-Chair/Chair/Vice Chair before opening the position to other Partner Countries.
- The following are proposed minimum requirements for Partners in leadership roles:
 - Active participation in the planning activities of the Secretariat
 - Active participation in the Steering Committee meetings of the GMI
- In addition to the minimum requirements, the following are expectations of Partners in leadership roles:
 - Hosting a GMI meeting or event (virtually or in-person)
 - Providing strategic direction on GMI initiatives

Table: Summary of Options for Steering Committee Leadership Structure¹

Benefits		Potential Constraints	
Option 1.1: Retain Current Co-Chair Model [<i>Status Quo</i>]			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This model has successfully worked for GMI, incorporating more partners in leadership roles.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk of single Partner taking on entirety of leadership role if other Co-Chair cannot effectively participate.• If terms are not staggered, potential for lapses in leadership or ineffective transitions.	
Option 1.2: Adopt Chair/ Vice Chair(s) Leadership Structure			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides continuity and easy transition of roles for the organization, i.e., a Vice Chair could step into the role of Chair when Chair is not available.• Allows Partner(s) serving as Vice Chair time to prepare for future term as Chair.• Allows Partner serving as Chair to have a clear, strong leadership role.• Allows opportunity for more Partners to participate in leadership roles.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less flexibility for a motivated Chair to continue in their leadership role.• Assessing which of the two Vice Chairs would assume the role of Chair could create confusion and would need to be discussed among Partners in leadership roles.	

Table: Changes to Terms of Reference for Steering Committee Leadership

Proposed Terms of Reference Language (3.2)
Option 1.1: Retain Current Co-Chair Model
[No changes] <i>The Steering Committee's leadership will be comprised of two Co-Chairs for a 2-year term that can be extended by consensus.</i>
Option 1.2: Adopt Chair/Vice Chair(s) Leadership Structure
<i>The Steering Committee's leadership will be comprised of a Chair and up to two (2) Vice Chairs, each for a 2-year term that can be extended by consensus. After a 2-year term as Chair (or as extended by consensus), the Chair will step down and a Vice Chair may become Chair.</i>

Recommendation

- Preference for *Option 1.2: Adopt the Chair/Vice Chair(s) leadership structure.*
- Strong recommendation for specifying minimum engagement requirements for leadership roles.

¹ All options presented here would be subject to minimum engagement requirements, outlined in the Terms of Reference.

2. Size and Composition of the GMI Steering Committee

Key Issue:

In recent years, Steering Committee meetings have lacked consistent participation, due to a number of barriers. Although an informal approach to Steering Committee membership has allowed GMI to be flexible and agile, the absence of a mechanism to review Steering Committee membership has made it difficult to maintain an active and engaged Steering Committee. The current membership should be reviewed, and a process for maintaining an active and engaged membership should be considered.

Additionally, the current exercise to revise the Terms of Reference offers the opportunity to expand the Steering Committee membership to include strategic partners to enhance collaboration.

Key Questions for the Steering Committee:

- A. How can the Steering Committee maintain an active and engaged membership?
- B. How can the Steering Committee better leverage the knowledge, support, and engagement of non-governmental organizations, including strategic partners?

Background:

Current Steering Committee Membership:

- In 2004, all partner countries (Partners) who joined GMI (then known as the Methane to Markets Partnership) were eligible to become Steering Committee members. The Steering Committee was eventually capped at 22 Partners.
- For the past several years, typically only 8 to 10 of these country partners have been active in attending the meetings and events of the GMI.
- The current Terms of Reference do not set terms or minimum requirements to be a member of the Steering Committee. Given that a Partner Country is only removed from the Steering Committee if they formally request to be removed, some inactive Partner Countries have remained on the official membership for many years despite having had little to no engagement.

Expanding Steering Committee Membership:

- Membership of the Steering Committee is currently reserved for governmental representatives of Partner Countries, although guests representing Strategic Partners, GMI's Project Network or other relevant organizations frequently participate in Steering Committee meetings or events.
- The 2020 Executive Task Force meetings were an excellent example of events with robust participation that extended beyond official Steering Committee members. These organizations enriched the discussion by sharing their perspectives which created opportunities for more effective collaboration, including more successful events.
- The Steering Committee has the opportunity to extend a form of membership to non-governmental representatives to encourage further future collaboration.

Current Terms of Reference (relevant sections)

Jump to [Section "3. Organization" and subsection 3.3 in the Terms of Reference.](#)

Question 2A: How can GMI ensure that the Steering Committee remains engaged and active?**Option 2.A.1 – Initiate an “opt-in” requirement for Steering Committee Membership.**

- Current Steering Committee members would be invited to re-affirm their interest in continuing to serve on the Steering Committee for a 2-year term.
- Those members who do not respond will be removed from the Steering Committee, with the option to re-join at a later date. Invitations could then be extended to additional country partners to join the Steering Committee if there is capacity.
- After 2 years, or another agreed-upon interval, Steering Committee members will be invited to re-affirm their participation for another 2 years. If an affirmation is not received by a specified cut-off date, then that Partner will be removed from the Steering Committee. The maximum number of Steering Committee members can be capped at the current 22 membership, or restricted to a smaller number.

Option 2.A.2 – Implement a rotational membership for Steering Committee members.

- Cap the Steering Committee at 8 partners, and each Steering Committee member serves a specified term, then rotates “off” the Steering Committee.

Table: Summary of Options for Maintaining Steering Committee Membership

Expected Benefits	Potential Constraints
Option 2.A.1: “Opt-in” requirement for Steering Committee Membership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners with most interest in participating in Steering Committee will be engaged. • “Opt-in” requirement will allow a mechanism by which inactive Partner countries can be removed from Steering Committee, with the option to rejoin at a later date if desired. • Opportunity to “open up” Steering Committee beyond current membership at a regular interval. • Opt-in exercise will have administrative benefit of ensuring contact lists are updated on a consistent basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a risk that “opting-in” will be a burden for some countries to secure approvals from their departments/agencies, particularly if the process is too formalized.
Option 2.A.2: Implement a rotational membership for Steering Committee members	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotating membership provides opportunity for more diverse participation as rotation allows for new members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotating membership could deprive the GMI of the support and engagement of active Partners once their term ends and they are rotated “off” the Steering Committee. • This process risks making membership overly formalized, and risks increasing the burden of administrative management.

Table: Changes to Terms of Reference for Maintaining Steering Committee Membership

Proposed Terms of Reference Language (3.2)
Option 2.A.1: “Opt-in” requirement
<i>Members of the Steering Committee are required to “opt-in” to reaffirm their interest in serving on the Steering Committee for a 2-year term.</i>
Option 2.A.2: Implement a rotational membership
<i>Members of the Steering Committee shall be appointed on a rotational membership basis; each member serves a specified term and then rotates off the Steering Committee.</i>

Recommendation:

- Strong recommendation for Option 2.A.1: “Opt-in” requirement for Steering Committee Membership. This option provides a mechanism to ensure that the membership of the Steering Committee is active and engaged, while minimizing administrative. Furthermore, the “opt-in” exercise provides an opportunity to update contact information in the event of staff-turnover or changes within a government agency.

Key Question 2B: How can the Steering Committee better leverage the knowledge, support, and engagement of non-governmental organizations, including strategic partners?**Option 2.B.1 – Create a designation of “Official Observers” to facilitate participation of non-governmental organizations in Steering Committee meeting and events.**

- The Steering Committee could formalize within the Terms of Reference an “Official Observer” designation which would provide a clear context for regular participation of non-governmental organizations, including but not limited to strategic partners, in Steering Committee meetings and events.
- The Terms of Reference would create clear parameters for the role of Official Observers in Steering Committee business. For instance, Official Observers would be welcome to offer ideas, insights, and perspective in Steering Committee discussions, but would not participate in the decision-making activities of the Steering Committee.

Option 2.B.2 – Retain status-quo of informational engagement with strategic partners.

- The Steering Committee could maintain the status quo, and invite organizations to attend meetings on an ad-hoc basis.

Table: Summary of Options for Expanding Steering Committee Membership

Expected Benefits	Potential Constraints
Option 2.B.1: Create a formal designation of “Official Observers”	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases active participation by relevant stakeholders. • Allows for more visibility and awareness of what cross-cutting organizations are doing regarding methane, including more visibility for GMI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance between Partner and Observer participation may need to be managed.

Expected Benefits	Potential Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates diverse ideas from key strategic partners across the methane community and allows for strategic collaboration. • Creates clarity on the role of non-governmental participants in Steering Committee meetings. 	
Option 2.B.2: Retain status-quo of informational engagement with strategic partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible approach requires less administrative burden. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible uncertainty on when to extend invites to strategic partners or other organizations, as they would not be invited by default.

Table: Changes to Terms of Reference for Expanding Steering Committee Membership

Proposed Terms of Reference Language (3.2)
Option 2.B.1: Create a formal designation of “Official Observers”
<i>Individuals designated as “official observers” may be invited to participate in meetings of the Steering Committee. An “official observer” will be welcome to offer ideas and perspectives but may not participate in decision-making activities of the Steering Committee.</i>
Option 2.B.2: Retain status-quo
[No changes]

Recommendation:

- Preference for Option 2.B.1 – Create a formal designation of “Official Observers”. This option will allow for greater clarity on engagement with interested strategic partners, and provide clear context for the participation of strategic partners and other interested parties in GMI Steering Committee events and meetings. Less formalized arrangement would still be possible with organizations which are interested in collaborating with GMI, but do not wish to participate in Steering Committee operations.

3. Composition of the Subcommittees

Key Issue:

The Subcommittees have identified that more robust participation of Project Network members and/or the private sector helps drive action in the specific sectors. Recently, a lack of clarity on who is eligible to participate in the Subcommittees has created confusion about the ability to accept interested non-governmental parties to the subcommittees.

Background:

GMI is a public-private partnership in which Partner Countries have official delegates on both the Steering Committee and the Subcommittees. Official delegates participate in consensus-based decision-

making processes that shape the direction of the Steering Committee and Subcommittees. The private sector is engaged in Subcommittees as part of the “Project Network.” Project Network members are welcome to attend subcommittee meetings but do not participate in consensus-based decision-making processes. Certain Subcommittees have experienced more engagement and participation from the private sector than governmental officials. As such, an increasing number of Project Network members have expressed interest in becoming “official” delegates to the Subcommittee and playing a greater role in the Subcommittee.

The language in the Terms of Reference finalized in 2016 provides two distinct ways that Project Network members may participate as “official delegates” in the Subcommittees:

- As an officially nominated delegate for a country Partner.
 - Section 3.5: *“The Subcommittees will be comprised of representatives from interested Partners. A Subcommittee may link formally or informally to other international organizations or partnerships. Each Partner may appoint up to three members to each Subcommittee.”*
- As an official “at large” delegate to the Subcommittee (not affiliated with a specific country).
 - Section 3.6, the Terms of Reference States that *“A Project Network Member may serve as an official delegate in sector Subcommittees by consent of that Subcommittee.”*

[Note that Project Network members are still welcome to participate in Subcommittee meetings without being designated as an “official” delegate (in either of the two ways described above, as part of a country delegation or as “at large delegate”).

The separation of these two statements in two separate sections of the Terms of Reference has likely caused confusion as to whether Project Network members can participate as delegates on the Subcommittees. Adjustments to the language in the Terms of Reference should be made to clarify that Project Network Members can serve as official delegates on a Subcommittee in two ways: (1) as a representative of a Partner Country, by consent of that Partner Country; or (2) as an “at large delegate” to the Subcommittee, not affiliated with a specific Partner country, by consensus of the Subcommittee.

Table: Changes to Terms of Reference for Clarifying Subcommittee language

Proposed Terms of Reference Language (3.5)
Option 3.A.1:
<i>The Subcommittees will be comprised of representatives from interested Partner countries, non-governmental organizations, and Project Network members. A Subcommittee may offer formal or informal membership to organizations or Project Network members. Each Partner may appoint up to three members to each Subcommittee.</i>
Option 3.A.2: Retain status-quo
[No changes]

Recommendation:

- Adjust the Terms of Reference to explicitly state that Subcommittees may extend membership to Project Network members in section 3.5.