



Coalbed Methane Outreach Program

Promoting Coal Mine
Methane Recovery and Use



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Our Mission

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Coalbed Methane Outreach Program (CMOP) is a voluntary program with a goal of reducing methane emissions from coal mining activities. Our mission is to promote the profitable recovery and utilization of coal mine methane (CMM), a potent greenhouse gas (GHG) that contributes to climate change if emitted to the atmosphere. When collected and used for energy, CMM is a valuable fuel source.

Since 1994, CMOP has worked cooperatively with the coal mining industry to reduce CMM emissions. By helping to identify and implement methods to recover and use CMM instead of emitting it to the atmosphere, CMOP has played a key role in the United States' efforts to reduce GHG emissions and address global climate change.

This guide summarizes CMOP activities and also highlights some of the program's accomplishments.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Reduce GHG emissions
- Achieve the profitable recovery and use of CMM
- Promote the use of a clean energy source



What Is Coal Mine Methane?

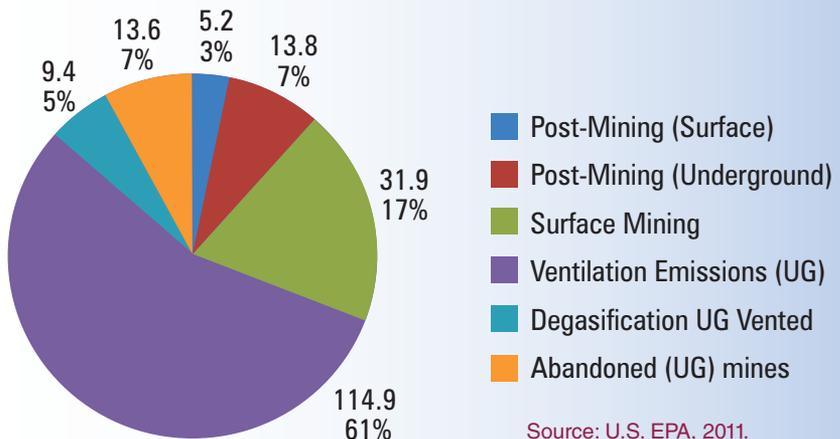
CMM refers to methane released from the coal and surrounding rock strata due to mining activities. In underground mines, it can create an explosive hazard to coal miners. Underground mines are the largest single source of CMM emissions. Mines tend to emit more methane the deeper they are, but their methane levels depend on many factors.

Sources of CMM

CMM is emitted from several sources:

- Underground mine ventilation systems, which emit large quantities of very dilute methane known as Ventilation Air Methane (VAM).
- Underground mine degasification (or “drainage”) systems are needed at some very gassy mines to remove methane from the coal seams. This can be done in advance of mining (“pre-mine drainage”) from the surface or from inside the mine, during or after mining (“gob” or “goaf” wells).
- Abandoned (permanently closed) mines emit abandoned mine methane (AMM) through vent holes, fissures, or cracks.
- Surface mines emit methane as the coal seam is directly exposed to the atmosphere.
- Post-mining operations—when coal is stored in piles and transported—produce fugitive methane emissions.

2009 US CMM Emissions (Bcf)



Source: U.S. EPA, 2011.

Recovery and Use of CMM

Technology is readily available to recover methane—the major component of natural gas—from coal mines. Specific end uses for CMM depend on the gas quality, especially the concentration of methane and the presence of other contaminants.

Worldwide, CMM is most often used for power generation, district heating, boiler fuel, and town gas, or it is sold to natural gas pipeline systems.

CMM can also be used in many other ways:

- Coal drying
- Heat source for mine ventilation air
- Supplemental fuel for mine boilers
- Vehicle fuel as compressed or liquefied natural gas (LNG)
- Manufacturing feedstock
- Fuel source for fuel cells

In the United States, nearly all CMM recovered for use from active mines is injected into the natural gas pipeline system.

BENEFITS OF CAPTURING AND USING CMM

- Reduces GHG emissions
- Conserves a local source of valuable, clean-burning energy
- Enhances mine safety by reducing in-mine concentrations of methane
- Provides revenue to the mine



CMOP Domestic Activities

EPA's CMOP is engaged in numerous domestic and international outreach efforts.

CMOP works cooperatively with the private sector to support project development. The program helps to overcome institutional, technical, regulatory, and financial barriers to implementation, and communicates the benefits of CMM recovery to interested and necessary audiences. Specific program activities include:

- Identifying, evaluating, and promoting CMM recovery and use opportunities.
- Conducting feasibility and pre-feasibility studies at U.S. mines and supporting cutting-edge technology demonstrations.
- Preparing and disseminating reports on key technical, economic, and legal issues.
- Interfacing with the mining industry, CMM project developers, and the financing community to advance project development.
- Organizing conferences and workshops to discuss leading technology and policy developments.

Sample screen from CMOP's Coal Mine Methane Project Cash Flow Model

The screenshot displays a 'Preliminary Report' window with a title bar and a main content area. The title bar reads 'Preliminary Report' and the main title is 'Preliminary Report'. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: 'The financial estimates for your projects are shown below. Select the View/Print report to generate a presentation-quality report of this analysis, including a bar graph showing the Net Cash Value of the project.' Below this text is a table of financial estimates. The table has two columns: the first column lists the financial metric, and the second column lists the value and units. A 'Goal Seek' button is positioned to the left of the 'Carbon credit unit value' row. At the bottom of the window, there are five buttons: 'View/Print Report', 'Show Cash Flows', 'Select New Scenario', 'Modify Inputs', and 'Save Scenario'.

Preliminary Report	
The financial estimates for your projects are shown below. Select the View/Print report to generate a presentation-quality report of this analysis, including a bar graph showing the Net Cash Value of the project.	
Available CMM for Other Projects	0 mcf/d
Total capital cost	6,095,000 \$
Total annual cost	1,091,000 \$/year
Equity percent	20 %
Equity amount	1,219,000 \$
Loan amount	4,876,000 \$
Interest rate	5 %
Carbon credits earned per year	120,511 tonne/year
Goal Seek Carbon credit unit value	4.00 \$/tonne CO2E
Internal rate of return (IRR)	68.83 %
Net present value	5,381,000 \$
Real discount rate	12 %
Quantity of exported Methane	267,971 Mcf/year

View/Print Report **Show Cash Flows** **Select New Scenario** **Modify Inputs** **Save Scenario**

How to reach CMOP: www.epa.gov/cmop

CMOP Accomplishments—U.S. Emissions Reductions

Since its launch in 1994 through 2009, CMOP has assisted the coal mining industry in successfully increasing its methane recovery by 50 percent. These emissions reductions are due to active underground mines recovering and utilizing drained gas. In 2009, the U.S. coal mining industry recovered and used about 81 percent of all drained CMM.

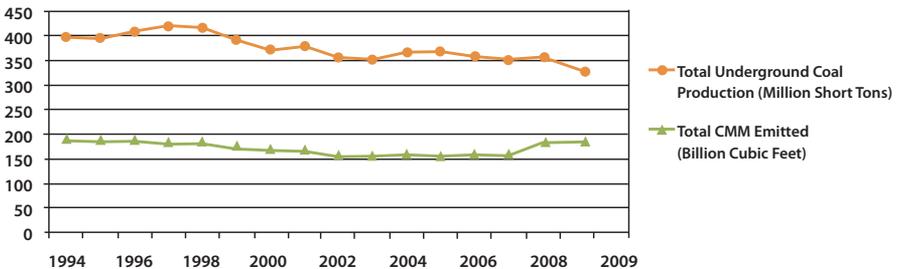
Between 1994 and 2009, U.S. CMM emissions reductions have effectively removed the equivalent of more than 263 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. These avoided emissions are equivalent to 654 billion cubic feet of methane—588 from active underground mines and the remaining 66 from abandoned underground mines.

According to the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator this is equivalent to:

- Removing more than 51 million passenger vehicles from the roads for one year.
- Shutting off more than 63 coal-fired power plants for one year.
- Providing electricity to more than 33 million homes for one year.

These emissions reductions have had an important economic impact as well. CMM gas sales nationally generated between \$150 million and \$350 million in revenue in recent years, depending on natural gas prices.

Total U.S. CMM emissions have declined since 1994

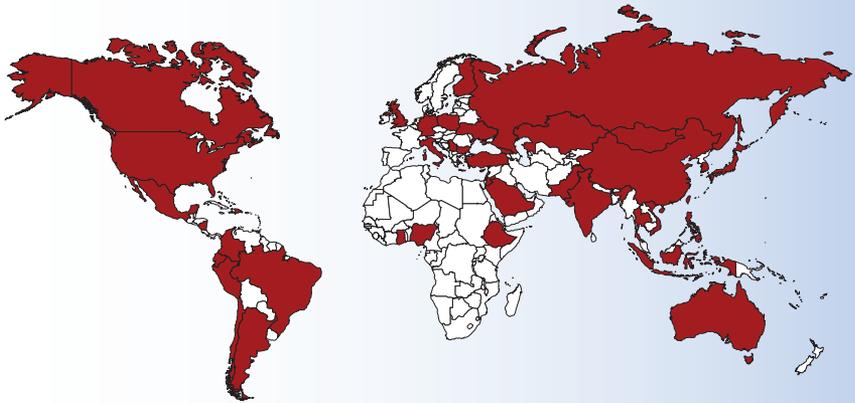


International Activities

CMOP has worked with many coal-producing countries around the world for more than a decade to promote CMM development and use. Today, CMOP conducts its international activities under the auspices of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI).

On behalf of GMI, CMOP has developed comprehensive profiles that characterize the coal and CMM sectors in nearly 40 countries; established an online database of more than 200 global CMM projects; launched a number of pre- and full-scale feasibility studies; sponsored technology demonstrations; and supported in-country capacity building through clearinghouses, technology transfer workshops, and study tours. CMOP also maintains strong relationships with several Partner countries, including China, India, Russia, and Ukraine.

Global Methane Initiative Partner Countries as of June 2011



For more information on CMOP's international activities and its involvement in the GMI Coal Subcommittee, visit:

www.epa.gov/cmop/international/ or www.globalmethane.org/coal-mines/



Join the CMOP Network

As part of its outreach efforts, EPA maintains contact with the U.S. and international CMM / CBM industries and encourages interaction between industry participants through the CMOP Network.

Joining the CMOP Network is free and voluntary! As a CMOP Network Member, you:

- Will receive our quarterly newsletter, the *Coalbed Methane Extra*, via e-mail.
- Can request to receive our weekly news announcement, the *CBM Note*, via e-mail.
- Can add your organization and contact information to our Network Contacts list featured on the CMOP Web site.

Sign up online today! www.epa.gov/cmop/join/



United States
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. (6207J)
Washington, DC 20460

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

EPA-430-K-08-008
October 2008 (Revised September 2011)
www.epa.gov/cmop



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