

2026 Science-Policy Dialogue – Methane 250

Overall summary of the session

This Science–Policy Dialogue (SPD) convenes senior leaders and experts from science, policy, finance, and implementation communities to take stock of methane science and policy and to shape priorities for action through 2030 and beyond. Methane is both a powerful climate pollutant and a key precursor to tropospheric ozone, placing methane mitigation at the centre of efforts to manage near-term climate risk, improve air quality, and deliver public health benefits.

The dialogue aims to foster strategic reflection and practical exchange across communities that influence methane action in different ways. Participants will examine where the scientific evidence supports ambitious methane mitigation and where remaining gaps limit policy design, investment decisions, or implementation. The discussions focus on how research, policy, and finance can work together more effectively to accelerate progress rather than on information sharing alone.

Participants will leave the dialogue with a shared understanding of the methane science–policy landscape and with sharper judgement on where attention and resources can deliver the greatest impact in the coming years. The dialogue will clarify which uncertainties genuinely constrain action, which opportunities remain under-exploited, and where leadership can accelerate progress between now and 2030. It will also identify pathways to sustain and strengthen methane ambition beyond 2030 as part of broader climate, air quality, and development strategies.

The success of the dialogue depends on active engagement. Participants will bring their experience and judgement to the discussions, share lessons from their own contexts, and engage constructively with differing perspectives. The dialogue will generate clear signals rather than formal consensus on priorities for future research, policy innovation, and investment. These signals will inform decision-making within governments, funding institutions, and partner organisations and support participants as they advance methane action through their own leadership and networks.

Agenda (30 March 2026)

08:15–09:00	Arrival at the Joint Research Centre (handout of badges) Welcome by EC JRC and CCAC secretariat
09:00–10:00	Methane Science and Policy Landscape: Plenary Building 36, 1st floor, Room 161/2 Introduction: Nathan Borgford-Parnell, Climate and Clean Air Coalition Secretariat, UNEP (5 mins)

	<p>Welcome: Greet Janssens-Maenhout, Ph.D., Deputy Director of the Sustainable Resources Directorate, European Commission, Joint Research Centre (5 mins)</p> <p>Keynote: Drew Shindell, Duke University (10 mins)</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Key conclusions from the Global Methane Status Report</i> Lena Höglund-Isaksson, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) (7 mins) ● <i>The policy landscape for methane action, with a focus on the Global Methane Pledge</i> Martina Otto, Climate and Clean Air Coalition Secretariat, UNEP (7 mins) ● <i>The data landscape for methane action</i> Steven Hamburg, Environmental Defense Fund (7 mins) <p>Description: The opening plenary sets the scene for the science-policy dialogue by providing a concise overview of the current methane science base and its relevance for near-term policy action. Drawing on the findings of the Global Methane Status Report, the session will summarise what is now known about global and regional methane emissions, mitigation potential, expected benefits, and where important uncertainties remain.</p> <p>The session will also situate this science within the evolving global policy landscape, with a focus on the Global Methane Pledge and related national and regional initiatives. This will help clarify how scientific evidence is currently informing methane policy commitments, implementation strategies, and accountability mechanisms, and where additional evidence could strengthen policy effectiveness.</p> <p>Finally, the session will highlight how data is critical to our understanding of methane and provides supporting evidence for taking action. Together, these perspectives establish a shared baseline for the dialogue and frame the key science and evidence questions that will be explored in subsequent sessions, with a view to identifying priority areas for future public research investment.</p> <p>Session Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share a common understanding of the current state of methane science and policy. ● Understand how existing scientific evidence is being used to inform methane policy commitments and implementation. ● Recognise the added policy relevance of methane through its links to tropospheric ozone, air quality, and health. ● Establish a common framing for subsequent sessions focused on research priorities and funding needs.
10:00-11:00	<p>The Methane Emergency Brake: From Commitment to Scale under the Global Methane Pledge and the Paris Agreement: Plenary</p>

	<p>Building 36, 1st floor, Room 161/2</p> <p>Moderator: Marielle Saunois, Climate and Environment Sciences Laboratory (LSCE) (5 mins)</p> <p>Moderated Panel Discussion (45 mins)</p> <p>Panellists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adalberto Maluf, Brazil ● Kenzie Huffman, Carbon Mapper ● Ilissa Ocko, Spark Climate Solutions ● Catherine Witherspoon, Super Pollutant Advisor <p>Description: This plenary panel responds directly to the opening scene-setting by reframing methane mitigation as an emergency brake—a near-term lever to rapidly reduce warming while longer-term decarbonisation unfolds. The session asks what it will take, in practice, to deploy that emergency brake at a scale consistent with the goals of the Global Methane Pledge and the Paris Agreement.</p> <p>Panelists will examine what is working and what is not across sectors and regions, focusing on the concrete constraints that continue to slow progress. The discussion will surface policy, institutional, financial, and data-related choke points; distinguish where action remains policy-limited versus evidence- or MRV-limited; and identify where uncertainty still blocks action versus where it is overstated. By grounding the emergency-brake concept in real-world decision systems, the panel will translate ambition into practical priorities and questions that set a clear, action-oriented tone for the breakout discussions that follow.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess whether current methane mitigation efforts are on track to deliver reductions consistent with the Global Methane Pledge and the Paris Agreement. ● Identify the most significant policy, institutional, financial, and data-related barriers preventing methane action from scaling at the required pace. ● Distinguish where progress remains primarily policy-limited versus where gaps in data, MRV, or analytical tools continue to constrain action. ● Examine sector-specific choke points that slow implementation and consider what changes would unlock faster and deeper methane reductions. ● Clarify what shifts in science–policy practice, coordination, or investment would most effectively enable methane to function as an “emergency brake” in the near term.
11:00–11:30	<p>Coffee Break</p> <p>Building 36, ground floor</p>
11:30–12:45	<p>Opening of the Celebration “Methane turns 250”</p> <p>Building 36, 1st floor, Room 161/2/3</p> <p>With attendance of regional, international high-</p>

	<p>level scientists, JRC staff, press</p> <p>POLICY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and Innovation with methane as climate emergency brake (EU Commissioner) • The power of the Global Methane Pledge Champions (Ministerial representative) <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International collaboration to reduce methane for Climate, clean air and environment (UNEP-CCAC) • Financing methane action (World Bank) <p>SCIENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handover of methane manifesto by scientists to policy makers • Standing on the shoulders of giants like Volta by the rector of the University of Pavia • Bringing home the historical book of Volta
12:50-13:00	<p>Group Photo Outside of Conference Building 36</p>
13:00-14:00	<p>Standing lunch in Conference Building 36, ground floor</p>
14:00-14:15	<p>Introduction of the four breakout sessions Building 36, 1st floor, Room 162/3</p> <p>Nathan Borgford-Parnell, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, UNEP</p>
14:15–15:10	<p>Breakout 1 – Methane in Agriculture and Food Systems: Evidence, Messages, and Action Pathways Building 36, 1st floor, Room 162/3</p> <p>Moderator: Eric Davidson, Spark Climate Solutions</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Key Messages from the Agriculture and Food Systems Assessment</i> Lisa Emberson, University of York (10 mins) • <i>Regional relevance – AMCoP (Africa Methane Community of Practice)</i> Kenza Khomsi, Mohammed6 Center for Research and Innovation (10 mins) <p>Guided discussion (35 mins)</p> <p>Description: This breakout session focuses on the key messages from the developing <i>Agriculture and Food Systems Assessment</i> led by the CCAC and FAO, with a particular emphasis on methane mitigation opportunities and co-benefits for air quality, health, and sustainable development.</p> <p>The session will present the draft high-level messages of the assessment and introduce the new region-specific chapters, which aim to reflect the diversity of agricultural systems, emissions profiles, and policy contexts across regions.</p>

	<p>Participants will be invited to provide targeted feedback on the clarity, relevance, and policy usefulness of these messages, including whether they adequately reflect the latest understanding of methane emissions, mitigation potential, and interactions with tropospheric ozone.</p> <p>Beyond refining the assessment messages, the session will explicitly look forward to the post-publication phase. Participants will discuss priority research gaps that should be addressed once the assessment is released, as well as strategies for using the assessment to catalyse policy action, guide investment, and inform future research funding—particularly in support of methane mitigation in agriculture and food systems.</p> <p>Breakout Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide substantive feedback on the draft key messages of the Agriculture and Food Systems Assessment. ● Assess whether the messages are policy-relevant, actionable, and regionally meaningful. ● Examine how well the assessment reflects current science on methane emissions and mitigation, including links to tropospheric ozone and air quality. ● Identify priority research gaps that remain after the assessment is published. ● Propose concrete opportunities to use the assessment to catalyse policy action and guide future research funding. <p>Reference documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agrifood Assessment Brief
14:15–15:10	<p>Breakout 2 – The Economics of Methane Mitigation: Evidence, Barriers, and Investment Priorities</p> <p>Building 36, 1st floor, Room 161</p> <p>Moderator: Nathan Borgford-Parnell, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, UNEP</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Key messages from the Economic Assessment</i> Drew Shindell, Duke University (10 mins) ● <i>The value of supporting enabling environments for rapid implementation</i> Johan Kuylenstierna, Stockholm Environment Institute (10 mins) <p>Guided discussion (35 mins)</p> <p>Description: This breakout session focuses on the key findings and innovations of the UNEP-CCAC <i>Economic Assessment of Integrated Climate and Clean Air</i>, with an emphasis on how economic evidence can inform methane mitigation policy, investment, and implementation. The session will present the assessment’s</p>

	<p>headline messages on costs, benefits, and economic trade-offs of methane mitigation, including insights relevant for near-term decision-making.</p> <p>In addition, the session will examine the practical barriers that often prevent economically attractive methane mitigation options from being implemented at scale. Participants will be invited to discuss the structural, institutional, and informational obstacles that limit uptake, and to consider how policy design, public investment, and targeted research can help overcome these barriers.</p> <p>Through guided discussion, the session will seek feedback on the clarity and policy relevance of the assessment's messages, identify priority gaps in economic and implementation-related evidence, and explore how the Economic Assessment can be used to guide future public research funding and investment strategies in support of methane mitigation.</p> <p>Breakout Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide targeted feedback on the key messages of the CCAC Economic Assessment. ● Assess whether the economic evidence presented is decision-relevant for policymakers and funders. ● Identify key implementation barriers that limit methane mitigation despite positive economic cases. ● Clarify where additional research or analytical work could help overcome these barriers. ● Generate actionable recommendations for using the assessment to guide future research funding and investment decisions. <p>Reference documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic Assessment Brief
15:10-15:15	<p>Transition Time</p>
15:15–16:15	<p>Breakout 3 – Addressing Methane Through Air Pollution and Health Lenses: Policy Innovation and Action</p> <p>Building 36, 1st floor, Room 162/3</p> <p>Moderator: Harro van Asselt, University of Cambridge</p> <p>Presentations (20 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Methane under the Air Convention: amending the Gothenburg Protocol</i> Yulia Yamineva, University of Eastern Finland (10 mins) ● <i>The Example of the Africa Clean Air Programme</i> N'Datchoh Evelyne Toure, Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny (UFHB), Côte d'Ivoire (10 mins) <p>Guided discussion (40 mins)</p>

	<p>Description: This breakout session explores examples of how methane is being addressed through air pollution and public health frameworks, complementing traditional climate-focused approaches. By examining two ongoing policy initiatives—the negotiations to amend the Gothenburg Protocol under the Air Convention to include methane, and the Africa Clean Air Programme led by the African Union with support from the CCAC—the session highlights emerging pathways for raising ambition and broadening support for methane mitigation.</p> <p>The session will showcase how framing methane as an air-quality and health issue can unlock new institutional entry points, engage different policy communities, and accelerate action at regional and national levels. Participants will be invited to reflect on the challenges these approaches face, the strategies being used to overcome them, and the immediate next steps required to translate political momentum into implementation.</p> <p>Through guided discussion, the session will identify lessons that can be applied in other contexts, assess where additional evidence or analysis could strengthen air-pollution-driven methane action, and explore how research funding and policy support can reinforce these alternative pathways for methane mitigation.</p> <p>Breakout Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand how air pollution and health frameworks can be used to address methane emissions. ● Examine challenges and opportunities associated with these non-traditional entry points. ● Identify immediate next steps for advancing methane action through air quality and health institutions. ● Assess what evidence, analysis, or research is needed to support these approaches. ● Generate recommendations for policymakers and funders to foster broader support and sustained action. <p>Reference documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCAC SAP Gothenburg Protocol Brief
15:15–16:15	<p>Breakout 4 – Financing Methane Action: Scaling Public and Private Investment to 2030 and Beyond Building 36, 1st floor, Room 161</p> <p>Moderator: Tom Grylls, Clean Air Fund</p> <p>Presentation (10 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Methane Abatement Finance: Current Landscape and Pathways to Scale</i> Pedro Fernandes, Climate Policy Initiative (10 mins) <p>Guided discussion (50 mins)</p>

	<p>Description: This breakout session examines the current state of global finance supporting methane mitigation and the role of the private sector in accelerating action. Drawing on analysis from the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI), the session will provide an overview of trends in public and private finance for methane mitigation, highlighting where investments are occurring, where gaps persist, and how funding aligns with mitigation potential.</p> <p>The session will consider how financial incentives, policy frameworks, and market structures shape private-sector engagement on methane. Through guided discussion, participants will consider what it would take to substantially scale resources for methane mitigation to meet the Global Methane Pledge’s 2030 targets and increase ambition beyond 2030. The discussion will focus on practical strategies for mobilising additional public and private finance, aligning incentives, de-risking investments, and strengthening the role of policy and research in enabling sustained methane action.</p> <p>Breakout Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand current trends in global methane finance, including key gaps and mismatches with mitigation potential. • Assess how the private sector is currently engaging on methane mitigation and why. • Identify barriers to scaling investment in methane mitigation across sectors and regions. • Explore policy, financial, and research levers to mobilise additional resources. • Develop recommendations to increase finance and private-sector action toward 2030 and beyond. <p>Reference documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMSR
16:15-16:45	<p>Coffee Break Building 36, ground floor</p>
16:45–17:35	<p>Topic: Expanding Methane Action: 2026–2030 and beyond in advancing climate and clean air goals Building 36, 1st floor, Room 161/2/3</p> <p>Moderator: Gabrielle Dreyfus, Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jebi Rahman, Climate Group/Subnational Methane Action Coalition (SMAC) (10 mins) • Helen Spence-Jackson, Environmental Defense Fund Europe – <i>Bridging Science, Policy, and Society – The Next Phase of Methane Action</i> (10 mins)

	<p>Moderated Panel Discussion (30 mins)</p> <p>Additional Panellists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lottie Cantel, UK (TBC) • Stefania Abakerli, World Bank • Denise Mulholland, UNECE <p>Description: This closing plenary brings together the key insights from across the dialogue to focus on how methane action can be expanded, accelerated, and sustained between 2026 and 2030—and strengthened further beyond 2030. Building on the scientific, economic, health, and finance discussions throughout the day, the session focuses on leadership, implementation, and coalition-building.</p> <p>The session will highlight the role of subnational governments and cities for driving methane mitigation through sectoral regulation, infrastructure investment, and local implementation. It will also examine how Global Methane Pledge (GMP) signatory countries can use policy leadership, diplomacy, and finance to spur broader action domestically and internationally.</p> <p>A moderated panel discussion will then reflect on the dialogue’s key messages and explore how governments, civil society, and finance institutions can work together to expand methane ambition, mobilise resources, and translate evidence into sustained action. The session will aim to articulate clear, forward-looking priorities that can guide policy, finance, and research decisions over the remainder of this decade.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how subnational actors and cities can strengthen methane mitigation ambition and delivery. • Identify ways GMP Champion countries can catalyse action among peers and partners. • Reflect on cross-cutting lessons from the day’s sessions. • Clarify practical pathways to expand methane action between 2026 and 2030.
<p>17:35– 17:45</p>	<p>Closing</p> <p>Building 36, 1st floor, Room 161/2/3</p> <p>Martina Otto, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, UNEP</p>
<p>17:45– 19:45</p>	<p>Lecture on the life of Volta (30 mins)</p> <p>Building 36, 1st floor, Room 161/2/3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video message on the IPCC Methane science by Sir Jim Skea • Lecture on the life of Volta – Professor Alessandra Mita Ferraro (eCampus University) <p>Description: This paper examines, on a documentary basis, the genesis of the discovery of methane (1776) by Alessandro Volta, situating it within the context of</p>

his experimental training and the networks of scientific knowledge circulation in the late eighteenth century. The discovery of “inflammable air of marshes” is interpreted as the outcome of a systematic empirical inquiry and as a decisive moment in the construction of Volta’s scientific identity.

Through an analysis of correspondence and experimental practices, the study highlights the role of intellectual relationships - including female contributors- and the rapid process of legitimation that led Volta to an academic career. The discovery thus emerges as a crucial turning point both in his individual trajectory and in the transformation of late eighteenth-century physical and chemical paradigms.

Apericena

Building 36, ground floor

- Toast with bubbles and light dinner
- Adjourn and transport to hotels