



## Natural Gas STAR Methane Challenge Program



### Evaluating New and Innovative Approaches to Methane Mitigation

#### Overview

Through the Methane Challenge Program, EPA encourages Partners to make ambitious commitments to reduce natural gas (methane) emissions through broad scale implementation of cost-effective technologies and practices. EPA recognizes ongoing advances in technologies and approaches for identifying, measuring, and mitigating methane emissions. To encourage innovation and technological advances, EPA will consider adopting new emission sources and/or Best Management Practices (BMPs) as commitment options under the Methane Challenge Program. EPA could also consider revising approaches to track, implement, and report on current commitments. This process for a “continuous improvement mechanism” would allow for enhancements to the program, whether proposed by EPA or Partner companies, through a transparent process.

#### Process for Evaluating New and Innovative Approaches

Step 1	Partner* submits written proposal to EPA
Step 2	EPA reviews proposal (using evaluation criteria) to assess completeness, relevance, feasibility, and program’s capabilities
Step 3	EPA communicates results of initial review to Partner; if appropriate, EPA works with Partner to develop a Program technical document
Step 4	EPA shares draft technical document with Methane Challenge partners (via website), about one-month review
Step 5	EPA works with Proposer to revise technical document as needed

*\*The proposal can be initiated by a program Partner or EPA.*

#### Proposal Format and Evaluation Criteria

The initial proposal can be submitted in Word or PDF format and should not exceed 5-10 pages. The initial proposal should include the following elements (as applicable):

- *If proposing a new Emission Source*, the proposal should denote the applicable industry segments, and should include at least one BMP to mitigate emissions from that source
- *If proposing a new BMP*, the proposal should specify the existing emission source(s) in the Program to which the BMP would apply
- A description of technology, including how widely available it is and technical infeasibilities/issues that need to be addressed
- Estimated range of emission reductions achievable
- Assessment of cost-effectiveness
- Data elements needed to monitor progress in reducing methane emissions
- Any other data needed to fully address all applicable evaluation criteria

After receiving an initial proposal, EPA will review it to ensure all applicable evaluation criteria are addressed:

- Reduces methane emissions through cost-effective capture and utilization of natural gas losses and results in other air quality improvements
- Voluntary in nature (i.e., not required by federal or applicable state regulation)
- Methane emission reductions are quantifiable through publicly available, broadly applicable direct measurement, engineering calculations, or emission estimation methodologies, and can be tracked and reported on annually through a specified set of data elements.
- Broadly applicable (i.e., not specific to one individual company's setup/conditions) or addresses a specific technical limitation or challenge common to standard operations.
- If a BMP, technologies are commercially available and field-tested; at least one oil & gas company has implemented technology.
- Supports and is consistent with the overall goals of the Natural Gas STAR Methane Challenge Program.

EPA reserves the right to consider proposals that would add new emission sources, BMPs, or make changes to the Program based on the evaluation criteria as well the Program's goals, needs, and available resources.

### **Stakeholder Feedback**

Based on review of the proposal with respect to the evaluation criteria and an evaluation of whether the proposal will advance the aims of the program, subject to availability of program resources, EPA will develop a Program technical document, in coordination with the proposer, that describes the emission source, BMP, or other proposed change, and provides an overview of potential emission reductions, cost-effectiveness, etc. This document will be shared for review with the Methane Challenge partnership and the public on the Program website. Depending on the type of change proposed, EPA intends to provide approximately one month for stakeholder feedback. Specific instructions will be provided at that time for comment submission.

### **Implementation**

Pending the approval of a proposed change, EPA will develop a timeline and plan for incorporating the changes into the partnership framework and developing reporting mechanisms. The timing of implementation will be based on the type of change proposed, and contingent on the Program's goals and available resources.

### **References and Contact Information**

For more information on the Methane Challenge program and the commitment options, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/natural-gas-star-program/methane-challenge-program>.

For questions and inquiries about this process, please contact the Natural Gas STAR Methane Challenge program at [gasstar@epa.gov](mailto:gasstar@epa.gov).