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For democracy. For everyone.

Methane matters: Three steps for parliamentary action



Methane released from landfills contributes to heatwaves and rising temperatures. Bangladesh © Niamul Rifat/Anadolu via AFP

Methane is a harmful greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere, contributing significantly to global warming and pollution. It heats the Earth more than 80 times as much as carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. Unlike carbon dioxide, methane stays in the atmosphere for only about a decade, which means that cutting methane emissions now can deliver rapid climate and health benefits within our lifetimes. Globally, the main sources responsible for human-caused methane emissions are agriculture (40%), fossil fuels (35%) and waste (20%).¹

Methane is a global issue with local consequences when released into the atmosphere; it reacts with other gases to form ground-level ozone, which is a toxic air pollutant that causes about one million premature deaths globally every year.² Methane alone is responsible for nearly half of these deaths.³ This is an annual toll which is comparable to major global health crises like malaria⁴ and HIV/AIDS.⁵ Methane-driven ozone also harms food systems by damaging crops. It reduces yields of essential staples like rice, wheat, maize and soy by 5% to 7% each year,⁶ threatening food security, raising food prices and endangering livelihoods, especially in regions already affected by climate stress and hunger.

¹ Global Methane Pledge (GMP), [The Imperative for Methane Action](#).

² United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)-Convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), [Guidance on Including Methane in NDCs](#) (2024), 6.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 597,000 deaths globally in 2023; see: World Health Organization (WHO), [World malaria report 2024](#) (2024).

⁵ 630,000 deaths globally in 2023; see: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), [The urgency of now: AIDS at a crossroads](#) (2024).

⁶ UNEP-CCAC, [Guidance on Including Methane in NDCs](#) (2024), 6.

If countries act now to cut methane using available solutions, it would be possible to avoid 255,000 premature deaths, 775,000 asthma-related hospital visits, and 73 billion hours of lost labour from extreme heat every year by 2030. We could also prevent the loss of up to 26 million tonnes of food annually.⁷ Reducing methane is one of the most powerful ways to deliver rapid benefits for health, food and climate and all within this decade.

Acting on methane also makes strong economic sense. As global markets tighten climate-related rules, methane-intensive products are coming under scrutiny. Exporters in sectors such as oil, gas and coal face new requirements, such as to monitor and reduce methane emissions, or risk trade barriers, import fees and restricted access to major markets.⁸

Governments are making commitments on methane but for these commitments to succeed parliaments must play their essential role. Parliaments can help ensure that national action on methane is held accountable, is properly funded, delivers economic and social benefits and is aligned with the needs of people and communities.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has made climate change a strategic priority, supporting parliaments to strengthen legislation, budgeting, oversight, representation and public engagement in response to the climate crisis. Methane emissions reduction presents a clear opportunity for practical and impactful action because it is one of the fastest and most effective ways to slow global warming in the near future and help keep the global 1.5°C temperature goal within reach, as called for in the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, because many of methane's sources such as energy, waste and agriculture are regulated or impacted by local and national laws, policies and budgets, parliamentarians have a direct role to play in methane regulation. Taking action on methane is therefore a concrete way for parliaments to contribute to national and global climate goals while responding to immediate local concerns.

This guide is a practical tool for parliamentarians to take informed, fair and effective action on methane from the local to the global level. It begins by outlining the essential information you need to understand what methane is, why it matters, where it comes from, and how it connects to your work. It then introduces a three-step approach for parliamentarians to take action on methane.

What parliamentarians need to know

Methane is a major contributor to climate change and local air pollution. It is over 80 times stronger than carbon dioxide⁹ at warming the Earth in the short term and is responsible for about a third of today's global warming. Methane also reacts in the atmosphere to create ground-level ozone, a dangerous pollutant that harms health and crops.¹⁰

The main human-made sources are:

- Agriculture (40%), including from livestock, manure and rice paddies
- Fossil fuels (35%), including oil, gas and coal production and leaks
- Waste (20%), including food and other organic materials in landfills, and open burning of organic waste¹¹

This section explains the basics of cutting methane emissions and highlights some of the most important things to know before taking action, especially for those serving communities facing economic, health and environmental pressure.

Why does cutting methane matter?

Cutting methane is one of the fastest ways to slow global warming. Methane reductions bring quick additional benefits: cleaner air, fewer health risks, and higher yields of staple crops like rice, wheat, maize and soy.¹² Parliamentary constituencies already feel in their daily lives the effects of methane – heat, poor air quality and health, and food insecurity.¹³

How does methane affect people in my constituency?

When methane builds up, it raises global temperatures much faster than CO₂, leading to more heatwaves, droughts and extreme weather. Methane build-up also contributes to ground-level ozone,¹⁴ which affects health (for example, causes breathing problems, especially in children, older people, those with existing health conditions and outdoor workers), food production and local livelihoods.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ For example, the European Union has adopted a methane regulation that applies to energy imports; see: [International Energy Agency \(IEA\), EU regulation on the reduction of methane emissions in the energy sector](#) (accessed 21 September 2025).

⁹ GMP, [The Imperative for Methane Action](#).

¹⁰ The Joint Research Centre: EU Science Hub, "[Cutting methane emissions key to fighting climate change and harmful ozone](#)" (20 September 2024).

¹¹ GMP, [The Imperative for Methane Action](#).

¹² UNEP-CCAC, [Guidance on Including Methane in NDCs](#) (2024).

¹³ UNEP-CCAC, [Methane](#) (accessed 21 September 2025).

¹⁴ European Environment Agency, [Methane, climate change and air quality in Europe: exploring connections](#) (2025).

Where is methane coming from in my constituency and country?

You will not be able to see or smell methane but you can often identify the activities and conditions that are likely to be producing it. Methane emissions come mainly from agriculture, fossil fuels and waste.¹⁵ Key sources of methane include:¹⁶

- **Agricultural practices**, such as intensive animal farms and rice fields. These lead to the production of methane in the following three key ways. In **livestock** (especially cows), methane is released when they digest food. Poor feed quality and large numbers of animals can all increase emissions. In **manure**, when it is stored in piles or pits without air. In flooded **rice paddies** where water blocks oxygen in the soil and leads to methane production as the plants grow.
- **Fossil fuels and gas infrastructure**, such as pipelines, valves and storage tanks used to move or process oil and gas. Methane can escape through leaks if this infrastructure is not monitored and maintained. These sites may be near or within your constituency, especially in regions with oil, gas or coal production.
- **Waste**, including open waste burning and unmanaged dumpsites which release methane as organic waste breaks down without oxygen. This is a common issue in areas without organized and managed waste collection services.

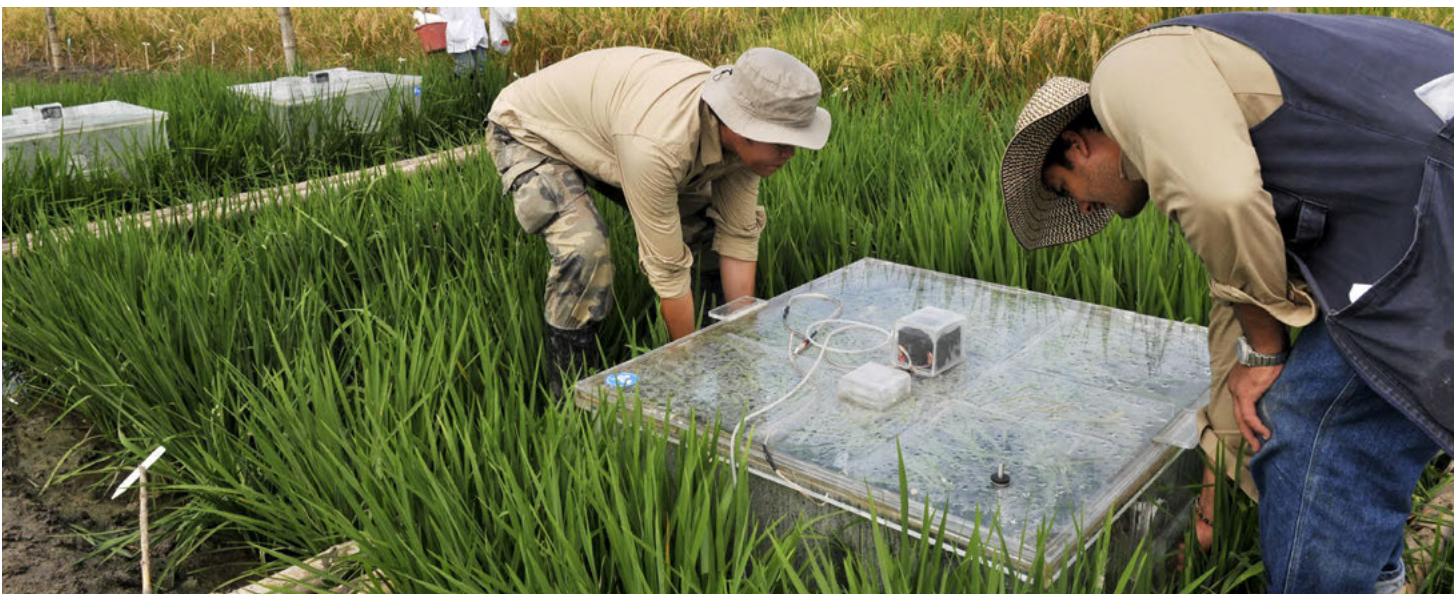
Can anything be done about it?

Yes! Across many constituencies, simple and low-cost practices are already helping to reduce methane.¹⁷ Some examples include:

- **Separating and then composting food and garden waste** – instead of dumping or burning it – allows it to break down with air, avoiding methane production.
- **Improved rice farming**, like drying fields between watering, reduces methane and saves water.
- **Better livestock feeding and care** reduces emissions and improves productivity.
- **Fixing gas leaks** makes the system safer and more efficient.

Where can I find information on my national level of methane emissions?

Reliable national data on methane can help you understand the scale of the challenge and ask the right questions in parliament. Many countries report their emissions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and these can be accessed through the UNFCCC [Nationally Determined Contributions Registry](#) and [Biennial Transparency Reports](#).¹⁸



Researchers measuring the methane emissions of rice production in Colombia © Neil Palmer/CIAT

¹⁵ GMP, [The Imperative for Methane Action](#).

¹⁶ For more detailed information and examples of policy responses see: UNEP-CCAC, [Guidance on Including Methane in NDCs](#) (2024).

¹⁷ For a range of examples of practices to reduce methane emissions across the key sectors see: UNEP-CCAC, [Methane](#) (accessed 21 September 2025).

¹⁸ In addition, tools such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [Non-CO2 Greenhouse Gas Data Tool](#) provide accessible information on methane emissions by country and sector. These data sources can help you see how your country compares globally and which sectors matter most for your constituency.

Who in my parliament and government is responsible for action on methane?

In parliament, action on methane may fall under several different committees such as those that typically deal with climate change, environment, health, energy and agriculture. Government ministries in these areas may also be involved in delivering methane-related policies. Understanding who is dealing with methane and how, can help you better understand where your entry points are to direct your questions and recommendations to get to the right people.

What is the global framework for methane action?

Methane action is supported by an international framework that your country may already be part of. These agreements create a clear mandate for parliamentarians to act and to hold governments accountable.

- **The Paris Agreement** (2015) commits countries to take economy-wide action to limit global warming to 1.5°C. This includes reducing all greenhouse gases, including methane. National climate plans called **nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** are your countries' official climate plan under the Paris Agreement. Your NDC should include clear action on methane especially in the energy, agriculture and waste sectors. If methane action is missing or vague you can push for stronger inclusion in the NDC updates.¹⁹ Your country's NDC can be found via the UNFCCC [Nationally Determined Contributions Registry](#).
- **The Global Methane Pledge**, launched in 2021, is a global agreement by over 150 countries to cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030. Check the website to see if you are from a participating country.
- At COP28,²⁰ all countries agreed through the global stocktake to rapidly and sustainably cut methane²¹ by 2030. This marked the first time methane was clearly recognized in a formal United Nations (UN) climate decision and gives a clear mandate for countries to include methane in their climate plans, budgets and laws, and for parliamentarians to push for stronger national action.

Who can I work with to take action on methane if my country or parliament has limited resources or capacity?

You can still take action, even with limited resources. Start by using what you have such as community/constituency knowledge, local observations, national regulations and commitments, and your parliamentary tools to ask questions and raise issues. Some of your national government agencies (dealing with environmental, energy, agricultural and health matters) may already have data and information or programmes that you can link to.

Universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) can also be valuable partners to help fill knowledge, information and capacity gaps.

At the regional and international level, organizations such as the IPU, Global Methane Hub, Global Methane Pledge (GMP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO), Clean Air Task Force (CATF), ParlAmericas, Plataforma Parlamentaria de Acción Climática contra el Metano (Parliamentary Climate Action Platform against Methane) and many others have tools, technical advice, peer learning and knowledge exchange opportunities to help you to move forward, even with a low resource starting point.



¹⁹ For more information and tools on parliamentary oversight of national climate commitments see: IPU, [10 actions for stronger national climate commitments](#) (2024) and IPU, [Parliamentary oversight of national climate commitments](#) (2024).

²⁰ For more information on COP28 and methane see: International Energy Agency (IEA), [Global Methane Tracker 2024: What did COP28 mean for methane?](#) (2024).

²¹ On other non-CO₂ gases, see: UNFCCC, [Outcome of the first global stocktake](#) (2023).

Three steps for parliamentary action on methane

This section sets out three practical steps to help you take action on methane, from understanding methane sources, to using your parliamentary powers, to championing and expanding solutions nationally and globally.

Each step combines constituency and parliamentary actions so you can link local concerns with national commitments and global cooperation. These steps should be adapted to fit your systems of government and your parliament's specific powers or responsibilities.

Step 1: Build your methane evidence base – locally and nationally.



Key message: Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas and a local air pollutant with sources that are often noticeable, such as smoke from waste burning, smells from sewage, landfills and livestock farms. The first step is to build a clear picture of where methane is produced in your constituency and across the country, and to understand your government's commitments and plans to address it.

Once you understand where methane is coming from both in your constituency and country, as well as whether your country has or has not committed to tackling it and who is responsible, the next step is to use this evidence base to guide parliamentary action in the sectors where methane is most produced.

Actions you can take in your constituency:

- Identify visible signs of activities that may produce methane: open waste burning, unmanaged landfills, sewage, livestock farms, rice fields, or fossil fuel sites.
- Use community visits and events to gather complaints and information on methane, making sure all voices, including those of women or potentially marginalized groups, are represented.²²
- Work with local organizations, researchers or civil society groups to gather data and create a simple "methane map" of your area.

Actions you can take in your parliament:

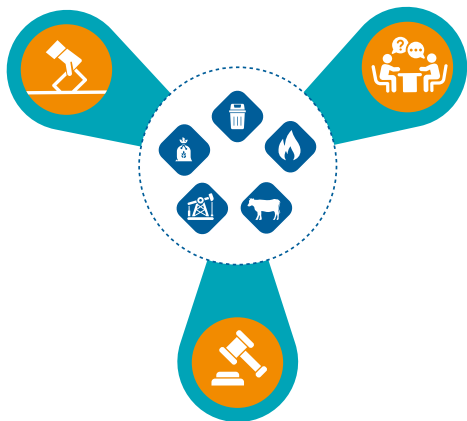
- Find out if your country signed the Global Methane Pledge or other methane initiatives.²³
- Research the main sources of methane at the national level. Request or advocate for methane data from relevant ministries and climate bodies.
- Understand which committees are responsible for or are already taking action on methane.
- Ask the national body responsible for climate action and the relevant ministries (environment, agriculture, energy, etc.):
 - ↳ Is there a national methane strategy or are there any specific national sectoral methane reduction targets?
 - ↳ What and where are the biggest sources of methane emissions?
- If there is no methane plan or strategy, use your platform to propose that the government develop one, either as a standalone plan or embedded in climate, waste, health, energy and agriculture policies. This should include methane reduction targets, timelines, enforcement mechanisms and clear roles for government agencies.
- Review your NDCs and climate change strategies to check and understand if and how methane is addressed and whether it aligns with national plans and international commitments like the Global Methane Pledge. If reducing methane is not mentioned or there is a lack of detail about targets, strategies and finance, it is still possible to raise this as an issue in parliament or government and suggest it be added during NDC updates.²⁴

²² For example, in Singapore, MPs hold weekly one-to-one meetings with their constituents to follow up directly on issues (see: [Meet-the-People Sessions](#)).

²³ For example, the World Bank's *Zero Routine Flaring by 2030* initiative.

²⁴ For guidance on including methane in NDCs see: UNEP-CCAC, [Guidance on Including Methane in NDCs](#) (2024).

Step 2: Act in key sectors using your parliamentary tools and powers.



Key message: As a parliamentarian you have powerful tools to take action on methane. Through lawmaking, budgeting, oversight and representation of your constituents, you can push for fair and visible methane reduction.²⁵ Even small actions like raising questions, sharing community concerns or reviewing existing laws can build the momentum needed for stronger methane reduction across key sectors.

Actions you can take in your constituency:

- Visit landfills or dumpsites, speak with workers and local authorities about challenges, and note how changes could affect jobs and incomes.
- Talk with farmers and food producers about practical ways to reduce methane (better manure management, feed changes, animal health), and understand their concerns or support needs.²⁶
- If you have fossil fuel sites or gas networks, visit facilities, ask about leak detection and repair, and listen to workers' and communities' experiences of health or environmental impacts.
- Work with local authority representatives and community leaders to identify methane challenges and opportunities for action, increase support for solutions and ensure fairer outcomes.
- Support or promote public awareness campaigns (through radio, in schools, with posters, etc.) that explain safer alternatives to practices like burning waste and highlight the benefits of reducing methane. Ensure messages reach women and vulnerable groups, and consider linking them to key dates to increase visibility.²⁷

Actions you can take in your parliament:

- **Legislation:** Promote or support new legislation and regulations that require improved practices such as leak detection, better waste handling or livestock feed standards.
- **Budgeting:** Examine climate and sectoral budgets to see if methane mitigation is funded. Push for funding for methane action, smart practices, just transition measures and support for vulnerable groups.
- **Representation:** Bring constituency testimonies into debates and hearings in parliament, and ensure the voices of affected people are considered and included in policymaking. Report back to communities on the results of your parliamentary questions, debates or motions related to methane, so people see how their concerns are shaping action.
- **Oversight:**
 - Question ministries on methane monitoring. Call on them to provide information about government action to achieve methane goals.
 - Request and review reports on progress against national methane commitments (e.g. the Global Methane Pledge).
 - Support or launch a parliamentary inquiry to gather evidence, identify data and information gaps, examine how methane policies are impacting constituents and raise methane's profile nationally. Present the inquiry recommendations back to the government.²⁸
 - Conduct post-legislative scrutiny to see if existing methane legislation is achieving its intended purpose and meeting the needs of your constituents.²⁹
 - Hold public hearings to request information from the government.
 - Sponsor or support a parliamentary motion that calls for clear methane reduction targets, inclusion in climate plans (such as the NDCs), or funding for methane mitigation in key sectors.

Once you have started applying your parliamentary powers to methane in key sectors, the next step is to champion these actions, connect them with national strategies and show how they can inspire change both at home and abroad.

²⁵ Reducing methane does not have to come at the cost of your constituents' livelihoods. To ensure a just transition in methane-emitting sectors, always ask who is affected by changes? What support is needed for them to benefit and not lose from this transition? Are all groups being heard, especially women and vulnerable or marginalized groups?

²⁶ For an example of concerns regarding changes of practices and parliamentary actions to address them see: Fiona Harvey, "[Ministers must reassure consumers feeding cattle Bovaers is safe, says Lady Sheehan](#)" (*The Guardian*, 10 December 2024).

²⁷ Such as World Environment Day (5 June) or International Clean Air Day (7 September).

²⁸ For an example of parliamentary methane action and inquiry see: [UK Parliament's actions on the issue](#).

²⁹ For examples of how to conduct post-legislative scrutiny on climate legislation see: IPU, [SDG-informed legislative scrutiny: A toolkit for parliamentarians](#) (2025).

Step 3: Champion and expand methane action at home and abroad.



Key message: Methane reduction is a global challenge, but effective solutions often start locally. Across your constituency, people may already be contributing to methane reduction either intentionally or as an extended impact of the work they are already doing. As a parliamentarian you can champion action in your constituency, expand it nationally and project this leadership internationally. Sharing successes across borders raises ambition worldwide but can also bring new knowledge, resources, technology and recognition back to your own community.

Actions you can take in your constituency:

- Visit and highlight local initiatives (waste management and composting, livestock feed changes, leak repairs).
- Share promising initiatives from other areas with your own constituents. Successful projects from elsewhere can also provide inspiration or lessons that can shape action in your own context.³⁰
- Connect community groups to national ministries, donors or NGOs for technical and financial support.
- Use local media and events to raise awareness of successful projects and their wider benefits.

Actions you can take in your parliament:

- Promote constituency initiatives in parliament as models for national replication.
- Advocate for pilot programmes and regulations that scale up proven local solutions (e.g. all municipalities to separate organic waste or support composting).
- Push ministries and donors to fund scaling efforts.

Global actions:

- Position your parliament as part of the global leadership driving rapid methane cuts.
- Share your initiatives and lessons learned through regional parliamentary assemblies or global platforms and show that parliaments are central to methane action.
- Promote stronger international standards and best practices for methane reduction.
- Support global cooperation, financing and technology-sharing, especially with parliaments with fewer resources.

Methane reduction is urgent but it is achievable and beneficial. By building your evidence base, acting in key sectors with your existing parliamentary tools and powers, and championing solutions both at home and abroad, you can deliver results for your constituents and help your country meet its climate commitments.

Parliaments have a unique and central role. Parliamentarians link the daily concerns of people with national policies and global goals. By taking these three steps, your parliament can be at the forefront of climate leadership, by protecting communities today and keeping the 1.5°C goal within reach.

Does your parliament need support to take action on methane?

Or do you have a good practice to showcase?

The IPU offers tailored capacity-building support to help parliaments reduce methane emissions. Through this initiative, the IPU also provides a platform for peer learning and for sharing successful parliamentary action on methane with a global audience.

Contact the IPU at postbox@ipu.org for more information or to request a briefing for your parliament.

³⁰ For a range of examples that can be adapted to different national contexts see: [UNEP-CCAC, Project portfolio](#) (accessed 21 September 2025).

Useful tools and resources

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) is a UNFCCC initiative that helps countries make climate action more inclusive and effective. It encourages public education, participation, access to information and international cooperation. For parliaments, ACE is a useful tool to engage communities, build public support, and ensure climate policies (such as those targeting methane) are fair, transparent and grounded in local realities.

Climate Change Laws of the world is a database, hosted by the London School of Economics. It includes global climate laws, policies and litigation cases, helping parliamentarians identify best practices and develop legislative frameworks including those specifically targeting methane emissions across various sectors.

International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO)-UNEP is a global initiative that collects, integrates and verifies methane emissions data from satellites, studies, industry reporting and national inventories.

IPU and UNDP, *Global Parliamentary Report 2022: Public engagement in the work of parliament* (2022). This publication examines public engagement in the work of parliaments and is a useful resource for understanding good practices and key principles for better and deeper public engagement.

IPU, *Parliaments4thePlanet* is a campaign to mobilize parliaments and parliamentarians to accelerate their climate action. It provides multiple resources, including educational tools, testimonials and interviews from around the world.

IPU, *SDG-informed legislative scrutiny: A toolkit for parliamentarians* (2025). This toolkit helps parliaments to ensure that laws and policies align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It provides guidance on reviewing existing legislation, drafting new laws and scrutinizing government strategies to make sure they advance the SDGs. For parliamentarians, it is a practical tool to strengthen oversight and ensure legislation contributes effectively to national and global development goals.

UNEP-CCAC, *Global Methane Assessment* (2021). This report identifies the major sources of methane, highlights cost-effective mitigation measures, and demonstrates how rapid action can deliver significant climate, health, and economic benefits by 2030.

UNEP-CCAC, *Guidance on Including Methane in NDCs* (2024). This publication helps countries integrate methane targets into their climate plans with practical, sector-specific actions.

UNEP-CCAC, *National Methane Roadmap Template* (2023), a practical planning tool that is continually updated, helps countries design clear, actionable strategies for reducing methane emissions across key sectors, aligned with their climate and development goals. [A series of videos are available](#) to guide users through each step of developing and implementing a national methane road map.

UNEP-CCAC, *Project portfolio* showcases initiatives that reduce methane emissions and other short-lived climate pollutants. It allows users to explore practical examples of policies and technologies by region, sector or pollutant, offering examples of activities that can be adapted to different contexts.

UNFCCC, *Nationally Determined Contributions Registry* is a database that houses all countries' nationally determined contributions (NDCs). It enables parliamentarians to review their country's climate commitments, including specific targets and measures related to methane emission reductions.

Cutting methane is the fastest way parliaments can slow global warming this decade

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Global Methane Hub

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