



UK Government

The UK's Methane Action Plan

● October 2025



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1. UK government's approach

Methane is a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. Known as a 'super pollutant', it is a more potent greenhouse gas (GHG) than carbon dioxide per tonne, but shorter lived in the atmosphere. It is also a significant precursor to tropospheric ozone, a harmful air pollutant that affects public health, ecosystems and crops. This means that reducing our methane emissions at home and globally is a powerful tool to rapidly slow down the rate of global warming and improve our air quality, with positive impacts for public health and food security. The UN Environment Programme's Global Methane Assessment highlights that cutting human-caused methane emissions could act as a "climate emergency brake"¹. That is why the UK is leading action both domestically and internationally to reduce methane emissions.

At home, the **Climate Change Act 2008 (CCA)** sets a legally binding target for the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. The Climate Change Act covers carbon dioxide emissions alongside the following 'super pollutants': methane, nitrous oxide (N₂O) and four known collectively as f-gases. Critically, the CCA ensures that methane emissions are properly accounted for and tackled. While there is not a specific methane target, methane reductions are essential to meeting our statutory net zero target. That is why policies which reduce methane emissions sit at the core of our Clean Energy Superpower Mission and have informed key decisions including our Clean Power Action Plan, our consultation on the North Sea's Energy Future and our firm commitment to reducing methane emissions from livestock including through improved health and welfare.

To develop our policies, emissions from GHGs other than CO₂ are converted into CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) by measuring their impact on our atmosphere over time. We then use this metric to compare the policy actions that can provide us with the most cost-effective path through our legislated carbon budgets and towards net zero overall emissions by 2050. This Methane Action Plan summarises the key actions the UK has taken to drive progress to date and will take to tackle remaining methane emissions - full detail can be found in the Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan, which sits alongside this publication.

Alongside our domestic policies, we are equally **committed to encouraging and supporting other countries to reduce their methane emissions**. In February 2025, the UK was elected Co-Chair of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) alongside Brazil. The CCAC is a partnership, convened by the UN Environment Programme, of over 200 governments, international organisations, and NGOs committed to reducing short-lived climate pollutants including methane. Through our CCAC Co-Chair role, we are working alongside partners to tackle super pollutants, combat climate change and improve air quality and global public health. Also, in June 2025, we announced that the UK will take on a more visible international leadership role by becoming a Global Methane Pledge (GMP) champion. As a GMP

¹ United Nations Environment Programme and Climate and Clean Air Coalition '[Global Methane Assessment: Benefits and Costs of Mitigating Methane Emissions](#)'. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme (viewed 10 October 2025).

Champion, the UK is working with others to encourage more urgent action to deliver on the collective ambition to reduce total global methane emissions by 30% by 2030.

Globally, **we are ensuring other countries also have confidence in available data on methane emissions.** The UK is championing the application of Earth Observation technologies to support efforts to monitor and reduce methane emissions. The UK National Physical Laboratory has worked with NASA and other countries' space agencies as part of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites to successfully develop common standards for the determination and reporting of satellite-derived methane emissions data. The Committee is continuing to build on this further through looking at how these common standards can then be implemented and progressed to best practice. This initiative supports evidence-based methane policies and international cooperation, integrating space technology to drive action on methane emissions.

This Methane Action Plan demonstrates another step forward in the government's commitment to advancing a unified international approach on 'super pollutants' to benefit communities around the world. **We encourage other countries to publish their own plans and take action to reduce methane emissions.**

2. Progress to date

The UK has made excellent progress in reducing emissions from methane. Latest statistics show that UK methane emissions have reduced by 62% between 1990 and 2023, one of the highest percentage reductions among the OECD countries. This has been achieved through progress across the economy, particularly in our fuel supply, waste and agriculture sectors.

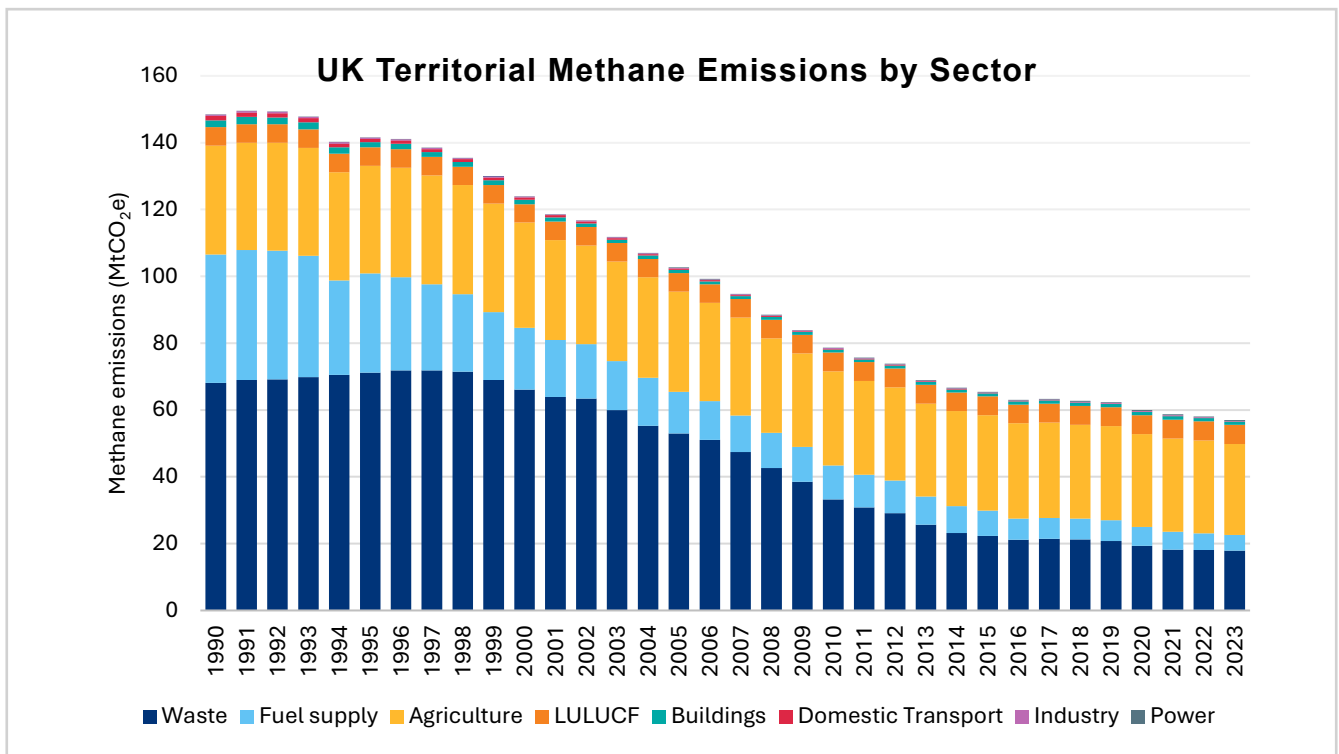


Figure 1. UK Territorial Methane Emissions by sector. Emission figures presented in Net Zero Strategy sectors as defined in Appendix A of the CBGDP

Source: DESNZ GHG Inventory 1990-2023

3. Our future action on methane

Our Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery plan (CBGDP) outlines the policies and proposals needed to reduce emissions, including those of methane, to deliver Carbon Budgets 4-6 and our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) on a pathway to net zero. While the CBGDP's policies cover the period until 2037, they will begin to drive reductions in our methane emissions by 2030, when the Global Methane Pledge aims to cut 30% of global methane emissions by. The Global Methane Pledge is a collective ambition of all of the signatories to reduce global methane emissions by 30% by 2030 on a 2020 baseline. This pledge is a voluntary commitment and represents the shared ambition to take international action.

Through policies currently captured within the [Energy and Emission Projections](#) baseline, we already have plans in place to reduce UK methane emissions (See Figure 2). When viewed collectively with our additional quantified policies and other early-stage policies in the CBGDP to deliver Carbon Budgets 4-6, we forecast that our methane emissions will reduce by ~12.7Mt between 2020 and 2030. This means that, from 1990 to 2030, we will have reduced our methane emissions by 68%. We are actively monitoring wider factors, such as technological and societal changes, which are likely to lead to further emissions reductions, which will drive further savings.

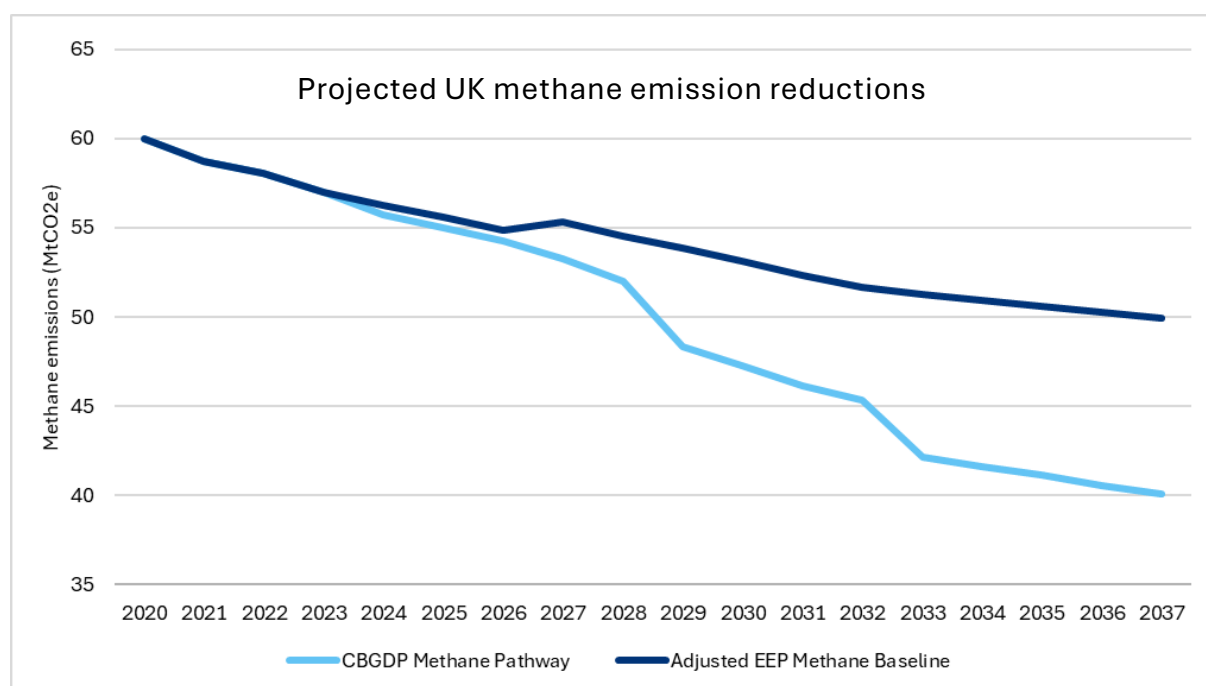


Figure 2: Projected methane reductions based on Energy and Emission Projection (EEP) policies, and additional quantified measures and other quantifiable early-stage policies in the CBGDP. Notes: 2020-23 is adjusted to capture the latest GHG Inventory estimates. Projections exclude methane impacts from additional wider factors.

Sources: DESNZ GHG Inventory 1990-2023, DESNZ Energy and Emission Projections 2023-2050, DESNZ CBGDP Analysis

Our action on methane is focused on agriculture, waste and fuel supply as they account for 87% of UK territorial methane emissions. Responsibility for two of these sectors, agriculture and waste, is devolved to the different nations of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). We have therefore highlighted in this action plan the key policies from both the UK central government and the devolved governments² which position us as a global leader in reducing our methane emissions.

As well as our domestic action, one of the strongest levers the UK has to reduce global methane emissions by 30% is to encourage and support other nations to also take action. This is why, alongside highlighting our key domestic policies, we've also highlighted action we're taking internationally below.

² The devolved governments will set out their full policies to reduce their emissions, including methane, in their upcoming publications: in 2026 the Welsh Government plans to publish a Carbon Budget 3 (2026-2030); Scotland will publish later this year their Climate Change plan for 2026-2040; and in Northern Ireland the Government is [consulting on their first Climate Action Plan](#).

4. Agriculture

Sector scope: The agriculture sector now represents 48% of the UK's methane emissions, the sector's methane emissions having fallen by 16% from 1990 to 2023. The main contributor to the UK's agricultural methane emissions is the UK's cattle population, which produced 78% of agricultural methane emissions in 2023 (65% from digestion and 12% from manure management). Sheep are the next largest contributor, with 17% of emissions coming almost entirely from digestion.

Change in methane emissions to date: Our Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes and grants are already paying farmers for delivering environmental benefits, reducing emissions and boosting nature's recovery. These include the Sustainable Farming Incentive (over 39,000 live, multi-year agreements), an improved Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (opened on 18 September 2025), Landscape Recovery (projects progressing to implementation phase), and ELM Capital Grants (£150m allocated in 2025). Government also offers grants to help farmers reduce emissions from manures, including the Slurry Infrastructure grant, which has allocated over £100 million to upgrade slurry storage – with grant-funded stores requiring methane-mitigating impermeable covers.

While our methane emissions have fallen, productivity improvements have enabled meat production to remain stable and milk output to increase, even while cattle numbers have declined (due to complex pressures such as changing demand, disease outbreaks etc). Productivity improvements have been due to increased prevalence of high yielding breeds and changes in management e.g. improving livestock's housing and diet.

The devolved governments have likewise driven progress on reducing methane emissions. For example, the Scottish Government has improved livestock efficiency through their Suckler Beef Support Scheme, which has helped farmers increase efficiency while lowering emissions. The Welsh Government's [Sustainable Farming Scheme](#) and Northern Ireland's [Sustainable Agriculture Programme](#) seeks to support the sector's decarbonisation, productivity, sustainability and resilience.

Action to 2030 and beyond: A profitable farming sector, good rural jobs and food security are essential pillars of a healthy and resilient economy. The long-term sustainability and productivity of agriculture relies on mitigating the worst impacts of climate change, improving soil health, having abundant pollinators and clean water. This is why we are taking action to support farming to reduce emissions and make space for nature.

We are committed to supporting farmers on the UK's journey to net zero by taking actions that reduce methane emissions alongside improving farmers' productivity, resilience and help their livelihoods. The delivery of our quantified agriculture policies

in the CBGDP contribute 38% of the reduction in the UK's methane emissions from 2023 to 2030. Our plan includes the following actions for England:

- Progressing with the rollout of **Methane Suppressant Feed Products (MSFPs)**. When MSFPs are mixed into cattle feed, they can help to reduce methane during digestion. Different products will vary but MSFPs can reduce methane emissions from 5-30% per cow. We are working closely with the farming sector to design policy to support farmers to use these products, alongside other decarbonisation options, guided by evidence collected through a call for evidence in 2022 and continuing industry engagement. We will look to develop a mature market with a range of trusted MSFP products to support farmers to increase uptake, backed up by a mandate for the use of proven safe and effective products in England as soon as feasibly possible, and by 2030 at the latest.
- **Improving animal health and welfare** prevents wastage in the sector, improving farmers' profitability, disease control and emission reduction, alongside improving livestock's quality of life. Our 'Animal Health and Welfare Pathway' offers a range of subsidised measures, including annual health and welfare reviews and funding for disease testing and targeted grants. In particular, **Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD)**, which increases cows' methane emissions, is being addressed through the above pathway and the provision of funding to support testing and advice from vets to control and eradicate BVD on farm. We intend to consult in late 2025 on proposals for a mandatory disease eradication programme for BVD in England.
- Supporting **research and development** into how farmers can adopt innovative technologies and trial practical solutions on their farm, which reduce methane emissions whilst improving productivity. We are promoting research and innovation on livestock genetics, and agri-tech adoption and development funding as part of the **Farming Innovation Programme (FIP)**. Within FIP, we have launched the Accelerating Development of Practices and Technologies Fund, which provides collaborative, farmer-led, innovation grants to farmers and farm businesses. Also, through FIP, Defra have made up to £12.5 million available this year to support projects developing technologies and practices to support low emissions farming. Defra is also funding a research program to test multiple emission reduction measures (see case study 1 below).
- Progressing improvements to the **Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)** of emissions in the agriculture sector. Reliable MRV is critical to unlocking the flow of private finance into decarbonisation efforts across the sector. We are driving standardisation of farm carbon calculators, which will help streamline data demands on farmers, enhance trust and confidence in their outputs, and drive wider uptake of farm carbon audits.
- **Environmental permitting:** Measures set out in the Defra consultation on modernising environmental permitting will accelerate regulatory processes and improve the control of pollutants such as methane from anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities, including currently unregulated sites that process non-waste feedstocks. These changes will support more proportionate and effective regulation across the entire AD sector.

Case study 1 - UK Dairy Carbon Network

The Defra-funded UK Dairy Carbon Network is a large R&D project that will help dairy farmers to find practical ways to significantly cut methane and other greenhouse gas emissions. This project seeks to understand how these measures work in isolation and in synchrony on real dairy farms.

The three-year project is actively working with over 50 UK dairy farms in the four main dairy regions to implement and assess practical, farm-ready emission reducing solutions. This research brings together a UK-wide consortium of leading research institutions, farmer levy bodies, and industry organisations to identify, support, and demonstrate effective ways to cut emissions while maintaining farm productivity

Initiated in December 2024, data collection for carbon footprints has been completed on the farms and farmers have discussed and selected initial mitigation options. The next step is to develop tailored mitigation action plans for each farm, involving input from farm advisors, project academics, and external consultants.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are continuing to drive further action on reducing agricultural emissions while supporting their farmers' production and livelihoods. Their respective forthcoming climate delivery plans (see footnote 2) will set out further details on their actions and monitoring arrangements.

5. Waste

Sector scope: The waste sector generates 31% of the UK's methane emissions. Since 1990, the sector's methane emissions have fallen by 74%, demonstrating huge progress. Our waste and resources sector covers organisations and local authorities involved in the reuse and repair of resources, alongside the prevention, collection, treatment and disposal of waste from businesses and households. Most methane emissions in this sector are from landfill gas (landfill accounts for 81% of the waste sector's methane emissions), generated when biodegradable waste decomposes, releasing methane and contributing to harmful air pollution.

Change in methane emissions to date: Interventions to reduce methane emissions in England's waste sector have focussed on 'turning the tap off' by diverting biodegradable waste from landfill and better managing and capturing landfill gas.

The rapid reductions in emissions have been driven by successful interventions including the introduction of the Landfill Tax and the Landfill Directive, which was retained in England and the devolved governments. These policies have supported the rapid diversion of waste from landfill, with the amount of residual waste (excluding major mineral wastes) sent to landfill decreasing by around half since 2010.

The Renewables Obligation (RO) scheme that was introduced in the UK in 2002 has also played an important role in incentivising landfill gas capture through electricity generation.

As England's environment regulator, the Environment Agency has also been enabled through regulation, monitoring and enforcement to support the reduction of methane emissions in England. In 2024, the Environment Agency published its [Methane Action Plan 2024 to 2026](#) which sets out how they have and will continue to work with relevant industry sectors and government to improve methane emissions data and modelling, identify best available techniques, and maximise the effectiveness of regulation.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have similarly made strong progress to reduce methane emissions from waste. For example, Northern Ireland have reduced their landfill emissions through mandated improvements to the separate collection of food waste from households; over 1.7 million tonnes of biodegradable waste have been diverted from landfill in Northern Ireland since inception in 2015.

Action to 2030 and beyond: This government will continue to reduce the waste sector's methane emissions including from the actions below. The delivery of our quantified waste sector policies in the CBGDP in addition to the EEP baseline contribute 45% of the reduction in the UK's methane emissions from 2023 to 2030. Our actions include:

- **Delivering collection and packaging reforms**, which look to lead a managed transition towards circularity, minimising the environmental impacts and

emissions from packaging. The reforms include the UK packaging **Extended Producer Responsibility** (pEPR) which from 2025 means some organisations and businesses will have to pay a fee for the packaging they import to support better waste collecting, managing, recycling and disposal, and the UK **Deposit Return Scheme** (DRS) which will require from 1 October 2027 the use of a refundable deposit for certain single-use drink containers. We have also announced UK **digital waste tracking** service will be in place from April 2026 to help tackle illegal waste handling, and **Simpler Recycling** in England which will enable consistent, more streamlined collections supporting recycling as much as possible.

- **Simpler Recycling** in England currently requires food waste to be collected from all workplaces (except micro-firms) in England and this will be extended to households by 31st March 2026 and micro-firms (with less than 10 FTE³) by 31st March 2027. The policy requires food waste to be sent to recycling (anaerobic digestion) or composting only and never to residual waste treatment (including incineration or landfill).
- Establishing a Taskforce of experts to co-design the first ever **Circular Economy Strategy for England** to outline how we will transition to a circular economy, ensuring resources are kept in use for longer and waste is designed out. We plan to publish the Circular Economy Strategy in the coming months. We are reviewing residual waste treatment, including incineration and landfill. In February, Defra published the summary of responses to the call for evidence on the near elimination of municipal biodegradable waste to landfill in England. We are exploring potential next steps.
- Our R&D **projects in England and Wales are the first step in creating future options to improve the monitoring of site-specific landfill gas emissions** (see case study box 2). This work could support industry with their own ambitious targets e.g., the waste sector's commitment to increase capture of methane emissions from landfill to 85% by 2030.
- The financial incentive provided by the RO will end for most landfill gas to electricity generators from 2027. **Government will support increased methane capture from landfill gas sites** including through exploring the implementation of a long-term methane capture scheme with suitable transitional arrangements.

³ FTE refers to 'Full Time Equivalent' which is used to measure a workplace's capacity e.g., 10 FTE refers to a business of a size which has 10 people's full time equivalent capacity.

Case study 2 - Direct Measurement of Landfill Methane Emissions

The government's Direct Measurement of Landfill Methane Emissions project aims to reduce uncertainty in landfill emission estimates. This will lead to more accurate measuring of methane emissions, supporting government and industry to accurately identify, prioritise and evaluate actions to reduce them.

In 2024/25, government commissioned the first of two initial projects, conducted by the National Physical Laboratory, which used state-of-the-art methodology including laser technologies to continuously measure methane emissions from a landfill site over 12 months, to understand the impact of seasonality on emission rates and reduce uncertainty in our current modelling approach. Results are now feeding into another larger project which will provide us with data to either validate existing modelling approaches or provide an alternative using real-world site level data. This second project incorporates novel technologies, such as satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles, to explore their potential role in a future multi-layered monitoring system.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are all continuing to drive forward policies which reduce the waste sector's methane emissions. In Scotland, there is a robust policy framework to drive further emissions reductions including the forthcoming ban on biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill, and steps to maximise landfill gas capture in Scotland. These are complemented by a range of measures in [Scotland's Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030](#). Wales is progressing its [Beyond Recycling Strategy](#) alongside a range of other initiatives which aim to boost [Workplace](#) and [Local Authority](#) recycling, limit large energy-from-waste developments, capture residual methane from landfill sites, and end landfilling of biodegradable materials. The Northern Ireland Government is now considering new proposals to divert biodegradable waste from landfill, as part of the legal requirement to reduce municipal waste to landfill to less than 10% by 2035.

6. Fuel supply

Sector scope: this refers to the production, import, and distribution of fuels for energy, transport, heating and industrial processes. This includes fossil fuels and, in future, low-carbon and alternative fuels like biofuels and hydrogen.

Methane is emitted in the extraction, processing (refining), and transportation of fossil fuels. Methane is a natural component of Oil & Gas (O&G) reserves and can be trapped in the rock alongside coal so can escape in its extraction. Methane is also often produced in oil production and can be emitted to the atmosphere if not captured or used. Older and leakier pipes distributing gas can also emit methane.

Change in methane emissions to date: as of 2023, upstream O&G made up less than 2% of all UK methane emissions, while the total fuel supply sector made up around 8%. The majority of fuel supply's methane emissions came from leakage in the distribution of gas (approximately 6% of UK methane emissions). Overall, the fuel supply sector's methane emissions have fallen dramatically by 88% since 1990.

Achievements to date: our reliance on fossil fuels has been reduced as we have improved energy efficiency and increased the amount of renewable energy used across the economy. We have also lowered the methane intensity of our O&G sector. The last coal-fired power plant closed in 2024, and most coal mines are now fully flooded, meaning they no longer risk emitting methane.

The UK O&G industry has already achieved the **Oil and Gas Climate Initiative's methane intensity 2025 target** (see case study 3) and has developed its own **Methane Action Plan (2021)** which covers flaring and venting. With support from government and regulators, the industry is on track to meet ambitious emissions reduction targets, including methane. This has been enabled by regulatory measures implemented by the North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA), including a consenting process for flaring and venting and a requirement for industry to publish Emissions Reduction Action Plans. For transparency and accountability, the NSTA reports annually on progress of emission reductions from UK O&G production; this includes public benchmarking showing flaring and venting emissions by named O&G assets. The NSTA estimates that flaring on the UK continental shelf is estimated to have already decreased by 51% between 2018 and 2024. Innovative techniques to measure methane emissions, such as drones equipped with methane and wind sensors, which enable targeted source identification and emissions quantification, are also being trialled.

Since 2000, methane emissions from **gas leakage in the mains network** have fallen by 50%, particularly through the 'Iron Mains Risk Reduction Programme' (IMRRP), overseen by Health and Safety England and funded by Ofgem, which replaces leakier iron pipes with plastic ones, which have 99% lower leakage rates.

Case study 3 - Low methane intensity of UK O&G production

The UK oil and gas sector has one of the lowest upstream methane emission intensities globally (the volume of methane emissions as a percentage of the volume of gas produced). It achieved the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative's 2025 methane intensity target of "well below" 0.20% at 0.18% in 2020, and the North Sea Transition Authority projects a decrease to 0.12% in 2024 data. These outcomes reflect the sector's response to regulatory requirements and transparency measures implemented by the NSTA.

Action to 2030 and beyond: this government will continue to reduce the fuel supply sector's methane emissions including from the actions below. The delivery of our quantified fuel supply sector policies in the CBGDP in addition to the EEP baseline contribute 15% of the reduction in the UK's projected methane emissions from 2023 to 2030. Our actions include:

- Recognising O&G production will continue to play an important role, and as the world embraces the drive to clean energy, government is **supporting proactive abatement initiatives from the upstream O&G industry**, particularly on further reducing emissions from **flaring and venting**. The UK has committed to the World Bank's 'Zero Routine Flaring by 2030' initiative and the UK's upstream O&G regulator, the NSTA, also requires zero routine flaring and venting by 2030. Industry will continue to drive reductions through being supported by regulatory measures implemented by the NSTA such as those discussed above on consenting, transparency and accountability, alongside the industry's abatement initiatives such as better flare and venting management practices and investment in flare gas recovery systems.
- We will also continue to **reduce gas leakage in the mains network**; as part of IMRRP, in January 2025, Health and Safety England published new rules requiring Gas Distribution Networks to better monitor condition and detect leaks of all iron mains, not just those 'at risk', and use Advanced Leakage Detection techniques to improve leakage sensitivity.
- Reducing our dependence on O&G and deploying home grown clean energy will further reduce our methane emissions. This government has already launched Great British Energy, begun the biggest ever investment in offshore wind, and is moving ahead with new industries like carbon capture and storage and hydrogen. In March 2025 we consulted on our plans in 'Building the North Sea's Energy Future', including the manifesto commitment to not issue new licences to explore new oil and gas fields while continuing existing fields for their lifetimes, and will publish our response in due course.
- Government is exploring biomethane's optimal role across the energy system and intends to **consult on a future biomethane policy framework in FY 2025–26**. Biomethane produced via anaerobic digestion (AD) has the potential to reduce methane emissions in two ways: (1) by displacing fossil fuels (it is currently used to decarbonise heating but could be used flexibly across industry, transport, and dispatchable power generation) and (2) by using materials in production like unavoidable food waste, manures, slurries, and sewage that would otherwise emit methane as wastes. In agriculture, AD can play a role in creating a circular

economy by displacing fossil-fuel based fertiliser with digestate, an organic fertiliser and by-product of the AD process.

Alongside these measures to tackle domestic emissions, we know we need to **work with our international partners in other countries and global industry** through both bilateral and multilateral forums to encourage global reductions, and address methane emissions associated with imported fossil fuels. We have already established ourselves as a committed international leader on methane through:

- Funding the **CCAC's Fossil Fuel Regulatory Programme** which provides tailored support to developing countries' governments for capacity development, monitoring, regulatory frameworks and compliance which help reduce emissions from routine venting and flaring, leakage and production.
- Our role as a **Global Methane Pledge Champion**. We're working through initiatives such as the O&G Decarbonisation Charter to reduce global methane emissions and encourage strong monitoring, reporting and verification processes.

Looking ahead, the **UK will initiate work to understand and address methane emissions associated with imported fossil fuels**, learning from our success at home. We will examine a range of options, focussing on how to raise standards and improve quality and availability of data, in the first instance, while also exploring mitigation measures. We will engage with industry, other countries and relevant international efforts to drive progress, and in particular to support efforts to improve consistency in monitoring, reporting and verification practices, and seek to learn lessons from other approaches.

7.Looking ahead

It is critical that globally and domestically we use the levers available to us to halt and prevent future global warming and its associated negative impacts on populations across the world.

In the UK we have successfully reduced our methane emissions over decades, and our Climate Change Act (2008) framework will continue to drive our action to reduce methane emissions at the pace necessary to meet our carbon budgets and deliver net zero by 2050.

We encourage other countries to produce a Methane Action Plan to ensure all states take action on methane as reducing its emissions is one the quickest and most cost-effective ways to limit near-term global warming. In our role as Global Methane Pledge Champion and CCAC Co-Chair we will continue to take on a visible leadership role and continue to support global efforts to reduce methane emissions.

This publication is available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-methane-action-plan>

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