# Methane emissions from fossil fuels hit new highs despite improved tracking, says IEA



Methane emissions from the fossil fuel sector persist at alarmingly high levels, despite recent improvements in data transparency and tracking methodologies, as highlighted in the International Energy Agency's (IEA) latest Global Methane Tracker. Released in early May 2025, this comprehensive report illustrates the urgent need for effective strategies to mitigate these emissions, particularly given the crucial role methane plays in exacerbating global warming.

Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the IEA, emphasised the potential benefits of tackling methane leaks, stating, “Tackling methane leaks and flaring offers a double dividend: it alleviates pressure on tight gas markets in many parts of the world, enhancing energy security – and lowers emissions at the same time.” The report indicates that almost 70% of methane emissions from the energy sector could be eliminated using existing technologies, a figure that suggests significant opportunities for both environmental and economic gain.

Despite the progress reported, total methane emissions from fossil fuels remain above 120 million tonnes annually, a figure that the IEA asserts exceeds official reporting levels. This discrepancy underscores the importance of robust data collection, which has reportedly improved with the aid of over 25 satellites now providing critical insights. However, even with these advancements, large leaks from oil and gas facilities reached historic highs in 2024, revealing the ongoing challenges in emission management.

The analyses contained within the Global Methane Tracker also draw attention to specific emissions sources. Abandoned oil and gas wells, as well as coal mines, collectively contributed approximately 8 million tonnes of methane emissions last year, ranking these sources among the top emitters globally. Implementing measures to seal these outdated facilities could yield considerable environmental benefits.

Moreover, the IEA’s data reveals striking disparities in methane emissions intensity across different countries and companies—top performers outshining the least effective by as much as a factor of 100. This variability highlights the necessity for greater sharing of best practices within the industry.

Global commitments to reducing methane emissions are notably intensifying, as reflected in recent pledges made during international forums, including COP28. Several nations, including Angola and Kenya, have committed to the Global Methane Pledge, which seeks to diminish emissions by at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030. Yet, despite these commitments, the lack of detailed implementation plans remains a critical barrier to achieving these ambitious targets.

As the report points out, enhancing methane abatement measures could yield substantial economic returns, with the potential to introduce an additional 100 billion cubic metres of natural gas to market in 2024—an amount equivalent to Norway’s total gas exports. Currently flared methane, which approximates 150 billion cubic metres annually, showcases the further opportunities available for capture and resale.

Looking ahead, the projections indicate a decline in methane emissions is imminent, largely depending on the adoption of current policies aimed at mitigation. The IEA estimates that effective implementation of these strategies could prevent a temperature rise of 0.1 °C by 2050, a significant impact akin to eliminating all carbon dioxide emissions from heavy industry worldwide.

In conclusion, while the IEA data reflects some positive advancements in methane data collection and emissions mitigation, the need for comprehensive and actionable implementation remains pressing. With fossil fuel emissions continuing to swell, the opportunity to create tangible change within the industry is both urgent and economically viable. Addressing methane emissions not only aligns with global climate goals but also holds vast potential for enhancing energy security and sustainability.

### Reference Map

1. Core Focus: IEA's global tracking update on methane emissions and progress in data collection.
2. Emissions from fossil fuels and contributor countries.
3. Global commitments and the need for implementation plans.
4. Projections of declining methane emissions.
5. Methane emissions contributing to the climate crisis and need for monitoring.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.environewsnigeria.com/methane-data-and-transparency-continue-to-improve-but-emissions-remain-far-too-high/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2024/key-findings> - The International Energy Agency's (IEA) Global Methane Tracker 2024 report highlights that methane emissions from the energy sector remained near a record high in 2023, with nearly 120 million tonnes emitted. The United States and Russia are the largest emitters from oil and gas operations, while China leads in coal sector emissions. The report emphasizes the need for enhanced data collection and monitoring to effectively address methane leaks and flaring, which could improve energy security and reduce emissions simultaneously.
* <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2024/what-did-cop28-mean-for-methane> - The IEA's analysis of the COP28 climate summit reveals that several countries, including Angola, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Romania, and Turkmenistan, joined the Global Methane Pledge, committing to reduce methane emissions by at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030. The Oil and Gas Decarbonisation Charter (OGDC) was also launched, aiming to accelerate emissions reductions within the industry. However, the report notes that most pledges lack detailed implementation plans, which are crucial for achieving the set targets.
* <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2024/after-slight-rise-in-2023-methane-emissions-from-fossil-fuels-are-set-to-go-into-decline-soon> - The IEA's report indicates that methane emissions from fossil fuels are projected to decline soon, following a slight rise in 2023. The report highlights that nearly 70% of methane emissions from the energy sector come from the top 10 emitting countries, with the United States, Russia, and China being the largest contributors. The IEA emphasizes the importance of implementing existing technologies to reduce emissions and improve energy security.
* <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2024/methane-emissions-from-energy-sector-remain-at-historic-highs-fueling-climate-crisis> - The IEA's report reveals that methane emissions from the energy sector remain at historic highs, contributing significantly to the climate crisis. The United States, Russia, and China are identified as the top emitters. The report underscores the need for enhanced data collection and monitoring to effectively address methane leaks and flaring, which could improve energy security and reduce emissions simultaneously.
* <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2024/what-did-cop28-mean-for-methane> - The IEA's analysis of the COP28 climate summit reveals that several countries, including Angola, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Romania, and Turkmenistan, joined the Global Methane Pledge, committing to reduce methane emissions by at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030. The Oil and Gas Decarbonisation Charter (OGDC) was also launched, aiming to accelerate emissions reductions within the industry. However, the report notes that most pledges lack detailed implementation plans, which are crucial for achieving the set targets.
* <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2024/after-slight-rise-in-2023-methane-emissions-from-fossil-fuels-are-set-to-go-into-decline-soon> - The IEA's report indicates that methane emissions from fossil fuels are projected to decline soon, following a slight rise in 2023. The report highlights that nearly 70% of methane emissions from the energy sector come from the top 10 emitting countries, with the United States, Russia, and China being the largest contributors. The IEA emphasizes the importance of implementing existing technologies to reduce emissions and improve energy security.