environmental investigation agency

CLIMATE

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BRIEFING

THE SUPER POLLUTANT COUNTRY ACTION ACCELERATOR

A new model for implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change demands urgent action on multiple fronts and tackling super pollutants is among the most powerful levers available.

Super pollutants – methane, tropospheric ozone, nitrous oxide, black carbon and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) – are responsible for up to 45 per cent of current warming.[1] Many are also short-lived climate pollutants with a disproportionate impact on near-term temperatures. Rapid reductions in these emissions offer an immediate opportunity to slow warming, forming a central pillar of climate action.

Super pollutants also offer one of the most important opportunities for integrated action in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[2] Beyond their immediate climate benefits, addressing super pollutants improves air quality, public health and development. By mid-century, action could prevent millions of premature deaths and save tens of millions of tonnes of crops annually.[3]

In recent years, governments have started to focus on super pollutants. Countries are increasingly including them in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement[4] and dedicated governance frameworks have emerged to drive coordinated global action. These include the Montreal Protocol's Kigali Amendment, now with 173 ratifications,[5] the Global Methane Pledge (GMP), now with 160 signatories,[6] the Global Cooling Pledge backed by 75 countries and 225 cities[7] and the joint announcement on sectoral action on black carbon launched at the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30).[8] Despite this growing political momentum, country-level implementation does not match the pace and scale required. For example, since the GMP was created in 2021, methane concentration has increased from approximately 1887 parts per billion (ppb) to 1945 ppb in 2025.[9]

This begs the question that if action on super pollutants delivers multiple benefits and countries are increasingly making commitments, why is progress falling short?

The answer lies not in a lack of political will, but in the type of support available to help countries translate their commitments into action. To meet this need, the Super Pollutant Country Action Accelerator (SPCAA) was launched at COP30. This briefing sets out why the SPCAA is the right model for delivering implementation support and what steps are needed to fulfil its potential.

WHAT WORKS: LESSONS FROM THE MLF AND GCF

A key lesson from successful governance frameworks is the importance of investing in enabling activities and sequencing support under multi-year country programmes.

The Montreal Protocol, widely regarded as the most successful multilateral environmental agreement, has phased out 99 per cent of the production of controlled ozone-depleting substances, avoiding an estimated 0.5-1°C of additional warming by mid-century.[10] Much of this success can be attributed to the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol (MLF), which provides long-term, predictable support to developing countries for enabling activities (e.g. institutional strengthening, capacity-building, inventories, reporting, policy development) as well as investment projects.

In this way, the MLF builds national capacity and moves beyond short-term, unpredictable funding cycles while creating coherence across actors, including donor countries, implementing partners and bilateral agencies. This support has been extended and expanded to enable countries to phase down HFCs under the Kigali Amendment, with the largest ever replenishment of the MLF for 2024-26 agreed at almost $1 billion.[11]

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme takes a similar approach.[12] It is designed to support countries through a progression from early-stage activities to investment-ready projects. The programme focuses on strengthening the institutions, systems and governance that countries need to plan, coordinate and deliver climate action. This includes supporting policy and regulatory reform and ensuring that readiness activities are aligned with broader investment planning. Recent reforms have further reinforced this approach by introducing multi-year programming cycles, improving predictability and enabling countries to address capacity gaps in a more structured, programmatic way.

PUTTING LESSONS INTO PRACTICE: THE SUPER POLLUTANT COUNTRY ACTION ACCELERATOR

Launched by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) at COP30, with an initial capitalisation of $25 million, the SPCAA provides support to seven countries – Brazil, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa.

It embeds dedicated capacity within governments for three years, covering four to five technical assistance projects in at least three super pollutant sectors.[13] The programme is explicitly designed around a country-led programmatic model, building on the lessons of the MLF and the GCF Readiness Programme, which have demonstrated that multi-year coordinated support is the most effective way to achieve tangible results.

The table below illustrates how the SPCAA's approach addresses the key shortcomings of traditional, project-by-project support.

	CURRENT SUPPORT	SPCAA
Duration	**Intermittent.** Funding tends to be project-by-project, which can prevent countries from embedding capacity and implementing multi-year country programmes.	**Multi-year.** Funding is designed to be longer-term, allowing countries to embed capacity and implement multi-year country programmes.
Focus	**Projects.** Funding often shifts from project to project, which can hinder regulatory and institutional capacity-building within countries and limit the attractiveness of additional investments.	**Country programme.** Funding is structured around institutional strengthening, regulatory capacity and planning, which can enhance implementation, build lasting capacity and expertise and make enabling activities more cost-effective, as demonstrated by the Montreal Protocol.
Access	**Complex.** Multiple funding applications for recipients and individually managed contributions from donors can increase administrative overhead, slow funding delivery and divert focus from programme implementation to paperwork.	**Streamlined.** A single point of entry with standardised disbursement and reporting can reduce administrative overhead, accelerate funding delivery and allow countries to focus on programme implementation rather than paperwork.

By adopting a country-led approach based on multi-year country programming to achieve specific outcomes on super pollutants, the SPCAA delivers longer-term benefits that extend beyond individual projects while building government capacity and reducing administrative burden. It works to connect climate, health and development outcomes in an integrated fashion, enabling donor countries to align funding across these areas. In responding to this need in developing countries, the SPCAA also creates the conditions for future policymaking and investments projects, reducing uncertainty and facilitating implementation.

WHAT NEXT?

To fulfil the potential of the SPCAA, three major steps are needed:

1. **expand participation –** the SPCAA hopes to welcome a new cohort of countries at COP31, eventually reaching 30 participants by 2030.[14] More than 70 per cent of GMP signatories are official development assistance (ODA) recipients, therefore achieving the objectives of the GMP while delivering on other super pollutants will require greater participation.[15] To this end, further engagement and contributions from both donor countries and philanthropies is needed.

2. **establish a dedicated fund –** to scale the SPCAA, a dedicated fund should be established to pool resources from diverse sources, facilitate fund deployment and mainstream multi-year country programming. Given that the current CCAC Trust Fund was not designed to meet these needs, establishing a dedicated fund for super pollutants should be an immediate priority. Among the options, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) represents the most viable model. It has a demonstrated ability to pool funding at scale, with 113 active funds representing commitments of $20.9 billion.[16] It can be established within a few weeks and enables the rapid disbursal of funds. Importantly, the steering committee includes UN agencies which, through strategic inclusion, can leverage the expertise of entities such as the CCAC, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO). Finally, establishing the fund requires the development of a theory of change that outlines the functions, objectives and governance of the fund, ensuring that it is strategy-driven. For more detail, see EIA's *Delivering on the Global Methane Pledge: Strategic Finance via a Multi-Partner Trust Fund*
3. **Link SPCAA with other finance providers –** The SPCAA should also seek to integrate a project preparation facility to assist countries with accessing other multilateral climate finance, in particular for investment projects. This includes not only other multilateral funds, such as the GCF and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in which climate finance is regularly made available, but also multilateral development banks and international financial institutions. Such support would complete the sequencing to implement multi-year country programmes.

   In addition, the SPCAA should build stronger partnerships with private finance providers. Private capital can greatly enhance super pollutant mitigation. In waste management, for example, among the measures needed to mitigate methane emissions is investment in certain infrastructure, such as anaerobic digestion facilities or methane capture at landfills, which public finance can't support at scale. Similarly, private sector investments in cleaner fuels and technologies are important in reducing black carbon. Currently, multiple barriers hinder private investment, including weak regulatory frameworks, high upfront costs and uncertain revenue streams. While the SPCAA addresses the first barrier through support for enabling activities, public finance can play a role in the latter two through blended finance and de-risking, making it safer and more attractive for private investors to participate.

   It is important to note that carbon or methane credits should not form part of this strategy. They have repeatedly failed to deliver credible reductions and rely on uncertain baselines, weak monitoring and questionable additionality. In many cases, credits reward actions that are already legally required or publicly funded, while allowing companies and governments elsewhere to continue emitting.[17] A recent international review, based on one billion tonnes of claimed reductions across key projects such as renewable energy and forest protection found that fewer than 16 per cent of carbon credits represent genuine emission reductions.[18] Instead, private finance should focus on direct investment in infrastructure, technology and implementation projects.

CONCLUSION

The SPCAA is a significant step forward in support for super pollutant action.

By providing multi-year programmatic support, it addresses the key shortcomings of traditional project-by-project approaches and builds the foundations that countries need to translate their commitments into action.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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