

December 15, 2022

Strategy Documents Reveal Gas Industry's Climate Lobbying Playbook *Inside the International Gas Union's campaign to lock in fossil gas*

Previously unseen strategy documents reveal how the International Gas Union (IGU) has sought to redefine the role of gas in the face of growing concerns about climate change, tailoring its communications playbook based on the level of "environmental consciousness" in each market.

The documents acknowledge that the climate policy debate poses a "potentially existential" situation for the industry. But rather than ignoring it, the IGU needs to "find a positive message to defend and enhance the role of gas" including the "greening of gas".

Among the documents are advocacy plans, executive committee presentations, and reports on IGU taskforce activities. Dozens of files were made available on the organization's website before being removed.

InfluenceMap has analyzed the documents as part of a *new report* on the IGU's climate agenda, showing how different elements of its strategy have played out in real-world advocacy from some of the organization's members.

InfluenceMap Program Manager Faye Holder said: *"These documents offer a detailed insight into the lobbying playbook of one the world's largest gas lobby groups.*

"They reveal the industry's rebranding strategy to promote gas as 'green' despite the increasingly urgent warnings from climate scientists.

"The IGU's strategy is playing out through the real-world advocacy of its members, undermining climate action in major economies around the globe."

The IGU has more than 150 members and represents some of the biggest gas companies and industry groups in the world, including **Shell, TotalEnergies, Sempra Energy, and ExxonMobil.**

The analysis of the IGU documents shows:

- The organization's "advocacy" strategy included targeting key global institutions such as the **UN**, the **G20**, the **World Bank**, the **International Monetary Fund**, and several regional development banks. It described these groups as "critically important, as they can be influential in the fuel choice that countries make".
- The IGU sought to develop relationships with key partners in the media (including the **Financial Times**, **Reuters**, **The Wall Street Journal**, and **Bloomberg**), environmental organizations (including **Environmental Defense Fund** and **Rocky Mountain Institute**) and think tanks and consultancies (including **Boston Consulting Group** and **Oxford Institute for Energy Studies**). IGU's aim for its outreach was to "raise IGU's credibility and leadership

amongst influential organizations to help shape energy dialogues and debates,” while its use of the media was to “promote positive sentiment toward, and broader definition of, gas”.

- In a document listing expected developments during 2022-25, the IGU was expecting a “black swan event upending [the] global political agenda”. While there is no suggestion the IGU anticipated the Ukraine invasion, InfluenceMap tracking in the immediate aftermath picked up a significant use of narratives emphasizing the energy security benefits of LNG by the US oil and gas industry.

The IGU documents state that “the golden age of natural gas has been replaced with a more delicate view of the role of natural gas in the future energy mix”. They go on to say that the “role of gas needs to be examined and strategic solutions to return to an overall positive image of gas shall be developed”.

It is within this context that the documents detail the organization’s regionally specific communication strategies to promote the use of gas. In different markets, this includes:

Europe: Given the high level of environmental consciousness in the EU, the documents reveal a strategy to focus on the “greening of gas”, presenting fossil gas as part of a broader category of gases including “low-carbon” and “decarbonized” gases. “‘Gas’ needs to be redefined, not only to cover natural gas, but including other, alternative gases, without fossil background.”

The IGU documents state: “Renewable and low-carbon gases must play a significant role in Europe’s future energy mix – including as EU reduces use of nuclear power. Biomethane, synthetic methane and hydrogen can all be used in stand-alone equipment or blended with natural gas in existing infrastructure.” InfluenceMap has tracked extensive use of this narrative by the IGU’s members in their advocacy to EU policymakers.

North America: An IGU presentation states that “there is something of a perfect storm of public and activist policy targeting the gas sector” and describes the emissions reduction agenda of the government, coordinated campaigns to ban gas delivery, and activists pushing for divestment. At the end of the slide, it states: “These are difficult times for the industry but, if it can remain nimble and get ahead of the discourse rather than just responding to it, it should weather this”.

When it comes to North American gas (as well as gas from the Middle East and North Africa), the IGU states that advocacy should focus on the argument that gas exports “bring secure energy and electricity to millions of global citizens in a way that will significantly reduce GHGs and deadly air pollution”.

Africa, South Asia, South East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean: In these markets, the IGU documents appear to focus more on promoting fossil gas as a way of displacing coal and reducing energy and monetary poverty. Fossil gas could have “dramatic and immediate benefits in reducing GHGs and cleaning the environment,” the IGU states.

According to the documents, the IGU believes it should focus on the benefits of gas to developing countries. In the context of Africa, it says these countries “should not be denied the benefits of such supply [fossil gas] that has benefited developed economies for many years”. And in the context of South and South East Asia, the documents suggest framing the debate around the idea

that: "Developed economies should not deny the region the benefits of such supply [fossil gas] that they benefited from for years".



InfluenceMap's tracking shows that the gas sector's advocacy has been successful or partially successful in influencing policy outcomes in several regions, including Australia, Korea, the EU, the US, and Vietnam.

The IPCC has been clear in its warning that limiting global warming requires a significant reduction in the use of fossil fuels, including the use of fossil gas. The scientific body has also identified "incumbent fossil fuel interests" as preventing decarbonization and being a limiting factor in the ambition of global climate policies.

The IGU's advocacy documents offer an explanation for why global climate forums, such as the COP process, have struggled to make more ambitious progress in responding to the climate crisis.

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For further information or to arrange interviews, please contact:
Simon Cullen, Communications Manager, InfluenceMap (London)
E: simon.cullen@influencemap.org

About InfluenceMap

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