Nitrous Oxide: The next great threat to ozone protection

Side event (EIA/GIZ)

Wednesday 4 November 2026, 18:00-20:00

Event description:

Nitrous oxide (N_2O) is now most significant ozone depleting substance. Weighted by ozone depletion potential, its annual emissions already outweigh those of all controlled ODS combined. The time to face this growing ozone threat is now.

Through expert presentations and discussion, this side event will emphasise the urgency of addressing nitrous oxide (N_2O) to safeguard the ozone protection legacy of the Montreal Protocol. By presenting the science, which confirms N_2O as the greatest threat to ozone protection today, and proposing actionable next steps, this event will foster dialogue on the potential role that the Montreal Protocol could play in tackling the most significant uncontrolled ODS.

With input from the Scientific Assessment Panel, governments and civil society, this side event will explore the relevance of N_2O to the Montreal Protocol, considering both how and why action must be taken, and discussing what future pathways could look like. The event will draw on a new paper *Nitrous Oxide under the International Ozone Regime: A New Governance Pathway for a Growing Threat*, with input from its authors, and will hear from the SAP on the latest science behind N_2O and its emissions. In addition, government representatives will share their thoughts on what steps can and should be taken next under the Protocol, while GIZ's *Nitric Acid Climate Action Group* will showcase an implementation model for addressing industrial byproduct emissions of N_2O.

Agenda:

- Welcoming remarks (EIA/TBC) (5 mins)
- SAP (speaker TBC): Background on N_2O as an ozone threat and responding to questions raised in OEWG plenary (15 mins)
    - Q&A (5 mins)
- Lesotho (/and partners TBC): Discussion of their thoughts on N_2O under the Protocol, what the CRP was intended to achieve, what next steps they want to see (15 mins)
    - Q&A (5 mins)
- NACAG/Partner country: Brief overview of NACAG and country case study (15 mins)
- Wrap up/closing remarks (EIA/TBC) (5 mins)