

Gulf eyes use for gas flares

by [Talal Malik](#) on Tuesday, 11 March 2008



GAS EMISSIONS: Gulf states Kuwait, Qatar and Oman are expected to sign up to a World Bank programme which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by finding commercial uses for natural gas that is still burned, or flared, as a by-product of oil production. (Getty Images)

Kuwait, Qatar and Oman are expected to sign up to a World Bank programme which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by finding commercial uses for natural gas that is still burned, or flared, as a by-product of oil production.

The Gulf states, of which Qatar and Kuwait are among the world's top carbon emitters per capita, are seeking ways to reduce their large environmental footprints amid growing awareness of climate change, the UK's Financial Times reported on Tuesday.

The region flares about 30 billion cubic metres of gas a year, the equivalent of 900,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil, or about \$10 billion a year, Bent Svensson, manager of the bank's Global Gas Flaring Reduction partnership, told the newspaper.

"In most cases there is an economically viable solution to stop flaring," said Svensson.

Flared natural gas can be applied for commercial use as a raw material in producing petrochemicals and power or for re-injection into oil fields to boost crude production.

Concerns over electricity and water capacity are becoming an issue across the Gulf states, but particularly in the UAE, which is the highest per-capita drain on the world's resources, according the conservation agency WWF.

Despite having the world's fourth largest natural gas reserves in the world, a severe strain is being placed on power supplies in the Emirates due to burgeoning oil-driven economy and ambitious real state projects.

"Reducing flaring can both contribute to carbon mitigation and improve energy efficiency by finding other means to use the gas," said Svensson about the methods by which the UAE and other Gulf states can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Annual global gas flaring of 150 billion cubic metres produces the equivalent of 400 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. If eliminated, this would achieve the same emissions reduction currently achieved by the 3,000 projects of the Kyoto protocol's clean development mechanism, he added.

Countries that sign up to the partnership programme agree to eliminate flaring from all new production projects and to reduce existing flaring to a minimum within about seven years. Monitoring of the countries' use of flaring is through satellite imagery.

The three Gulf states set to join the World Bank's partnership together contribute seven billion cubic metres a year, but Iran and Iraq each flare seven billion cubic metres of gas. Outside the Gulf, west Africa and Russia are large sources of gas flaring.