



Application Guidelines Specific International Programme

Third Round of Applications

Call for Applications opened on 15 December 2020
Deadline for Submission is 18 March 2021

These application guidelines are structured as follows:

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| Chapter 1 | The first chapter addresses key questions about applications to the Specific International Programme. |
| Chapter 2 | The second chapter provides more information on how projects are screened and appraised under the Specific International Programme. |
| Chapter 3 | The third chapter sets out how to conceptualise and develop a project for the Specific International Programme, including the logical framework, workplan and the budget. |
| Chapter 4 | The fourth chapter gives specific information on how to complete the various parts of the application, namely:
Form A Project Application
Form B Project Budget
Form C Letter of Transmittal |

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

The Specific International Programme of the Minamata Convention supports eligible Parties in their efforts to strengthen their capacity and technical ability to implement the obligations and provisions of the Convention. The Programme forms a compliment to the support provided by the Global Environment Facility, and to the support Parties mobilise nationally and elsewhere.

Since the operationalisation of the Programme in early 2018, a total of fifteen projects have been approved by the Governing Board in the First and Second Rounds, in areas ranging from phasing out mercury-added products and managing their wastes, developing national guidelines on decommissioning mercury-cell chlor-alkali facilities, and developing participatory model approaches to deploy health care workers in artisanal and small-scale gold mining communities.

The Governing Board, at its meeting in November 2020, was pleased to decide to launch the Third Round of Applications to the Specific International Programme.

Building on the experiences of the two Rounds, these guidelines provide Applicant Governments with clear information on what to consider in the preparation of project applications to the Programme.

Reflecting on the prior Rounds and the projects now under implementation, for the Third Round we would like to highlight that the Governing Board:

- Welcomes applications for targeted and specific interventions in areas of work regarded as the highest priority by the Applicant Government, noting that projects can range in size from USD50,000 to USD250,000.
- Recognises that the Programme is able to support projects to be carried out on a regional, sub-regional or inter-regional basis, in addition to national projects.
- Highlights that the Programmes is not to fund activities that are already funded or planned to be funded by the Global Environment Facility (through a Minamata Initial Assessment, an ASGM National Action Plan or other enabling activities projects), or by the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening.
- Encourages Applicant Governments to carefully review and utilise the information provided in these guidelines on the planning and conceptualising of a project application, and the development of logical frameworks, work plans and budgets to ensure sound project drafting and development, and to reach out to the Secretariat for clarifications as needed on planned applications.

Co-Chairs of the Governing Board (2020-2021)

Reginald Hernaus and Prasert Tapaneeyangkul

15 December 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction		4
Chapter 1	Key Questions about Applications to the Specific International Programme	5
	1.1 Who can apply to the Specific International Programme?	5
	1.2 What amount is available for projects under the Programme?	5
	1.3 What should be the duration of the project?	6
	1.4 In what language should I submit my application?	6
	1.5 Who are the Minamata Convention National Focal Points?	6
	1.6 Where does one obtain the application forms?	6
	1.7 What does a complete application consist of?	6
	1.8 Can I seek support in the preparation of my application?	7
	1.9 How can I ensure gender mainstreaming in my application?	7
	1.10 What are reporting and oversight requirements for projects?	7
	1.11 What are the eligible budget categories, and are there any budget caps I should be aware of?	9
	1.12 What is the submission process for applications?	10
	1.13 What happens once the applications are submitted?	10
Chapter 2	Screening and appraisal of Applications	13
	2.1 Completeness checklist	13
	2.2 Eligibility screening	14
	2.3 Coherence appraisal	14
	2.4 Prioritization appraisal	15
Chapter 3	Conceptualizing projects under the Specific International Programme	16
	3.1 Theory of Change as tool to conceptualise the planning of a project	17
	3.2 Provisions of the Minamata Convention for Project Planning	19
	3.3 Moving from the Theory of Change to fill in the Logical Framework, Workplan and Budget	20
Chapter 4	How to complete the Application Forms	25
	4.1 Form A – Project Application	25
	4.2 Form B – Project Activity-Based Budget	32
	4.3 Form C – Letter of Transmittal	34

INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidelines on the project application process to the Third Round of the Specific International Programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance.

The Specific International Programme forms part of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and is set up to assist eligible developing countries Parties and Parties with economies in transition to develop projects to support their capacity to implement their obligations under the Minamata Convention.

As per [MC-1/6](#), the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme oversees the Programme and takes operational decisions to ensure the Programme adheres to the guidance of the Conference of Parties. This includes that the Governing Board endorses, as appropriate, the criteria and procedures for application, assessment, reporting and evaluation, as applicable, to the Programme. At its Third Meeting, held in Geneva on 14-15 February 2019, the Governing Board concluded on the Rules of Procedure for its functioning.

All reports of past meetings of the Governing Board are available on the Minamata website. Further information is also available on past projects approved. Since the operationalisation of the Programme a total of fifteen projects have been approved. They are currently in various stages of implementation.

The Secretariat supports the Governing Board in its deliberations, and also manages the overall project application process, project application appraisals, as well as supports the full cycle of project implementation.

All approved projects are directly implemented by Parties.

The Specific International Programme has been generously supported by the following donors:



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CHAPTER 1: KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT APPLICATIONS TO THE SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

This chapter addresses some frequently asked questions about the Specific International Programme and outlines the application process.



1.1 WHO CAN APPLY TO THE SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME?

Eligible **Governments** can apply to the Specific International Programme.

Governments from developing country Parties to the Minamata Convention and Parties with economies in transition are considered eligible. Furthermore, the Specific International Programme takes full account of the specific needs and special circumstances of Parties that are small island developing States and least developed countries.

Governments here refer to the national government ministry or department in charge of implementing the obligations of that country under the Minamata Convention. Affiliations of governments and local governments are not eligible. Note that the application form differentiates between the **Applicant Government**, which refers to the Government submitting the application and the **Applicant Government Official**, who is the lead contact person on behalf of the Applicant Government

Several governments can jointly submit a sub-regional, regional or inter-regional project. This may be an optimal approach for implementation issues which are best addressed in a sub-regional or inter-regional coordinated manner. For projects of this nature, it is a requirement that one Government is specified as a project lead.

It is strongly encouraged that the Applicant Government only submits one application from the country based on the issue(s) identified as the most important national priorities for funding from the Specific International Programme. In cases where there may be more than one proposal at the national level, the Minamata Convention National Focal Point should coordinate among the proponents to enable the Applicant Government to submit one proposal.

It is expected that the Government submitting the application will directly implement the project. Project partner organizations with whom the Government intends to engage to support the project's implementation should be listed clearly in the application.



1.2 WHAT AMOUNT IS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECTS UNDER THE PROGRAMME

The Specific International Programme may provide support from USD50,000 to USD250,000 per project proposal. This amount is inclusive of fees for monitoring, evaluation and financial audits. Applicant Governments should be aware that specific projects targeted to the highest implementation priorities might have a higher chance of approval by the Board, than broader, more general projects.



1.3 WHAT SHOULD BE THE DURATION OF THE PROJECT?

Projects must be completed within 36 months/three years. Technical activities must be completed within at most 33 months so that reporting, auditing and evaluation can be completed within the maximum time frame of 36 months.



1.4 IN WHAT LANGUAGE SHOULD I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION?

The Governing Board works in English and all project applications must be submitted in English. The application guidelines will be made available in French and Spanish as soon as possible.



1.5 WHO ARE THE MINAMATA CONVENTION NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS?

The Minamata Convention in Article 17, paragraph 4 makes provision for the designation of National Focal Points to the Minamata Convention for the exchange of information under the Convention.

The National Focal Point is requested by the Governing Board to be consulted on the development of applications submitted by its Government. The confirmation of this consultation is indicated by the National Focal Point's signature on Form C - Letter of Transmittal.

The list of National Focal Points can be found on the Minamata Convention website, along with information on the designation procedure for Parties that have not yet notified the Secretariat of their National Focal Points.

In the event that a project is put forward involving more than one Party, a lead Party needs to be identified to sign Form C – Letter of Transmittal – on behalf of all. In such a case all other National Focal Points are to provide their transmittal signatures too.



1.6 WHERE DOES ONE OBTAIN THE APPLICATION FORMS?

The complete set of application forms can be downloaded from the website of the Minamata Convention:

<http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Implementation/SpecificInternationalProgramme>



1.7 WHAT DOES A COMPLETE APPLICATION CONSIST OF?

The complete set of application forms consists of the following forms:

Form A	Project Application
Form B	Project Budget
Form C	Letter of Transmittal

Form C is to be **signed** by the Applicant Government Official, the Minamata National Focal Point and the GEF Operational Focal Point.

A checklist of essential elements to make the application complete is to be cross-checked and completed by the Applicant Government in Form A under section 6.



1.8 CAN I SEEK SUPPORT IN THE PREPARATION OF MY APPLICATION?

The Secretariat is available to provide support on a case-by-case basis as requested by Parties during the preparation of their application. Applicant Governments can seek specialist advice on identifying technical cooperation solutions, project design and sequencing of appropriate activities, articulation of impact and project management best practices. This advice can be solicited from the Secretariat. The Secretariat can also be requested to connect Applicant Governments with relevant experts from the Global Mercury Partnership for additional technical advice and expertise. Applicant Governments are encouraged to reach out to the Secretariat as soon as possible to seek assistance. The Secretariat may not be able to support late requests.

Kindly send all requests to: MEA-MinamataSecretariat@un.org, with copy to marianne.bailey@un.org.



1.9 HOW CAN I ENSURE GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN MY APPLICATION?

Gender mainstreaming integrates gender perspectives across all domains of activity, from project planning, policies, participation and staffing through to specific project assessments and activities. The ultimate aim of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. This starts by making visible the activities, impacts, engagement and agency of both men and women as differentiated actors.

Applications submitted under the Specific International Programme need to explain how the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects includes a gender lens. Projects aimed at evaluating impacts of and exposures to mercury should include plans to evaluate the gender-differentiated nature of impacts and exposures. All project and development interventions should integrate the principles of equal participation and non-discrimination, including in the staffing of projects and in opportunities for public participation. Project activities should promote these issues at the national and regional levels. See section 3.4 of Chapter 3.



1.10 WHAT ARE REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECTS?

Once a project is approved to enter the implementation phase, the **Applicant Government Official** will be asked to identify a **Project Focal Point**. This Project Focal Point fulfils important roles for the project, including finalisation of project and legal documents for implementation, and communicating on managing, monitoring and reporting on the progress of the project.

Monitoring, review and evaluation enables the managers of projects to measure performance, identify areas of good practice or possible improvement, and therefore provides for adaptive management, operational improvement and positive learning.

Monitoring and reporting: Monitoring of project implementation refers to the routine collection and analysis of information to track progress, check compliance and make informed decisions for project management at each level of the Logical Framework. Monitoring activities need to be built into the project work plan and allocated (human and, if necessary, financial) resources from the start. Regular

monitoring is the responsibility of project managers and forms the basis for periodic reporting by Project Focal Points, as well as evaluation of the entire project at its conclusion. As best practice project managers are to develop a monitoring plan that describes the means for measuring the indicators of progress and as defined in Logical Framework.

During the implementation phase, Project Focal Points will submit narrative progress reports twice per year, in June and December, and an end of project final narrative report. Expenditure reports will also be submitted on the same schedule and an end of project financial audit report will also need to be submitted.

Expenditure reports should be certified by an **authorised administrative/finance officer** (other than the Project Focal Point) from the Applicant Government attesting to the accuracy of reported expenditures, that resources have been used in accordance with budget provisions and the terms of conditions of the implementation agreement, and that all expenditures are supported by relevant documents.

UNEP can only accept expenditures that are in line with the approved budget. These provisions will be reflected in the project cooperation agreement that will be signed between UNEP as trustee of the Specific International Programme, and the Applicant Government as recipient and implementor of the project. The agreement will include pre-set templates for periodic and final reporting.

Evaluation: For projects with funding from the Specific International Programme of USD 150,000 or less, the recipient Government is required to arrange for a terminal review. The terminal review is mandatory and falls under the responsibility of the Government and can be done internally. If in-house capacity is not available, the recipient Government may wish to identify, for example, an academic institution, a research centre, an independent consultant, or a non-governmental organisation for this task. Terminal reviews should follow the guidance provided by the UNEP Evaluation Office. Applicant Governments will need to set aside funds for this purpose. See section 4.2 of Chapter 4.

For all projects with funding from the Specific International Programme of over USD 150,000, a terminal evaluation is mandatory. These terminal evaluations will be initiated based on criteria as identified by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention will manage the process of the terminal evaluations. These evaluations will be done by independent evaluators. Funding for this expense will be retained by the Secretariat from the amount as per the approved project budget.

- For projects with budgets between USD 151,000 and USD 200,000, the Secretariat will retain USD 8,000 from the approved project budget to conduct a terminal evaluation.
- For projects with budgets between USD 201,000 and USD 250,000, the Secretariat will retain USD 10,000 from the approved project budget to conduct a terminal evaluation.

Funding from the programme in USD	Type of activity expected at the end of the project	Responsible organization	Budget allocation
Less than 150,000	Terminal review	Recipient Government	To be decided by the recipient Government
151,000 – 200,000	Terminal evaluation	UNEP Evaluation Office	8,000 USD (retained from the approved project budget)
200,000 - 250,000	Terminal evaluation	UNEP Evaluation Office	10,000 USD (retained from the approved project budget)

Financial audit: The use of resources within the United Nations is guided by the UN Financial Regulations and Rules. The United Nations Secretariat, under which UNEP and therefore, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention falls, are subject to the audits by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services and the UN Board of Auditors. All projects under the Specific International Programme are externally executed, and therefore the Applicant Government is responsible for the financial management and audit of the project. Records must be kept for ten years following the closure of the project. See section 4.2 of Chapter 4.



1.11 WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE BUDGET CATEGORIES, AND ARE THERE ANY BUDGET CAPS THAT I SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

The available budget categories, or classes, are the following:

Commitment Class	Commitment Class Name	Explanation
FT30_Class_010	Staff and Other Personnel Costs	(i) Includes all costs and entitlements of personnel including staff, consultants, administrative staff, interns. (ii) Meeting facilitators, interpreters, evaluation consultants all to be budgeted under this Class.
FT30_Class_120	Contractual Services	(i) Works and services of a commercial nature contracted following procurement procedures. This could include contracts given to NGOs if they are more similar to procurement of services than a grant transfer. (ii) Where meetings/workshops require venue to be hired e.g. Hotel, then relevant costs to be budgeted under this Class. (iii) Commercial printing/publication contracts to be budgeted here.
FT30_Class_135	Equipment	(i) Procurement of non-consumables and specialized and technical equipment costs e.g. IT equipment.
FT30_Class_160	Travel	i) All meeting costs including staff/consultant/meeting participant travel (per diem/tickets as applicable) (ii) Road / train / Fuel and vehicle/ boat rental costs for staff, consultants and other project personnel

There are some caps on specific budget items:

- Specialised and technical equipment – 10 per cent is set as a cap, although up to 25 per cent could be considered by the Governing Board in exceptional cases based on details annexed to the application;
- Monitoring, review/evaluation and audit, these activities should be captured in the final Output of the project. Funding for this output should not exceed USD 15,000 in total, including any amount to be retained by the Secretariat per Section 1.10

See “Further notes on budget classes” in Section 4.2 Form B – Project activity-based budget.



1.12 WHAT IS THE SUBMISSION PROCESS FOR APPLICATIONS?

Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications as early as possible in advance of the deadline in order for the Secretariat to review the applications for completeness. Applications must be submitted in English.

Complete applications should be sent electronically in **Word** and **PDF** versions, including Form C – Letter of Transmittal (i.e., scanned signatures from the Applicant Government Official, National Focal Point and the GEF Operational Focal Point), to MEA-MinamataSecretariat@un.org, with copy to marianne.bailey@un.org.



1.13 WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE APPLICATIONS ARE SUBMITTED?

See Figure 1 below for a depiction of the submission process against timelines for the Third Round of Applications for the Specific International Programme.

The Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of the application package within the next two business days.

If you do not receive an acknowledgment, kindly check in with the Secretariat to ensure your submission was successfully received.

Step 1: Screening by the Secretariat

The Secretariat **screens** the applications to ensure they are complete and eligible.

During the screening process the Secretariat may request additional information or clarifications from the Applicant Government to facilitate the eligibility and completeness process.

It is imperative that applications reach the Secretariat well before the deadline so that if there are any missing/additional items required, the Secretariat can alert the Applicant Government of missing items for submittal before the deadline.

The deadline of Thursday, 18 March 2021 is mandatory.

Late or incomplete applications cannot be considered for funding by the Governing Board.

Step 2: Appraisal by the Secretariat

The Secretariat conducts an appraisal of the applications based on the criteria and procedures as endorsed by the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme.

The Secretariat will first conduct a technical appraisal of the project applications and provide the Applicant Government with suggestions for revisions, if any are needed to ensure a technically sound application package for full appraisal. Such revisions could include, for example, edits to the logical framework or the project budget. The Applicant Government will then need to provide the updated application to the Secretariat **within a specific deadline (about 1 month)**.

Thereafter, the Secretariat conducts a full appraisal of each application and presents the appraisal for consideration and decision to the Governing Board.

The Secretariat will consult with relevant intergovernmental organizations during the appraisal process.

Step 3: Approval by the Governing Board

The Governing Board will review all complete project applications at the Board's next meeting taking account of the appraisals undertaken by the Secretariat.

The Governing Board will approve project applications, subject to the availability of funds at the time of their meeting. The Governing Board may decide to approve projects pending Applicant Government undertake specific revisions to the project application documents. Such revisions are expected to be incorporated in the final project documents within a short time span to ensure that implementation of the project can begin as soon as possible.

NOTE: If an Applicant Government is a member of the Governing Board the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Board require that Board member is to recuse himself or herself from the deliberations of, and decision-making on, the specific application.

Step 4: Notification of Outcome of the Government Board

The Secretariat will notify all Applicant Governments through their identified Applicant Government Official of the decision of the Governing Board in writing, within two weeks of the relevant Governing Board meeting.

For projects that are approved for funding in the Third Round, the Secretariat's notification may include items for revisions and finalisation to the project documents be requested by the Governing Board.

For projects that are approved for funding, the Applicant Government Official will be requested to identify/confirm the following Officers as soon as possible, following the notification:

- (a) **Project Focal Point:** This is the official understood to be responsible for any project document finalisation and the subsequent implementation of the project, and has to be notified,
- (b) **Project Correspondence Focal Point:** In case the Project Focal Point is assisted by another Officer for communication and correspondence purposes, such an officer may be additionally notified

NOTE: In some instances, the Application Government may decide that the Applicant Government Official identified at the time of application, becomes the Project Focal Point to manage and implement the approved project through its project implementation cycle.

In some cases, Governments may wish to update that a different Official takes on the task of project implementation.

In cases where the official Project Focal Point may be a high-level official, for practical purposes of communication and correspondence, a Project Correspondence Focal Point may be additionally identified to take on the task for working directly with the Secretariat to finalise any revisions requested by the Governing Board, and to be the direct point of contact to facilitate setting up of implementation arrangements.

Step 5: Setting up Implementation Arrangements for Approved Projects

The finalisation of all approved project documents is required before the conclusion of the project cooperation agreement to set up the implementation arrangements between the Government and UNEP.

The use of financial resources within the United Nations is guided by the UN Financial Regulations and Rules. Activities financed by the Specific International Programme will be implemented in accordance with the financial management of projects provisions as per standard UNEP practices.

Project management arrangements include the conclusion of relevant project cooperation agreements between the Government and UNEP, the trustee of the trust fund of the Specific International Programme. The life of the project coincides with the duration of the project cooperation agreement. The start date of the project will be the date the agreement is signed by both parties.

Applicant Governments are to identify the **signatory** of the agreement according to their respective national institutional settings. To ensure rapid progress to conclude the project cooperation agreement and begin implementation, early identification of the signatory can help, especially in national contexts that may have additional internal consultation requirements.

For UNEP the signatory of the project cooperation agreement for the Specific International Programme is the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention.

Once both parties have signed the project cooperation agreement the Minamata Secretariat can begin the process of disbursement of funds, according to the approved project budget.

Once the project is underway, the Secretariat will be in close touch with the Project Focal Points for periodic reporting (in June and December of each year), as well as other matters throughout the project life.

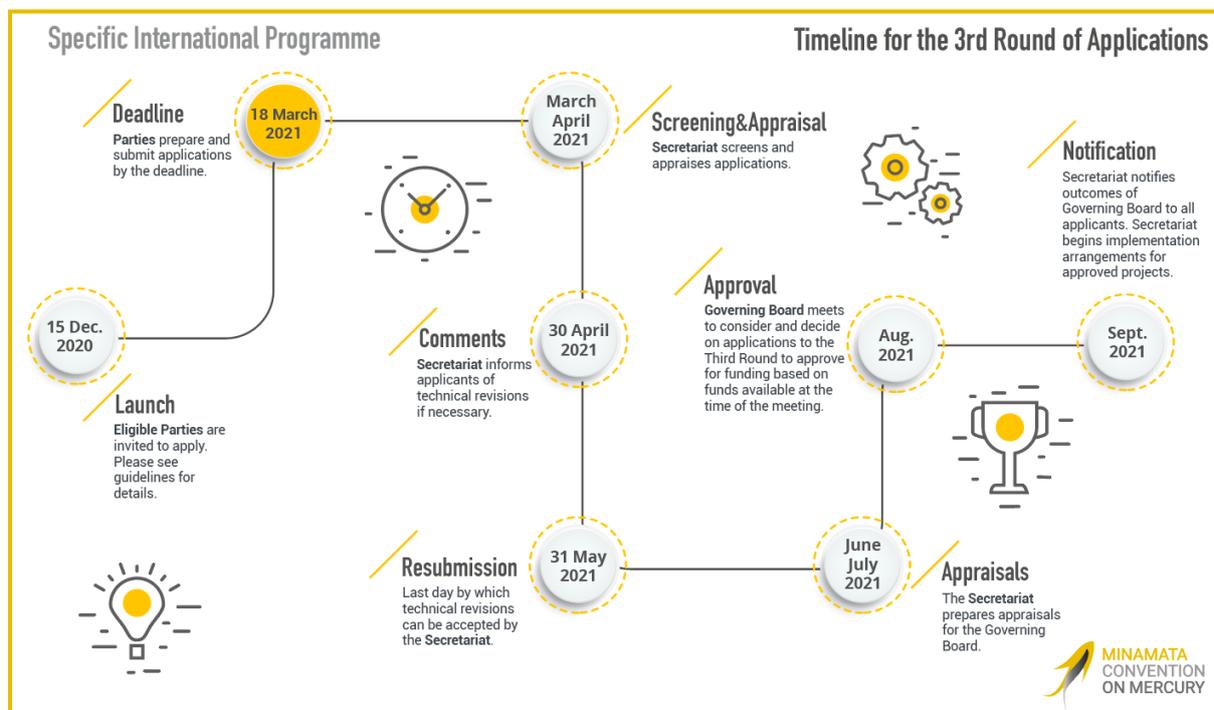


Figure 1: Timeline for the Third Round of the Specific International Programme

CHAPTER 2: SCREENING AND APPRAISAL OF APPLICATIONS

The Specific International Programme is to support projects that help improve the capacity of developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition in implementing their obligations under the Minamata Convention.

The **scope** of the Specific International Programme extends to support capacity-building and technical assistance in accordance with paragraph 6 (b) of Article 13 of the Minamata Convention.

Decision MC 1/6 states that the Specific International Programme will be guided in its operations as follows:

- (a) Be country-driven, taking into consideration national priorities, country ownership and the sustainable implementation of the obligations under the Convention;
- (b) Ensure complementarity and avoid duplication with other existing arrangements to provide capacity-building and technical support, in particular the Global Environment Facility and the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, as well as other existing assistance frameworks;
- (c) Build upon lessons learned and engage at the national and regional levels, including by encouraging South-South cooperation;
- (d) Be consistent with the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste, as relevant to the implementation of the Convention.



Applicant Governments are strongly advised to ensure that all elements in the framework of appraisal are considered in their applications.

To assist and guide Applicant Governments in developing their applications based on national priorities, the Governing Board laid out clear criteria. These criteria are used in the appraisal of and decision-making on the applications. Building on this the Governing Board agreed on overall framework of appraisal for all applications, as follows:

2.1 COMPLETENESS CHECKLIST

Form A - Project Application including	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Table 1: Logical Framework	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Table 2: Project Workplan	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Contact Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Related Projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Form B - Project Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Form C - Letter of Transmittal	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Any other annexes (depending on application)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

2.2 ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

- E1. Is the Applicant Government a **Party** to the Convention at the time of submitting the application?
- E2. Is the Applicant Government a developing country, Least Developed Country (LDC), Small Island Developing Country (SIDS) or a Country with an Economy in Transition (CEIT)?
- E3. Do the proposed activities avoid duplication of effort at the national level in terms of projects already funded or to be funded by the GEF and/or the Special Programme?

2.3 COHERENCE APPRAISAL

- C1. Do the outputs of the project improve the capacity of the Applicant Government to **implement the obligations** under the Minamata Convention?
- C2. Does the project build on previous initiatives and projects, established mechanisms and draws on **lessons learned**?
- C3. Does the project **engage at the national level** with partners and other relevant actors?
- C4. Does the project **engage at the regional level**, including by encouraging South-South Cooperation?
- C5. Is the project consistent with the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste,¹ to support **national mainstreaming**?
- C6. Is the project consistent with the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste, to support **industry contributions**?
- C7. Does the proposal include **performance indicators** and related baselines and targets that measure the improvement in the capacities to implement obligations under the Convention?
- C8. Does the project respond to **gender** considerations?
- C9. Does the project contribute to the **Sustainable Development Goals** and safeguards against adverse environmental or social effects in other areas?
- C10. **Cumulative allocations**: Has the country already benefited from the Specific International Programme in a previous round?

¹ The **Integrated Approach** to long-term funding of the Chemicals and Waste agenda was adopted by the UNEP Governing Council in February 2013 (UNEP/GC.27/7), after being developed in a country-led consultative process. At the first meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly in June 2014, Governments welcomed the Integrated Approach in its Resolution 1/5. The Integrated Approach is composed of three components: (a) mainstreaming, (b) industry involvement and (c) dedicated external finance. These components are considered to be mutually reinforcing and are all important for the financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste at all levels.

Further, UNEA 1/5 through Annex II gave effect to set up the **Special Programme to support institutional strengthening** at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention, and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

C11. If the country has benefitted from funding from the Specific International Programme in the past, are the **reports and evaluations** of the project(s) available? Does the application provide evidence of how the proposal would build upon the outcomes of the previous project?

2.4 PRIORITIZATION APPRAISAL

P1. To what extent has the project provided an indication of the **scale of potential environmental and health impacts**?

P2. Will the project result in the **sustainable ability** of the Applicant Government to implement the obligations of the Minamata Convention?

P3. Has the project provided **evidence of needs** that serve as a rationale for this project?

P4. To what extent is the project **country-driven** and in support of **national priorities**?

P5. Does the project encompass **innovative approaches** for possible show-case and replication?

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALIZING PROJECTS UNDER THE SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

This chapter introduces the Theory of Change exercise as a recommended approach to conceptualize and plan projects. It shows how to construct the Logical Framework using results-based management concepts. Submitting a Theory of Change explanation is not a mandatory requirement. Projects will be judged by the quality and measurability of their logical frameworks, work plans and budget, as well as expected impact to be achieved. It is noted that the process of completing a Theory of Change exercise may well enhance the design and quality of the project.

The UN has set in place the requirement to work according to results-based management principles. The aim of **Results-Based Management** is to improve delivery throughout the project management life cycle: from initiation (analysis, project planning and design), to implementation (results-based monitoring, adjustments and reporting), and closure (final evaluations and reports, and integrating lessons learned into future programming). Through targeted result-focused management, specific results are identified, pursued and effort is maximized for their achievement, so that the project succeeds to bring about the changes it targeted. By clearly defining expected results, pro-actively assessing risk, regularly monitoring progress against a set workplan and indicators, project managers are able to oversee steady implementation, and if need be, make timely adjustments, to bring projects to a successful conclusion.

To support the drafters of applications to the Specific International Programme in their task to conceptualise, consult, plan, design and explain the intended activities, outputs and expectations of their project, this chapter is set out in three parts.

First, the Theory of Change exercise as a recommended approach to **conceptualize and plan projects** is introduced.

Second, a short overview is given of the provisions of the Minamata Convention as a way to orient drafters to consider various possible areas of work for which to seek support from the Programme. The intent of the Programme is to support eligible Parties to strengthen their **capacity** to implement the provisions of the Convention. To this end the application has to identify both the **areas of work that the Government sees as highest priority** need for additional support (as it is not already funded in other ways), and to **show how the proposed activities of the project strengthens and improves the ability of that Government to implement the Minamata provisions and so doing reduce the negative impacts of mercury.**

Third, a **step-by-step walkthrough** is given on how to move from the Theory of Change to construct the **logical framework** using results-based management concepts, as well as the **work plan and budget**. This section is particularly important to consult closely as project applications will be judged by the quality and measurability of their approach through the logical frameworks, the work plans and the proposed budget, in addition to the expected impact the proposed project is set to achieve.

3.1 THEORY OF CHANGE AS A TOOL TO CONCEPTUALISE THE PLANNING OF A PROJECT

The Theory of Change is a **tool for the conceptualisation and planning of projects** that intend to bring about change. The aim of a Theory of Change is to map the logical pathways from preconditions, through activities and outputs, to achieve specified outcomes and project objectives.

In the simplest terms, the Theory of Change is a **mapping exercise that is undertaken in a backward direction**. The first question is: What change, what impact, do you want to bring about?

The purpose of the Theory of Change is to make the logical pathways of change explicit. It starts by defining the long-term **impact** the project seeks to make efforts towards, and from there works backwards from preconditions (the current state), through intermediate steps of activities and outputs, to bring about specific changes as will be seen in outcomes and impact.

Identifying **what the project seeks to change** (i.e. the problem or challenge it seeks to address) is the starting point.

Once this is set, the exercise of drawing up a Theory of Change allows the project drafters to define what outcomes are necessary, and what activities and outputs are required to bring about the desired outcomes. In this way the Theory of Change becomes a conceptual roadmap for drafting the logical framework (which requires the identification of outcomes, outputs, and activities), as well as shape the workplan, and formulate the budget of the project.

A Theory of Change can be represented either visually or as a narrative. A narrative of the Theory of Change allows for detailed chronological description of change dynamics. A visual representation of the Theory of Change can serve as a summary and make communicating the project's logic easier. Often visual Theory of Change descriptions can be excellent consultation tools to bring different expertise and officials together.

Figure 2 gives a sample Theory of Change for a project that seeks to increase national capacity for developing control strategies for existing and new sources of emissions of mercury.

NOTE: Applications to the Specific International Programme do not require the insertion of a description of the Theory of Change of the proposed project as part of the application. The information in this sub-section of the chapter is included merely as supplementary information to support the planning, conceptualisation and development of applications, i.e. particularly in the consultation and design phase of their project.

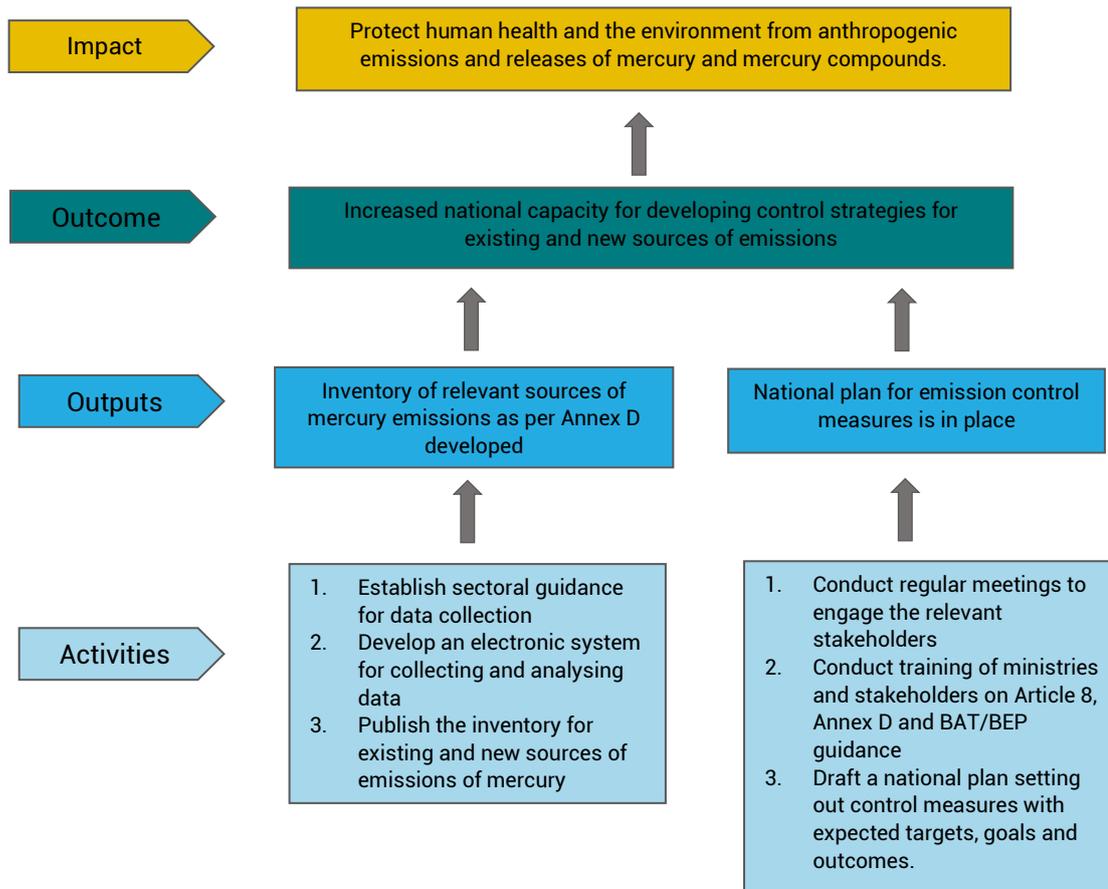


Figure 2: Example of a visual Theory of Change for a project to strengthen national capacity to develop control strategies for existing and new sources of mercury emissions (Annex D)

3.2 PROVISIONS OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION FOR PROJECT PLANNING

As the Specific International Programme is to support eligible Parties in implementing their obligations under the Minamata Convention, it is useful to reflect upon the range of obligations set forth in the Convention.

As shown below, these obligations include control measures designed to limit the amount of mercury in circulation, reduce the use of mercury, and reduce the emissions and releases of mercury. Supporting measures also provide important functions.

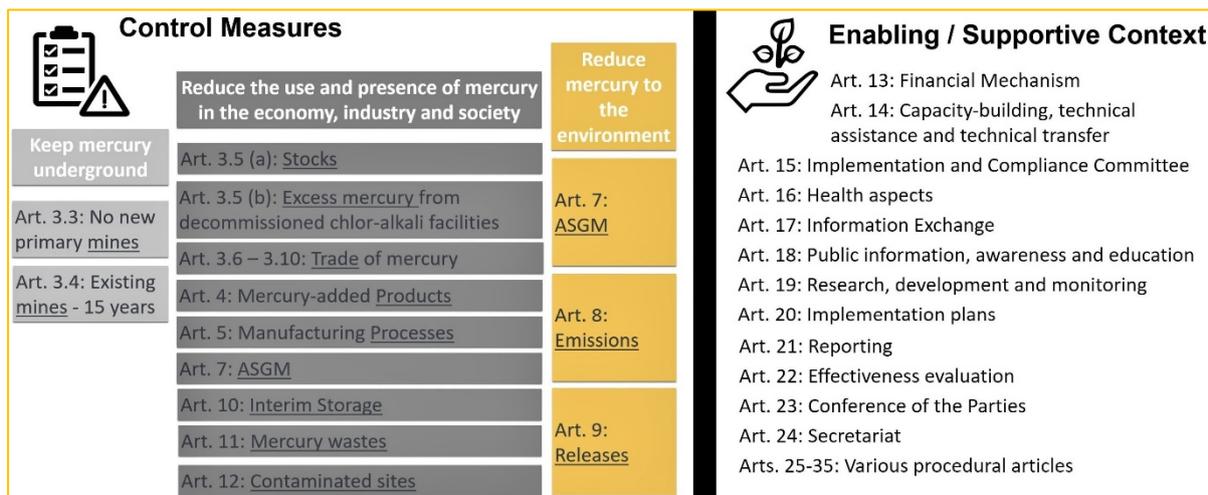


Figure 3: Provisions of the Minamata Convention

A strong application to the Specific International Programme will set forth an intended **outcome** related to **one or more of these measures**. Some examples of strong outcomes are, for example:

- Institutional capacity to control emissions from sources listed in Annex D are strengthened.
- Effective procedures for managing trade in mercury and mercury-added products developed at the national and sub-regional levels are in place.
- Capacity to phase out mercury use in industrial processes in accordance with Article 5 is strengthened.

Detailed information on many of these measures can be found in the Minamata Online section of our website, where you can listen and watch recorded information sessions and download presentations describing specific [Articles of the Convention](#).

Minamata Initial Assessments and other related overviews that have been conducted at the national level, will provide useful information on which measures an Applicant Government may prioritise for action and therefore for support from the Specific International Programme.

3.3 MOVING FROM THEORY OF CHANGE TO FILL IN THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK, WORKPLAN AND BUDGET

3.3.1 Developing the Logical Framework – Form A, Table 1

The **Logical Framework**, which takes the form of a table (Table 1 of Form A), is a mandatory part of a project document and serves as the key project planning tool. It can reflect the insights gained from doing a Theory of Change exercise in preparation of a project application or it can stand on its own as a results-based management description of the project components.

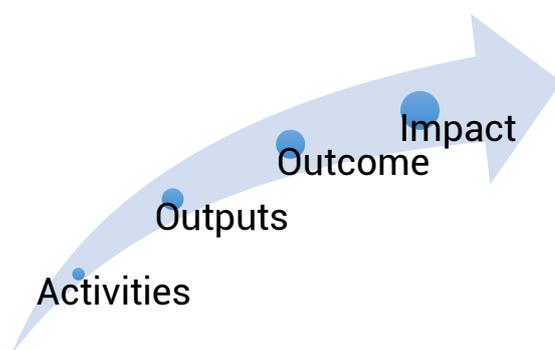


Figure 4: Simplified representation of the steps involved in developing the logical Framework used in the Specific International Programme application

The Logical Framework describes the project components and explains the details of how the project will operate and will affect the change intended. It will serve as the roadmap for implementation and as a tool for evaluating and monitoring progress. It is the concrete blueprint of the project plan, assuming a linear cause and effect relationship between the activities and outputs, taking into account assumptions and baseline and setting out timeframes, targets, indicators of success, and means of verification for project implementation.

Important Note: All the elements of the **Logical Framework** must be replicated in the project **workplan** of the application form (Table 2, Form A) and in the activity-based **budget** (Form B).

The following section will provide definition of key terms and a step-by-step guidance on developing the log frame, workplan and budget.

Outcome: The outcome of a project is the change resulting from the project outputs. This can be observed as changes of behaviour, knowledge or skill, or can also be a change in attitude, action or condition. Examples of outcomes could include improved knowledge and technical capacity, improved coordination and communication flows, or increased awareness leading to institutionalisation or regularisation of a new norm.

Develop your outcome statement from the broader narrative description of the project which includes the rationale for the project, its intended results in terms of outcomes and impact.

TABLE 1: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

PROJECT TITLE: [INSERT PROJECT TITLE]		
Project outcome	Indicators	Means of verification
<i>For example: Control of trade of mercury at a regional level is improved</i>	<i>[All indicators should have a measurable Baseline and Target listed in brackets] Note: Indicators at the Outcome level should be closely linked to the project Outputs</i>	<i>Insert both data source and method for measuring progress against indicator target</i>

Indicators: An indicator is a unit of measurement that helps assess progress towards the achievement of an intended result and is a simple and reliable means to assess results. Information collected is used to guide decision-making throughout the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. At a minimum, indicators should be specific, measurable and achievable.

Under this section, kindly list the indicators that will be used to measure the achievement of the outcome. You should include at least one indicator for each Output listed. They can be qualitative or quantitative, as explained in the table below.

When defining indicators, kindly also provide information on the baseline situation, i.e. where are you now, and information on your targets, i.e. where do you plan to be once the project is completed. *Each indicator should have a baseline and target.*

	Purpose	Examples	Data sources
Quantitative indicators	Measure actions, variations, tendencies and levels of knowledge Helps determine: How many? How much? How often? Close ended: Variables or themes are predefined before data collection begins	Number of ... Frequency of ... Increase/decrease of ... of Ratio of ... Percentage of ...	Project records Service statistics Survey at the program level Survey at the population level (local, national)
Qualitative indicators	Provides information about attitudes, perceptions and motivations. Answers the question why? Usually structured in an open-ended fashion (allow spontaneous info)	Level of... Compliance with... Extent to... Quality of... Presence of... Perception of...	In-depth interviews Case studies Focus groups Observations Client studies

Means of Verification: Under this section, list at least one means of verification for each indicator provided. A means of verification is a tool that can be used to confirm whether or not the indicator, and ultimately the project outcome has been achieved. These can include reports, other documentation, records, contracts, evaluations or by other means as appropriate for each indicator provided.

Outputs: Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities, and awareness of individuals or within institutions. The outputs are usually tangible goods or services the project produces or delivers.

Activities: An action taken, or work performed, through which inputs are utilized to realise specific results. Activities are basically actions which need to be completed in order to achieve the output.

Expected milestones: The expected milestones highlight when each proposed activity is expected to be achieved during the period of project implementation. For each activity, in the milestone column, provide the time frame, in terms of months following the start of the project, when the activity should be completed.

Output 1	Indicators	Means of verification
<p><i>Example: National Mercury information system to collect data on mercury supply, use, storage, emissions, releases and trade developed</i></p>	<p>You should include at least one indicator for each activity listed.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> Number of stakeholders participating in the technical working group (Baseline:0, Target: 15) Number of meetings of the technical working group organized (Baseline:0. Target: 6) Number of national/international systems studied (Baseline: 0, Target: 10) Number of key elements of the system identified (Baseline: 0, Goal: 8) Pilot test conducted (Baseline: 0, Goal: 1) Number of stakeholders trained in the use of the platform (Baseline: 0, Goal:30)</p>	<p>List at least one means of verification for each indicator provided.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> Terms of Reference for the technical working group Meeting report of the technical working group Comparative assessment report Report on the conceptual design of the system Report on the pilot test Training workshop reports</p>
Activities	Milestones	
1.1. Technical working group with relevant stakeholders formed	Month 6/Year 1	
1.2.A comparative study of national and internationally existing chemical registration and control systems is conducted	Month 9/Year 1	
1.3 Conceptual design for the development of a mercury information system is approved by the Technical Working group	Month 1/Year 2	
1.4 A pilot test of the mercury information system is conducted	Month 6/Year 2	
1.5 Relevant stakeholders are trained in the use of the platform	Month 12/Year 2	

←
 Insert the expected timeframe that this activity will be accomplished in this column, measured in months following project

The process described above should be followed for all outputs and activities.

3.3.2: Developing the project workplan – Form A, Table 2

Present a project workplan using the table provided. As with previous sections, the workplan is build based on information provided in sections that have already been filled out in the Logical Framework. Review the information provided under the “Expected Milestone” column in the Logical Framework and reflect that information in the relevant section of the workplan. The workplan should reflect the Output, associated activities and the expected milestones.

If, for example, Output 4 of a project is 'Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region', then Table 2: Workplan for that particular output will be completed as demonstrated below:

Output 4 Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region'	Indicators	Means of verification
Activities		Milestones
4.1. Develop the concept note of the regional workshop		Month 3/Year 3
4.2. Identify the relevant national/regional stakeholders and receive feedback on potential regional issues		Month 4/Year 3
4.3 Organize the regional workshop		Month 8/Year 3
4.4 Draft the workshop report and publish it online		Month 9/Year 3

Table 2: Project workplan

Timeframe (by quarter – every 3 months)													
Description	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Output 4 Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region'													
Activity 4.1.													
Activity 4.2.													
Activity 4.3.													
Activity 4.4.													

The workplan is an important tool for formulating and implementing a project. From the workplan, it is possible to assess the proposed implementation of the project, as follows:

- Are the time horizons realistic (for approval, negotiation with cooperating agencies or supporting organizations, delivery of outputs and administration)?
- Is the workload reasonably balanced?
- Are any activities likely to be held up by the timing of other activities?

A well-prepared workplan is particularly useful for monitoring and evaluation. The workplan is used in the progress report as the reference point for assessing the progress of the project. As well as being an indicator of progress, the workplan also highlights difficulties likely to be encountered in project

implementation, identifies backlogs or bottlenecks, and facilitates planning to resolve any anticipated problems.

The process described above should be followed for all outputs and activities.

3.3.3. Developing the activity-based project budget - Form B

The Specific International Programme uses activity-based budget for the applications. Therefore, the budget must closely follow the activities as highlighted in the workplan. More information on the budget categories can be found in Section 1.10 of Chapter 1 and 4.2: Form B – Project activity-based budget. Taking our previous example, let us assume that 20,000 USD is being requested to achieve Output 4 'Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region'. The budget for that Output will be developed as follows:

Table 2: Workplan

Timeframe (by quarter – every 3 months)

Description	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 4 Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region												
Activity 4.1. Concept note of the regional workshop developed										■		
Activity 4.2. Relevant national/regional stakeholders identified and feedback on potential regional issues received										■		
Activity 4.3. Regional workshop organized											■	
Activity 4.4. Workshop report drafted and published online												■

Activities in the workplan must be copied and reflected as is in the Form B: Budget.

Make sure that the requested budget in section '2.5: Budget and funding summary' in Application Form A is mirrored in the budget table

2.5. Budget and funding summary

	Request from the Minamata Specific International Programme Trust Fund – in USD	Applicant Country Contribution, if relevant (cash and/or in kind) – in USD
Output 1	\$	\$
Output 2	\$	\$
Output 3	\$	\$
Output 4 Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region	\$ 20,000	\$ 5,000
Output 5:	\$	\$
Sub-total	\$	\$
Total project budget	=\$	

Form B: Budget

	Staff and Other Personnel Costs (FT30_010)			Contractual Services (FT30_120)			Equipment (FT30_135)			Travel (FT30_160)			Grand Total
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Output 4 Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region													
Activity 4.1 Concept note of the regional workshop developed						2,000							2,000
Activity 4.2 Relevant national/regional stakeholders identified and feedback on potential regional issues received						1,000							1,000
Activity 4.3 Regional workshop organized											15,000		15,000
Activity 4.4 Workshop report drafted and published online						2,000							2,000
Sub-total for Output 4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	15,000	20,000

CHAPTER 4: HOW TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORMS

This chapter will give step-by-step information on how to fill in the application forms, as well as indicate the additional items needed to have a complete application package to submit to the Secretariat. While the Logical Framework, Workplan and Budget described in the previous chapter form the final four tables in the application, they are essential to building a strong application.

4.1 FORM A – PROJECT APPLICATION

Form A contains the main project application. It consists of sections 1 to 6 and Tables 1 and 2, as shown below.

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

- 1.1. **Applicant Government and Applicant Government Institution:** Fill in the name of the country(ies) and institution(s) making the application.
- 1.2. **Project title:** Enter the title of the project. Ideally project titles capture the results intended.
- 1.3. **Budget:** Indicate the total budget being requested from the Specific International Programme. Separately note the country contribution (if any).
- 1.4. **Duration:** Indicate the proposed project duration, expressed in the number of months, noting that 36 months (3 years) is the maximum duration of a project, inclusive of time needed for final reporting and auditing.
- 1.5. **Country status:** Confirm that your country is a Party to the Minamata Convention by mentioning the date of ratification or accession. Further indicate whether your country is a developing country, country with an economy in transition, a small island developing state or a least developed country.
- 1.6. **Relevant Convention Articles:** Mention the specific articles (and relevant paras and annexes) that the project will contribute towards.
- 1.7. **Project Summary [maximum 350 words]:** Present a summary of your project. The summary should include the rationale for the project and its intended impact. It should describe how these will be achieved by describing the overall outcome, outputs, and activities as set forth in the project logical framework. Applicant Governments should also indicate how the project will improve national capacity in implementing the obligations under the Convention and mention key partners in implementation.

It is important that this summary is developed so that it can be publicly disseminated as a stand-alone item. The summary should be developed in a manner that is easily understood.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Expand on the project summary provided in section 1.7 structured as follows:

- 2.1. **Rationale/justification [maximum 500 words]:** Explain why this project is important and necessary for your country's ability to implement the Convention. Outline the result it intends to bring about, the context of work, and the rationale for the project. This may include:

- Giving an overview of the status quo and the problem to be addressed based on data and insights from existing reports such as Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs).
- Outlining how the project addresses the identified problem.
- Explaining why and how your country has identified this work for priority action to be able to implement the Minamata obligations.
- Linking to other efforts at the national level to strengthen implementation of the Convention, or other aspects of capacity-building.
- Describing how the project builds on previous initiatives and projects, established mechanisms and draws on lessons learned, and how.

Indicate if your country is undertaking/has undertaken a GEF MIA and/or an ASGM NAP. If that is the case, add additional information in section 5 'Related Projects'.

2.2. Expected results [maximum 750 words]: Explain what this project will achieve by listing and describing the concrete outputs proposed for support from the Specific International Programme in a clearly structured manner. For each output the following details will need to be provided:

- A description of the activities that will take place under each output as well as their sequence and timing will need to be provided. Note that this text links directly into Tables 1 and 2, the Logical Framework and Workplan.
- The roles and responsibilities of all involved stakeholders must be detailed, including partners if such are foreseen.
- An explanation of how these outputs and activities will improve the capacity of your country to implement its obligations under the Minamata Convention. The proposed outputs should strengthen capacity-building at the country level and strengthen technical know-how and its application. Make specific reference to the articles, paras and annexes (as appropriate) that each output will contribute to.
- Mention any innovative or likely show-case approaches that the project employs or results that the project expects to achieve.

2.3. Project management [maximum 500 words]: Provide a comprehensive description of project management arrangements. Indicate the institution responsible for the management of the project. If partners are involved, explain how. Partners could be intergovernmental organization(s), governmental entity(ies), or other actors such as non-governmental organization(s), or the regional and sub-regional centres established under the Basel Convention and Stockholm Convention.

To ensure that all partners fulfil their respective responsibilities with respect to the project, the project team should consider the necessary formal and informal arrangements. For example, it should be specified if a partner is required to take the lead on specific outputs and/or provide data on results for monitoring and evaluation.

Applicant Governments may wish to include an organizational diagram that presents the project implementation structure. Applications should describe the composition, roles and responsibilities, as well as how decisions are made, as appropriate, for the following:

- Project Focal Point and government authority implementing the project;
- Roles and lines of responsibility of project team members;
- Partners, if they are involved, and highlighting the partner's responsibility in the project;
- A project Steering Committee or Project Coordination Committee (if applicable).

The description should indicate how the project will ensure both accountability of, and coordination between, different relevant national authorities and partners. An example of the organizational diagram is as below:

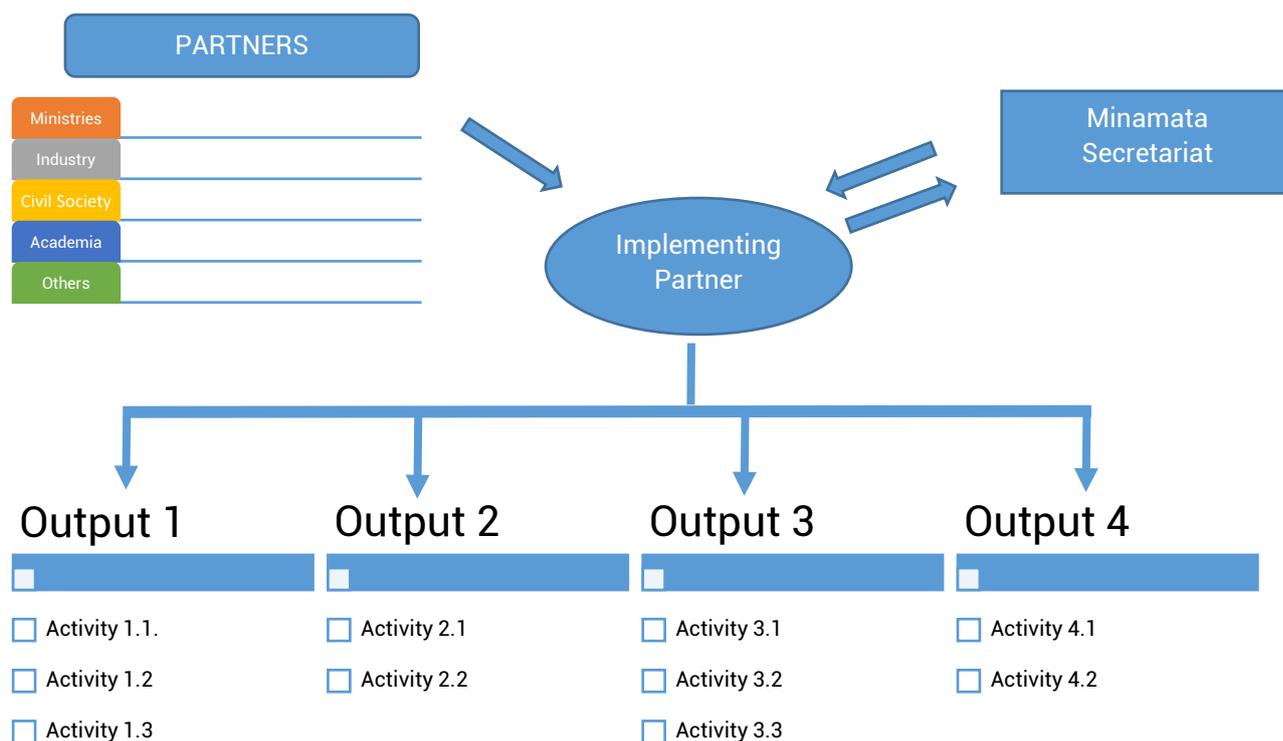


Figure 5: Sample organizational diagram

2.4. Project Partners: Provide details of partners you may want to engage. Partners could be intergovernmental organization(s), governmental entity(ies), non-governmental organization(s), or regional and sub-regional centres established under the Basel Convention and Stockholm Convention. Add rows in Form A for partners (if multiple) in order to list them separately.

2.5. Budget and funding summary: List the budget for each proposed output, as described in Form B, the activity-based budget. The budget and funding summary present the requested amount from the Specific International Programme. If the Applicant Government will make a contribution itself, this is to be captured here. Note that co-financing from the Applicant Government or another entity is not required, but there may be cases where co-financing makes sense.

3. PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS

Expand on the following key project considerations. See Chapter 2 of these guidelines for the appraisal framework that will guide the Governing Board in its decision-making on project applications.

3.1. Expected impact [maximum 500 words]: Provide an indication of the scale of the potential environmental and health impact following the implementation of the project.

Impact can also be illustrated through an exploration of how the project will assist to make progress towards fulfilling key obligations of the Minamata Convention, including through potential mercury reduction.

When outlining the likely impact of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What is expected to happen as a long-term result of the project?
- What difference is the activity expected to make to your country's ability to implement Minamata provisions?

- Can you quantify how many people are expected to benefit? Or another quantitative or qualitative indicator?
- Does the project offer safeguards that it will not support/generate adverse environmental effects?

3.2. Sustainability [maximum 350 words]: Describe here how national capacity is supported by the Specific International Programme is contributes to the longer-term capacity of the country to implement Minamata obligations.

The measures in this regard could include:

- Engage national staff (rather than only consultants) in the analytical and planning processes to enable institutional learning and later replication of the project.
- Share regular updates of progress and solicit formal feedback from stakeholders to build common knowledge and build a common experience and expertise pool.
- Establish formal or more ad hoc framework (decision/decreed) or soft institutional mechanisms (knowledge management, inventories and data bases, technical manuals and oversight registers) through the project to support the implementation of the Convention.

3.3. National ownership [maximum 500 words]: Describe how the project is country-driven, in support of national priorities and engages at the national level (and if applicable, how it engages the regional context).

This section serves to allow the Applicant Government to provide all evidence possible to show the proposed project is in support of national priorities, is nationally driven, responds to urgent national needs, and to show the overall engagement on mercury and Minamata matters.

Here elements of the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste, and particularly for mercury, could be indicated too, such as efforts at national mainstreaming and the role of industry. This section could also describe other stakeholders from the national context being drawn into the work of the project such as from academic, research and advocacy, or the private sector.

This section could also mention possible Applicant Government contributions to the proposed projects, whether financial or in-kind, noting that it is not mandatory for applications to the Specific International Programme to indicate co-financing.

3.4. Gender [maximum 350 words]: Demonstrate how the project addresses gender considerations. The project should address women's as well as men's concerns and experiences in the context of mercury management as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

It will be useful to include gender indicators and targets in the Logical Framework reflecting activities such as:

- Generating sex-disaggregated data that reflects the impacts of mercury pollution.
- Planning and organising awareness raising activities that educate relevant stakeholders, such as the general public, on the gender-differentiated and socially-determined impacts of mercury management. Activities may include producing information materials and media that contains gender specific information and ensuring that in-person activities are held at times that women are able to attend.
- Promoting multi-stakeholder approaches to ensure effective participation of different groups, including women, in policy development and decision making. The inclusion of women brings to the table different experiences and perspectives that would serve to strengthen proposed policies and proposed activities

- Creating terms of reference for project staff that ensure equal opportunity for women and men, and where applicable, require skills/expertise in gender
- Monitoring benefits, participation, and feedback among women and men during project activities and incorporate remedial action that promotes gender equality as appropriate. This can be carried out through evaluation forms are distributed during each project activity, as appropriate, to collect information on each participant's gender, previous engagement in similar activities and perceived relevance and improvements that can be carried out.

3.5. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Describe how the project contributes to the Applicant Government's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, making reference to specific Goals as appropriate.

4. IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

4.1. Funding sources: Indicate whether the Applicant Government will make a confirmed contribution to the project. If contributions of cash or in-kind have been confirmed, note their amount or value.

Indicate whether funding has been received or requested from the GEF (to support Minamata Convention activities) or the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening, as well as funding received or requested at the national and international level, including from other governments, intergovernmental organizations, foundations and the private sector.

Note also if this project or the activities proposed in the project, have been previously submitted for funding or in-kind donations from sources, other than the GEF or the Special Programme.

4.2 Monitoring and reporting, evaluation and audit: Monitoring, reporting, evaluation and audit are necessary elements of sound project management and oversight. Project monitoring is done constantly by the project managers. Project activities and progress should be monitored, and activities, outputs, and completion dates should be reported. Monitoring and evaluation should also include several indicators or targets. Such indicators may include:

- Performance of the project against its defined objectives;
- Capacity of the project to target its beneficiaries;
- Stakeholders and sectoral involvement, as required, in the project implementation;
- Sustainability of the project and follow-up;

Monitoring, reporting, evaluation, and financial audit should be listed as a separate output in the logical framework, workplan and budget. The budget for monitoring, evaluation and audit should not exceed USD 15,000.

Monitoring and reporting plan [maximum 100 words]: Explain here how you plan to monitor the delivery of this project. Project activities and progress should be monitored according to indicators or targets. The plan must be based on the objectives identified in the project description and the project workplan and the mandatory six-monthly reporting. During the implementation phase, the Project Focal Point will be required to submit narrative progress reports in June and December of each year, and an-end-of project a final narrative report based on pre-set templates. Six-monthly financial reports and an-end-of project financial report will also need to be submitted.

Evaluation plan: Based on project size, indicate whether your project is to undergo a terminal review or a terminal evaluation.

For projects up to the value of USD 150,000 make provision for a terminal review of the project. The terminal review falls under the responsibility of the Applicant Government and can be done internally

or externally.² The amount budgeted for the terminal review may be around USD 2,000 but should not exceed USD 4,000. The UN has Evaluation Norms and Standards³ to which contracted evaluators are bound. UNEP evaluations and reviews consider nine specific criteria⁴: strategic relevance; quality of project design; nature of external context; effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the provision of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; financial management; efficiency; monitoring and reporting; sustainability; and factors affecting project performance and cross-cutting issues. **Additional criteria can be proposed as appropriate. More information on the evaluation criteria can be found [here](#).**

For projects between USD 151,000 to USD 250,000, describe in this section that the Secretariat will retain funding and that the Secretariat will make provision for an independent evaluation of the project (Refer to section 1.10 for further information)

Audit arrangements [maximum 100 words]: The requirements of UNEP's standard legal instruments apply to audit arrangements. In accordance with the prescriptions of these instruments, audits may be required at the end of the project's implementation. For that purpose, the budget for an audit should not exceed USD 5,000. The auditing arrangements must comply with acceptable international standards. In cases where the project is delivered through a Government Institution, the auditing arrangements for that Government Institution apply to the project. In cases where the project is not delivered through a Government Institution or cannot fall under the auditing arrangements for the Government, the Applicant Government is required to describe the alternative auditing arrangements. When applicable, the auditor would be required to make an audit report of project expenditures after the completion of the project.

In any event, UNEP has the right, at its own expense, to have the records of the project reviewed and audited, and thus project documentation is to be kept on file for 10 years after project closure.

4.3. Risks and mitigation measures [maximum 250 words]: List the factors or conditions, and challenges that are likely to affect the successful achievement of the project objective, outcome or outputs. These risks could be institutional, financial, administrative, technical and/or political. Kindly also identify the mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce each risk. Indicate how the project managers would ensure successful implementation (strategies).

Risk 1: Delays in submission of sectoral information.

Mitigation measure 1: Regular contact with sectoral resource persons to ensure sound awareness of the required information and to provide assistance in obtaining information as required.

Risk 2: Lack of acceptance of alternative products by professionals

Mitigation measure 2: Education and awareness campaign along with demonstrations of the suitability of alternatives.

5. RELATED PROJECTS

GEF: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COUNTRY'S GEF MINAMATA INITIAL ASSESSMENTS: Include here all relevant information if your country is undertaking a GEF MIA. This includes, the GEF MIA project number, project title and project objective, and the Status of the MIA (is it ongoing or is it completed).

² If in-house capacity is not available, the Applicant Government may wish to identify, for example, an academic institution, a research centre, and independent consultant or a non-governmental organisation for this task.

³ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

⁴ UNEP Evaluation Criteria- <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/evaluation-criteria-and-ratings>

List reports, if relevant, pertaining to the MIA and include as annex as relevant. Also explain how this project build on and links to the GEF MIA outcome. Lastly, indicate why this project falls outside of the GEF mandate.

GEF: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COUNTRY'S ASGM NATIONAL ACTION PLAN: Include here all relevant information if your country is undertaking a GEF NAP. This includes, the GEF NAP project number, project title and project objective, and the status of the NAP (is it ongoing or is it completed). List reports, if relevant, pertaining to the NAP and include as annex as relevant. Also explain how this project build on and links to the GEF NAP outcome. Lastly, indicate why this project falls outside of GEF NAP implementation.

GEF: DESCRIPTION OF OTHER GEF PROJECTS TO SUPPORT COUNTRY CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE MINAMATA CONVENTION: Include here a description of other GEF projects, if any, to implement the obligations of the Minamata Convention. Complete the table for current and previous projects. Provide the time frame, funding and framework of such projects, as well as details on how the outcome of the previous and ongoing projects can provide a basis for, support or build upon the outcomes of the proposed project under the Specific International Programme.

SPECIAL PROGRAMME: DESCRIPTION OF SPECIAL PROGRAMME PROJECTS TO SUPPORT INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING: Include here a description of any current or previous Special Programme projects, including a description of any activities therein to implement the obligations of the Minamata Convention. Provide the time frame, funding and framework of such projects, as well as details on how the outcome of the previous and ongoing projects can provide a basis for, support or build upon the outcomes of the proposed project under the Specific International Programme.

OTHER PROJECTS: DESCRIPTION OF OTHER PROJECTS TO SUPPORT COUNTRY CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE MINAMATA CONVENTION: Include here a description of other projects, if any, supported by sources other than the GEF or the Special Programme to implement the obligations of the Minamata Convention. Complete the table for current and previous projects. Provide the time frame, funding and framework of such projects, as well as details on how the outcome of the previous and ongoing projects can support or build upon the outcomes of the proposed project under the Specific International Programme.

6. CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSION

Make sure that the checklist for submission is complete. Refer to Chapter 2 of these guidelines for further details.

4.2 FORM B – PROJECT ACTIVITY-BASED BUDGET

Form B (the Project Budget) is an excel form, for the Applicant Government to reflect the financial information related to the budget of the project. It consists of 4 tables each on a different excel sheet, as further described below.

The Specific International Programme can fund projects between USD 50,000 and USD 250,000. Provide all figures in United States dollars (USD) and per year. Budgets in other currencies cannot be considered. Budgets should reflect the amount requested from the Specific International Programme, as well as other financial or in-kind contributions, if such funds are provided.⁵ The budget must be developed as an activity-based budget that aligns exactly with the project Logical Framework and Workplan.

Form B includes the following tables:

Table 1: Budget Summary

Summarize here funding and, if relevant, in-kind contributions from all sources of funding.

Table 2: Specific Trust Fund

This table captures only costs to be covered by the Specific International Programme. It is set out by year, and in USD. List here the cost for each proposed **output and activity on a separate line** (i.e., this is an activity-based budget), noting that the columns refer to different class codes, such as: a) staff and other personnel costs, b) contractual services, c) equipment and d) travel. This budget format is required according to UN financial rules and regulations. See the tab on class explanation for more information.

Table 3: Applicant Government Contribution, if applicable

If there is a contribution from the Applicant Government, provide the details of this contribution here. If possible, provide the breakdown of the budget by proposed output and activity, by year and in USD.

Table 4: Class Explanation

This tab provides examples for the class codes. For example: travel includes workshops and meetings.

Further Notes on Budget Classes

- It is expected that Applicant Governments that decide to manage their projects themselves should be able to ensure project management support without having to devote funds from the Specific International Programme for administrative costs.
- Enhancing national capacity for implementation requires a minimum level of commitment, notably, from an administrative and logistical perspective, it is expected that Applicant Governments will provide the necessary administrative and logistical support. Therefore, normal operational and running costs such as premise, vehicles, fuel etc. are not eligible for support.
- Specialised and technical equipment should account for no more than 10 per cent of the budget. In due cases, a maximum of 25 per cent for specialised and technical equipment could be considered by the Governing Board. For these exceptional cases, kindly provide a description of the necessary equipment and appropriate justification for the equipment as an

⁵ Such "costs" should also be reflected as in-kind contributions in Form B.

Annex to your application. Include information on the relevant procurement processes, which must comply with the United Nations principles on procurement of highest quality, economy and efficiency, and that procurement will be based on an assessment of competitive quotations, bids, or proposals. Note the ownership of any equipment purchased through this budget remains with UNEP through the life of the project, and requirements for inventory, insurance, and other safeguards will need to be adhered to. The Secretariat generally intends to transfer to the partner the ownership of the equipment financed by the project once the project is completed and once all the obligations of the legal agreement have been fulfilled.

- The budget for monitoring, review/evaluation and audit in total shall not exceed USD15,000.

The following costs are not eligible for support:

- Recurrent or running institutional costs, including the rental of office space.
- Costs not directly related to strengthening national capacity to implement the obligations of the Minamata Convention.
- Wages of civil servants.
- Hospitality costs, for example, costs in connection with receptions given to participants in workshops, conference and seminars.
- Office equipment and furniture, vehicles, fuel, electricity, etc.
- Costs for individual items which are disproportional to the budget. If such costs are part of the project, they must be mentioned in the budgets and provided by other funding sources.

Add as annex(es) to the Application the following if they are requested in the budget:

- Indicative information regarding group trainings/meetings/conferences, such as tentative dates, location, the number of participants, and approximate cost of travel.
- A list of non-expendable equipment, including the estimated costs, and a justification if equipment costs are over 10% of project budget (not to exceed 25%).
- Note that if a project is approved to be implemented, the Government must retain relevant job descriptions of project personnel, recruitment process records, and terms of reference of consultants.

4.3 FORM C – LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Form C (Letter of Transmittal) is key to the application submission. Scanned signatures from the Applicant Government Official, the Minamata Convention National Focal Point and the GEF Operational Focal Point are needed for the application to be considered complete.

APPLICANT GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SIGNATURE: The Applicant Government Official is to certify, sign and date the application. Also provide the details of the official and contact information.

NATIONAL FOCAL POINT SIGNATURE: The Minamata Convention National Focal Point is to sign and date the application to confirm having been consulted on its preparation and development. Also provide the details of the National Focal Point and contact information.

GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT SIGNATURE: The GEF Operational Focal Point is to sign and date the application to confirm having been consulted on its preparation and development. Also provide the details of the Focal Point and contact information.