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**United Nations  
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**Intergovernmental negotiating committee  
to prepare a global legally binding instrument  
on mercury**

**Seventh session**

Dead Sea, Jordan, 10–15 March 2016

Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**Report on the activities of the interim secretariat during  
the period prior to the entry into force of the Convention:  
cooperative activities with other relevant actors**

## **Progress report of the Global Environment Facility**

### **Note by the secretariat**

1. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury, in paragraph 11 of its resolution requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to provide the interim secretariat services to support the Committee and its activities until the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, while in paragraph 13 of its resolution requested the Executive Director to facilitate activities at regional and country level to support implementation during the interim period in an effective and efficient manner. Paragraph 16 of its resolution on arrangements in the interim period (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/4, annex I), invited the Council of the Global Environment Facility to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition that are signatories to the Convention in undertaking activities, particularly enabling activities, to facilitate early implementation and ratification of the Convention. A report on these activities is set out in the annex, without formal editing by the secretariat.

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\* UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/1.

Annex



**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Report of the Global Environment Facility  
to the Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental  
Negotiating Committee on Mercury

Global Environment Facility  
January 11, 2016

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## Acronym List

ASGM	Artisanal Small-Scale Gold Mining
BAT	Best Available Techniques
BET	Best Environmental Practices
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Country Support Program
EA	Enabling Activity
FSP	Full-sized Project
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
KM	Knowledge Management
MIA	Mercury Initial Assessment
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	Medium-sized Project
NAP	National Action Plan
NPFE	National Portfolio Formulation Exercise
OFP	Operational Focal Points
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutant
PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride
RBM	Results-Based Management
SGP	Small Grants Programme
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UPOPs	Unintentionally Produced Persistent Organic Pollutants
VCM	Vinyl Chloride Monomer

## Executive Summary

1. The Minamata Convention on Mercury, adopted by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in October 2013<sup>1</sup>, is the most recent Convention served by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and seeks to limit human and environmental exposure to mercury by reducing and eliminating mercury emissions and releases globally. The GEF was included in the financial mechanism by Article 13 of the Minamata Convention<sup>2</sup>. The GEF Instrument was amended by the Fifth GEF Assembly, held in May 2014, to incorporate the Minamata Convention. This report presents the work of the GEF on mercury between July 2014 and October 2015.
2. In response to the guidance from sixth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC6) held in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2014, the GEF eligibility criteria for the enabling activities, which are Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs), artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM) National Action Plan (NAP) development, have been revised to include non-signatories that are taking bona fide steps to ratify the Minamata Convention. As of November 2015, the GEF has cumulatively supported these enabling activities in 65 countries to facilitate ratification.
3. Between July 2014 and October 2015, the GEF has programmed \$24.6 million<sup>3</sup> in mercury projects, including, MIA, ASGM NAP, capacity building, healthcare waste management, and reduction the production and use of mercury in manufacturing processes. This amount is 17 percent of the GEF-6 programming targets of \$141 million for the Convention on Mercury.
4. The projects approved during the reporting period are expected to achieve 360 tonnes of mercury phase out, which is 36 percent of the GEF-6 target for the reduction of 1,000 tonnes of mercury. The target was developed taking into account the use of mercury in the vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) sector in China and the usage of mercury in the artisanal and small scale gold mining (ASGM) sector.

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/3

<sup>2</sup> Article 13 (6). The Mechanism shall include: (a) The Global Environment Facility Trust Fund; and (b) A specific international Programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance.

<sup>3</sup> This number includes only the GEF grant amount, not associated fees or Project Preparation Grant (PPG).

## Introduction

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) serves as a financial mechanism for a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, including the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Convention of Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The Minamata Convention is the newest Convention served by the GEF. The Convention seeks to limit human and environmental exposure to mercury by reducing and eliminating mercury emissions and releases globally.
2. Consistent with the resolution on financial arrangements in the final act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury<sup>4</sup>, during the interim period, the GEF is providing support to countries towards early ratification and implementation of the convention.
3. This report presents the work of the GEF on mercury between July 2014 and October 2015.

## GEF's Support to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

### GEF's Role in the Convention

4. The Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted on 10 October 2013, and the GEF was included in the financial mechanism in Article 13 of the Convention.
5. The sixth replenishment period of the GEF (GEF-6) began on 1 July 2014. For the GEF-6 period of 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2018, \$141 million has been allocated to mercury projects. The allocation of GEF resources for the Minamata Convention responds to guidance from the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), and eventually guidance from the Conference of the Parties (COP), in line with the GEF-6 Chemicals and Waste Strategy<sup>5</sup>.

### Guidance and GEF Response

6. In regard to the GEF, Article 13 of the Minamata Convention states the following:

*“The Global Environment Facility Trust Fund shall provide new, predictable, adequate and timely financial resources to meet costs in support of implementation of this Convention as agreed by the Conference of the Parties. For the purposes of this Convention, the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund shall be operated under the guidance of and be accountable to the Conference of the Parties. The Conference of the Parties shall provide guidance on overall strategies, policies, programme priorities and eligibility for access to and utilization of financial resources. In addition, the Conference of the Parties shall provide guidance on an indicative list of categories of activities that could receive support from the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund. The Global*

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<sup>4</sup> UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/4

<sup>5</sup> GEF/A.5/07/Rev.01

*Environment Facility Trust Fund shall provide resources to meet the agreed incremental costs of global environmental benefits and the agreed full costs of some enabling activities.”*

7. The INC 6 held in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2014, provided the guidance to the GEF to apply the following eligibility criteria in providing financial support to the developing countries and countries with economies in transition for activities under the Minamata Convention on Mercury<sup>6</sup>:
  - (a) Parties to the Convention;
  - (b) Signatories to the Convention in undertaking activities, particularly enabling activities, to facilitate early implementation and ratification of the Convention;
  - (c) Non-signatories to the Convention, for enabling activities, provided that any such State is taking meaningful steps towards becoming a Party as evidenced by a letter from the relevant minister to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and to the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the GEF.
  
8. In response to the above INC6 guidance, the GEF Council approved new eligibility criteria in January 2015. The GEF secretariat circulated this revision of criteria among the relevant GEF Agencies<sup>7</sup> in February 2015. The Interim Minamata Convention Secretariat also shared two model letters with these GEF Agencies, United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the World Health Organization, to be submitted from non-signatories on their meaningful steps towards becoming a Party (Annex 1 and Annex 2).
  
9. The INC6 also requested the GEF to consider the following activities when providing financial resources to developing countries and countries with economies in transition:
  - (a) Enabling activities as outlined in the Initial Guidelines for Enabling Activities for the Minamata Convention on Mercury of the GEF, particularly Minamata Convention initial assessment activities and national action plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining, to facilitate ratification;
  - (b) Activities to implement the provisions of the Convention, affording priority to those that:
    - (i) Relate to legally-binding obligations;
    - (ii) Facilitate early implementation on entry into force; and
    - (iii) Allow for reduction in mercury emissions and releases and address the health and environmental impacts of mercury.
  
10. The GEF-6 Chemicals and Waste Strategy has two strategic objectives to meet the goals of eliminating harmful chemicals and waste. As for mercury, two programs support the activities requested by the INC6. Program 2 supports enabling activities (EA) and promote their integration into national budgets and planning processes, national and sector policies and actions and global monitoring. Program 4 is for reduction or elimination of anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury to the environment. The GEF has programmed \$141 million for mercury projects under these two programs of GEF-6.

<sup>6</sup> Annex III, UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.6/24

<sup>7</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and World Bank (WB).

11. During the reporting period, 23 projects with the GEF grant amount of \$25.6 million have been supported including EA, medium-sized projects (MSP)<sup>8</sup>, and full-sized projects (FSP)<sup>9</sup>. The supported projects are consistent with the guidance from the INC6, and GEF-6 Chemicals and Waste Strategy and guidelines for enabling activities for the Minamata Convention. The projects have provided assistance to countries to develop initial assessments of their mercury issues, mercury reduction or elimination, and sustainable alternatives (see next section).
12. Annex 3 summarizes guidance from INC6 and GEF responses. Annex 4 summarizes guidance from the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury and GEF responses.

#### Communication with the Interim Minamata Convention Secretariat

13. Since the adoption of the Convention in October 2013, the GEF Secretariat has initiated formal cooperation and communication with the Interim Minamata Convention Secretariat in order to enhance coordination, share information and collaborate on issues related to the implementation of the Convention.
14. The GEF and the Interim Minamata Convention Secretariat had an in-person meeting during the GEF Chemicals and Waste Task Force Meeting in May 2015 that included representatives from the GEF implementing and project agencies, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the GEF, and the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions. Participants discussed the GEF-6 Chemicals and Waste Strategy, and shared information on enabling activities and project ideas.
15. The GEF and the Interim Minamata Convention Secretariat had another in-person meeting after the fourth International Conference on Chemical Management in October 2015. This meeting discussed preparation for the INC7 to be held in Dead Sea, Jordan, in March 2016, especially the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Conference of the Parties of the Minamata Convention and the GEF Council according to the conclusion of INC6.
16. The GEF joined the Minamata Convention regional workshops to support countries in the interim period until the Convention enters into force. During the reporting period, the GEF participated in the following regional workshops:
  - (a) Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago (January 2015)
  - (b) Pacific, Samoa (January 2015)
  - (c) Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Belarus (February 2015).
17. The GEF also joined the back-to-back Minamata and BRS Conventions Regional Meetings in 2015. The GEF participated in the following regional meetings:
  - (a) Asia and the Pacific, Indonesia (March 2015)

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<sup>8</sup> Medium-sized projects are projects under \$2 million.

<sup>9</sup> Full-sized projects are project over \$2 million

- (b) Africa, Kenya (March 2015)
- (c) Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Slovakia (April 2015)
- (d) Latin America and the Caribbean, Uruguay (April 2015).

## GEF's Contributions to the Implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in the Interim Period

### Projects Approved in GEF-6 (July 2014–October 2015)

18. During the reporting period, the GEF has programmed \$24.6 million in mercury projects, including, MIA, ASGM NAP, capacity building, healthcare waste management, and reduction the production and use of mercury in manufacturing processes. This amount is 17 percent of the GEF-6 programming targets of \$141 million for the Convention on Mercury.
19. The GEF has approved 20 Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) projects and two artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM) National Action Plan (NAP) projects in 33 countries with the total amount of \$8.3 million (see Table 1 and Figure 1). The number of countries supported by the GEF for MIAs and/or ASGM NAP becomes 58 through GEF-5 and GEF-6. Among these countries, eleven countries have already accepted or ratified the convention. Annex 5 summarizes the project approved during reporting period.
20. GEF also supported two FSPs and a MSP to help capacity building, healthcare waste management, and emission reduction form manufacturing process. These projects are expected to achieve 360 tonnes of mercury phase out, which is 36 percent of the GEF-6 target for the reduction of 1,000 tonnes of mercury.
21. One FSP in China aims to decrease the production and use of mercury by 50 percent per ton of vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) production in 2020, which will result in the reduction of 360 tons of mercury usage in polyvinyl chloride (PVC) industries. This will be achieved through optimizing the existing production and achieving 90 percent recovery of mercury in production processes and promoting mercury-free catalyst and trial application as the initial step of commercialization. The project will promote technology transfer and investment for the widespread application of best available techniques and best environmental practices (BAT/BEP). Further descriptions of FSPs and MSP are provided in Annex 6.

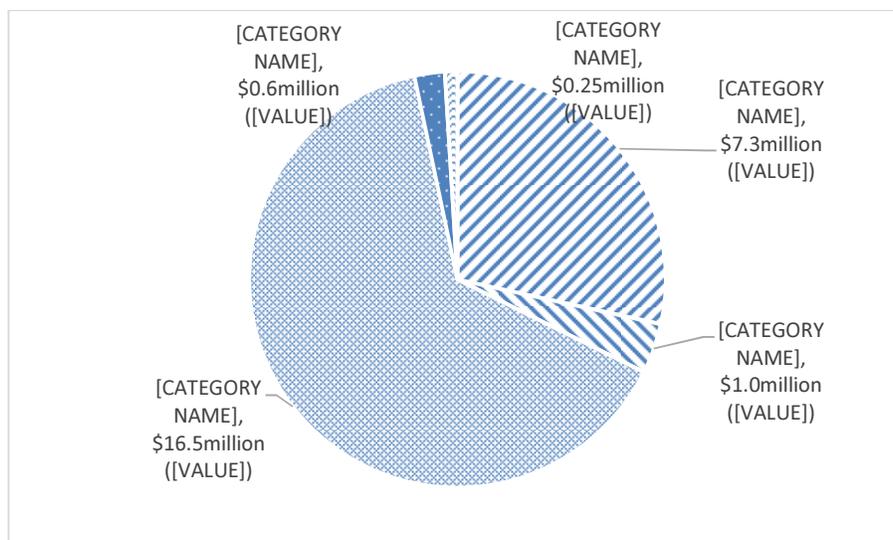
**Table 1: GEF Funded Mercury Projects in GEF-5 (July 2010 – June 2014) and GEF-6 (July 2014 – October 2015)**

Project Type	Number of Projects		GEF Grant Amount*	
	GEF-5 (July 2010-June 2014)	GEF-6 (July 2014-Oct 2015)	GEF-5	GEF-6
Enabling Activities**	20	20	\$ 9,456,868	\$8,297,045
Full-sized Projects	6	2	\$1,354,768	\$16,750,000
Medium-sized Projects	14	1	\$11,309,900	\$600,000

\*These totals include only the GEF grant, not associated fees. For the medium- and full-sized projects, the total amounts include the funding allocated to mercury components only, not the full project amount.

\*\* A number of the enabling activities projects includes multiple countries so while the total projects are 40, the number of countries covered is 71.

**Figure 1: GEF-6 (July 2014 – October 2015) mercury funding allocation by project purposes**



Cross Cutting Project

22. In GEF-6, there has been an emphasis on the importance of multi-focal area and cross-cutting projects that address and apply resources to several problems at once. These include projects and programs that incorporate biodiversity, climate change mitigation, and international waters. Within the chemicals and waste focal area, the cross-cutting projects can involve work with other Conventions that aim to reduce or eliminate Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and other chemicals.
  
23. For example, one FSP in Colombia will contribute to the convention obligations of the country in two chemicals conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Stockholm Convention, and takes advantage of the integrated chemicals and waste focal area and seeks to introduce BAT/BET to reduce the release of mercury and unintentionally produced POPs (UPOPs) from the treatment of healthcare waste, the processing of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, secondary metal processing and biomass burning. The project takes an innovative holistic approach to achieve environmentally sound management of mercury and UPOPs-generating waste in the country.

**GEF-Wide Policies and Programs**

Small Grants Programme

24. The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), implemented by UNDP on behalf of the GEF partnership, was launched at the time of the Earth Summit in 1992. Through its decentralized country driven approach, the GEF SGP channels its support to civil society for environmental action, by providing grants of up to \$50,000 directly to civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations and indigenous peoples. Since 1992, the program has supported a cumulative total of more than nineteen thousands community-based and CSO-implemented projects across all GEF focal areas. The program is currently active in over one 125 countries, more than half of which are Least Developing Countries and Small Island

Developing States. During the reporting period, 113 projects were under implementation in the chemicals and waste focal area, accounting for about three percent of SGP's current portfolio of 4,051 active projects.

25. During the reporting period, 12 projects related to mercury reduction and management were implemented in Belarus, China, Ghana, Guyana, Malaysia, Nepal, St. Vincent and Grenadines and Suriname, with a total value of \$443,339 in GEF funding and \$541,251 in co-financing leveraged by the SGP. The main activities of these projects have focused on the collection and recycling of e-waste to avoid mercury contamination, awareness raising and campaigns to influence government policies. For example, in Belarus, two projects worked on the collection, recycling and replacement of mercury-containing fluorescent lamps and the installation of Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights, which not only reduce mercury contamination but also increase energy efficiency. In St. Vincent and Grenadines, training was provided to young people on sustainable e-waste management, and a public awareness program was developed and implemented to increase people's knowledge about the e-waste problem.
26. In GEF-6, the SGP seeks to develop local communities' awareness and capacities to address mercury issues. The SGP aims to build upon its experience and lessons learnt together with knowledge from other partners to test and implement good practices to prevent, reduce and eliminate the use or release of mercury, particularly through mercury-contained e-waste collection and management and reducing or removing mercury use or release in ASGM. Further, the SGP seeks to strengthen global partnerships with organizations such as International POPs Elimination Network and others to jointly address mercury issues.

#### National Portfolio Formulation Exercise

27. The National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) is a voluntary exercise undertaken to serve as a priority setting tool for countries and as a guide for GEF Agencies as they assist recipient countries. The NPFE, a component of the Country Support Program (CSP) of the GEF, was continued in GEF-6. At the request of the Operational Focal Points (OFP), the GEF supports the organization of these exercises with up to \$30,000. This activity is to help GEF OFPs to engage main national stakeholders and line ministries, in the planning process for developing national priorities for GEF support.
28. Another component of the CSP is the National Dialogues. These are also voluntary activities that help countries to hold broad stakeholder gatherings to consider national objectives and strategies, as well as national coordination procedures. The National Dialogues that took place during the first year of GEF-6 implementation also contained a session or sessions dedicated to programming of GEF resources.
29. During the reporting period, the GEF Secretariat financed NPFEs in 27 countries. In addition, 12 countries carried out similar programming exercises during their National Dialogues.

#### Expanded Constituency Workshops

30. The expanded constituency workshops include the participation of GEF OFPs, Convention focal points and other key representatives, including CSOs. These meetings allow the participant's interaction with staff from the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies to discuss priority issues, review policies and procedures, and share lessons and experiences from the development and implementation of GEF projects and their integration within national policy frameworks. During the reporting period, 12 expanded constituency workshops were held worldwide.

### Gender

31. The GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming states that: "The GEF recognizes that gender equality is an important goal in the context of the projects that it finances because it advances both the GEF's goals for attaining global environmental benefits and the goal of gender equity and social inclusion." Building on the expertise and experience of GEF Agencies and other partners, the GEF developed the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) in 2014, and since then focused much on delivering on five main areas including: (1) consolidating the GEF Gender Partnership around the effective and collaborative implementation of the GEAP; (2) capacity development on gender mainstreaming at the GEF and other partners; (3) developing gender responsive project cycle and programming processes; (4) systemizing results-based management and ensuring greater accountability for gender mainstreaming; and lastly (5) building the knowledge base on gender related to the GEF 2020 strategy<sup>10</sup> and project portfolio.

32. Specifically, the GEF Secretariat, in coordination with the GEF Agencies, has reviewed and updated the GEF-6 project templates and guidelines, and incorporated a specific section in the templates to describe gender considerations, including approaches and plans to address gender equality and women's empowerment through GEF projects. Templates for the Project Implementation Form, Program Framework Document, and the CEO Endorsement Request have been updated. These project templates are recognized as one of the key tools to enable gender responsive project design and implementation of GEF projects. The chemicals portfolio has generated noticeable impacts on the improvement of the health of women and children through active engagement of both women and men in awareness-raising and capacity-building activities as well as the eradication of exposure to these chemicals. It is critical to design gender-responsive mercury projects, especially in sectors like ASGM, where women play a large role.

### Results-Based Management

33. The GEF's Results-Based Management (RBM) system aims to improve management effectiveness and accountability by defining expected results and targets, monitoring progress toward results, integrating lessons learned into management decisions, and reporting on performance. The GEF has strengthened its RBM system by implementing RBM action plan approved by the GEF Council in October 2014.

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<sup>10</sup> GEF/A.5/10

34. The RBM Action Plan set out a way forward for the GEF to strengthen its RBM system in support of the objectives of the GEF 2020 strategy and the GEF-6 replenishment. Under the Action Plan, the GEF Secretariat, in partnership with the Agencies and Conventions, has committed to pursue five key actions; (1) Review and, where necessary, upgrade all results frameworks at the GEF with a focus on alignment, efficiency, and relevance, (2) Strengthen corporate-level results reporting, (3) Review and upgrade GEF's IT platform to support the RBM system, (4) Review and, where necessary, strengthen management and working capacity for RBM in the GEF Secretariat, and (5) Conduct an independent assessment of the improved RBM system.
35. As for the corporate-level results framework on chemicals and waste, the GEF-6 aims to increase the phase-out, disposal and reduction of releases of POPs, ozone depleting substances, mercury and other chemicals of global concern. The replenishment established a target for reduction of mercury at 1,000 tonnes.

### Knowledge Management

36. Knowledge is a primary asset of the GEF partnership and supports its strategic objectives. The Policy recommendations in the GEF-6 Replenishment stressed the development of a knowledge management (KM) system to improve the GEF partnership's ability to learn by doing and thereby enhance its impact over time. The KM approach and an initial roadmap was presented to the GEF Council in June 2015. The approach articulates that the purpose of KM in the GEF context is to facilitate the capture, exchange and uptake of knowledge within and beyond the GEF Partnership with two key objectives: (1) to inform global, regional and national policy dialogues on options and approaches to reverse the course of environmental degradation, and (2) to improve the impact of GEF-supported projects and programs.
37. The GEF Secretariat established an informal KM Advisory Group, as a sounding board for GEF KM initiatives, with the participation of GEF Council members, the GEF agencies, GEF IEO, STAP, CSO network and convention secretariats, and organized a kick-off workshop right after the GEF Council in October 2015. The KM Advisory Group will guide the preparation of a more detailed KM implementation plan for the GEF Partnership (with clear targets, roles and budgets) including design of a GEF KM system, a forward publications plan, including in-depth technical studies conducted jointly by GEF partners.

### Broadening the GEF Partnership

38. In line with the GEF-5 policy recommendation to broaden the GEF Partnership, the GEF Council agreed, in May 2011, to launch a pilot program to accredit "up to ten" new agencies, to be called GEF Project Agencies, to assist countries in implementing GEF-financed projects. The implementation of the GEF Accreditation Pilot consists of the following three stages:
- Stage I: Value-added Review
  - Stage II: Accreditation Panel review for compliance with the GEF's Fiduciary Standards and Environmental and Social Safeguards including Gender Mainstreaming review, and

Stage III: the signing of necessary agreements with the GEF and the Trustee.

39. Eight new agencies have joined the partnership through the Accreditation Pilot. They are called GEF Project Agencies, and include Conservation International (CI), Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Foreign Economic Cooperation Office of China (FECO), Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade (FUNBIO), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), West African Development Bank (BOAD), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US). As of October 2015, seven of them have completed the Stage III, and one is in the process of finalizing necessary agreements. With their addition, there are 18 Agencies in the GEF partnership.

## Annex 1: Model letter on eligibility on Minamata Initial Assessment

*[To be issued on letterhead of relevant Minister]*

*[Original signed copies to be addressed to Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, P.O. Box 47074 - Nairobi 00100, Kenya, Email: executiveoffice@unep.org and to Ms. Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility at 1818 H Street, NW, Mail Stop P4-400, Washington, DC 20433 USA, Email: secretariat@thegef.org]*

*[Signed copies to be addressed to the GEF Secretariat at secretariat@thegef.org and to the Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention at mercury.chemicals@unep.org]*

*To the attention of:*

- *Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme*
- *Ms. Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility*

*Subject: Steps taken by [name of country] towards becoming a Party to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and request for consideration as eligible for financial support for enabling activities*

At its sixth session held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3 to 7 November 2014, the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury requested the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to apply revised eligibility criteria in providing financial support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for activities under the Minamata Convention on Mercury. In particular, it requested the eligibility for funding be extended for enabling activities to non-signatories to the Convention, provided that any such State is taking meaningful steps towards becoming a Party. Such request was approved by the Council of the GEF in January 2015.

*[Name of country]* was not in a position to sign the Minamata Convention on Mercury before it was closed to signature on 9 October 2014. However, our Government supports the objective of the Minamata Convention to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds and has taken a number of steps at the national level towards becoming a Party and allow for the deposit of the instrument of accession to the Convention. In particular, *[name of country]* has *[select as appropriate]*:

- participated in the sub-regional workshop organized by UNEP *[specify date/place]* and developed in that context a draft national roadmap on the Minamata Convention;
- discussed and/or further elaborated the draft national roadmap with other ministries / stakeholders;
- engaged with UN agencies, intergovernmental and/or non-governmental organizations to discuss possible actions at the national level in support for the accession to and early implementation of the Minamata Convention;
- undertaken a preliminary analysis of key mercury-related issues and/or stakeholders at the national level;
- organized a national interministerial / stakeholder consultation on the Minamata Convention *[specify date/place]*;
- identified the national process for accession to international instruments;
- carried out an initial legal gap analysis in order to identify the regulatory amendments that may be needed for the implementation of the Minamata Convention's provisions;
- Etc.]

In order to adequately prepare for acceding to and effectively implementing the Minamata Convention, our Government would benefit from the enabling activities funded under the GEF as they would allow the identification of the domestic mercury challenges and the extent to which existing legal and regulatory frameworks enable to implement future obligations under the Minamata Convention.

In light of the steps taken by my country towards acceding to the Minamata Convention in line with the requirements to become eligible to financial support for enabling activities, I thank you in advance for supporting our project application for a Minamata Convention Initial Assessment (MIA).

*Signed on [specify date/place] by [Full name, function and official seal of relevant Minister]*

*Cc: Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention and GEF Secretariat*

## Annex 2: Model letter on eligibility on artisanal and small-scale gold mining National Action Plan

### **INTRODUCTORY NOTES:**

#### **Status of the model letter and of notifications submitted before entry into force of the Convention**

- (1) The Global Environment Facility (GEF) *Initial guidelines for enabling activities for the Minamata Convention*<sup>11</sup> state that in the period between adoption of the Convention and the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties “countries eligible to receive GEF funding for the preparation of ASGM National Action Plans (ASGM NAPs) will (...) Notify the Secretariat of the Convention in writing that there is more than insignificant ASGM and processing in its territory”.
- (2) The present document has been prepared by the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention in cooperation with the GEF Secretariat to assist countries prepare such notification and enable them meet the eligibility criteria for funding from the GEF in the period pending entry into force of the Convention.
- (3) While it may be used as a guiding tool, it is not intended to interpret nor to substitute the original authentic texts of the Minamata Convention, nor is it intended to replace any formal notification under Article 3 paragraph 7 following entry into force of the Convention for a Party. Any notification submitted by a country before it becomes a Party does not replace the notification obligation it may have pursuant to paragraph 3 of Article 7 of the Minamata Convention.

#### **Overview of the related provisions under Article 7 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury (see abstract from the Convention text in Annex I)<sup>12</sup>**

- (4) The measures in Article 7 and its associated Annex C apply to artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in which mercury amalgamation is used to extract gold from ore (paragraph 1).
- (5) Each Party that has artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing within its territory, independently of its importance, has the general obligations to take steps to reduce, and where feasible eliminate, the use of mercury and mercury compounds in such mining and processing, as well as the emissions and releases to the environment of mercury from such activities (paragraph 2).
- (6) Further, a Party that at any time determines that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in its territory is more than insignificant, shall notify the Secretariat (paragraph 3). Any such Party shall also develop and implement a national action plan in accordance with Annex C (paragraph 3(a)); submit its national action plan to the Secretariat no later than three years after entry into force of the Convention for it or three years after the notification to the Secretariat, whichever is later (paragraph 3(b)); and thereafter, provide a review every three years of the progress made in meeting its obligations under this Article and include such reviews in its reports submitted pursuant to Article 21 (paragraph 3(c)).
- (7) The process to determine “more than insignificant” with respect to artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing is not prescribed in the Convention. Each Party may use its own criteria in determining whether such activities are more than insignificant within its territory.
- (8) The notification must be done at any time the Party determines artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in its territory is more than insignificant. The notification should therefore be submitted once a country becomes a Party.

<sup>11</sup> Document GEF/C.45/Inf.05/Rev.01

<sup>12</sup> The below overview is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to interpret nor to substitute the original authentic texts of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

**ANNEX I : ABSTRACT FROM THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY**

**Article 7**

**Artisanal and small-scale gold mining**

1. The measures in this Article and in Annex C shall apply to artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in which mercury amalgamation is used to extract gold from ore.
2. Each Party that has artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing subject to this Article within its territory shall take steps to reduce, and where feasible eliminate, the use of mercury and mercury compounds in, and the emissions and releases to the environment of mercury from, such mining and processing.
3. Each Party shall notify the Secretariat if at any time the Party determines that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in its territory is more than insignificant. If it so determines the Party shall:
  - (a) Develop and implement a national action plan in accordance with Annex C;
  - (b) Submit its national action plan to the Secretariat no later than three years after entry into force of the Convention for it or three years after the notification to the Secretariat, whichever is later; and
  - (c) Thereafter, provide a review every three years of the progress made in meeting its obligations under this Article and include such reviews in its reports submitted pursuant to Article 21.
4. Parties may cooperate with each other and with relevant intergovernmental organizations and other entities, as appropriate, to achieve the objectives of this Article. Such cooperation may include:
  - (a) Development of strategies to prevent the diversion of mercury or mercury compounds for use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing;
  - (b) Education, outreach and capacity-building initiatives;
  - (c) Promotion of research into sustainable non-mercury alternative practices;
  - (d) Provision of technical and financial assistance;
  - (e) Partnerships to assist in the implementation of their commitments under this Article;and
  - (f) Use of existing information exchange mechanisms to promote knowledge, best environmental practices and alternative technologies that are environmentally, technically, socially and economically viable.

**ANNEX II : MODEL LETTER OF NOTIFICATION THAT ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE GOLD  
MINING AND PROCESSING IS MORE THAN INSIGNIFICANT**

[Government letterhead]

The Coordinator  
Interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  
Chemicals and Waste Branch  
Division of Technology, Industry and Economics  
United Nations Environment Programme  
11 - 13 chemin des Anémones  
CH - 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva  
SWITZERLAND

Fax: (41 22) 797 3460  
E-mail: mercury.chemicals@unep.org

[Date]

Dear Sir or Madam,

Notification that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing is more than insignificant within [Name of country]

[Name of country] hereby notifies the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in which mercury amalgamation is used to extract gold from ore is more than insignificant within its territory.

Yours faithfully,

[Name and signature  
of SAICM National Focal Point]

**Annex 3: Guidance from INC6 (November 2014) and GEF Response**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Guidance</b>	<b>GEF Response</b>
<p>Report of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury on the work of its sixth session, Annex III</p>	<p>Request the Global Environment Facility to apply the following eligibility criteria in providing financial support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for activities under the Minamata Convention on Mercury:</p> <p>Eligibility criteria</p> <p>(a) Parties to the Convention;</p> <p>(b) Signatories to the Convention in undertaking activities, particularly enabling activities, to facilitate early implementation and ratification of the Convention;</p> <p>(c) Non-signatories to the Convention, for enabling activities, provided that any such State is taking meaningful steps towards becoming a Party as evidenced by a letter from the relevant minister to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and to the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility.</p>	<p>The GEF Council approved new eligibility criteria in January 2015. The GEF Secretariat also circulated this revision of criteria among the GEF Agencies in February 2015.</p> <p>The Interim Minamata Convention Secretariat shared the template of the letter to be submitted from non-signatories on their meaningful steps towards becoming a Party.</p> <p>Based on the new criteria, Botswana, Namibia and Papua New Guinea submitted the letters. Their MIAs were approved accordingly.</p>
<p>Report of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury on the work of its sixth session, Annex III</p>	<p>Request the Global Environment Facility to consider the following activities when providing financial resources to developing countries and countries with economies in transition:</p> <p>(a) Enabling activities as outlined in the Initial Guidelines for Enabling Activities for the Minamata Convention on Mercury of the Global Environment Facility, particularly Minamata Convention initial assessment activities and national action plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining, to facilitate ratification;</p> <p>(b) Activities to implement the</p>	<p>The GEF-6 Chemicals and Waste Strategy has two strategic objectives to meet the goals of eliminating harmful chemicals and waste. As for mercury, two programs support the activities requested by the INC6; Program 2 to support enabling activities and promote their integration into national budgets and planning processes, national and sector policies and actions and global monitoring, and Program 4 for reduction or elimination of anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury to the environment. The GEF has programmed \$141 million for mercury projects under these two programs of GEF-6.</p> <p>During the reporting period, 23</p>

Source	Guidance	GEF Response
	<p>provisions of the Convention, affording priority to those that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Relate to legally-binding obligations;</li> <li>(ii) Facilitate early implementation on entry into force;</li> <li>(iii) Allow for reduction in mercury emissions and releases and address the health and environmental impacts of mercury.</li> </ul>	<p>projects with the GEF grant amount of \$25.6 million have been supported including enabling activities and medium- and full-sized projects. The supported projects are consistent with the guidance from the INC6, and GEF-6 Chemicals and Waste Strategy and guidelines for enabling activities for the Minamata Convention. The projects have provided assistance to countries to develop initial assessments of their mercury issues, mercury reduction or elimination, and sustainable alternatives.</p>

#### Annex 4: Guidance from the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury (October 2013) and GEF Response

Source	Guidance	GEF Response
Minamata Convention Article 13	<p>“The Global Environment Facility Trust Fund shall provide new, predictable, adequate and timely financial resources to meet costs in support of implementation of this Convention as agreed by the Conference of the Parties. For the purposes of this Convention, the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund shall be operated under the guidance of and be accountable to the Conference of the Parties. The Conference of the Parties shall provide guidance on overall strategies, policies, programme priorities and eligibility for access to and utilization of financial resources. In addition, the Conference of the Parties shall provide guidance on an indicative list of categories of activities that could receive support from the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund. The Global Environment Facility Trust Fund shall provide resources to meet the agreed incremental costs of global environmental benefits and the agreed full costs of some enabling activities.”</p>	<p>The GEF during the negotiations of the 6th replenishment allocated \$141 million of new funding to support the Minamata Convention during the 6th replenishment period (GEF-6), from July 2014 to June 2015. From this allocation, the GEF has been providing resources to meet the agreed incremental costs of global environmental benefits and the agreed full costs of some enabling activities.</p> <p>The GEF-6 Chemicals and Waste Strategy includes specific programs for mercury.</p>

Source	Guidance	GEF Response
Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury	“Invites the Council of the Global Environment Facility to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition that are signatories to the Convention in undertaking activities, particularly enabling activities, to facilitate early implementation and ratification of the Convention;”	<p>The 44th GEF Council in June 2013 allocated \$10 million for enabling activities under the Minamata Convention in the GEF-5 period, specifically MIAs and ASGM NAPs. Guidelines have been developed for application of these projects. In GEF-6, \$30 million in additional resources has been allocated for these enabling activities.</p> <p>The initial guidelines may be amended by the INC or COP as required.</p> <p>The guidelines can be found at:  <a href="http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/9983">http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/9983</a></p>
Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury	“Invites the Council of the Global Environment Facility to give effect to the inclusion of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund as a part of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention and to recommend to the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, as a matter of urgency, that it make any adjustments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility that are necessary to allow it to fulfil its role in the financial mechanism;”	<p>At the 5th GEF Assembly in May 2014, the GEF Instrument was amended to include the Minamata Convention in the list of conventions served by the GEF. The new paragraph 6e of the GEF instrument contains the following text:</p> <p>“(e) Operate as one of the entities comprising the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, pursuant to its Article 13, paragraphs 5, 6 and 8. In such respects, the GEF shall operate under the guidance of, and be accountable to the Conference of the Parties, which shall provide guidance on overall strategies, policies, program priorities and eligibility for access to and utilization of financial resources. In addition, the GEF shall receive guidance from the Conference of the Parties on an indicative list of categories of activities that could receive support; and shall provide resources to meet the agreed incremental costs of global environmental benefits and the agreed full costs of some enabling activities, pursuant to Article 13, paragraph 7, of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.”</p>
Final Act of the	“Decides that the Committee	GEF Secretariat shared the

<b>Source</b>	<b>Guidance</b>	<b>GEF Response</b>
Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury	should develop, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting, a draft memorandum of understanding to be agreed between the Council of the Global Environment Facility and the Conference of the Parties on arrangements to give effect to the relevant provisions of paragraphs 5 to 8 of Article 13;”	memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants with the Interim Minamata Secretariat for background to assist in developing the MOU between the GEF Council and the Minamata COP. Examples of MOU between the GEF Council and various COPs have been provided by the Interim Minamata Convention Secretariat in the meeting documents for INC6.
Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury	“Decides also that the Committee should develop, and adopt provisionally pending formal adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting, guidance to the Council of the Global Environment Facility on overall strategies, policies, programme priorities, eligibility for access to and utilization of financial resources and an indicative list of categories of activities eligible for support from the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund;”	Noted. The GEF will incorporate and respond to guidance received by the INC and will report at a subsequent meeting of the Convention.
Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury	“Encourages the Council of the Global Environment Facility to apply provisionally any guidance provided to it by the Committee pending the adoption of the guidance by the Conference of the Parties;”	Noted. The GEF will incorporate and respond to guidance received by the INC and will report at a subsequent meeting of the Convention.
Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury	“Invites donors to the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund to contribute through the sixth and subsequent replenishments of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund additional financial resources adequate to enable the Global Environment Facility to support activities to facilitate the rapid entry into force and effective implementation of the Convention;”	The 6th replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund includes an allocation of \$141 million to support activities to advance early entry into force and effective implementation of the Minamata Convention. \$30 million has been allocated for enabling activities and \$111 million has been allocated to support early action.

**Annex 5: Table of GEF-6 (July 2014–October 2015) Funded Projects****Enabling Activity Projects**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>GEF Grant (\$)</b>
UNDP	Albania	Minamata Initial Assessment for Albania	EA	200,000
UNEP	Cameroon	Development of Minamata Initial Assessment in Cameroon	EA	200,000
UNIDO	Chad	Minamata Convention Initial Assessment in Chad	EA	200,000
UNIDO	Colombia	Minamata Convention Initial Assessment (MIA) in the Republic of Colombia	EA	200,000
UNIDO	Gabon	National Action Plan on Mercury in the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining sector in Gabon	EA	500,000
UNDP	Guyana	Minamata Initial Assessment for Guyana	EA	200,000
UNDP	India	Improve Mercury Management in India	EA	1,000,000
UNDP	Jordan	Strengthen National Decision Making towards Ratification of the Minamata Convention and Build Capacity towards Implementation of Future Provisions	EA	200,000
UNEP	Macedonia	Development of a Minamata Initial Assessment	EA	200,000
UNDP	Malaysia	Minamata Convention Initial Assessment in Malaysia	EA	250,000

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>GEF Grant (\$)</b>
UNIDO	Mozambique	National Action Plan on Mercury in the Mozambican Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining sector	EA	500,000
UNIDO	Nepal	Minamata Initial	EA	200,000

		Assessment in Nepal		
UNDP	Panama	Minamata Initial Assessment for Panama	EA	200,000
UNEP	Papua New Guinea	Development of Minamata Initial Assessment in Papua New Guinea	EA	300,000
UNDP	Seychelles	Strengthen National Decision Making Towards Ratification of the Minamata Convention and Build Capacity Towards Implementation of Future Provisions.	EA	199,100
UNIDO	Regional (Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Togo)	Minamata Convention Initial Assessment in Francophone Africa II	EA	800,000
UNIDO	Regional (Guinea, Mali, Senegal)	Minamata Convention Initial Assessment in Francophone Africa I	EA	600,000
UNEP	Regional (Angola, Malawi, Zimbabwe)	Development of Minamata Convention on Mercury Initial Assessment in Africa	EA	547,945
UNDP	Regional (Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Mozambique, Samoa)	Strengthen national decision making towards ratification of the Minamata Convention and build capacity towards implementation of future provisions	EA	1,000,000
UNEP	Regional (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland)	Development of Minamata Initial Assessment	EA	800,000

**Medium-Sized Projects**

Agency	Country	Title	Project Type	GEF Grant (\$)
UNIDO	Tunisia	Improve Mercury Management in Tunisia	MSP	600,000

**Full-Sized Projects**

Agency	Country	Title	Project Type	GEF Grant (\$)
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UNIDO	China	Demonstration of Mercury Reduction and Minimization in the Production of Vinyl Chloride Monomer	FP	16,500,000
UNDP	Colombia	Reducing UPOPs and Mercury Releases from Healthcare Waste Management, e-Waste Treatment, Scrap Processing and Biomass Burning	FP	5,750,000 <sup>a</sup>

a: The amount of Grant for mercury component is \$250,000.

**Annex 6: GEF-6 (July 2014–October 2015) Funded Medium-Sized and Full-Sized Projects and Descriptions**

**Mercury Emissions and Releases Project**

Country	China	GEF ID	6921
Title	Demonstration of Mercury Reduction and Minimization in the Production of Vinyl Chloride Monomer		
Implementing/ Executing Partners	GEF Agency	UNIDO	
	Executing Agency	Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environmental Protection, China	
GEF Funding	\$16,500,000	Co-financing	\$99,000,000
Project Summary	<p>The objective of the proposal is to reduce risks of mercury on human health and the environmental impact from industrial production of VCM to achieve 50% reduction of mercury use in per unit production by the year 2020 (reference year 2010) through optimizing the existing production and achieving 90% recovery of mercury in production processes. Promote mercury-free catalyst research and development and trial application as the initial step of commercialization.</p> <p>The project will promote technology transfer and investment for the widespread application of BAT/BEP. This will emphasize the technology accessibility and removing the market barriers from applying BAT/BEP across the industry sector. Currently smaller PVC producers are reluctant to make the conversion to low mercury processes due to perceived high costs and technical uncertainties. The project will further introduce public-private partnership model to foster a wide range of domestic and international exchanges and cooperation partners participation (including the VCM producers, catalyst producers, academic institutions and public sectors such as the Ministry of Environment Protection and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology), promoting the technology transfer and exchange.</p>		

**Other Projects**

Country	Colombia	GEF ID	6928
Title	Reducing UPOPs and Mercury Releases from Healthcare Waste Management, e-Waste Treatment, Scrap Processing and Biomass Burning		
Implementing/ Executing Partners	GEF Agency	UNDP	
	Executing Agency	Ministries and Regional Environmental Authorities	
GEF Funding	\$5,750,000	Co-financing	\$22,050,000
GEF Funding	Mercury Component	\$250,000	Mercury Component \$1,000,000
Project Summary	<p>This aims to introduce BAP/BAT to reduce the release of unintentionally generated POPs and mercury from the treatment of healthcare waste, the processing of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, secondary metal processing and biomass burning. The project takes a holistic</p>		

	<p>approach to achieve environmentally sound management of UPOPs and mercury generating waste in the country. This holistic approach makes the project innovative.</p> <p>In addition to demonstrating environmentally sound management of UPOPs and mercury the project will strengthen the institutional, administrative, legal, technical, and regulatory framework for managing these harmful chemicals. This capacity building will contribute to the sustainability of the project. Additionally, the inventory of dioxins and furans from this project will be incorporated in to the country's National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention.</p> <p>This project will contribute to the convention obligations of the country in two chemicals conventions, the Stockholm Convention and the Minamata Convention on Mercury.</p>
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Country	Tunisia	GEF ID	8000
Title	Improve Mercury Management in Tunisia		
Implementing/ Executing Partners	GEF Agency	UNIDO	
	Executing Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Directorate General for the Environment and Quality of Life</li> <li>- National Sanitary and Environmental Product Control Agency</li> <li>- International Centre for Environmental Technologies of Tunis</li> </ul>	
GEF Funding	\$600,000	Co-financing	\$2,350,000
Project Summary	<p>This project aims to contribute to the reduction of negative mercury impacts on human health and the environment in Tunisia. As a result of using mercury-cell technology for 36 years (1962-1998) to produce chlorine, the National Society of Cellulose and Paper Alfa (SNCPA) is currently a hotspot for mercury contamination. This project has two components; (i) developing a national inventory of mercury sources, conducting a gap analysis of the regulatory and institutional framework, enhancing the laboratory capacity to analyse mercury and raising the awareness on risks associated with mercury, and (ii) conducting a complementary assessment of previous investigations at the SNCPA site and in the downstream alluvial plain, including additional soil and water samples as deemed necessary and a sanitary risk evaluation based on biological samples.</p>		
Project Summary			

