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The GEF



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Almost from its inception, the Global Environment Facility has been engaged in supporting significant efforts to address the challenges of managing and eliminating the use of mercury. On January 19, 2013, during the fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, participating nations selected the GEF to fund the implementation of a new international treaty committed to the reduction and eventual elimination of mercury contamination:



The Minamata Mercury Convention. The treaty is named for a fishing village in my home country of Japan which suffered tragically due to mercury contamination.

In the coming years, the GEF will utilize its convening power to promote innovation in the design and scaling up of mercury programs to prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again. The GEF's selection as financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention reinforces our unique role in funding a range of interconnected environmental programs addressing chemical pollution, land degradation, climate change, and threats to biological diversity and water resources. This brochure outlines current GEF activities in reducing mercury contamination and points the way to stepped-up efforts under the new Convention.

— Naoko Ishii , CEO and Chairperson, The Global Environment Facility



Mercury Effects

Environmental Impacts

Mercury is a global pollutant. Like persistent organic pollutants (POPs), mercury remains in the environment where it circulates among air, water, sediments, soil, and biota in various forms. Atmospheric mercury can be transported long distances, incorporated by microorganisms and concentrated up the food chain.

Human Health Impacts

Mercury is a neurotoxin. Exposure to elemental mercury, mercury in food, and mercury vapors poses significant health risks including kidney, heart and respiratory problems, tremors, skin rashes, vision or hearing problems, headaches, weakness, memory problems, and emotional changes.



GEF Mercury Strategy

In the current GEF5 funding cycle, financial resources for mercury projects and programs support assessment and pilot activities. The projects help advance the development of the global mercury instrument and improve the ability of countries to implement the provisions of the instrument.

The GEF is supporting project proposals, consistent with the strategy, in the following areas:

- Reducing mercury use in products
- Reducing mercury use in industrial processes
- Reducing mercury use and exposures in artisanal and small-scale gold mining
- Enhancing capacity for mercury storage
- Reducing atmospheric emissions of mercury
- Improved data and scientific information at the national level
- Enhancing capacity to address waste and contaminated sites



GEF-5 Investments in Mercury

Mercury Projects funded during GEF-5

REDUCING MERCURY USE AND EXPOSURES IN ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE GOLD MINING

These projects aim at reducing the impacts of mercury on human health and the environment from artisanal and smallscale gold mining in the participating countries. This will be accomplished by providing relevant health information and introducing cleaner, more efficient, and locally built gold processing techniques that will enable a reduction of 50% mercury use, emissions, and exposure.

Minimizing Mercury Releases from Artisanal Gold Mining in Ecuador and Peru, implemented by UNIDO — GEF Resources \$909,000; Cofinancing \$2.45M

Minimizing Mercury Releases from Artisanal Gold Mining in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal), implemented by UNIDO — GEF Resources \$990,000; Cofinancing \$2.4M

Reducing Mercury Emissions in Artisanal Gold Mining in the Philippines, implemented by UNIDO — GEF Resources \$550,000; Cofinancing \$1.1M

REDUCING ATMOSPHERIC EMISSIONS OF MERCURY

The GEF has approved projects that seek to reduce atmospheric emissions of mercury in both the healthcare and mining sectors. The following projects

aim to address emissions of mercury from the healthcare sector by implementing best environmental practices for non-incineration waste treatment technologies and also replacing of mercury containing devices with mercury-free ones.

Demonstrating and Promoting Best Techniques and Practices for Reducing Healthcare Waste to Avoid Releases of Dioxins and Mercury in Argentina, India, Lebanon, Latvia, Philippines, Senegal, Tanzania, Vietnam, implemented by UNDP — GEF Resources \$10.3M; Cofinancing \$13.5M

Hospital Waste Management Support Project* in Vietnam, implemented by the World Bank — GEF Resources \$7M; Cofinancing \$150M

NIP Update, Integration of POPs into National Planning and Promoting Sound Healthcare Waste Management in Kazakhstan, implemented by UNDP — GEF Resources \$3.4M; Cofinancing \$16M

Reducing UPOPs and Mercury from the Health Sector in Africa in Ghana, Madagascar, Tanzania, Zambia, implemented by UNDP — GEF Resources \$6.5M; Cofinancing \$25.8M

Protect Human Health and the Environment from Unintentional Releases of POPs and Mercury from the Unsound Disposal of Healthcare Waste in Kyrgyzstan, implemented by UNDP — GEF Resources \$1.42M; Cofinancing \$5.7M

*GEF-4 project



Reducing Global and Local Environmental Risks from Primary Mercury Mining in Khaidarkan the Kyrgyz Republic, implemented by UNEP- GEF Resources \$994,000; Cofinancing \$3M

The following project addresses emissions of mercury from zinc smelting. It will demonstrate best available techniques and best environmental practices in eliminating emissions of mercury from zinc smelting at two facilities. The project will assist negotiators of the mercury INC in understanding the emissions from non-ferrous metals production, zinc in particular, and how to reduce these emissions in a cost effective manner.

Reduction of Mercury Emissions in Zinc Smelting in China, implemented by UNIDO — GEF Resources \$990,000; Cofinancing \$4M

REDUCING MERCURY USE IN PRODUCTS

A project has been approved to reduce mercury use in products. This project takes a life-cycle approach at managing a number of mercury containing products and wastes, including lighting, dental sources, and hospital waste. The project will address the issue of mercury storage as well.

Environmentally Sound Life-Cycle Management of Mercury Containing Products and their Wastes in Uruguay, implemented by UNDP — GEF Resources \$700,000, Cofinancing \$2.6M



Development of Mercury Inventory

Pilot Project on the Development of a Mercury Inventory in China, implemented by UNEP- GEF Resources \$1M; Cofinancing \$3.15M

Pilot Project on the Development of Mercury Inventory in the Russian Federation, implemented by UNEP — GEF Resources \$1M; Cofinancing \$3.4M

GEF Future in Mercury

A Mercury Convention was agreed to at the fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) in January 2013 and is expected to come into force before the end of the sixth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund (GEF-6) period. International negotiators selected the GEF was selected as financial mechanism to fund the implementation of the new treaty. The GEF's future work on mercury will build on what was started during the negotiation period to support the new convention during the implementation period and into ratification.

Urgent work will be needed during GEF-6 to support states in their preparations for participation in the Convention and to address the measures set out in the convention, including supporting early action on mercury already taken up through partnerships. Actions are likely to include support for national assessments of mercury issues and, where necessary, the preparation of plans to address priority concerns; actions to reduce the use of mercury in products and processes; actions to reduce releases of mercury from industrial processes; actions towards the sound disposal of mercury; and actions to address mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. As part of their ratification process, states will also need to examine what control measures they may need to put in place to meet obligations for controls under the convention and how best to ensure that these are effective and sustainable. They will likely undertake reviews of current regulatory regimes and, where necessary, strengthen these, including through the development of new legislation or regulations.

PHOTOGRAPHY

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ABOUT THE GEF

The Global Environment Facility unites 182 countries in partnership with international institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives. Today the GEF is the largest public funder of projects to improve the global environment. An independently operating financial organization, the GEF provides grants for projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants.

Since 1991, the GEF has achieved a strong track record with developing countries and countries with economies in transition, providing \$11.5 billion in grants and leveraging \$57 billion in co-financing for over 3,215 projects in over 165 countries. Through its Small Grants Programme (SGP), the GEF has also made more than 16,030 small grants directly to civil society and community based organizations, totaling \$653.2 million.

The GEF partnership includes 10 Agencies: the UN Development Programme, the UN Environment Programme, the World Bank, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Industrial Development Organization, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel provides technical and scientific advice on GEF policies and projects.

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