

UNEP Global Mercury Partnership

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining Area

Partnership Area Leads

co-lead: Susan Keane (Natural Resources Defense Council)

co-lead: tbd.

Issue

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) is the largest anthropogenic user and emitter of mercury. Because ASGM is often tied to poverty, the issues faced by the sector are complex and require the collaboration of multiple stakeholders and disciplines to develop and implement successful solutions. The ASGM partnership area assembles a wide range of partners from Government, IGOs, NGO and academia who, together, can identify and implement sustainable solutions for the sector.



Mercury use in Tanzania

Objective

The Partnership promotes a concerted approach at national and international levels to encourage the formalization of the ASGM sector and to reduce the amount of mercury used and emitted.

Strategy

The Partnership fosters dialogue among practitioners, government policy makers, and donors about practical and effective ways to reduce mercury while supporting the economic benefits of the sector; disseminates information about the sector at national,

regional and international events and through active expert networks and on-line platforms; and contributes to the formulation and implementation of innovative approaches to reduce mercury use, from national policies and planning, to on-the-ground projects in ASGM communities.

Contribution to Implementation of the Minamata Convention

Throughout the negotiations of the Convention, the ASGM Partnership Area provided key information that assisted negotiators in the development of the text relating to ASGM under Article 7 and Annex C. The Partnership is now focused on assisting governments to prepare to address ASGM obligations under the Convention, by: creating guidance material for ASGM National Action Plan (NAP) development; assisting key governments in the development of their own NAPs; and by helping to identify and implement practical projects.

Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining is addressed in **Article 7** and corresponding **Annex C** of the Minamata Convention.

Outreach Activities

The ASGM Partnership has regularly participated in and sponsored participation of partners in international fora, including two Global Forums on ASGM, regional conferences, and the bi-annual International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant. The ASGM Partnership has produced

important technical and policy guidance material, including a technical guide for mercury management in the sector and a study on formalization. The Partnership Area also contributed to the development of a website where information on mercury use by the sector in each country is available.



Presence of children in ASGM in Mali

Featured Projects

ASGM in Francophone West Africa: In 2012, selected partners developed a joint programme aimed at supporting the ASGM sector in Francophone West Africa with activities covering technology transfer to eliminate mercury use, health education programmes and improved market access for the miners through the introduction of ethical gold standards. The Partnership area was key in bringing the project actors together and in securing the financing of the various components.

NAP Guidance: In 2014, the Partnership Area created a draft guidance document for the development of National Action Plans on ASGM under the Minamata Convention. A number of partners contributed to the drafting and revision of the document. The Partnership is now revising and finalizing the product ahead of its submission to the Interim Secretariat at the next meeting of the INC.

Future Work to be Carried out to Support Implementation of the Minamata Convention

With the entry into force of the Convention foreseen in the next year or two, the ASGM Partnership Area will continue to serve as an

ideal platform for partners to share information and jointly develop interventions to reduce mercury use in ASGM. As the GEF is the main financing mechanism of the Convention, co-financing sources must be identified for these projects. Unfortunately, ASGM typically occurs in countries which do not have the means to co-finance activities to the level required and the private sector has been very cautious in getting involved. Therefore, the Partnership area will continue to focus on bridging the gap between project needs and co-financing potential from other donors in the international community.

Additionally, as further research is undertaken to develop technical solutions and to monitor the success of the Convention, the ASGM Partnership area will continue to act as the primary mechanism for sharing this critical information among Parties to the Convention.

Collaboration with Other Partnership Areas and Relevant Stakeholders

ASGM generates a large amount of tailings which, when mercury is used in the process, poses a risk of mercury contamination. Therefore, the ASGM partnership area will continue its collaboration with the mercury waste partnership area. In addition, ASGM will continue to collaborate with the fate and transport partnership area to better understand how ASGM emissions and releases impact the local, regional and global environment.

For More Information

Visit our web site:

<http://www.unep.org/chemicalsandwaste/Mercury/GlobalMercuryPartnership>

Or contact the partnership area lead:

skeane@nrdc.org