

SUMMARY OF UNEP MERCURY STORAGE PROJECT

Reduction of mercury supply and investigation of mercury storage solutions

Project builds on GC 24/3 IV priority:

To reduce global mercury supply and to find environmentally sound storage solutions for mercury.

GC 25 : To continue and enhance as part of international action on mercury, the existing work including enhancing capacity for mercury storage

PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

- Project will quantify excess elemental mercury supply in Asia and Latin America from 2010- 2050 (from artisanal mining, closed chlor alkali facilities, end of life mercury containing products, non ferrous metal mining such as from zinc smelting, other sources).
 - In Asia: Estimates will include Southeast Asia (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and East Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka).
 - In Latin America : Estimates will include South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela) and for key countries in Central America and the Caribbean (Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic).
- Based on quantification of excess mercury supply, governments in the respective regions will examine the options to address excess elemental mercury. Options could include an above ground storage facility, below ground storage facility, export to an EU facility, other viable options. Criteria for the selection of possible options will be agreed upon by the governments, and will include but are not limited to: costs and benefits, technical and environmental requirements, social and political acceptability, public health, infrastructure, regulatory requirements and site selection.
- A regional support structure/advisory committee will be created and represented by an Executive Committee of 8 members from governments in the respective regions. This advisory committee is expected to provide the leadership in catalyzing regional action and recommend appropriate legislation/policies consistent with the establishment of a terminal storage facility. It will meet on a regular basis (quarterly via conference calls, annually face to face).
 - Inception Workshop of the Asian Mercury Storage Project, 4-5 March 2009, Bangkok, Thailand organized jointly by UNEP Chemicals and the NGO partner- Zero Mercury Working Group (partly funded by the Government of Japan).
 - Inception Workshop of the Latin American Mercury Storage Project, 22-23 April 2009, Montevideo, Uruguay organized jointly by UNEP Chemicals and the Basel Convention Regional Center in Uruguay.
 - Expected output for both inception meetings include:
 - Understanding of the sources and quantities of excess elemental mercury supply from 2010-2050 for the scoped countries in the respective regions.
 - Understanding of the UNEP Mercury Storage Project with agreement on next steps for the project, such as the criteria and management options for the safe long term storage of elemental mercury and support for the proposed feasibility study.
 - Creation of a Regional support structure, such as an Advisory Committee.
 - Regional/ Subregional action plans that will outline next steps .
- Feasibility studies and analysis on the option to be selected for the long term safe storage will be undertaken for both Asia and Latin America over the ten months following the inception workshop. Results of feasibility studies will include recommendations on the most feasible option. When a decision will be made on the preferred option, a call for specific proposals in relation to the regional preferred option will be made. The proposals would presumably include detailed basis for site selection, site specific assessments, and possible funding source will be available during the second year of the project.