

# UNEP GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP

## Mercury in products Area\*

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### ISSUE

Large amounts of mercury are used globally in numerous products and manufacturing processes. Yet, for most products, effective alternatives to mercury are available.

Transition success has been demonstrated in thermometers, switches and relays, batteries other than button cells, thermostats, HID auto discharge lamps, and sphygmomanometers.

Affordable alternatives to mercury are available for most products, but commercially cost-effective alternatives for some products are further needed.

Moving away from mercury-added products is the most effective means to avoid mercury in waste. Sound management should consider all stages of the product's lifecycle. Clear regulation can prompt manufacturers to produce mercury-free products.

### RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY:

Under **Article 4 (Mercury-Added Products)**, Parties shall not allow the manufacture, import or export of mercury-added products listed in **Part I of Annex A** after the phase-out date specified for those products.

Parties shall also take measures for the mercury-added products listed in **Part II of Annex A**.

Amongst others, Parties shall also discourage the manufacture and distribution in commerce of mercury-added products not covered by any known use prior to the date of entry into force of the Convention for them, unless an assessment of the risks and benefits of the product demonstrates environmental or human health benefits.

The Secretariat shall collect and maintain information on mercury-added products and their alternatives and make such information publicly available.



### OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Partnership Area is to phase out and eventually eliminate mercury in products and to eliminate releases during manufacturing and other industrial processes via environmentally sound production, transportation, storage, and disposal processes.



### STRATEGY

The Partnership Area seeks to achieve its goals through:

- Identifying and implementing successful approaches for reducing or eliminating mercury in products where there are effective alternatives;
- Promoting environmentally sound production, transportation, storage, and disposal procedures; and
- Providing a partner-driven forum for exchanging information and discussing strategies for achieving goals and objectives.



### CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION

The Partnership Area intends to support countries in implementing their obligations in relation to Article 4 of the Minamata Convention, including through:

- Exchanging and disseminating technical information; and
- Engaging scientific and business communities.

The Partnership Area also contributes to work undertaken by the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention in relation to customs codes.

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## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Additionally, the Partnership Area convenes and participates in meetings and teleconferences to bring partners together, as well as reach out to various stakeholders interested in issues related to mercury in products.



## FEATURED PROJECTS

The Partnership Area has completed numerous global projects dedicated to improving and monitoring data baselines, as well as demonstrating availability and efficacy of mercury-free alternatives. An example of this work is the development of a brochure to provide a concise list of effective alternatives to mercury-containing products<sup>1</sup>.

The Partnership Area is responding to decision MC-2/9 of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention concerning customs codes for mercury products in international trade. The Partnership Area collaborated with the Secretariat of the Convention as well as key partners and stakeholders, to draft a report and to identify and suggest “approaches for customs codes to identify and distinguish non-mercury-added and mercury-added products listed in Annex A to the Convention, including approaches for their possible harmonization” (documents UNEP/MC/COP.3/5 and UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/12). This report built upon the Harmonized System survey previously conducted by the Partnership Area to determine the level of interest and support for a coordinated process to consider mercury-product specific customs codes.

<sup>1</sup> [web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/our-work/mercury-reduction-products](http://web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/our-work/mercury-reduction-products).



## FUTURE PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The future work of the Partnership Area will build on existing strategies, including:

- Continue to support efforts related to the report on customs codes initiative;
- Explore organizational modifications to enhance operations of the Partnership Area;
- Continue to identify alternatives to mercury-added products; and
- Compile a list of projects and other publicly available resources on mercury-added products and alternatives.



## COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PARTNERSHIP AREAS AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

The Partnership Area focuses on a lifecycle management approach to mercury in products. This includes reflecting the costs, benefits, and potential emissions and releases associated with mercury use in all phases of the product lifecycle. As a result, the Partnership Area looks for ways to collaborate with various partners of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, and especially its Mercury Supply and Storage, and Mercury Waste Management Partnership Areas.



**Read more about the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and how to become a Partner:**

[web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership](http://web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership)

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