

UNEP GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP

Mercury supply and storage Area*

Partnership Area Leads:

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ISSUE

Mercury is a natural element that cannot be destroyed nor converted into another substance. Strategies to decrease the production, use, import, and export of mercury must be accompanied by the environmentally sound and secure short- and long-term storage and disposal of mercury.

Supply sources and export/import controls are main instruments to reduce supply. Transparency of trade is also essential for future success in limiting global supply. Primary mining is not required to meet global market demand.



OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Partnership Area is to identify and characterize relevant supply sources, the amount of mercury generated and the destination of the mercury obtained in order to contribute to minimizing and where feasible, eliminating mercury supply considering a hierarchy of sources, and retiring mercury from the market to environmentally sound management.

RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY:

Activities under the Partnership Area may be of relevance to **Article 3** (Mercury supply sources and trade), **Article 10** (Environmentally sound interim storage of mercury, other than waste mercury), **Article 11** (Mercury wastes), **Article 14** (Capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer), **Article 17** (Information exchange), **Article 18** (Public information, awareness and education) and **Article 19** (Research, development and monitoring).



STRATEGY

In practice, the Partnership Area aims to contribute to:

- Eliminating production and export of mercury from relevant mercury supply sources;
- Determining how much mercury will become available from primary mining, decommissioning of mercury chlor-alkali plants and the quantity of by-product mercury generated from non-ferrous metal processing, gold mining as well as oil and gas production; and
- Collecting and disseminating information on options and technologies for storage or final disposal of excess mercury supply from the different sources.



CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION

The Partnership Area aims to support countries in the implementation of the Minamata Convention, including assisting with the development of a common and cohesive framework to effectively reduce the circulating quantities of mercury, where stabilization/solidification can be an effective tool to reduce the availability of mercury.

The reduction of the global supply of mercury is an important way to encourage reductions in mercury demand. This is particularly key for uses such as in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining, which have limited regulatory strategies and effectiveness to reduce the demand.

* web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/our-work/mercury-supply-and-storage



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The Partnership Area communicates with the Basel and Stockholm conventions Regional Centers to inform them about its objectives, priorities and activities. The aim is to share knowledge and expertise, identify regional priorities, possible collaborations and, eventually, to actively involve the Regional Centers in the mercury issue.



FEATURED PROJECTS

“Workshop for training on mercury contaminated sites for Latin American countries” (Madrid, Spain, October 2017) promoted by Uruguay through the Coordinating Center of the Basel Convention and Regional Center of the Stockholm Convention for Latin America and the Caribbean (BCCC-SCRC) - Technological Laboratory of Uruguay (LATU) with the support of the Center for Energy, Environmental and Technological Research (CIEMAT, Spain).

15 selected representatives from the following countries participated in this workshop: Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic and Paraguay.

“Training workshop on dismantling, waste management and contaminated sites associated with the Chlor-alkali Industry” (Montevideo, Uruguay, February 2018). The National Environment Directorate (DINAMA) of the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment (MVOTMA) of Uruguay organized the Workshop which was attended by a large number of representatives from the national Ministry, local administrations, the Regional Center BCCC-SCRC and the EFICE S.A. chlor-alkali plant, amongst others. Representatives of Spain shared their experience in relation to: EU Legislation applicable to the chlor-alkali sector (Ministry of the Environment, (MAPAMA), Remediation of a mercury contaminated site and Stabilization and Solidification technology (MAYASA), Mercury behavior in soil and potential effects, environmental restoration, and environmental monitoring (CIEMAT) and plant dismantling (ERCROS).



FUTURE PLANNED ACTIVITIES

- Update information on current primary mercury mining activities and their production.
- Collaboration with industry for the environmentally sound management and storage of mercury in the sectors of chlor-alkali, non-ferrous and gas production.
- Update information on options and availability of infrastructures and techniques for the management, storage and final disposal of surplus mercury.
- Promote the replication of successful workshops.
- Promote transparency and traceability throughout the whole life cycle of mercury, including supply source, trade and export, to address potential illegal sources of mercury supply.



COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PARTNERSHIP AREAS AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

The Partnership Area collaborates with the World Chlorine Council in phasing out mercury cell chlor-alkali facilities.

The Partnership Area also collaborates with the Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining Partnership Area on the reduction of mercury demand, with the Mercury Waste Management Partnership Area on techniques for the management of surplus mercury and with the Mercury in Products Partnership Area on projects to reduce the use of mercury containing equipment and products.



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

web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership

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