



**UNEP  
GLOBAL  
MERCURY  
PARTNERSHIP**

# **OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK FOR THE UNEP GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP**

VERSION OF JUNE 2020



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## INTRODUCTION

The present document, which explains the ongoing work of existing partnerships, responds to the call of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council in its decision 24/3, paragraph 27 (a), for an overarching framework for strengthening the Global Mercury Programme. It has been developed under the auspices of the Executive Director in consultation with Governments and other stakeholders. The document was forwarded to the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session where progress made by the Partnership was welcomed and the continued involvement of UNEP in the Partnership was endorsed. It has been subsequently revised and updated to reflect latest developments.

## PREAMBLE

UNEP Governing Council Decision 23/9 called for mercury partnerships between governments and other stakeholders as one approach to reducing risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds to the environment. This call is consistent with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/215 "Towards Global Partnerships" that defines partnerships as "...voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits" (Paragraph 2). In response to UNEP Governing Council Decision 23/9, five partnership areas were identified in 2005: mercury release from coal combustion, artisanal and small-scale gold mining, mercury cell chlor alkali production, mercury in products, and mercury air transport and fate research.

In Decision 24/3 part IV, UNEP Governing Council recognized "that current efforts to reduce risks from mercury are not sufficient to address the global challenges posed by mercury" and concluded, therefore, "that further long-term international action is required to reduce risks to human health and the environment and that, for this reason, the options of enhanced voluntary measures and new or existing international legal instruments will be reviewed and assessed in order to make progress in addressing this issue."

In Paragraph 27 of UNEP Governing Council Decision 24/3 part IV, UNEP was tasked with working in consultation with Governments and stakeholders in strengthening the UNEP mercury programme partnerships by:

- (a) "... Developing an overarching framework for the United Nations Environment Programme Global Mercury Partnership through, among other means, organizing a meeting of partners and other stakeholders, including:
  - (i) Development of business plans;
  - (ii) Identification of partnership goals;
  - (iii) Development of operational guidelines;

- (b) Expanding the number and scope of partnerships to include new, growing or related sectors such as vinyl chloride monomer production, non-ferrous metals mining and cement production and waste combustion;
- (c) Enhancing the artisanal and small-scale gold mining partnership through, among other things, increased cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, exploration of innovative market-based approaches and dissemination of alternative capture and recycling technologies;
- (d) Endeavouring to secure adequate funds for the Global Mercury Partnership efforts.”

Furthermore, the UNEP Mercury Programme is guided by the seven priorities set out in Paragraph 19 of the UNEP Governing Council Decision 24/3 part IV:

- (a) “To reduce atmospheric mercury emissions from human sources;
- (b) To find environmentally sound solutions for the management of waste containing mercury and mercury compounds;
- (c) To reduce global mercury demand related to use in products and production processes;
- (d) To reduce the global mercury supply, including considering curbing primary mining and taking into account a hierarchy of sources;
- (e) To find environmentally sound storage solutions for mercury;
- (f) To address, considering the results of the analysis referred to in paragraph 24 (d) below<sup>1</sup>, the remediation of existing contaminated sites affecting public and environmental health;
- (g) To increase knowledge on areas such as inventories, human and environmental exposure, environmental monitoring and socio-economic impacts.”

In Decision 25/5 part III, UNEP Governing Council, amongst others commended “the Executive Director and members of the United Nations Environment Programme Global Mercury Partnership for their progress in developing and implementing the Partnership as a vehicle for immediate action on mercury”; welcomed “the progress made by the Partnership in creating an overarching framework for immediate action in the priority areas identified in decision 24/3, section IV” and endorsed “the continued

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP Governing Council Decision 3/24 Part IV Paragraph 24.d: Requests the Executive Director to prepare a report, drawing on, among other things, ongoing work in other forums addressing: ... Site-based contamination ‘(d) An analysis of information on the extent of contaminated sites, the risks to public and environmental health of mercury compound releases from such sites, environmentally sound mitigation options and associated costs and the contribution of contaminated sites to global releases.’

involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Partnership”.

In Decision 26/3 part II, UNEP Governing Council acknowledged “the progress made by the United Nations Environment Programme mercury programme, including under the Global Mercury Partnership and other initiatives”; urged “Governments and other stakeholders to continue to support and contribute to the Global Mercury Partnership” and “all partners to continue their efforts to take immediate steps to reduce risks from mercury exposure”. It further requested “the Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to undertake specific actions in the context of the Global Mercury Partnership to strengthen the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to initiate or further develop their national inventories of mercury”.

In Decision 27/12 part III, UNEP Governing Council welcomed “the efforts by the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme and its partners to take immediate action on mercury through the Global Mercury Partnership”, urged “all partners to continue their efforts” and “Governments and other stakeholders to continue to support, participate in, and contribute to the Global Mercury Partnership”. It further requested “the Executive Director to continue to provide the necessary support to the Global Mercury Partnership”.

In Decision 25/5 part III, UNEP Governing Council had also requested “the Executive Director to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee with the mandate to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury”. This mandate was reaffirmed by the Governing Council through its decision 26/3. The negotiations process led to the adoption of the Minamata Convention on Mercury on 10 October 2013 at the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Kumamoto, Japan. The Minamata Convention entered into force on 16 August 2017. The objective of the Convention is to protect the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.

The Global Mercury Partnership has played an important role in helping build momentum for a global legally-binding instrument on mercury, and contributed knowledge to negotiators, other stakeholders and the public during the negotiations process through the entry into force of the Convention. It worked closely with stakeholders to assist in the timely ratification and implementation of the Convention. The Partnership currently focuses its work on supporting timely and effective implementation of the Minamata Convention, on providing state of the art knowledge and science on mercury and on delivering outreach and awareness raising towards global action on mercury.

The Overarching Framework Document of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership was developed in 2008 in consultation with governments and other stakeholders and has been subsequently revised and updated to reflect latest developments. It should be viewed as a dynamic document that will be reviewed and updated in the light of experience with its application.

## 1. UNEP GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP GOAL

The overall goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is to protect human health and the global environment from the release of mercury and its compounds by minimizing and, where feasible, ultimately eliminating global, anthropogenic mercury releases to air, water and land.

The partnership areas should support the overall goal of the Partnership through contributing to the following objectives, consistent with the priorities set out in paragraph 19 of Governing Council Decision 24/3:

- Minimization and, where possible, elimination of mercury supply considering a hierarchy of sources, and the retirement of mercury from the market to environmentally sound management.
- Minimization and, where feasible, elimination of unintentional mercury releases to air, water, and land from anthropogenic sources.
- Continued minimization and elimination of global use and demand for mercury.
- Promoting the development of non-mercury technologies where suitable economically feasible alternatives do not exist.

To achieve these objectives the partnership areas should also:

- Strengthen the capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
- Share and exchange information.

In undertaking its work, the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and its partnership areas should focus on:

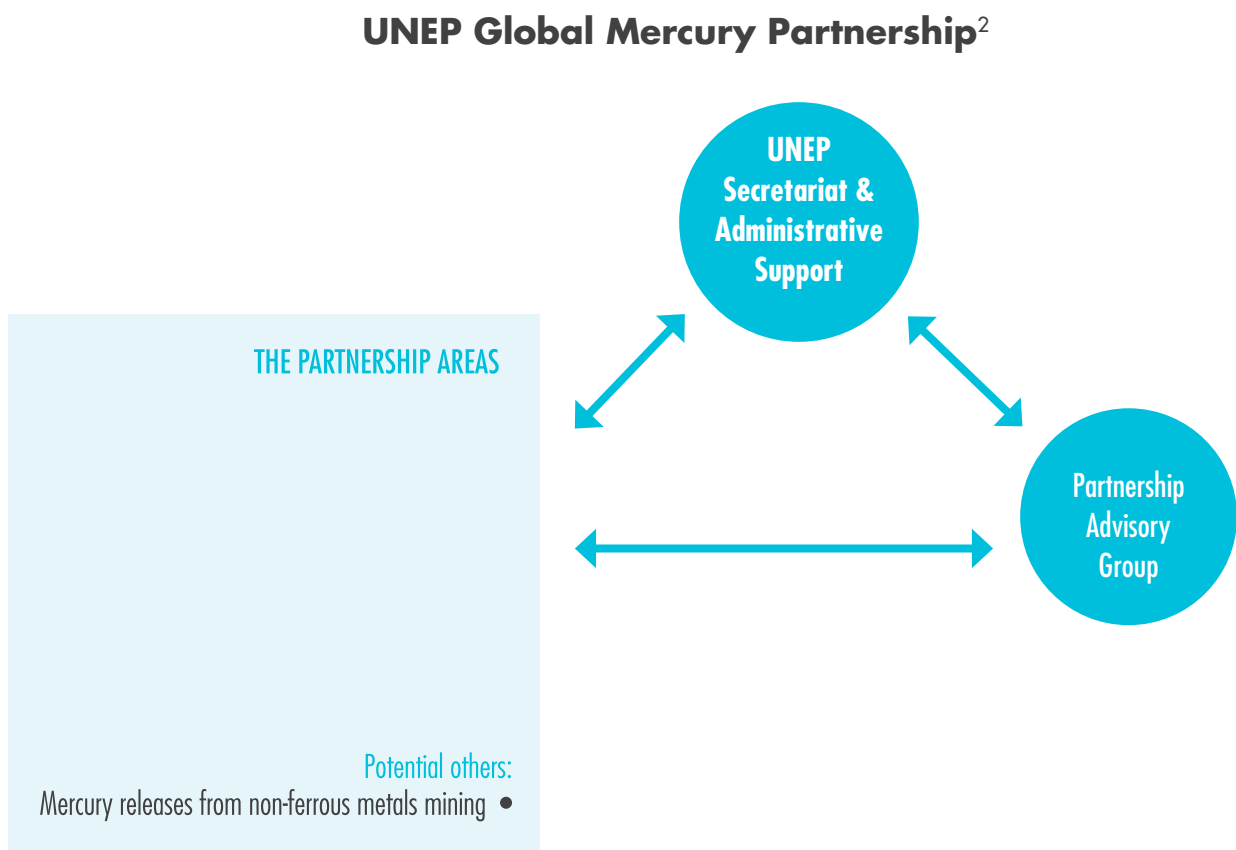
- Supporting timely and effective implementation of the Minamata Convention;
- Providing state of the art knowledge and science on mercury; and
- Delivering outreach and awareness raising towards global action on mercury.

## 2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure facilitates meeting the overall goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and the objectives of the partnership areas in a transparent, inclusive, flexible and effective way.

The organizational structure set out in Figure 1 below aims to provide broad oversight, coherence, direction and facilitation to assist partners in coordinating objectives and to serve as a body for deliberation on cross-cutting issues. It is designed to be accountable and sustainable in nature and allow for effective monitoring and review.

**Figure 1 - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is comprised of representatives of governments, regional economic integration organizations, international organizations, industry or business organizations, non-governmental/civil society organizations or academic institutions that support the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Goal as well as any other entities or individuals who agree to work towards the Partnership Goal.

<sup>2</sup> As of June 2020, eight partnership areas were established.

### 3. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The Operational Guidelines set out in Annex 1 accommodate the wide scope of issues under the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, maintaining flexibility in undertaking the partnership area activities in a transparent, accountable and inclusive way. The Operational Guidelines are to be applied to all aspects of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, including the Partnership Advisory Group and the partnership areas.

### 4. BUSINESS PLANS

Business plans were called for under UNEP Governing Council Decision 24/3.

The structure for the plans is outlined in Annex 2 to provide guidance to the partnership areas.

The business plans should have the flexibility to allow for perspectives of new partners to be considered and included within them. Business plans should also be periodically reviewed. While the goal and objectives would largely remain the same over time, priorities and timelines will need to be updated regularly in the light of progress in implementation and changing circumstances.

### 5. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

UNEP will share and disseminate information on relevant issues, develop and disseminate outreach materials and support partners as requested in addressing responsibilities.

### 6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Financial resources are required to operate the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. The partnership area objectives and business plans should provide clarity for potential donors and finance institutions and assist in mobilizing resources in a systematic, focused and harmonized way to meet the goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

### 7. EVALUATION

The partnership areas will report biennially to UNEP in accordance with the UNEP reporting format<sup>3</sup>. UNEP will facilitate reporting of progress to governments, including the United Nations Environment Assembly or its subsidiary bodies, as appropriate.

Regular reports on activities undertaken within the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership will also be submitted to meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

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<sup>3</sup> UNEP will develop a systematic reporting format and timeline for the partnership areas.



Reporting will include tracking partnership activities and partner contributions as well as assessing effectiveness, and measuring the impact of partnership activities on the achievement of the overall goal. The reports will enhance efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

The reports will be made available through the Partnership Secretariat's website.

# Annex 1

## OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The present guidelines govern the operations of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

### 1. THE PARTNERSHIP

- (a) The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is a voluntary and collaborative relationship between various parties, governmental, non-governmental, public and private, in which all participants agree to work together in a systematic way to achieve the goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, consistent with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/215 “Towards Global Partnerships” and will support the objectives of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
- (b) The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership operates through partnership areas<sup>4</sup> that address issues of priority as identified by Decision 24/3 paragraph 19 of the Governing Council of UNEP.

### 2. PARTICIPATION

- (a) The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is open to any government, regional economic integration organization, international organization, industry or business organization, non-governmental/civil society organization or academic institution that supports the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership goal. It is open also to any other entity or an individual who agrees to work towards the goal of the Partnership.
- (b) Each entity or individual, upon becoming a participant of the Partnership (hereinafter referred to as a “partner”), will contribute resources or expertise to the development and implementation of partnership activities.

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<sup>4</sup> As of June 2020, eight partnership areas were established.

- (c) To become a partner, interested entities or individuals should submit a letter to UNEP signifying their support for the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and their commitment to achieving its goal, and specifying how they will contribute to meeting the goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. Such letters of intention should be submitted to:

Head, Chemicals and Health Branch  
Economy Division  
United Nations Environment Programme

Palais des Nations  
8-14 avenue de la Paix  
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

E-mail: [metals@un.org](mailto:metals@un.org)

Such letters of intention will be made public through the Partnership Secretariat's website.

- (d) UNEP may request additional information from potential partners based on UNEP's rules and policies.
- (e) Participation in the Partnership will be confirmed by UNEP.

### 3. PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY GROUP

- (a) A Partnership Advisory Group, composed of up to 25 members, is established to serve the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.
- (b) The Partnership Advisory Group will be comprised of representatives of governments, regional economic integration organizations, and major groups and sectors (including NGOs, science and industry). The Partnership Advisory Group membership shall include participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and shall take into account geographical representation and gender balance.
- (c) UNEP Executive Director shall invite the following representatives to serve as members of the Partnership Advisory Group:
  - (i) The partnership area leads.
  - (ii) Partners nominated from the partnership areas.
  - (iii) Other representatives, as may be needed to meet the compositional requirements of paragraph b.

The Executive Director may invite additional representatives to participate on an intermediate basis in the Partnership Advisory Group when new partnership areas are established.

- (d) The Partnership Advisory Group members will select a Chair or two co-chairs who will serve for a two-year term. The Chair or co-chairs may be re-elected and may serve a maximum of two terms.
- (e) UNEP will be represented as ex-officio in the Partnership Advisory Group and will provide the Secretariat.
- (f) The functions and responsibilities of the Partnership Advisory Group will include the following:
  - (i) To encourage the work of the partnership areas consistent with the overall goal and operational guidelines of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.
  - (ii) To review the partnership area business plans in order to advise the partnership areas on the consistency of their business plans with the overall goal and the operational guidelines of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.
  - (iii) To report to the Executive Director of UNEP on overall progress.
  - (iv) To communicate overarching issues and lessons learned while promoting synergy and collaboration across partnership areas.
  - (v) To report on activities undertaken within the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

## 4. MEETINGS

- (a) Partnership Advisory Group
  - (i) The Partnership Advisory Group will meet at least on an annual basis and at such other times as deemed necessary.
  - (ii) Meetings may be in person, by conference call or by any other means.
  - (iii) The Partnership Advisory Group will act by consensus of its members.
  - (iv) Observers may attend meetings of the Partnership Advisory Group.
  - (v) Members and observers are expected to cover the costs of their participation. Nevertheless, the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership through its Secretariat shall undertake efforts towards obtaining funding to assure the participation of members from developing countries and countries with economies and transition and NGOs.
  - (vi) Reports of the meetings of the Partnership Advisory Group will be made available through the Partnership Secretariat's website.
- (b) The partnership areas
  - (i) Partners will meet at least on an annual basis and at such other times as deemed necessary.
  - (ii) Meetings may be in person, by conference call or by any other means.
  - (iii) The partnership areas will act by consensus of the partners thereof.
  - (iv) Observers may attend meetings of the partnership area upon its invitation or the invitation of its partnership area lead or co-lead(s), provided that there is no objection from a partner taking part in that meeting.
  - (v) Partners and observers are expected to cover the costs of their participation. Nevertheless, the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership through its Secretariat shall undertake efforts towards obtaining funding to assure the participation of members from developing countries and countries with economies and transition and non-governmental organizations.
  - (vi) Each of the partnership areas will designate a lead or co-leads who will serve for a two-year term. The lead(s) may be re-elected.

## 5. AMENDMENT TO THE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Any Partner may propose changes to previously approved Partnership operational guidelines. Partners proposing any such amendment should submit a written explanation regarding the proposed amendment to the Partnership Secretariat. Proposals for amendments to the operational guidelines will be submitted to the Partnership Secretariat who would review them and submit them to the Partnership Advisory Group for consideration.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and responsibilities are consistent across partnership areas and consistent with the goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, while recognizing the unique contributions of individual partners.

### (a) Role of the partners

The partners in the partnership areas will, *inter alia*:

- (i) Initiate and undertake activities under the partnership area, conferring with other partners as needed.
- (ii) Share information within their respective organization on the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and the partnership areas.
- (iii) Report to partnership leads on their activities within the partnership areas in terms of progress and results, in a timely manner, that can be used to monitor and review partnership progress and assess partnership results against agreed objectives.
- (iv) Be proactive in identifying additional activities, strategies, and resources that would contribute to achieving the partnership objectives.
- (v) Agree on a lead or co-leads for the individual partnership areas.
- (vi) Be active in fundraising on behalf of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.
- (vii) Provide guidance and technical assistance to the partnership areas.
- (viii) Help bring new partners to participate in the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, as appropriate.

### (b) Role of the partnership area leads

The lead or co-leads for each of the partnership areas will:

- (i) Convene and chair the business planning and other meetings.
- (ii) Facilitate the development of business plans.
- (iii) Encourage input and the sharing of information and strategies among all individual partners in the partnership area.
- (iv) Share and disseminate information regularly including providing reports on progress, lessons learned, and best practices to UNEP for wider public dissemination.
- (v) Act as representative of the respective partnership area on the Partnership Advisory Group.
- (vi) Report to UNEP on behalf of the partnership area.

(c) Role of UNEP

UNEP, subject to the availability of resources, will:

- (i) Provide administrative and secretariat support.
- (ii) Facilitate the reporting of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership to governments, including, where appropriate, the United Nations Environment Assembly or its subsidiary bodies and the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
- (iii) Be proactive in fundraising on behalf of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.
- (iv) Provide guidance and technical assistance to the partnership areas.
- (v) Help bring new partners to participate in the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, as appropriate.
- (vi) Serve as ex-officio on the Partnership Advisory Group.

(d) Included in its role under (c) above, UNEP shall provide the following support for information exchange activities:

- (i) To disseminate information to the Partners on relevant issues.
- (ii) To operate and maintain a website to provide easy access to information, partner activities, and resources.
- (iii) To maintain a list of contacts.
- (iv) To help to gather appropriate information for countries.
- (v) To develop and disseminate public outreach materials about the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.
- (vi) To develop and disseminate technical materials for developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
- (vii) To make meeting reports and other relevant materials publicly available.

# Annex 2

## BUSINESS PLAN TEMPLATE

### I. SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

(MAX OF 250 WORDS)

The summary highlights why this particular issue is important in the context of the overall UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. It provides the reader with some context of the issue.

### II. OBJECTIVE OF THE PARTNERSHIP AREA

The objective should reflect desired outcomes of the partnership area. Objectives are to be clear, measurable, target-oriented and realistic while at the same time being clearly linked to the ambitious goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. Objectives will contribute to concrete results in a systematic way.

### III. PRIORITY ACTIONS

This section identifies the key priority activities for the partnership area (suggest three to five priority actions). The partnership area priority actions link to the objective.

### IV. PARTNER EFFORTS AND TIMELINES

This section delineates the major contributions of the partners for each of the priority actions, including overarching, bilateral and collaborative efforts:

- Efforts must be clearly link to the partnership area objective(s).
- Brief specific descriptions of efforts are provided, with costs, timeframes, targets and milestones, as appropriate and available.
- Contact information is provided for all efforts.

### V. OPPORTUNITIES

This section notes other concepts and ideas that are of potential interest to the partnership area in terms of meeting the partnership area objectives but that are not being pursued in the current time frame. This allows the partners to log 'good ideas' that may need more scoping and/or are currently unfunded. It also allows partners to communicate with each other on interesting efforts for future business plans and may generate interest of new partners and enhanced transparency.

Opportunities should clearly link to the partnership area objectives and be as specific as possible.



## VI. EVALUATION

Common to all of the partnership areas:

The partnership areas will report biennially to UNEP in accordance with the UNEP reporting format<sup>5</sup>. Reporting will include tracking partnership activities and partner contributions as well as assessing effectiveness, and measuring the impact of partnership activities on the achievement of the overall goal.

In this section, the partnership areas shall:

- Outline the indicators of progress in meeting the partnership area objective(s).
- Describe how the partnership area will undertake performance measurement and reporting.

## VII. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and the associated partnership area business plans are a way of mobilizing resources in a systematic, focused and harmonized way. The partnership area objectives and business plans should provide clarity for potential donors and finance institutions. If partners wish to leverage funding for particular projects, details should be outlined within this section for partner consideration.

The partners are encouraged to contribute financially and also to offer in-kind assistance.

Partners can develop specific initiatives, work with non-partners, or pursue projects consistent with partnership objectives. It is hoped that the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership will serve as a mechanism to consolidate and leverage funding for large, strategic projects.

Partners are encouraged to apply for funding to relevant funders and regional organizations.

## VIII. BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

The process in developing and reviewing business plans will be outlined in this section. Partnerships will take stock of efforts and test direction and productivity in moving forward and will adjust planning accordingly.

## IX. LINKAGES

It is understood that the partnerships undertake cross-cutting work. Key related activities should be listed in this section, including:

- Cross-cutting activity internal to the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership efforts
- External to the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership efforts

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<sup>5</sup> UNEP will develop a systematic reporting format and timeline for the partnership areas to follow.

## X. PARTNERS

This section is a list of partners, and the key points of contact. It also identifies the partnership area lead(s) and any other relevant information.

Further information is available at [www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership](http://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership).

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## ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

Our mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

Our work includes assessing global, regional and national environmental conditions and trends; developing international and national environmental instruments; and strengthening institutions for the wise management of the environment.

We categorize our work into seven broad thematic areas: climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, chemicals and waste, resource efficiency, and environment under review. In all of our work, we maintain our overarching commitment to sustainability.

We work closely with Member States as well as representatives from civil society, businesses, and other Major Groups and Stakeholders. We are always looking for new ways to leverage partnerships to drive sustainable development.

[www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)

### For more information, contact:

Secretariat of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership  
Chemicals and Health Branch  
Economy Division  
United Nations Environment Programme

Palais des Nations  
8-14 avenue de la Paix  
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

E-mail: [metals@un.org](mailto:metals@un.org)

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



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