

UNEP Global Mercury Partnership
Mercury Waste Management Area 2nd Meeting 2022
20 September 2022, 9:30-12:30 (SGT)
Simpor 4811, Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre, Singapore/
Webex online

-Summary-

Overview

1. The Mercury Waste Management Area (WMA) of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership (UNEP-GMP) held its second annual meeting in a hybrid format (in-person and online) on 20 September 2022, from 9:30 to 12:30 (SGT). The meeting was organized by the Ministry of the Environment Japan, a co-lead of the WMA, with the support of the WMA Secretariat, EX Research Institute Ltd. (hereafter “Secretariat”). The meeting brought together about 25 participants including representatives from governments, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the academic community. The WMA meeting was organized back-to-back with the ISWA (International Solid Waste Association World Congress (21 to 23 September), and some members from the ISWA joined the WMA meeting with the generous support of Mr. Nicolas Humez and his team of the ISWA.

Opening

2. Mr. Koji Ono, Deputy Director, Industrial and Hazardous Waste Management Division, Ministry of the Environment Japan, the co-lead of the Mercury Waste Management Area, opened the meeting and warmly welcomed all the participants, highlighting the importance of information sharing through this meeting to contribute to environmentally sound management of mercury wastes. Following his remarks, new WMA Partners, COLNODO and Blackforest) were introduced, and the agenda was adopted as proposed.

Session 1: Progress since the last WMA meeting in February 2022

3. The Secretariat briefly introduced an overview, objective and the Activity plan (2022-2024) of the WMA and its activity for the last few years.
4. Following the presentation, the Secretariat of the UNEP-GMP shared an overview of discussions at the 12th Partnership Advisory Group (PAG 12) held on 11 and 14 March 2022 and the Co-leads follow-up meeting on 25 May 2022, including future priority areas that were not currently addressed by existing partnership areas (e.g., mercury trade and flows, mercury and biodiversity, storage and management of seized mercury, information collection on cement sector). She also reported that at the PAG12 lead authors of study reports on oil & gas and non-ferrous metals had shared key knowledge gaps and the needs identified in the reports. As GMP’s upcoming events,

she mentioned the 13th PAG meeting to be held on 9 and 10 November 2022 in Paris, back-to-back with the OECD Global Forum on Environment Meeting dedicated to mercury and a webinar on Minamata Initial Assessments on 27 September 2022. As a reminder, information sharing of highlights by Partnership areas and partners such as events and resources were encouraged through newsletter, emails and the website.

5. The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury presented provisions of the Convention related to mercury wastes management and recent developments at its Conference of the Parties (COP) including decisions on thresholds for mercury wastes and relevant inter-sessional works. He also introduced the updated “*Technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds*”¹ adopted by the COP to the Basel Convention at its 15th meeting in June 2022.
6. Notably, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention explained a concept note on capacity-building initiatives for mercury wastes management to discuss possible collaboration with the Partnership area:
 - The Government of Switzerland offered support to the Minamata Convention to roll out online capacity-building activities on mercury wastes management in cooperation with the Basel Convention and the UNEP-GMP;
 - This project could potentially start with an exploratory online event (5 October) on mercury waste management technologies described in the technical guidelines under the Basel Convention;
 - After the exploratory event, a training material to use the technical guidelines at the national level will be developed in six UN languages; and
 - Online workshops in six languages will be organized in 2023. The side event at COP5 could also be considered.
7. In this regard, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention suggested the WMA present relevant activities, particularly on factsheets for certain types of mercury wastes, results of needs survey to identify challenges in mercury wastes management and “*The Catalogue of Technologies and Services on Mercury Waste Management*”² at the exploratory online event.
8. The Secretariat introduced key activities of the WMA since the last WMA meeting, particularly on webinars and face-to-face events entitled as:
 - “Treating Mercury Wastes: Knowledge and Technology” held as the UNEP-GMP information sharing session on 15 February 2022;
 - “Mercury Wastes: latest developments, tools and practices for their environmentally sound management” held at the side event of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm COP on 9 June 2022; and
 - “Turning a mercury policy into practices” scheduled to be held at the ISWA World Congress

¹ UNEP/CHW.15/6/Add.6/Rev.1

² <https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/resources/tool/catalogue-technologies-and-services-mercury-waste-management-2022-version>

on 22 September 2022.

Session 2: Reporting from Working Groups (WG)

Working Group 1: Resource development

9. Mr. Nicolas Humez from the ISWA (WG1 leader) presented achievements of the WG1 so far including the finalization of a road map and template of factsheets for certain types of mercury wastes and a list of mercury waste streams to be prioritized. The WG1 has already started developing a factsheet on non-electronic devices containing mercury with the intention of completing it by the end of December this year. He also briefly explained the template and its content that covers all relevant phases of waste management (e.g., classification / collection / packaging, labeling and transport / storage / environmentally sound treatment).
10. Following comments were provided by participants and members of WG1;
 - Concerns of actual stakeholders should be considered when prioritizing waste streams for the development of factsheets.
 - Challenges in the management of tailings from Artisanal Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) and contaminated soils were highlighted at the side event of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm COP in June 2022.
 - Factsheets on mercury wastes from oil/gas and non-ferrous metal sectors could also be developed considering that possible priorities for future work on those sectors are under discussion at the PAG.
 - Collaboration with other partnership areas should be sought in developing factsheets, as appropriate.
 - The ASGM area may have better expertise and knowledge on the management of tailings from ASGM.
 - The Chlor-alkali area and cement area could provide relevant information useful to develop the factsheet.
 - Once a factsheet on non-electronic measuring devices containing mercury was developed, other factsheets could be developed relatively smoothly. Factsheets for certain mercury-added products may be combined into a single factsheet in case common practices could be applied to their management.
 - Factsheets should be simple and easily understood and updatable while avoiding duplication of the information with existing resources.
 - Collaboration with other WGs should be sought for the use of factsheets.

Working Group 2: Capacity-building and awareness-raising

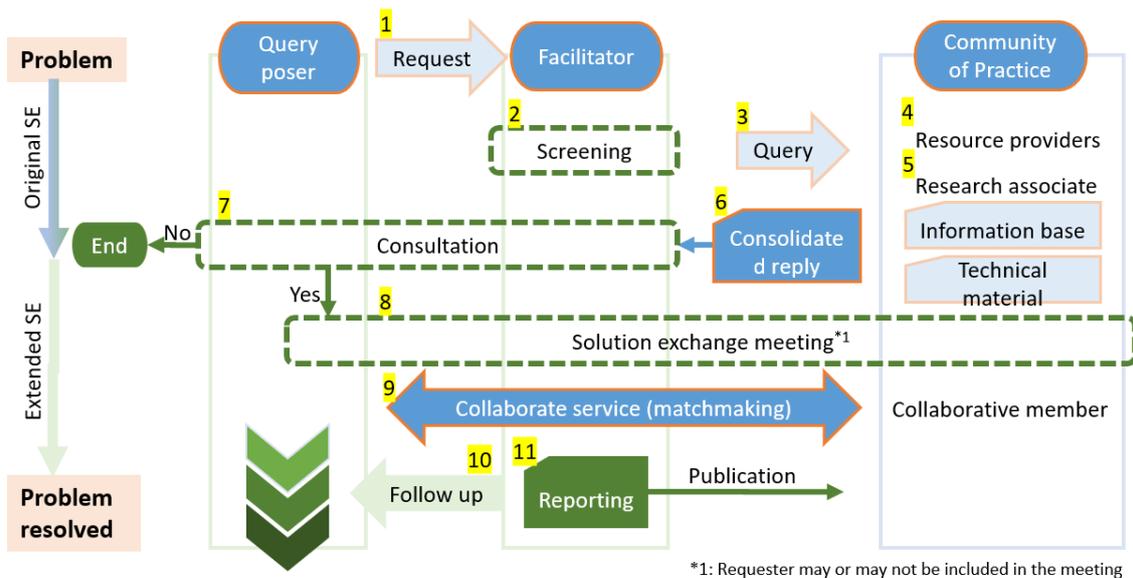
11. Ms. Immaculate Javia from Sustainable Alluvial Mining Services (WG2 leader) presented the draft workplan for 2022-2024, highlighting that any capacity-building and awareness-raising activities needed a sector-specific approach. Proposed activities in the capacity-workplan include

understanding the requirements on mercury wastes under the Minamata Convention and organizing training for specific sectors. She asked all participants to provide more feedback on the workplan of the WG2 for its finalization, particularly issues on which lack of expertise is identified among WG2 members.

12. Mr. Toda from the Minamata Convention secretariat suggested implementing capacity-building and awareness-raising activities within opportunities of existing projects such as those currently implemented in Moldova under the Special International Programme of the Minamata Convention. In this regard, the Secretariat requested further information-sharing to the Secretariat of the Convention on existing projects addressing mercury waste management.
13. Another said the importance of language in any capacity-building activities if focusing on specific regions, with a reference that the ISWA was aiming at establishing relevant working groups in different regions such as Latin America.

Working Group 3: Solution exchange

14. Mr. Mick Saito from UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (WG3 leader) introduced a concept of matchmaking and highlighted that the Solution Exchange (SE) under the WMA is a demand-driven platform where creates matchmaking opportunities among concerned stakeholders. He also shared experiences of the UN Solution Exchange established in 2005 as an e-mail network with their Communities of Practices (CoP) moderated by full-time facilitators and research associates which accept queries from anyone in the CoP. Drawing on experiences (success and failure) in the UN Solution Exchange, a potential structure of the solution exchange in the WMA was suggested as follows:
 - Community of Practices (CoP): the WMA as a whole;
 - Facilitator: A group of partners who operationalize the SE.
 - Query poser: Any stakeholders asking for information/support from the CoP; and
 - Consolidate reply: A form of products that the SE creates in a structured format.



15. He also shared the following action points for the future;

- Output 1: documents to operationalize the WG3 SE
 - Templates, checklists
 - Guidance for query poser and resource providers
 - Screening checklist
 - Query form
 - Template of the consolidated reply
 - Frequently asked questions
- Output 2: Identification of resources in the WMA
 - Resource holders
 - Reference materials
 - Interviews
- Output 4: Public relations materials
 - Leaflets

16. One participant asked for a possible timeline from the receipt of a query to sending out the consolidated reply. The UN Solution Exchange took about one month to issue a consolidated reply, but Mr. Saito suggested one-and-a-half month of timeline for the SE of the WMA, considering the voluntary nature of the WMA. However, he also noted that the balance of needs, quality and time should be carefully considered.

Synergies among WGs and cooperation with other UNEP-GMP areas

17. To further strengthen synergies among WGs and cooperation with other GMP areas and entities, the Secretariat invited participants to provide comments on;

- Areas of activities on mercury waste management that are not covered but potentially could

be covered by WGs;

- Activities of WGs that could be undertaken together with other WGs; and
- Possible collaboration with other GMP areas or other organizations.

18. One shared idea of collaboration between the Hazardous Waste Working Group or Health Care Waste Working Group within the ISWA and WGs of the WMA by organizing joint webinars. In doing so, he also suggested focusing on specific regions (e.g., Latin America, Africa, Middle East) to address region-specific issues in cooperation with the regional chapter of the ISWA. Another showed an interest in focusing on this region-specific approach while highlighting the importance of implementing activities in local languages.
19. In relation to regional focus, taking a consideration of target audience whether it is governments, the private sector, or academia, into planning of deliverables is crucial.
20. Another noted the potential collaboration between WG3 and WG1, particularly for the preparation of a consolidated reply that includes relevant resources. He also suggested compiling existing resources that the WMA has. Collaboration with other Partnership areas in the pilot phase of the SE was pointed out by which asking for specific advice or comments on other areas when there were queries more relevant to them.

Session 3: Sharing information

21. The Secretariat shared upcoming events including the 1st WMA meeting 2023 in February and encouraged WGs to organize WG meetings, as appropriate to move forward with their workplans and create synergies among different WGs.

Closing

22. Mr. Ono closed the meeting with thanks to the participants for their contribution.