



The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury is pleased to present the second edition of **Focus on the Specific International Programme**. This newsletter provides Parties and other stakeholders with regular updates on the operations of the Specific International Programme, insights on ongoing projects, as well as forthcoming activities.

Fifth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme

The fifth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme was held on 24 – 25 November 2020. The members of the current Governing Board were approved by the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-3) in November 2019 and serve a two-year term. This was the first time that the members of the Governing Board (2020-2021) convened. Mr. Reginald Hernaus (the Netherlands) and Mr. Prasert Tapaneeyangkul (Thailand) were elected as the Co-Chairs of the Board for this term.

The Governing Board decided to launch the Third Round of applications for the Specific International Programme and agreed on the timeline (see below). The Board also reviewed the progress in implementing the projects of the First and Second Round, and provided initial input to the review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention (Ref: [Decision MC-3/7](#)), as well as the Executive Director's report to assess the possible options for enhancing the Specific International Programme and its operations. The Governing Board will meet at least once later this year to review applications and select projects for funding.

5th Meeting of the Governing Board Specific International Programme

25/11/2020 13:00 CET - virtual



Third Round of Applications Open Until 18 March 2021

The Third Round of applications to the Specific International Programme opened on 15 December 2020. Eligible Parties are invited to apply for projects that can range in size from USD 50,000 to USD 250,000. Applications are due by Thursday, 18 March 2021.

Eligible Parties are requested to consult the [application guidelines](#) for the Third Round on how to prepare applications.

The Third Round is made possible with generous donor contributions to the Specific Trust Fund from Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.

Do you want to learn more?

To support eligible Parties in the development of their project proposals, the Minamata Convention Secretariat is hosting webinar sessions on 19 and 20 January 2021 in English, French and Spanish. We look forward to hearing your questions and discussing important considerations when developing and submitting project applications. To view the schedule and to register, please see the [invitation news](#).

Webinars

Tuesday, 19 January 2021

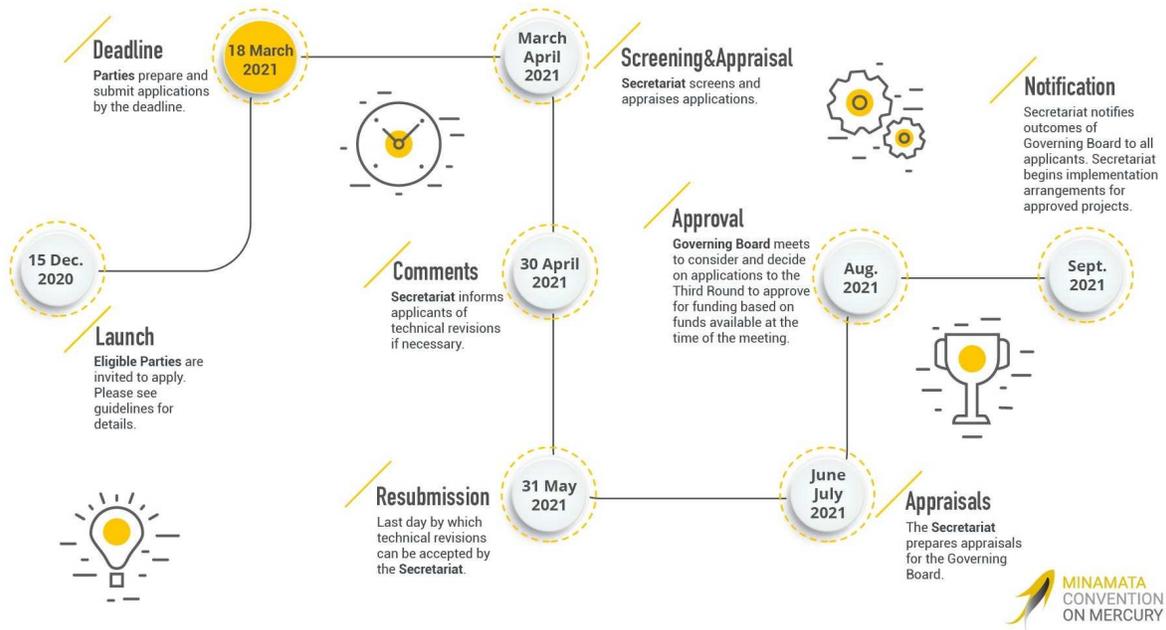
In English	En français
11h00-12h30 CET	15h00-16h30 CET

Wednesday, 20 January 2021

In English	En español
14h00-15h30 CET	16h00-17h30 CET

To further support eligible Parties, by-appointment clinics will be held in early February – [stay tuned!](#)

Specific International Programme



For prospective applicants: What is the Theory of Change?

As a policymaker, government official, or community leader, you face many challenges in delivering services to your stakeholders. How do you begin to sort through the actions needed to address a particular issue?

This is where the Theory of Change can help.

The Theory of Change is a useful tool for conceptualizing and designing a project. Identifying the long-term impact you seek to achieve, and what the project aims to change (i.e. the problem or challenge it attempts to address) is the starting point. Once this is set, the project drafters define what outcomes are necessary, and what activities and outputs are required to bring about the desired outcomes.

A Theory of Change can be represented either visually or as a narrative. Undertaking a Theory of Change planning exercise can be an excellent way to bring those with different roles and expertise together to begin working towards a common objective.

The Specific International Programme's Application Guidelines provide more information on using the Theory of Change to develop your project.

Highlights of Select Round 1 Projects

Legislation underway to implement life cycle approach for management of mercury-added products (Argentina)



The project entitled 'Capacity Building Programme for the Implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Argentina' is taking steps to move towards the widespread availability of sustainable and safe alternatives to mercury-added products. Options for improved market availability of feasible alternatives are being developed through extensive multi-stakeholder consultations. The project is also addressing challenges faced in managing the entire life cycle of mercury-added products, including their final disposal.

Project leads Verónica Bernardez of the National Directorate of Substances and Chemical Products at the National Ministry of Environmental and Sustainable Development, and Leila Devia, head of the Basel Convention Regional Center in Argentina, are moving forward to implement several different legislative work streams, such as the regulation of foreign trade of mercury-added products and the use of mercury, mixtures and compounds.

The project is also implementing an [awareness campaign](#) for local governments and other key stakeholders including academia, health workers and the general public. This content is published on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in order to guarantee its free accessibility. And, to facilitate ongoing mercury surveillance after the life of the project, two public universities will be equipped with tools for sampling, analyzing and surveillance of mercury, resulting in enhanced technical capacity for sound management of mercury, mercury wastes, and mercury contaminated sites for the country.

Progress towards phasing out mercury in chlor-alkali plants (Iran)

This project on 'Management of Chlor-Alkali Plants at the Petrochemical Industry' is managed by Nahid Etemad, an environmental engineer in Iran's Research Institute of Petroleum Industry, and her project team. The project has already done data gathering, site visits, technical advice to facility managers, mercury sampling, speciation and analysis, and inventories of waste and contaminated materials. In line with the project's objective of assisting the Islamic Republic of Iran in decommissioning activities of chlor-alkali plants, the project is developing guidance for decontamination, demolition and disposal of mercury wastes and the management of contaminated sites.

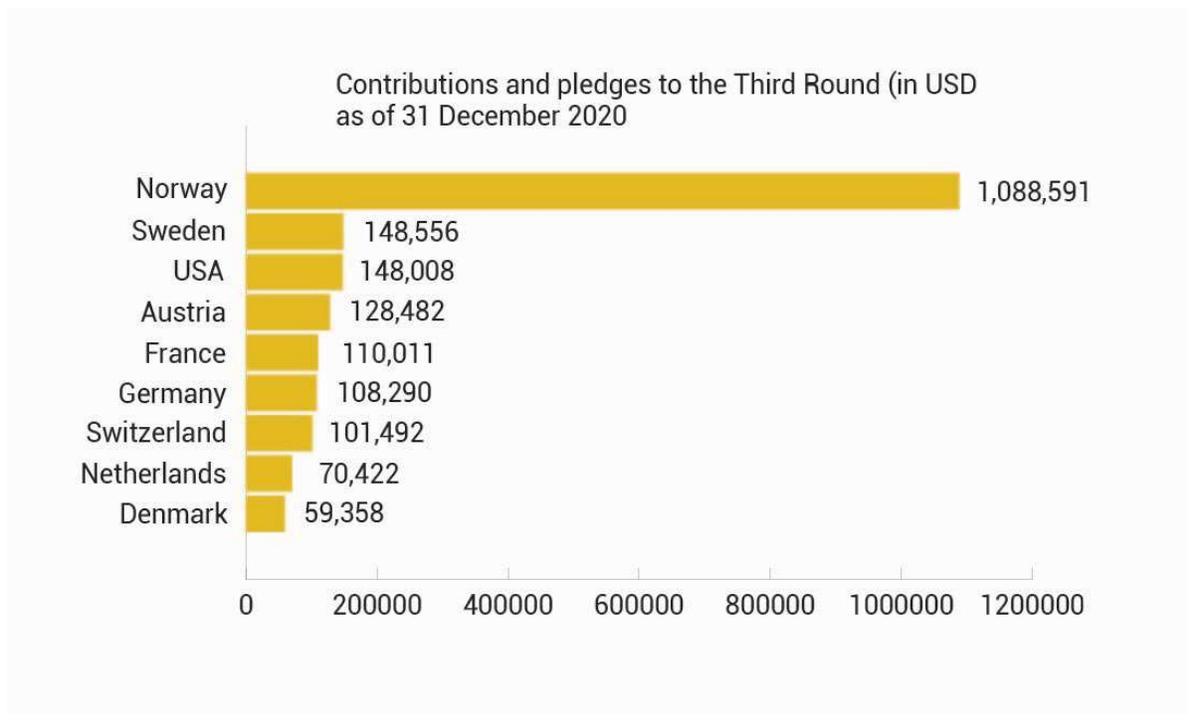
The project as well puts an important gender lens on the health risks associated with mercury management at decommissioning chlor-alkali facilities. The project will develop a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) as a tool for risk assessment focusing on gender and mercury, as well as a health and safety action plan, guidance on health protection of workers during demolition activities, and plans for conducting biomonitoring.



Support to the Specific International Programme

Several donors have already provided contributions to enable the Third Round of applications to the Programme. The Specific Trust Fund, managed by the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, thanks them for their generous support, and welcomes further contributions from governments, the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, academia, and civil society. These contributions support developing countries and countries with economies in transition as they move forward in their work to meet deadlines and implement provisions under the Convention. Now more than ever, these contributions are pivotal as the world works together to Make Mercury History.





Specific International Programme

The Specific International Programme is established under Article 13 of the Convention as a component of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention. The Programme serves developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition. The objective of the Programme is to lend direct support to strengthen capacity-building and technical assistance at the national level for the implementation of the obligations of the Convention of the applicant Party. Applications to the Programme can be made by Governments for projects between 12 and 36 months to the value of USD 50,000 to USD 250,000. The launch of the Third Round of applications will be announced by the Secretariat before the end of 2020.

More information at the [Convention website](#).

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