



The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury is pleased to present the third 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.

Generous contributions and pledges to the Specific Trust Fund for over 6 million US dollars enabling Parties' commitment to #MakeMercuryHistory through the Specific International Programme

With thanks to generous voluntary contributions to the Specific Trust Fund from *Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States*, the Specific International Programme is implementing to date *fifteen* capacity-building and technical assistance projects for a total funding of *over three million US dollars* in the **First** and **Second Round**.

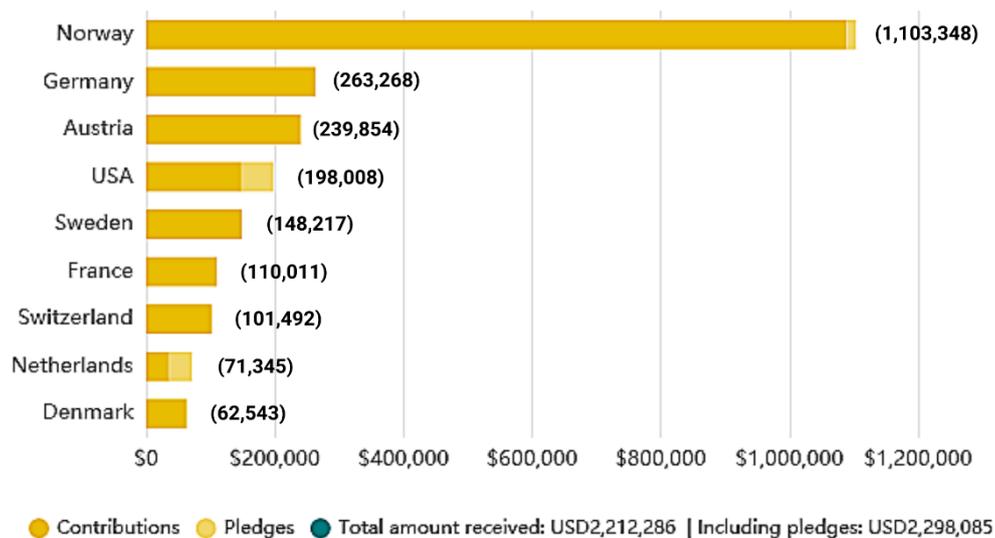


Contributions and Pledges to the Specific Trust Fund 2018-2021: USD6,035,793 (as of 30 June 2021)



With the continued support from the donors to the **Third Round** of the Specific International Programme, as of 30 June 2021, the funding envelope has grown to 2.3 million US dollars including pledges, which enables the Programme to support developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to move forward in their work on implementing their obligations under the Convention, based on approved project proposals. Approved projects are conceptualized, owned and implemented at the national level by Parties themselves.

Contributions and Pledges to the Third Round (in USD, as of 30 June 2021)

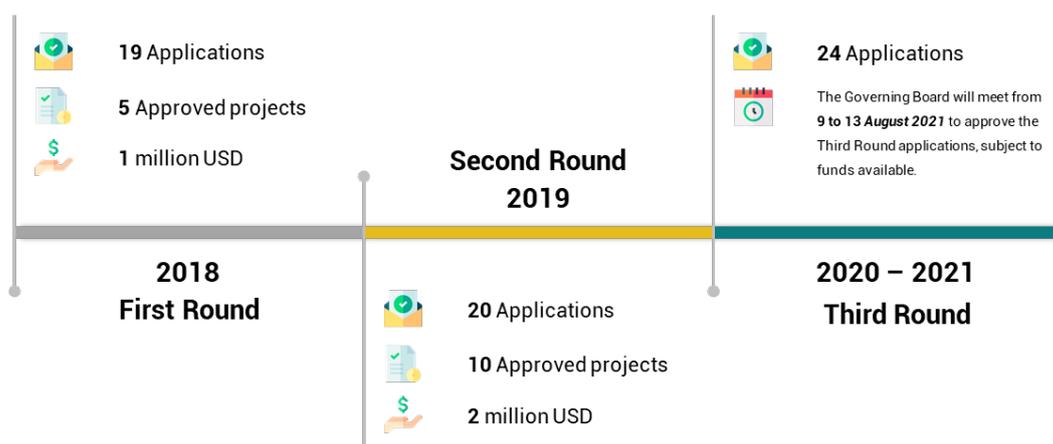


Development of the Specific International Programme since its inception

Mercury is recognized as a substance producing significant adverse neurological and other health effects, with particular concerns expressed about its harmful effects on infants and unborn children. The adverse impacts from mercury and mercury compounds require global action to reduce risks to human health and the environment from the emissions and releases of mercury and its compounds to the environment. Mercury emissions and releases into the environment from anthropogenic activities include artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), coal-fired power stations, certain other industrial processes and mercury waste.

The undertaking of the Convention is to break the cycle of harm caused by mercury. Together with the Global Environment Facility, the Specific International Programme is one of the two components of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury as per Article 13.

So far, the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme has launched three rounds of applications to the Specific Trust Fund.

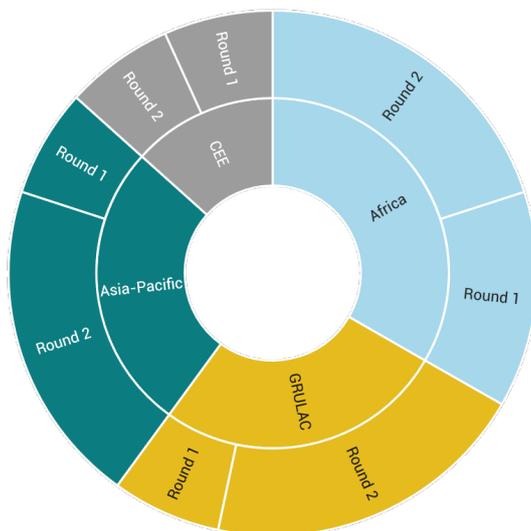


In 2018, the First Round was launched on 5 June 2018. It was open until 31 August 2018 and attracted 19 applications. Following the review and appraisal process, the Governing Board approved five projects to the value of one million US dollars. The five projects funded in the First Round are being implemented by **Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Iran and Lesotho**. These projects are to build their capacity to take on specific obligations of the Convention through activities such as phase-out campaigns on mercury thermometers, cataloging alternatives to mercury lamps, developing national guidelines on decommissioning mercury-cell chlor-alkali facilities, and training health facilities on mercury waste management.

In 2019, the Second Round was launched on 5 March 2019. It was open until 14 June 2019 and received 20 applications. Following the review and appraisal process, the Governing Board approved ten projects to the value of two million US dollars, for projects in **Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Moldova, Nigeria, Peru, Sri Lanka and Zambia**. The projects extend support to Parties to work on a range of issues from mercury waste management to phasing out mercury-added products, strengthening the health sector, reducing the presence of mercury in vulnerable populations, improving mercury inventories, and developing “participatory model” approaches in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM).

In 2020, the Third Round was launched on 15 December 2020. It was open until 18 March 2021 and 24 applications were received, which are currently under review and appraisal process by the Secretariat. The Governing Board will meet from 9 to 13 August 2021 to approve the Third Round applications, subject to funds available by the time of the meeting.

The Specific International Programme's projects by region

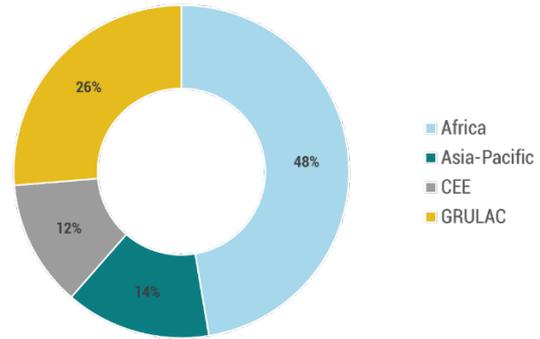


Region	Country Name	Economic Status	Round 1	Round 2
AFRICA	Benin	LDCs	*	
	Ghana	DCs		*
	Lesotho	LDCs	*	
	Nigeria	DCs		*
	Zambia	LDCs		*
ASIA-PACIFIC	Indonesia	DCs		*
	Iran	DCs	*	*
	Sri Lanka	DCs		*
CEE	Armenia	CEITs	*	
	Moldova	CEITs		*
GRULAC	Antigua and Barbuda	SIDS		*
	Argentina	DCs	*	
	Ecuador	DCs		*
	Peru	DCs		*

The fifteen projects of the First and Second Round of the Specific International Programme are distributed throughout the world.

Compared to GEF's projects on enabling activities for the implementation of the Convention, the Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs), where the highest proportion of projects was in Africa (48%), followed by GRULAC (26%) and Asia-Pacific (14%), the distribution of the Programme's projects represents a regional balance with respect to the highest proportion being in Africa (33%), followed by the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) (27%), Asia-Pacific (27%) and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (13%).

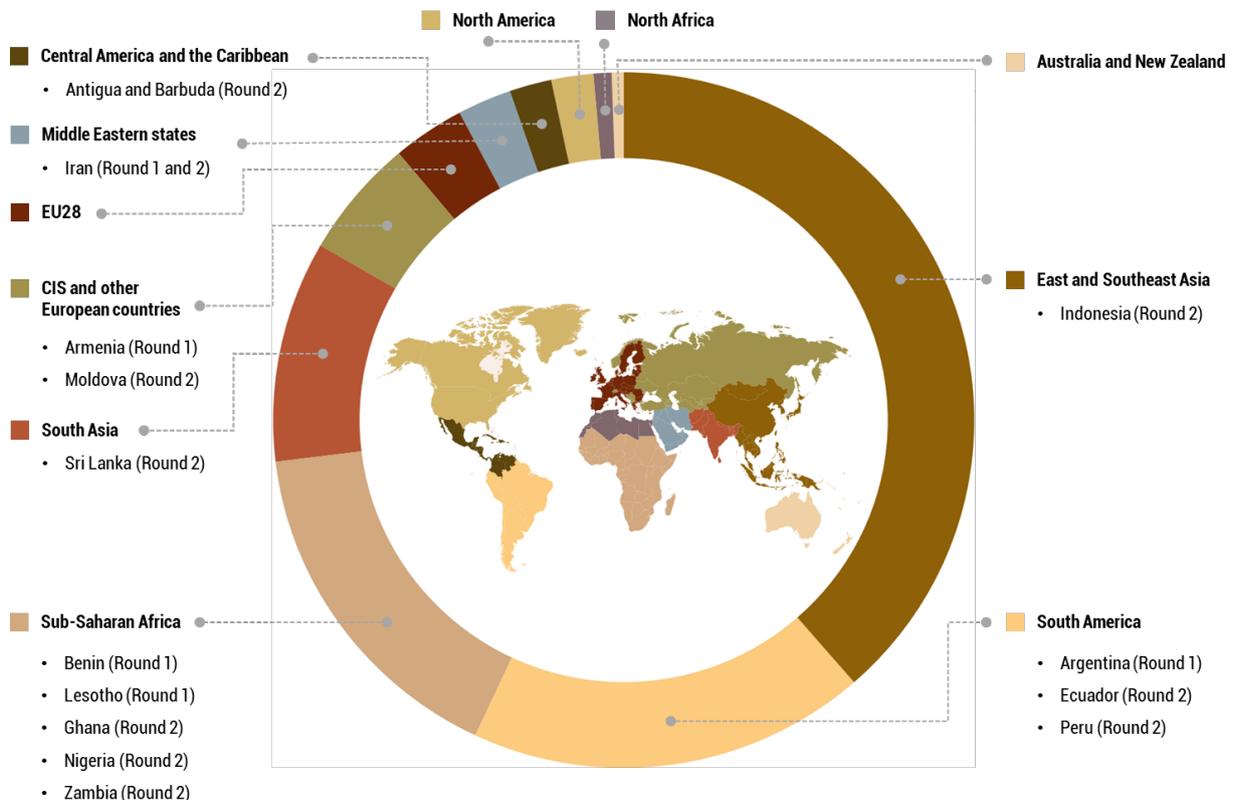
Regional breakdown of the Minamata Convention Initial Assessments funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF)



The number of approved projects per region of the Second Round increased as opposed to the First Round thanks to the doubling of funding. With the Third Round of applications, we hope that the Specific International Programme can outspread support to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition

How do Specific International Programme's projects plot against a global mercury emissions map?

To have a sense of impact, below the Programme's current projects are mapped against the global mercury emissions of 2015 as reported in the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment (2018) by region¹



Source: UNEP/Global Mercury Assessment 2018

¹ Regional breakdown accords to the Global Mercury Assessment 2018

While the purpose of the Programme's projects is to build capacity and technical know-how at the national level, rather than directly reduce emissions, mapping the project against the emissions background goes some way to illustrate the impact strengthened national capacities have on the overall implementation of the Convention. Strong implementation knowledge at the national level contributes to the global effort of enhancing the reduction of mercury pollution in the next decades, and so doing to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury. Mapping on-going projects to the emission map also demonstrates the Programme's potential impacts to the regional and global efforts of making mercury history.

The mercury emission level **per region** is identified by the circle around the global emission map. GMA also indicates that the **largest single activity** causing mercury emissions worldwide is artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). Countries in Africa, the Asia Pacific and Central and South America have received GEF, due to the highest ASGM activities in the regions. Please visit [PlanetGOLD](#) for more detail.

Progress of the Third Round of applications to the Specific International Programme

The **application guidelines** for the Third Round of the Specific International Programme prepared by the Secretariat support eligible Parties to develop and submit project applications by 18 March 2021. In addition, the Secretariat organized a [webinar](#) in four separate sessions in English, French and Spanish on 19 and 20 January to discuss important considerations with Parties when developing and submitting project applications. Furthermore, there were several [one-on-one Clinics](#) held in February upon demand to clarify and answer any questions that may have arisen during the course of the application preparation.

By the mandatory deadline the Secretariat received **24 applications**. At the time of writing, the Third Round applications are under a technical review by the Cross-Secretariat Task Team² for the Governing Board approval when it meets in August 2021. The Secretariat noted that the applications received have been very well formulated, and the needs well presented. The total funding request by the applications to the Third Round sums to USD 5.7 million.

As the number of approved projects is subject to funds available for the Third Round the Secretariat would like to encourage and welcome any further contributions.

The Programme is open to receive contributions from governments, the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, academia, and civil society to contribute.

More information at the [Convention Website](#)

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² the Cross-Secretariat Task Team includes Minamata Secretariat staff members, as well as members of the GEF Secretariat, the Special Programme Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership