



The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury is pleased to present a **Focus on the Specific International Programme**. This newsletter will provide Parties and other stakeholders with regular updates on the operations of the Specific International Programme, insights on ongoing projects, as well as forthcoming activities. The next edition of Focus will be released in early 2021.

The Governing Board of the Specific International Programme



The **Governing Board** is the decision-making body of the Programme as mandated by the Conference of the Parties. The Founding Board (pictured) began its work in early 2018 under the leadership of Co-Chairs

Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana) and Reggie Hernaus (The Netherlands) to set up the Programme and steer it through two successful funding rounds of project applications. Under its leadership the Programme allocated over USD 3 million to support 15 projects.

Following the conclusion of the term of the Founding Board at the Third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-3), the COP confirmed the Members of the next term (2020-2021) as: **for Africa** Mr. Olubunmi Olusanya (Nigeria) and Ms. Aïta Seck (Senegal), **for Asia and the Pacific** Mr. Mohsen Naziri Asl (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Mr. Prasert Tapaneeyangkul (Thailand), **for Central and Eastern Europe** Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia) and Mr. Kaupo Heinma (Estonia), **for Latin America and the Caribbean** Mr. Pedro Piacesi de Souza (Brazil) and Ms. Gina Griffith (Suriname), and **for Western Europe and others** Mr. Reggie Hernaus (Netherlands) and Mr. Atle Fretheim (Norway).

First Round: Five projects (2018)

In 2018, the Governing Board selected **5 projects** from 19 applications, namely in [Argentina](#), [Armenia](#), [Benin](#), [Iran](#) and [Lesotho](#). With **one million US dollars** in funding, the projects are now in progress, taking on specific obligations of the Convention 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. They have featured workshops on the impact of mercury from a gender perspective, drawing in industry stakeholders, and taking active steps to ensure COVID-19 safety in their project implementation.

Second Round: Ten projects (2019)

Since early 2020, the Secretariat has been working closely with the project managers of the **10 projects** selected by the Board for the Second Round, amounting to **two million US dollars**. A total of 20 applications had been received for the Round. The successful projects were submitted by Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Moldova, Nigeria, Peru, Sri Lanka and Zambia. The projects extend support to countries 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).



Digital Coffee Sessions with Project Managers



Given the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 turned out to be a year like no other, and placing much strain on officials and communities around the world. To assist our Project Managers the Secretariat started a series of Digital Coffee sessions to connect and lend support. The Digital Coffee sessions were set up as a virtual informal meeting space, to check in on progress made under the projects, following up on an challenges to report the progress or address any challenges faced, as well as exchange on other areas of technical information or help needed. The sessions on 9 July 2020 were arranged at different times in an effort to accommodate project managers from different regions.

Donors and resources raised so far for the Third Round

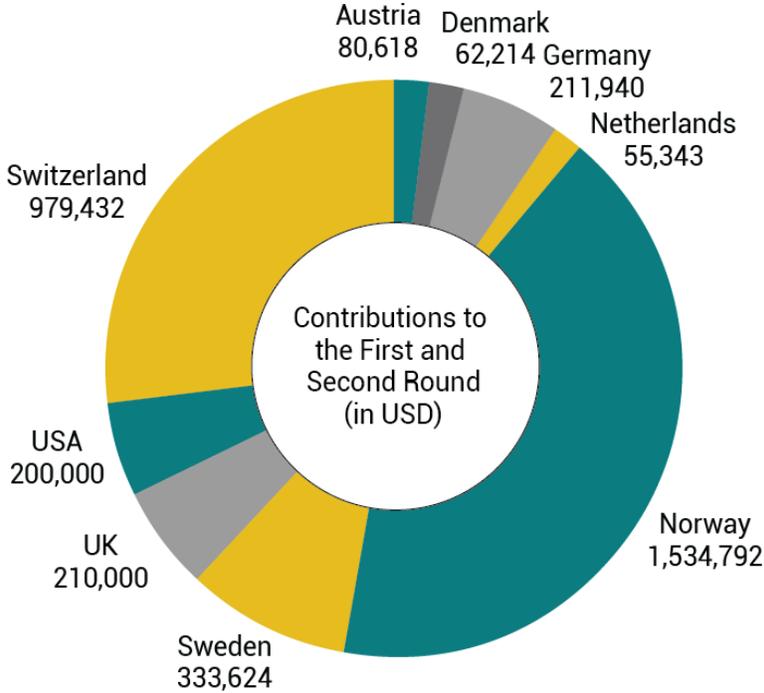
The Specific International Programme counts on the generous contributions to the Specific Trust Fund. The First and Second Rounds were made possible by the valuable contributions of **Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**

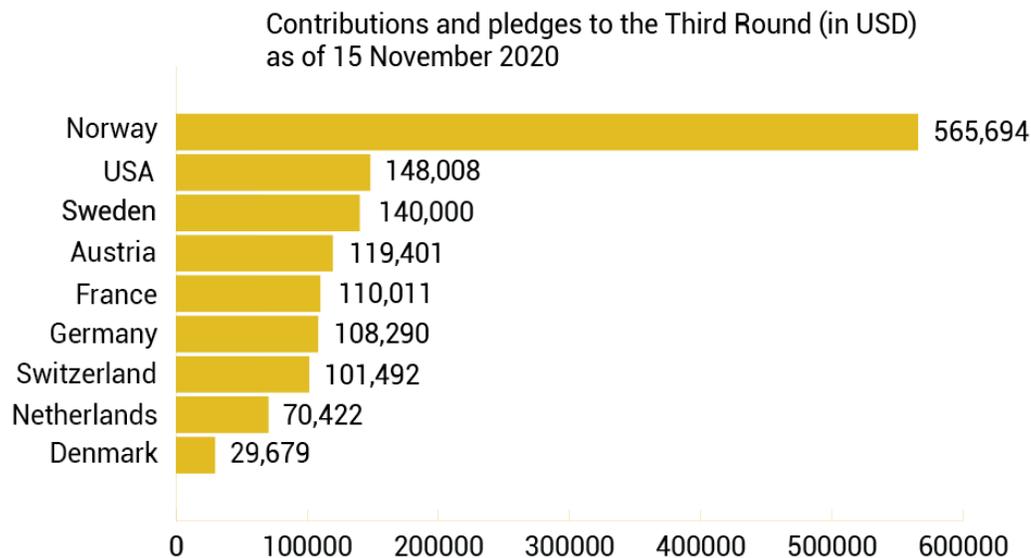


The Secretariat is pleased to report that following the pledges by **Norway** (NOK 500,000), **Switzerland** (CHF

100,000) and **Denmark** (DKK 200,000) during COP-3, more donors have come forward to make pledges and contributions to the Specific Trust Fund, namely also **Austria, France, Germany, The Netherlands** and **Sweden**. As of 31 October 2020, just over USD 1 million is received by the Secretariat.

In anticipation of the Governing Board's decision to launch the Third Round in late 2020, those Parties in a position to do so are sincerely invited to contribute further to the Fund, to continue to allow the Programme to support the capacity-building and technical assistance needs as identified by developing country Parties.





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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