



3 November 2015

**Subject: Call for submissions by relevant organizations to provide information on the availability of monitoring data for the Minamata Convention**

Dear Coordinator for the Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury,

In response to the request from the office of the Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury on 1 December, 2014, I am responding, albeit late, to the request for more information on the availability of monitoring data about mercury for Article 22 – Effectiveness Evaluation.

Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) is a non-profit, 501(c)3 research organization based in Portland, Maine in the United States and oversees the Center for Mercury Studies. BRI and BRI scientists at the Center for Mercury Studies have been conducting field studies to assess the exposure and impacts of mercury in the environment, and how that may impact ecological and human health, since 1990.

As part of field investigations by BRI and BRI scientists over the past 25 years, there has been a strong effort to become a central clearinghouse for biotic mercury data for North America. To meet that interest, BRI has conducted regional, multi-year workshops for mercury scientists and policy-makers across North America. Starting in 2000 and ending in 2005, mercury data from the northeastern part of the United States and eastern part of Canada were compiled to produce 21 peer-reviewed manuscripts in a special issue of the journal *Ecotoxicology*. From 2007 to 2011, mercury data were compiled and centralized in BRI's Hg databases for the Great Lakes Region of the United States and Canada – resulting in 35 peer-reviewed manuscripts published in special issues of the journals *Ecotoxicology* and *Environmental Pollution*. And, currently, starting in 2012, BRI is a co-lead with the U.S. Geological Survey to compile biological Hg data for western North America and develop peer-reviewed papers to be published in a special issue of the journal *Environmental Science and Technology*. These data compilation and publication exercises places BRI in a unique position to hold biological Hg data for most of North America, which represents published and unpublished sources from governmental agencies, academics and non-profit organizations. BRI now holds over 400,000 biotic Hg data point for North America.

In an effort to build from the North American experience, BRI – as a member and co-lead of the Fate and Transport Partnership (now the Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research Partnership) – developed the Global Biotic Mercury Synthesis (GBMS) database with an initial emphasis on shellfish, fish and marine mammals. That database includes over 34,000 individual organisms from 72 countries based on data published in peer-reviewed journals. These data are available for use by the Interim Secretariat's Office and are planned to be used as a pilot project, through a grant by the STAP-GEF Regional Office of North America, on UNEP Live.



Lastly, BRI has and continues to participate in global Hg biomonitoring and capacity building projects. In addition to BRI serving as an Executing Agency for UNIDO to conduct work with the Minamata Initial Assessments and for UNDP to serve as an International Hg Advisor, we are also working with UNEP and IPEN to sample human hair and fish that they may consume in countries around the world. BRI conducted a global biomonitoring project in 2013 and 2014 that represented samples from over 40 countries and will continue this work in 2015 and 2016 in at least 20 more countries.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance as either the director of BRI or as the co-lead of the Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research Partnership.

Sincerely,

David Evers, PhD, Executive Director

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