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**Conference of the Parties to the  
Minamata Convention on Mercury  
Fourth meeting**

Online, 1–5 November 2021 and Bali, Indonesia,  
21–25 March 2022

Item 4 (e) (ii) of the provisional agenda\*\*

**Matters for consideration or action by the  
Conference of the Parties: financial resources and  
mechanism: Specific International Programme to  
Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance****Strengthening the Specific International Programme to Support  
Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance of the Minamata  
Convention on Mercury: enhancing the effective functioning of  
the Programme****Report of the Executive Director**

1. At its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury invited the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to present a report on enhancing the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance and its operations to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting. The present report has been prepared in response to that invitation.
2. In preparing the present report, the Executive Director invited the views, perspectives and reflections of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme, in particular with respect to enhancing the Programme and its operations, based on the experiences to date. The Governing Board met twice<sup>1</sup> between the third and fourth meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and at each of those meetings considered the matter and the input to be transmitted to the Executive Director. On each of those occasions, the Board underscored the importance of the Specific International Programme for the Convention and for applicant countries and expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for the excellent preparations to support the application rounds and the smooth operations of the Programme and to the generous donors to the Programme, especially repeat donors. At the second of the two meetings, its sixth meeting, the Board underscored as a central priority the mobilization of more resources for the replenishment of the Specific Trust Fund of the Minamata Convention, so that the fourth round of the Programme could be launched as soon as possible.

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\* Reissued for technical reasons on 16 February 2022.

\*\* UNEP/MC/COP.4/1.

<sup>1</sup> See UNEP/MC/COP.4/11 (Overall report on the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance) and UNEP/MC/COP.4/11/Add.1 (which includes the reports of the fifth and sixth meetings of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme). Also see the Convention website for more detailed information.

3. The present report further draws on all the reports of the Governing Board, the secretariat's annual reports to the Governing Board and the secretariat's regular overall reports on the Specific International Programme to the Conference of the Parties at each of its meetings, as well as other information on the operation of the Programme.
4. The report is prepared against the background of the Convention text and related decisions by the Conference of the Parties and takes into account the outcome of the first review of the financial mechanism during the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
5. The attached annex contains the report by the UNEP Executive Director, laid out in four sections plus two appendices. The first section describes the mandate of the Specific International Programme. The second section describes the unique features of the Specific International Programme in support of parties' implementation of their obligations under the Minamata Convention. The third section provides an overview of the experiences of the Specific International Programme to date. The last section lays out options for a possible way forward to enhance the effectiveness of the Specific International Programme. Appendix I gives an overview of deadlines for the implementation of the Minamata Convention, and appendix II provides an overview of the three rounds of the Specific International Programme, the type of work supported by the Programme and the support provided to parties through the three rounds of funding.

### **Suggested action**

6. The Conference of the Parties may wish to:
  - (a) Recall and reiterate the value of the Specific International Programme in facilitating capacity-building and technical assistance to support the implementation of the Convention and compliance with the obligations thereunder,
  - (b) Invite parties to make use of the unique features of the Specific International Programme, including its party-driven nature, to their fullest potential in the light of the urgent work of the Convention in its first decade;
  - (c) Recognize that enhancement of the effectiveness of the Specific International Programme and its operations requires an increased level of Programme funding;
  - (d) Call on parties in a position to do so to provide financial resources and other resources, including in-kind contributions, for the operation of the Specific International Programme.
7. Further, the Conference of the Parties may wish to return to the matter of enhancing the Specific International Programme at its fifth meeting, in the light of the further work to be done on the Programme by the Governing Board and the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the work on the second review of the financial mechanism.

## Annex

# Strengthening the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: enhancing the effective functioning of the Programme

## Report of the Executive Director

### I. Mandate of the Specific International Programme

#### A. Intent of Governments expressed during the preparation of the Convention

1. During the negotiation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, it was generally agreed that the capacity to implement the provisions of the mercury instrument under negotiation would vary widely among countries. Developing countries in particular needed adequate, predictable and timely funding, capacity-building and technical assistance to enable them to meet their obligations under the instrument. An effective financial mechanism was therefore considered essential to the success of the instrument and the achievement of a significant reduction in mercury emissions and releases to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of mercury.<sup>1</sup>

2. Along those lines, during the final stage of the negotiation to prepare the Minamata Convention, one of the key policy issues was the inclusion of both a mechanism to facilitate implementation and compliance and a mechanism to provide financial resources for implementation in a balanced manner, in a political package for reaching compromise. Both subjects were considered closely interlinked and critically important for the implementation of the future Convention.

3. This was subsequently reflected in paragraph 2 of article 13 of the Convention, stating that the overall effectiveness of implementation of the Convention by developing-country parties would be related to the effective implementation of article 13 concerning financial resources and the financial mechanism. It was also mirrored in the scope of the mechanism established in paragraph 1 of article 15 to promote implementation of, and review compliance with, all provisions of the Convention. It is also worth noting that the mechanism described in article 15, including the Committee established as part of that mechanism, was to be facilitative in nature.

#### B. The institutional arrangements and mandate set out in article 13 of the Convention and decision MC-1/6 on the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance

4. The Minamata Convention, in article 13, sets out the provisions concerning financial resources and the financial mechanism. Multilateral, regional and bilateral sources of financial and technical assistance, as well as capacity-building and technology transfer, are encouraged, on an urgent basis (para. 3). The mechanism is to provide adequate, predictable and timely financial resources for the purpose of supporting developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition in implementing their obligations under the Convention (para. 5). The mechanism consists of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) trust fund and a specific international programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance (para. 6).

5. As is envisaged in paragraph 9 of article 13, the Conference of the Parties, in decision MC-1/6, decided on the arrangements for the operation of the Specific International Programme, including by:

(a) Deciding that the hosting institution of the Specific International Programme would be provided by the United Nations Environment Programme;

(b) Deciding that the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme would deliver administrative support to the Specific International Programme, through the allocation of human and other resources, through the secretariat of the Minamata Convention (annex I, hosting arrangements);

<sup>1</sup> See the report of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury on the work of its fifth session (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.5.7), para. 184.

- (c) Establishing the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme, to oversee and implement the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, including decision-making on projects (annex I, governance arrangements);
- (d) Approving the guidance on the scope, eligibility, operations and resources of the Specific International Programme (annex I, guidance);
- (e) Approving the duration of the Specific International Programme, which was to be open to receive contributions and applications for support for a period of 10 years from the establishment of its trust fund;<sup>2</sup>
- (f) Approving the terms of reference setting out the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board, the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (annex II).
6. Based on the above, the Governing Board, at its first meeting, adopted its rules of procedure to support its functioning and that of the Specific International Programme, and also the criteria according to which applications are to be supported by the Specific International Programme.<sup>3</sup>
7. Further to the provisions of the Convention and decision MC-1/6, it is worth noting that:
- (a) The Convention invites all parties and other relevant stakeholders to provide financial resources to the Programme on a voluntary basis (para. 9 of article 13);
- (b) Resources for the Programme shall include financial and in-kind contributions and expertise (decision MC-1/6, annex I, para. 9);<sup>4</sup>
- (c) The Programme shall be country-driven, taking into consideration national priorities, country ownership and the sustainable implementation of the obligations under the Convention (decision MC-1/6, annex I, para. 8);
- (d) The Programme shall ensure complementarity and avoid duplication with other existing arrangements to provide support, in particular GEF and the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening<sup>5</sup> (decision MC-1/6, annex I, para. 8).

## II. Unique features of the Specific International Programme in support of parties' implementation of their obligations under the Minamata Convention

8. The Specific International Programme, as one of the two components of the financial mechanism of the Convention and being established after the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening, was set up to be different and distinct. This differentiation and distinction both in mandate and in operations also underlines its unique ability to support Minamata Convention parties in a distinct and specific manner.
9. **The Specific International Programme is different from and additional to the GEF trust fund, which is the other, larger component of the financial mechanism defined by the Minamata Convention.**<sup>6</sup> In its instrument, GEF has included the Minamata Convention as one of the conventions it services.<sup>7</sup> As such, GEF operates under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties in respect of

<sup>2</sup> The Conference of the Parties may decide to extend this period, not exceeding an additional seven years, taking into account the review process of the financial mechanism in accordance with paragraph 11 of article 13 of the Minamata Convention. (para. 12 of annex 1 to decision MC-1/6).

<sup>3</sup> See the report of the first meeting of the Governing Board (UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.1/6).

<sup>4</sup> The same paragraph continues with "Contributions are encouraged from a broad range of sources. This includes all parties to the Minamata Convention with the capability to contribute, as well as other relevant stakeholders, including Governments, the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, academia and other types of civil society actors". It should be noted that a specific set of rules and directives applies when the United Nations receives financial or other resources from the private sector or others.

<sup>5</sup> For purposes of clarity, the "Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management" is referred to in this report as the "Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening". The Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening is hosted by the UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch.

<sup>6</sup> See the GEF website for details on the support provided by the GEF trust fund.

<sup>7</sup> See "Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility", para. 6 (e).

the Minamata Convention<sup>8</sup> but is subject to its own governance structure, decision-making processes, financial management and operational modalities according to its own instrument. It is to be noted that GEF is a very substantial enabler of financial and technical support for the parties of the Minamata Convention: working with and through implementing agencies and executing agencies, parties have been supported with respect to mercury management and their obligations under the Minamata Convention since the fifth GEF replenishment.<sup>9</sup> As specified, the Specific International Programme is additional to GEF. It is distinct in that it provides parties with direct access to funding for capacity-building and technical assistance, without the need to work through implementing or executing agencies or through larger, more technical and complex projects. For example, applicants to the Specific International Programme are not required to provide co-funding (though many applicants did). Further, the Conference of the Parties recognized that the priority for both GEF and the Specific International Programme should be to support parties in implementing their obligations under the Convention. Given the significant differences between GEF and the Specific International Programme, including in allocations, the Conference of the Parties specified that their work should be complementary and duplication should be avoided.

10. **The Specific International Programme is also different and distinct from the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening hosted by the UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch.**<sup>10</sup> The Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening was established by the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP through resolution 1/5 (which adopted the terms of reference for that programme). As such, it is considered an intergovernmental arrangement that is under the authority of the United Nations Environment Assembly and works across the chemicals and waste cluster. The Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening is therefore an institutional arrangement within UNEP and, from a legal perspective, outside the authority of the parties to the Minamata Convention or any other instrument in the chemicals cluster. The value it can bring to Minamata Convention parties lies in its cross-cutting mandate to support implementation more generally across the five instruments it supports to strengthen the overall chemicals and waste cluster, as opposed to the targeted, Convention-specific support provided by the Specific International Programme.

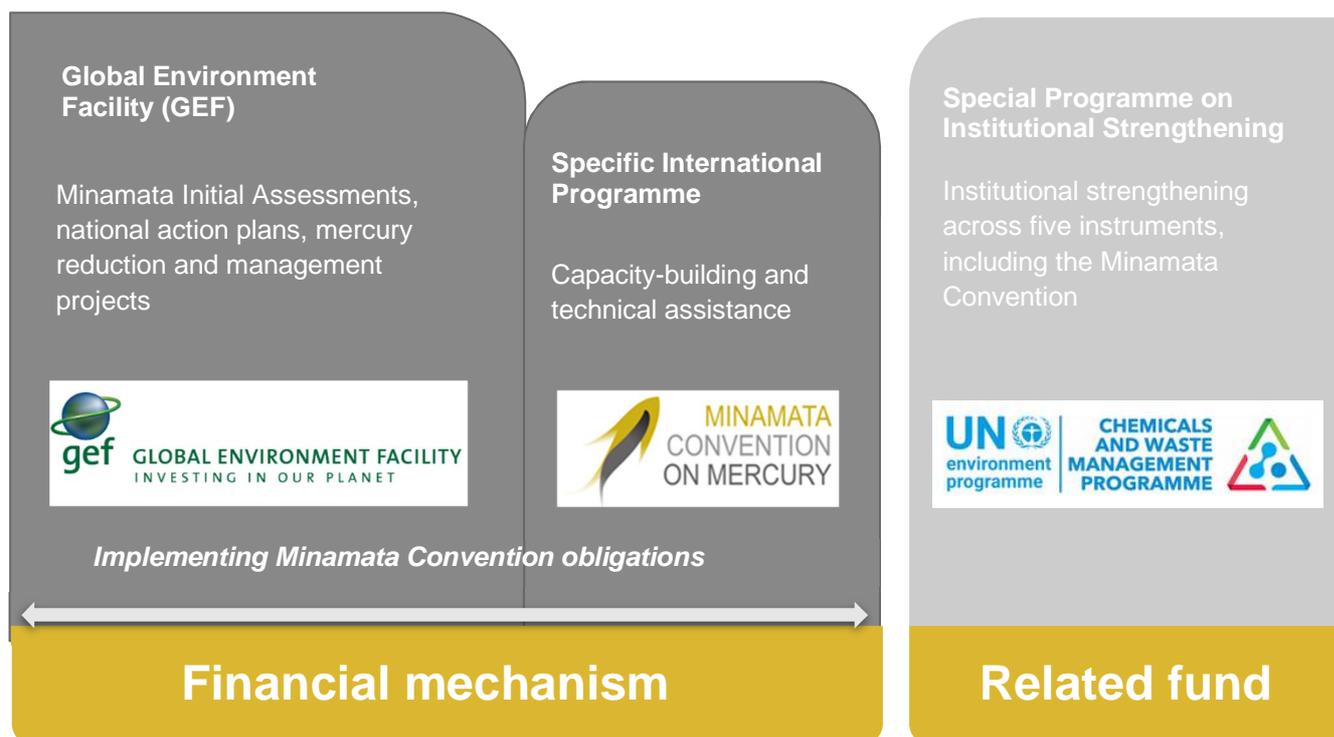
11. Figure 1 presents a schematic representation of the roles of GEF, the Specific International Programme and the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening in supporting the parties to the Minamata Convention. It is to be noted that the figure does not correspond to the size of allocations available under each (please see footnotes 9 and 10 for more details); it is intended to present the interrelatedness of the three trust funds and the mandate and extent of their respective work areas.

<sup>8</sup> See decision MC-1/5 on guidance to the Global Environment Facility.

<sup>9</sup> For a full overview of support provided, see the regular reports by GEF to the Conference of the Parties (UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/3, UNEP/MC/COP.2/INF/3 and UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/2). It is worth highlighting here that as at 8 July 2021, a cumulative total of 104 countries were receiving support on mercury under the seventh GEF replenishment, for a cumulative total of \$158.9 million. Cumulatively over the replenishment cycles, GEF resources have supported 117 countries in conducting Minamata Initial Assessments to enable countries to ratify the Convention and begin early implementation. As at 30 June 2021, 59 Minamata Initial Assessments had been submitted to the Minamata Convention secretariat.

<sup>10</sup> See the UNEP website for detailed information on the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening, which supports country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level to address the financing of the sound management of five instruments in the chemicals and wastes cluster, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities for each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle. The Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening supports projects of up to \$250,000, or in some cases up to \$500,000. To date, the Executive Board of the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening has conducted four rounds of applications. As at 31 July 2021, 57 projects with budgets totalling \$15.2 million had been approved by the Executive Board. The applications to the fifth round are currently under review.

Figure 1

**Roles of the various entities supporting the implementation of the Minamata Convention**

12. The unique features of the Specific International Programme that support parties' implementation of their obligations under the Minamata Convention on Mercury can be summarized as follows:

(a) First, the Specific International Programme is governed under the direct authority of the parties to the Minamata Convention, through its Conference of the Parties,<sup>11</sup> and managed by a body under the Conference of the Parties, namely the Governing Board. The Governing Board consists of 10 members, with each United Nations region providing two members from among the parties to the Convention. It is therefore the party-driven part of the financial mechanism. Being under the direct authority of the parties enables the Specific International Programme to be more directly cognisant of and responsive to the parties' priority areas of work. It should be noted that eight members of the Governing Board are from recipient country parties and two are from donor country parties, which provides the Board with direct knowledge of the demands of implementing the Convention in different national contexts.

(b) Second, the Specific International Programme provides parties with direct access to sources of financial and technical assistance without the need to work through or with implementing or executing agencies. In the discussions leading to agreement on the Convention text, developing countries identified direct access to support for capacity-building and technical assistance as necessary and even essential for national implementation, including to develop the capacity to access the much larger GEF resource envelope.

(c) Third, as the first decade of implementation of a Convention lays the foundation for action to achieve the objective of the Convention, it is notable that the Specific International Programme was established for this first decade, in recognition of the fact that this is when the needs are specific and urgent. The parties to the Convention have agreed to timelines that mainly lie within the 15 years after entry into force, notably with respect to the closure of mercury mines; banning of the manufacture, import and export of mercury-added products; and phase-out or reduction of specific industrial processes where mercury and mercury compounds are used; as well as elements related to article 7 (artisanal and small-scale gold mining), article 8 (emissions) and article 9 (releases) (see appendix I for key dates for obligations under the Convention). Moreover, action required by parties in the first decade of implementation of the Convention also relates to putting in place regulations and practices for the trade of mercury (article 3), identifying and managing stocks and

<sup>11</sup> In accordance with paragraph 9 of article 13 of the Convention, the Specific International Programme will be operated under the guidance of and be accountable to the Conference of the Parties.

sources of mercury (articles 3 and 10) and undertaking national action on mercury waste (article 11), contaminated sites (article 12) and health (article 16).

(d) Fourth, the role of the secretariat of the Minamata Convention in Programme operation and in supporting the parties applying to the Programme is unique to the Specific International Programme. The history of applications to the Specific International Programme thus far, with a total of 63 applications received from 48 parties over its three rounds of applications, provides the secretariat with a direct view of support parties' needs and national priorities in terms of the capacity-building and technical assistance support needed to implement the Convention and comply with its provisions.

13. It should also be noted that the national reporting by parties provides a further window into implementation progress and challenges and thus possible needs for capacity-building and technical assistance by parties. "The national reports, which are submitted to the Conference of the Parties on a regular basis, through the secretariat, provide information on implementation progress and can include information on the challenges that parties encounter in implementing their obligations and other requirements under the Convention.<sup>12</sup> The Conference of the Parties and the Implementation and Compliance Committee are therefore in a direct position to be informed of such challenges. The Governing Board could also request the secretariat to provide it with an overview of the needs expressed through national reports, as well as through direct requests made to the secretariat.

### III. Experiences of the Specific International Programme and its operations thus far<sup>13</sup>

14. The Convention has just marked the fourth anniversary of its entry into force (16 August 2021). The Specific International Programme began operating immediately after the conclusion of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties (September 2017), pursuant to decision MC-1/16. UNEP established the Specific Trust Fund effective 1 January 2018 to receive funds for the Specific International Programme. Though the Specific International Programme is only three-and-a-half years into operation (at the time of writing), the rapid progress to date by the Governing Board, with the support of donors for the three rounds thus far and the direct support provided by the secretariat to 22 parties, is notable.

15. The meeting reports of the Governing Board, the secretariat's annual reports to the Governing Board, the secretariat's regular reports to the Conference of the Parties and the website and newsletter on the Specific International Programme provide detailed information on the progress and experiences of the Programme thus far (for an overview of the three rounds, see appendix II). It is worth noting that:

(a) The full structure of the Specific International Programme is in place, including its Specific Trust Fund, the Governing Board and the secretariat function, delivered through the secretariat of the Minamata Convention;

(b) Three rounds of applications have been concluded, allowing for the approval of 24 projects ranging in value from \$160,000 to \$250,000 at the national level in 22 parties, for a total of \$5.2 million in funding. This includes three regional projects that extend to a further 13 countries as official partners that benefit;

(c) The 15 projects from the first and second rounds are in implementation mode, with the first two projects set to conclude later this year;

(d) As was requested, close cooperation has been established with the GEF secretariat and the secretariat of the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening through the cross-secretariat

<sup>12</sup> Pursuant to the terms of reference of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, one of the functions of the secretariat is to prepare reports on issues to be considered by the Committee on the basis of the national reports submitted by parties under article 21 of the Convention. Further, in accordance with paragraph 2 (e) of article 24 of the Convention, the secretariat prepares periodic reports for the Conference of the Parties based on the information received pursuant to articles 15 and 21. The first short reports were submitted by parties to the Minamata Convention by 31 December 2019. The secretariat's report to the Conference of the Parties on the national reports received is contained in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/16 and the Implementation and Compliance Committee's report to the Conference of the Parties is contained in document UNEP/MC/COP4.15. See the Convention website for details on national reporting.

<sup>13</sup> All up-to-date information pertaining to the Specific International Programme and the work and reports of its Governing Board is available at <https://www.mercuryconvention.org/en/implementation/specific-international-programme>.

task team (which also includes the secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership, also hosted by the UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch) to ensure complementarity of effort and avoiding any duplication in activity or funding.

16. While it is too early to list the impacts of the projects being implemented under the Specific International Programme (the first two are only due for completion and closure in late 2021/early 2022), it is possible to outline some of the main outcomes expected of the first 10 projects: almost all involve work on specific policy issues, a number relate to further legislative development, one project has enabled a regional partnership to address common issues among a set of small island developing States, many have well set gender elements and, in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), a number have changed their approach and conducted training online, reaching more trainees than originally planned for.

17. ***Effective secretariat functions are imperative for the effective operation of the Specific International Programme.*** The secretariat function for the Specific International Programme is provided by the secretariat of the Minamata Convention, including strategic, programmatic, legal, scientific, technical, communication, financial and administrative secretariat services and functions provided to the Governing Board, the Specific International Programme and its Specific Trust Fund, the project managers implementing approved projects and the applicants to the various Programme application rounds. To augment this capacity, UNEP and the secretariat have looked at different options for additional staff support. In this regard, UNEP and the secretariat greatly appreciate the generous support of the Government of Italy for a Junior Professional Officer post in the Minamata Convention secretariat for two years, from late 2021 onwards. This support for the Specific International Programme and the secretariat of the Minamata Convention comes at a pivotal time. Should the need to further augment staff support arise, the terms of reference of the Specific International Programme provide for the possibility of a review (para. 12 of annex II to decision MC-1/6).

18. It should also be noted that paragraph 11 of article 13 of the Convention provides for the regular review of the financial mechanism, of which the Specific International Programme is one component. The Conference of the Parties conducted a first review during its third meeting, at which time parties praised the rapid roll-out of the Specific International Programme, reiterated the Programme's essential role in implementing the Convention and meeting the obligations thereunder and welcomed the incorporation during the second round of lessons learned from the first round. At the time, it was also pointed out that the Specific International Programme had, from the outset, lacked sufficient financial resources to meet the high demand from parties for support.<sup>14</sup>

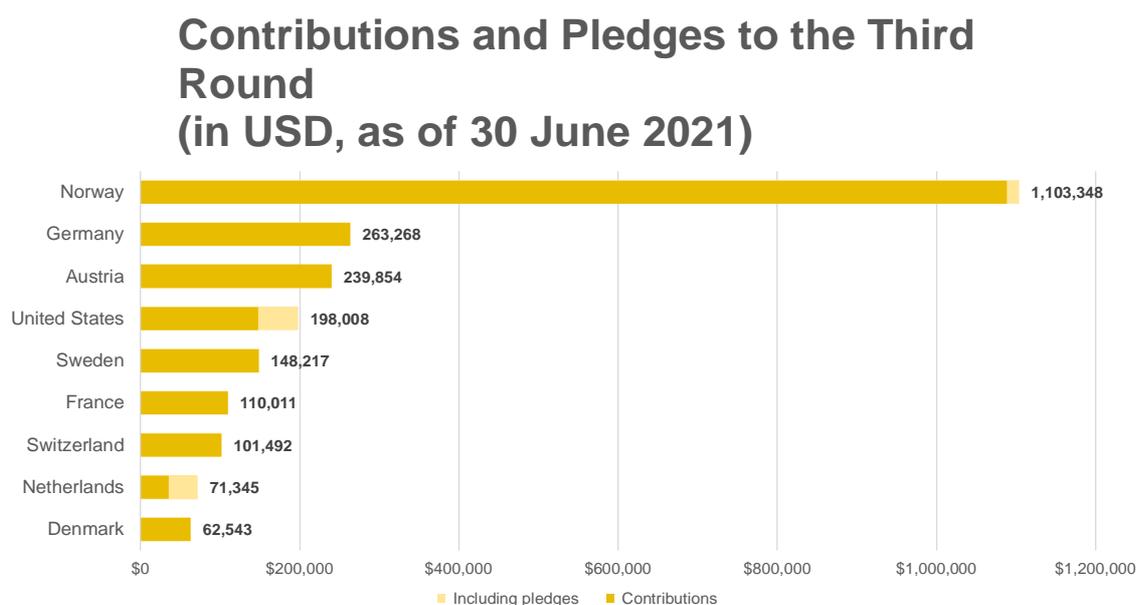
19. Taking the above into account, apart from the urgent need to mobilize resources, the Governing Board reports that the Specific International Programme is responding well to its mandate, is well supported by the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and is functioning effectively in terms of processes and project administration and grant management. It is worth noting here that in August 2021, at its sixth meeting, the Governing Board made budgetary provision for a mid-term evaluation of the Specific International Programme to be conducted by the UNEP Evaluation Office from 2022 onwards, to provide an external opinion on the overall implementation of the Programme and related information.

20. ***The effective functioning of the Specific International Programme clearly requires adequate, predictable and timely financial resources (para. 5 of article 13).*** The support provided to parties by the Programme thus far has been enabled by the contributions of the following parties: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Norway deserves recognition for being the single largest contributor to the Specific International Programme overall. In addition, Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States are to be commended for having contributed to each round, and Switzerland for making a significant contribution to the second round. As at 30 June 2021, a total of \$6,035,793 had been contributed to the Specific Trust Fund, enabling the approval of a total of 24 projects and the overall operations of the Specific International Programme (see figure 2 for the fundraising status and breakdown by donor as at 30 June 2021).

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<sup>14</sup> See the report of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury on the work of its third meeting (UNEP/MC/COP.3/23), para. 112.

Figure 2  
Fundraising status of the Specific International Programme as at 30 June 2021



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



21. ***The level of funding of the Specific International Programme needs the attention of the Parties as a priority.*** At the most recent meeting of the Governing Board, the Board thanked Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States for their contributions to the third round, as they had enabled nine more projects to be supported. However, the Board noted with concern that the funding envelope was not sufficient to cover all the applications that it considered conceptualized and articulated well enough to approve on the basis of merit shown and need expressed. This situation places the Board and by extension the Specific International Programme overall in a difficult position, as the applicants followed the Convention text regarding the implementation of obligations and the guidelines for applying for capacity-building and technical assistance support. It is worth noting here that in the first round, 19 applications were received, of which 12 were assessed for funding and 5 were approved; in the second round, 22 applications were received and 10 were approved for funding; and in the third round, 24 applications were received, many among them well-articulated, but only 9 projects could be approved given the funds available.

## IV. Enhancing and strengthening the Specific International Programme and its operations: a way forward

22. Consideration of the Specific International Programme by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting comes at an important time for the Programme and the Convention. As the Specific International Programme is only set to be in place for 10 years, the additional steering required to improve the funding levels to the Programme should come as early as possible in the life of the Programme, to allow any adjustments needed to make the Programme as beneficial as possible for the remainder of the short time it is in place, both for parties' compliance with their obligations and for the effective implementation of the Convention.

23. Paragraph 11 of article 13 of the Convention provides for the regular review of the financial mechanism, of which the Programme is a component. The review is to include consideration of the level of funding, the guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties, the effectiveness of the Programme and the ability of the Programme to address the changing needs of parties eligible to access it. At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties will have before it draft terms of reference for the next review of the mechanism, which it may ask to have completed for consideration at its fifth meeting.<sup>15</sup>

24. For the immediate future, to support the effective functioning of the Programme, the upcoming review notwithstanding, the priorities appear to be:

(a) To recall and reiterate the value of the Specific International Programme in facilitating capacity-building and technical assistance to support the implementation of the Convention and compliance with the obligations thereunder;

(b) To invite parties to use the unique features of the Specific International Programme, including its party-driven nature, to their fullest potential in the light of the urgent work of the Convention in its first decade of operation;

(c) To recognize that enhancing the effectiveness of the Specific International Programme and its operations requires an increased level of funding for the Programme.

25. ***The Specific International Programme is clearly set up and ready to facilitate implementation of the Convention alongside GEF, for very specific purposes.*** While compliance is the prerogative of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, the Programme, too, supports parties in complying with the Convention's provisions. The Specific International Programme is building a wealth of insights on implementation needs through the applications received, and can also draw on information coming forward from the Implementation and Compliance Committee and from the Conference of the Parties after its consideration of national reports pursuant to article 21.

26. ***In the context of upcoming time-bound obligations under the Convention, it might be beneficial for the Specific International Programme to address time-sensitive implementation issues through a more systematic approach.*** A more systematic approach could mean defining a work programme for each round to focus on foreseeable immediate issues or potential difficulties requiring attention in the first decade of the implementation. In practice, the Governing Board, in its instruction to the secretariat on drafting the application guidelines for the fourth round (and subsequent rounds), could be encouraged to explore a systematic approach built on the knowledge gained from the needs expressed in applications for past rounds, the experience with projects already in implementation and the challenges recorded in article 21 national reports. A systemic approach may also make it easier to entice donors to contribute and provide opportunities to leverage the Programme's funds with those of other multilateral or bilateral cooperation initiatives. In this regard, the key dates agreed to by the parties (see appendix I) serve as an indication of upcoming priorities.

27. Moving the Specific International Programme to a systematic (or work-programme-based) approach could also help attract the attention of donors to the Programme, especially if they have an interest in supporting specific areas of work under the Convention or specific technical expertise to share or networks to tap into.

<sup>15</sup> The first review was conducted by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting. See document UNEP/MC/COP.4/12 for details on the upcoming review of the financial mechanism pursuant to paragraph 11 of article 13.

28. ***The party-driven nature of the Specific International Programme allows both donors and recipients, and parties overall, to shape the work of the Programme and secure its contribution to the overall effective implementation of the Convention.*** The parties guide the work of the Specific International Programme through the Conference of the Parties and the Governing Board, and in so doing can enhance the value of the Programme's investment in the capacity of developing-country parties to implement the Convention
29. ***Raising more funds to enable the Specific International Programme to fulfil its function for the remainder of its life requires parties' attention.*** Raising funds is a continuous task, and has become more difficult in a context not only of COVID-19 but also of the many competing environmental priorities, including within the chemicals and waste cluster. Ten parties of the Minamata Convention have invested in the Specific International Programme, supporting the capacity of 22 parties to implement the provisions of the Convention and comply with their obligations thereunder (with a further 13 parties as partners in regional projects).
30. ***Adequate, predictable and timely financial resources are the priority need for enhanced effectiveness of the Specific International Programme.*** In that light, it may be helpful for:
- (a) The secretariat of the Minamata Convention to prepare an estimation of the resource target for the Programme for the remainder of its life, based on the experiences so far and other available information, to provide potential donors with a multi-year view for planning purposes;
  - (b) The secretariat to provide a note on in-kind contributions that could be meaningful for the Programme;
  - (c) The Conference of the Parties to consider periodically holding a resource consultation or pledging event for the Programme;
  - (d) The Conference of the Parties to note that in implementing the Specific International Programme, the Governing Board and the secretariat have taken care to ensure that work under the Programme is different and distinct from work supported under the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening, and have made every effort to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity with the work of GEF and the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening, including through the review of all the applications to the Programme by the cross-secretariat task team;<sup>16</sup>
  - (e) Parties to share insights with the Governing Board and the secretariat regarding what type of information on the Programme and its mandate would be most helpful in terms of their internal budget procedures.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The cross-secretariat task team consists of members of the Minamata Convention secretariat, the GEF secretariat, the secretariat of the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening and the secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership. It is worth noting that in the last round, two applications to the Specific International Programme that would be better served under GEF were directly referred to the GEF secretariat. The two parties involved have now been linked with implementing agencies to begin project preparation under the much larger GEF envelope.

<sup>17</sup> On resource mobilization, it is worth noting that, as requested in decision MC-1/6, annex I, paragraph 10, the secretariat of the Minamata Convention prepared elements of a resource mobilization strategy for the Programme, which were presented to and considered by the Governing Board in 2018 and 2019. Numerous items listed in this paragraph draw from the secretariat's note to the Board.

## Appendix I

### Compilation of deadlines under the Minamata Convention on Mercury as per the Convention text and applicable annexes to the text

<i>Date</i>	<i>Article</i>	<i>Description</i>
2018	Art. 5, para. 2, and annex B	Acetaldehyde production in which mercury or mercury compounds are used as a catalyst is to be phased out.
2020	Art. 4, para. 1, and annex A	Manufacture, import or export of various mercury-added products is no longer allowed (including batteries, switches and relays, compact and linear fluorescent lamps, high pressure mercury vapour lamps, cold cathode fluorescent lamps and external electrode fluorescent lamps for electronic displays, cosmetics, and pesticides, biocides and topical antiseptics, as well as barometers, hygrometers, manometers, thermometers and sphygmomanometers).
	Art. 5, para. 3, and annex B	In vinyl chloride monomer production, reduce the use of mercury in terms of per-unit production by 50 per cent by the year 2020 against 2010 use. For sodium or potassium methylate or ethylate, reduce emissions and releases in terms of per unit production by 50 per cent by 2020 compared to 2010.
2025	Art. 5, para. 2, and annex B	Mercury-cell chlor-alkali production is to be phased out.
2027	Art. 5, para. 3, and annex B	For sodium or potassium methylate or ethylate, reduce the use of mercury, aiming at phase-out of this use as fast as possible and within 10 years of entry into force of the Convention.
2032*	Art. 3, para. 4	Primary mercury mining that was being conducted within a party's territory at the date of entry into force of the Convention for that party is to cease 15 years after that date.
2020*	Art. 5, para. 5 (c)	Submit to the secretariat, no later than three years after the date of entry into force for the party, information on the number and types of facilities that use mercury or mercury compounds for processes listed in annex B, and the estimated annual amount of mercury or mercury compounds used in those facilities.
	Art. 7, para. 3 (b)	For a party that determines that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in its territory is more than insignificant, submit a national action plan to the secretariat no later than three years after the date of entry into force for the party or three years after the party notifies the secretariat of its determination, whichever is later.
	Art. 9, para. 3	Identify relevant point source categories no later than three years after the date of entry into force for the party.
2021*	Art. 8, para. 3, and art. 9, para. 4	Submit an implementation plan, if one has been developed, within four years of the date of entry into force for the party.
2022*	Art. 8, para. 4	For new sources, require the use of best available techniques and best environmental practices no later than five years after the date of entry into force for the party.
2022*	Art. 8, para. 7	Establish and maintain an inventory of emissions sources no later than five years after the date of entry into force for the party.
	Art. 9, para. 6	Establish and maintain an inventory of release sources no later than five years after the date of entry into force for the party.
2027*	Art. 8, para. 5	Implement control measures for existing facilities no more than 10 years after the date of entry into force for the party.

\* Denotes first possible date, depending on when the Convention entered into force for that party.

## Appendix II

### Overview of support provided to parties through the three rounds of funding by the Specific International Programme

#### Overview of the three rounds of the Specific International Programme

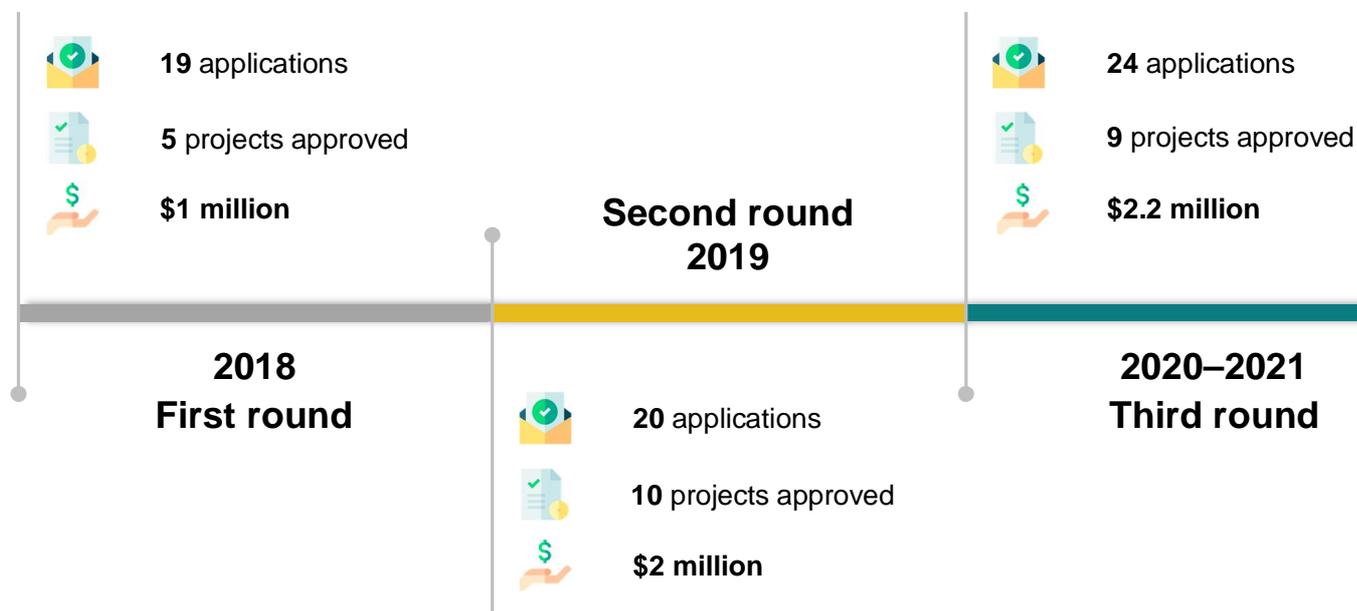


Table A-1  
Snapshot of the type of work supported by the Specific International Programme

<i>Argentina*</i>	<i>Armenia*</i>	<i>Ghana</i>	<i>Islamic Republic of Iran</i>	<i>Antigua and Barbuda</i>
Management framework for mercury-added products and their treatment as waste	Capacity to support phase-out of mercury-containing lamps, including cataloguing alternatives	Strengthening Ghana's health care sector for the implementation of the Minamata Convention	National guidelines to decommission mercury-cell chlor-alkali facilities	Facilitating monitoring capacities for a regional context (regional project)

\* These two projects from the first round are due for completion and closure in late 2021/early 2022. Thereafter, the project managers and the secretariat will be able to provide information not only on the activities of the projects but also on their impact.

Table A-2  
**Overview of parties receiving support from the Specific International Programme**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Economic status</i>	<i>First round</i>	<i>Second round</i>	<i>Third round</i>
Africa	Benin	LDC	*		
	Burundi	LDC			*
	Gabon	DC			*
	Ghana	DC		*	
	Lesotho	LDC	*		
	Nigeria	DC		*	
	Rwanda	LDC			*
	Senegal	LDC			*
	Zambia	LDC			*
Asia-Pacific	India	DC			*
	Indonesia	DC		*	
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	DC	*	*	*
	Jordan	DC			*
	Sri Lanka	DC		*	
Eastern Europe	Armenia	CEIT	*		
	North Macedonia	CEIT			*
	Republic of Moldova	CEIT		*	
Latin America and the Caribbean	Antigua and Barbuda	SIDS		*	
	Argentina	DC	*		
	Cuba	SIDS			*
	Ecuador	DC		*	
	Peru	DC		*	

*Abbreviations:* CEIT– country with an economy in transition; DC – developing country; LDC – least developed country; SIDS – small island developing State.