



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

Online, 1–5 November 2021*

Item 4 (f) of the provisional agenda**

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference
of the Parties: capacity-building, technical assistance
and technology transfer****Capacity-building and technical assistance programme of the
Minamata Convention on Mercury****Note by the secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. In the Minamata Convention on Mercury, paragraph 1 of article 14, on capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer, calls upon parties to cooperate to provide, within their respective capabilities, timely and appropriate capacity-building and technical assistance to developing country parties, in particular parties that are least developed countries or small island developing States, and parties with economies in transition, to assist them in implementing their obligations under the Convention. Paragraph 2 of article 14 says that such capacity-building and technical assistance may be delivered through regional, subregional and national arrangements, including existing regional and subregional centres, through other multilateral and bilateral means and through partnerships, including partnerships involving the private sector. Paragraph 2 further says that cooperation and coordination with other multilateral environmental agreements in the field of chemicals and wastes should be sought to increase the effectiveness of technical assistance and its delivery.

2. Paragraph 3 of article 14 calls upon developed country parties and other parties within their capabilities to promote and facilitate, supported by the private sector and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate, development, transfer and diffusion of, and access to, up-to-date environmentally sound alternative technologies to developing country parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, and parties with economies in transition, to strengthen their capacity to effectively implement the Convention. Paragraph 4 of article 14 calls upon the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention to consider information on existing initiatives and progress made in relation to alternative technologies; consider the needs of parties, particularly developing country parties, for alternative technologies; and identify challenges experiences by parties, particularly developing country parties, in technology transfer. The Conference of the Parties is to do this on a regular basis. Paragraph 5 calls upon the Conference of the Parties to make recommendations on how capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer could be further enhanced under article 14.

* The resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury is to convene in person in Bali, Indonesia, and is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2022.

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

3. In decision MC-3/8, the Conference of the Parties emphasized the relevance of using, as appropriate, regional, subregional and national arrangements, including the existing regional and subregional centres of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, in the delivery of capacity-building and technical assistance, consistent with article 14 of the Convention.
4. In the decision, the Conference of the Parties further requested the secretariat of the Minamata Convention to compile any information received from the parties and the existing regional, subregional and national arrangements, including the existing regional and subregional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions, on the capacity-building and technical assistance provided to support parties in implementing their obligations under the Minamata Convention, and also requested the secretariat to report thereon to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting.
5. Section II of the present note provides the requested report on the submissions received in that regard, which are reproduced in their entirety in UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/11. Section III of the present note provides additional information on the capacity-building and technical assistance activities of the secretariat, including engagement with regional, subregional and national arrangements and other partners. Section IV sets out the secretariat's view on areas for capacity-building and technical assistance in the next biennium. Section V outlines suggested action by the Conference of the Parties.

II. Report on submissions

6. The secretariat sought information relevant to decision MC-3/8 from parties and other stakeholders by means of a letter sent by the Executive Secretary on 13 December 2019 to all the participants in the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as well as national focal points for the Convention, permanent missions to the United Nations Environment Programme and permanent missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva. On 20 May 2021, the Executive Secretary sent a letter to national focal points reiterating the invitation for submissions.
7. Fourteen submissions were received from 13 parties: Argentina, Cambodia, Canada, Ecuador, Gambia, Germany, Japan, Montenegro, Netherlands, Oman, Qatar, Seychelles and United States of America. A compilation of the full submissions is set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/23.
8. One submission, received from a party hosting a regional centre, reported on the activities of the regional centre in implementing a project under the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance; participating in the ad hoc group of experts on the review of annexes A and B and the group of technical experts on guidance in relation to mercury releases; and participating in the delivery of relevant seminars and training courses. Another submission described in detail a project for mercury risk management in five countries, implemented with the support of a regional centre.
9. Five parties provided detailed descriptions of ongoing needs in relation to capacity-building and technical assistance. Some who only recently became parties noted challenges, including a lack of data, expertise and technical capacity. Several parties described the support they had received to date, including through enabling activities and other projects funded by the financial mechanism and related programmes. One said that the expertise it required existed in the private sector and that technical support would facilitate the uptake of such expertise.
10. Five parties provided detailed information on support they had provided for implementation of the Convention. The support included financial contributions to the Global Environment Facility, the Specific International Programme and 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. These submissions also described numerous bilateral and multilateral activities in such areas as mercury monitoring and assessment, artisanal and small-scale gold mining, mercury emissions control and mercury waste management. One submission described support provided for enabling activities before the Convention's entry into force and another outlined a programme to facilitate technology transfer in the private sector.
11. National reporting provides a structured opportunity for parties, should they wish to do so, to describe the involvement of regional centres and other partners in their national implementation activities and in their cooperation with other parties, and the related outcomes and challenges. The secretariat's report on the national reports received to date is set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/16. Additional information is expected to be provided in the full national reports due in December 2021.

12. International organizations and bodies, including existing regional and subregional centres, may provide information on their activities relative to the Minamata Convention in information documents provided to the Conference of the Parties at each of its meetings. The report on the activities of relevant international bodies to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting is set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/19.

III. Capacity-building and technical assistance activities of the secretariat

13. In carrying out its responsibilities with respect to article 13 on financial resources and mechanism and article 14 on capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer, the secretariat has worked directly and indirectly with many partners. A number of regional centres have been engaged in Convention-related activities and projects. The multi-stakeholder Global Mercury Partnership has also been directly involved in supporting parties' implementation efforts.

14. The regional centres have been involved in the development of the Minamata initial assessments and the national action plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining. These enabling activities have informed the further design of projects under the financial mechanism, the work of the Global Mercury Partnership and bilateral projects. The regional centres play a role in several of the programmes and projects funded through the Convention's financial mechanism. For example, they are involved in programmatic approaches like the Global Environment Facility's Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing States (ISLANDS) programme. They are also involved in some of the projects being implemented under the Specific International Programme, including, in some cases, as a formal implementing partner. One such project involves partnering with a country's national cleaner production centre.

15. The secretariat is implementing a number of targeted capacity-building and technical assistance efforts funded by the European Union. One project provides targeted support to parties in relation to the trade provisions of the Convention (article 3) and the provisions on emissions (article 8). Another project relates to supporting parties with regard to the 2020 deadline for the phase-out of mercury-added products.

16. The secretariat responds to individual requests from parties for information regarding Convention requirements, forms and guidance on a regular basis.

17. The secretariat has made tools, information resources, guidance and expertise available online to maximize their distribution and use, particularly in the light of the coronavirus disease pandemic. The Minamata Online series is an example of this effort. Experts from regional and subregional centres, the Global Mercury Partnership and other relevant international organizations have joined the secretariat in delivering several of the Minamata Online sessions. Recordings and presentations from the Minamata Online sessions are available on the Convention website. The secretariat has also participated in selected online events of such organizations and has highlighted activities and available tools of relevant partner organizations through social media.

IV. Secretariat's view of areas for capacity-building and technical assistance in the next biennium

18. Pursuant to article 21 and decision MC-1/8, the parties reported for the first time in December 2019, covering the reporting period 16 August 2017 to 31 December 2019. They were required to submit short reports addressing four questions, including three on article 3 (primary mining; stocks and sources; and consent for trade in mercury) and one on article 11 (final disposal). The report of the secretariat on the responses in the short reports is set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/16. Based on the responses received, including the comments made regarding the challenges faced by parties, there appear to be certain areas in which parties would benefit from further support. It is anticipated that the secretariat will work with parties in the next biennium in this regard. The Implementation and Compliance Committee considered the first short reports during its meeting on 7 and 8 June 2021. The report of the meeting of the Implementation and Compliance Committee is set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/15.

19. The first full national reports, covering all 43 questions in the reporting format, are expected by 31 December 2021. The responses received will be analysed closely by the secretariat and may well form the basis for capacity-building and technical assistance activities in the next biennium.

20. In the next biennium, the secretariat will seek to maximize the benefits of capacity-building and technical assistance activities managed by the secretariat itself, those supported through the financial mechanism and those undertaken by relevant partner organizations, while ensuring that there is no duplication of effort. Activities undertaken by the secretariat pursuant to article 14 are funded by contributions to the special trust fund. The programme of work and budget activity fact sheet for capacity-building and technical assistance in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/22 describes proposed activities for advancing a coordinated approach. The proposed activities are:

- (a) Tools, training and delivery modalities
 - (i) Develop and adapt tools and training materials;
 - (ii) Assess modalities to disseminate tools and training materials;
 - (iii) Develop case studies on technology cooperation and private sector engagement;
 - (iv) Undertake facilitated planning sessions;
 - (v) Expand use and accessibility of digital learning tools and micro-training;
 - (vi) Utilize and disseminate tools and training materials.
- (b) Specific capacity-building activities
 - (i) Develop and deliver training, workshops and advisory services on best available techniques and best environmental practices (BAT/BEP) guidance;
 - (ii) Develop and deliver training, workshops and advisory services on trade forms and procedures;
 - (iii) Develop and deliver subregional workshops on management of article 5 industrial facilities;
 - (iv) Enhance understanding and use of the Basel Convention technical guidelines for mercury waste;
 - (v) Reinforce the training and workshops listed above at the national level through country-specific interactive training and tailored information materials;
 - (vi) Further disseminate tools, training materials and case studies.
- (c) Capacity-building activities upon request
 - (i) Deploy expert advice to parties;
 - (ii) Organize national, subregional or regional planning meetings;
 - (iii) Convene national, subregional or regional implementation support meetings.
- (d) Cross-cutting activities
 - (i) Engage partners to design cross-cutting activities to leverage resources for implementation;
 - (ii) Design and implement subregional projects addressing trade and supply chain issues;
 - (iii) Undertake national projects on mercury linkages with biodiversity, deforestation and climate;
 - (iv) Offer the secretariat's gender and mercury training at the national level.

21. Should voluntary resources be made available, the secretariat hopes to build a knowledge base of these complementary and mutually-reinforcing efforts and use the information in an actionable way to guide tool development and dissemination, as well as the design of future capacity-building and technical assistance delivery. This work would be undertaken with a view to making the tools, training materials and information resources that are outputs of the activities of relevant partner organizations, as well as successful examples of capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer, available to parties to support implementation.

V. Suggested action by the Conference of the Parties

22. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the information provided in the present note and in the submissions themselves (UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/23) and draw the attention of parties and relevant stakeholders, especially those providing capacity-building and technical assistance pursuant to article 14, to the activities, initiatives and reports mentioned in the submissions, as well as to the needs and challenges described therein.

23. The Conference of the Parties may further wish to note that, pursuant to article 21 and annex I of decision MC-1/8 setting out the reporting format, parties are required to report on their activities relative to paragraphs 1 and 3 of article 14 in their national reports, and are invited to also provide supplemental information with respect to their receipt of capacity-building and technical assistance.
