

ZMWG contribution in relation to Article 14 of the Minamata Convention, on capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer

June 2018

In response to the request from the Committee of the Whole regarding the provisions under Article 14, addressing the matters of capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer, the Zero Mercury Working Group is pleased to provide the following contributions based on some of its most recent projects:

1. *Contributing to the preparation/implementation of the Minamata Convention, with a focus on developing strategies to implement product phase-out provisions and national action plans for artisanal and small scale gold mining, in four African countries”* , July 2014-December 2017.

With funding provided by the European Commission (EC) through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, this project, reached a successful conclusion in December 2017, with encouraging, concrete and continuing results.

The project was managed by the European Environmental Bureau, in collaboration with the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG), (hereafter referred to as EEB/ZMWG). Project partners were the Mercury Policy Project and Natural Resources Defense Council as resource organizations, groundwork South Africa as regional advisor, and SRADev-Nigeria, PANEM-Mauritius, Agenda-Tanzania and Friends of the Nation-Ghana as local partners.

The project focused on reducing mercury use in artisanal and small scale gold mining (ASGM) in Ghana and Tanzania through assisting in the development of National Action Plans (NAPs), and on mercury-added product phase-out in Mauritius and Nigeria. ASGM and products were chosen as thematic areas for the project because of the prominence of these mercury sources in the African Region. Globally ASGM accounts for 35% of anthropogenic airborne emissions of mercury, and mercury-added products represent the 3rd largest demand/consumption sector after ASGM and Vinyl Chloride Monomer production¹.

The project aimed to provide country stakeholders with a better understanding and direction on their overall Convention ratification and obligations via-a-vis the two project thematic areas. Overall, the project has been well-received by governments and has contributed to informing and solidifying relationships among the many stakeholders who are most likely to contribute to the successful implementation of the relevant Convention provisions. The project was welcomed as an integral part of wider national preparations for ratification and early implementation of the Convention. In particular, as a result of our project, important project activities continue and our local NGO partners are integral members of the project advisory committees (PACs), the national Steering Committees of the MIA projects in their respective countries, and are also part of the NAP development teams in Ghana and Tanzania.

[On developing national strategies for phasing out mercury added products, the project:](#)

¹ UNEP, Trade Report, p.10

- Engaged with the Ministry of the Environment, Mercury Focal Points and relevant stakeholders: Project Advisory Committees (PACs) involving relevant ministries/organisations, were constituted to inform and advise the project; a larger group of product related stakeholders were identified; and inception and final workshops were organised in both pilot countries.
- Assisted governments with drafting National roadmaps towards phasing out mercury added products: The project developed a ZMWG checklist and guide, including steps governments can follow to create a phase-out roadmap; the two pilot countries, Nigeria and Mauritius used the guide to draft their national roadmaps; the guide and checklist were presented at our regional workshop on products; and 29 African governments and Jamaica, plus over ten other Caribbean islands, have used the checklist and guide to develop their first draft roadmaps to phase out mercury added products.
- Further developed and implemented several of the steps identified in the checklist in the two pilot countries; specifically, the project produced:
 - a. A study looking at the transition of the national market towards Convention compliant products;
 - b. A legal gap analysis vis-à-vis the Article 4 requirements: In collaboration with the government of Mauritius ,
 - c. Draft laws to meet Art. 4 requirements

A commitment was expressed by both countries to sustain efforts towards phasing out mercury added products through continuation of Product Advisory Committees and their work plans as well as furthering support for draft legislation to move forward to phase out products by 2020.

On the development of the ASGM National Action Plans (NAPs), the project:

- Conducted initial stakeholder outreach and consultation through two-day workshops to better inform stakeholders about the Minamata Convention and its requirements.
- Conducted research and created background documents profiling the status of the ASGM sector in Tanzania and Ghana.
- Conducted intensive consultations with mining communities where miners were informed about the Convention and its requirements, while simultaneously providing a platform where miners could provide their valuable input to structure the NAP.
- Created a step-by-step guide for conducting miner consultations that can be used for further engagement in the two pilot countries or by any other country developing a NAP.
- Developed recommendations for the NAP, based on the research and consultations, including: measures on formalisation; potential measures to discourage the most harmful ASGM practices and reduce mercury consumption and releases; and education and outreach to the mining communities.
- Provided training for NGO partners on Baseline Mercury Inventories from international mining experts, contributing to the local NGOs capacity building and ensuring their future contributions to the development of the NAPs.
- Built capacity of national small-scale mining associations through a series of workshops.

The lessons learned, experiences, deliverables and tools developed by the project were presented at two regional conferences held from the 22nd to 26th May, in Nairobi, Kenya, in collaboration with UN Environment. These conferences focused on phasing out mercury-added products and on reducing mercury use in ASGM. In total, over 70 representatives from 29 African governments and Jamaica, UN agencies, NGOs, academics, and private sector took part in the conferences.

Project partners participated actively at regional meetings, the [sixth](#) and [seventh](#) Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meetings and in the [First Conference of the Parties \(COP1\)](#) for the Minamata Convention. They provided input to negotiations, interacted with stakeholders and governments, and presented the project results on different occasions. ZMWG members also attended and gave presentations during a series of eleven UNEP workshops around the world, to support ratification and early implementation of the Convention.

Overall, the project has also contributed to raising awareness about Convention obligations among various stakeholders, government agencies and officials, NGOs, traders, miners and other relevant parties. Three (Ghana, Mauritius, Nigeria) out of the four project countries have now ratified the Treaty.

2. *“Contributing towards early ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and towards phasing out mercury added products.”*

In 2016 three product phase out projects took place in Kenya (CEJAD), Ivory Coast (CASE) and South Africa (groundWork)². In 2017, five additional projects³ started in Kenya (CEJAD), and Ivory Coast (CASE) as well as in Bangladesh (ESDO), the Philippines (BanToxics!) and India (Toxics Link), under the title of: “Contributing towards early ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and towards phasing out mercury added products.” Building on the outcomes of the above mentioned project, these projects include fully or partly the following activities:

- Development and eventually assisting with the implementation of the checklist/roadmap to phase-out mercury added products with relevant government ministries.
- The development of study of availability of alternatives to mercury-added product of the country.
- Development/contribution on the legal gap analysis focusing on Article 4 provisions of the Treaty.
- Assisting hospitals to go mercury free with focus on phase out of thermometers and sphygmomanometers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.
- Sensitization of border inspectors from relevant government agencies and media on Minamata Convention/phase out provisions and illegal mercury containing products.
- Contribute to the global skin lightening product campaign
- Contribute to the MIA work

3. *“Towards quick Treaty Ratification, testing and phasing out mercury in dentistry and health care.”*

In 2016, a project took place in Mauritius (PANEM)⁴. The project focused among others, on awareness raising, testing and phasing out mercury in dentistry and health care while engaging in their MIA, in support of quick Treaty Ratification. The EEB/ZMWG Lumex testing instrument was used to measure mercury levels in indoor air in a public hospital, 8 private clinics, 5 schools/colleges, a national laboratory, 3 jewellery shops and outside in 2 landfills and a CFL

² The project in South Africa was funded by German Ministry of Environment. The ones in Kenya and Ivory coast were funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), via the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), through the European Environmental Bureau.

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recycling company. Eighteen awareness raising meetings/activities were held, with positive feedback from the participants. PANEM has also been an active participant of the National Mercury focus group in Mauritius, and has followed closely the multiple government processes related to the Convention, from the Minamata Initial Assessment to supporting the ratification process.

Over the last two years⁵, the EEB/ZMWG has placed a considerable amount of effort into developing the capacity of its NGO partners, including but not limited to those mentioned above. Through the projects described, these NGOs have become key stakeholders and resources in their respective countries. In order to expand these efforts further, additional funding for NGOs that would allow continued support in the form of technical assistance, capacity building and technology transfer, is essential to the effective implementation of the Minamata Convention.

⁵ EEB/ZMWG has been funding around 5 projects per year since 2005, in around 30 countries.
http://www.zeromercury.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=41