

Minamata Convention on Mercury

Third Review of the Financial Mechanism

Template for the submission of information by Parties and stakeholders

1. In paragraph 5 of article 13 on financial resources and mechanism, the Minamata Convention on Mercury defines a mechanism for the provision of adequate, predictable and timely financial resources to support developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition in implementing their obligations under the Convention. Paragraph 6 of the same article states that the mechanism is to include the Global Environment Facility (GEF) trust fund and the Specific International Programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance (SIP).
2. In accordance with decision MC-6/11 of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, Parties, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and stakeholders are invited to submit information on their experience gained through their interactions with the financial mechanism of the Convention, consistent with the terms of reference for the third review.
3. The terms of reference are informed by the respective mandates of GEF and the Specific International Programme for their support for the Minamata Convention on Mercury, as set forth in article 13 of the Convention, and in relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties (see decisions [MC-1/5](#), [MC-5/7](#), [MC-5/11](#), and [MC-6/10](#), on guidance to GEF, and decision [MC 1/6](#), on the Specific International Programme).
4. The third review of the financial mechanism will be of use in the development of GEF projects and programmes within the funding allocation and programming directions of the ninth GEF replenishment period, and for future rounds of the Specific International Programme.
5. Submissions should be communicated to the Secretariat by email mea-minamatasecretariat@un.org, with copies to brenda.koekkoek@un.org and alexander.romanov@un.org, by **30 April 2026**.

Section I: Identification of the Submitting Entity

Please complete the following information to identify the entity making this submission.

Name of Party / Organization	Eritrea
Type of Entity	Government
Contact Person	Adel Osman Omer National Focal Point Minamata Convention on Mercury Ministry of Land, Water and Environment (MoLWE)
Email Address	Aadel.osman.omer@gmail.com
Date of Submission	29.05.2026

Section II: Executive Summary

Please provide a brief overview of your experience with the financial mechanism (recommended length: 250–500 words).

The State of Eritrea, having acceded to the Minamata Convention on 7 February 2023 as its 140th Party, offers the following submission as a Least Developed Country (LDC) Party for the third review of the financial mechanism. Our experience confirms that both the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Specific International Programme (SIP) are indispensable. The GEF mechanism has been instrumental in supporting our foundational work under Article 7 of the Convention, specifically through the **GEF-6 project “Development of Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) and National Action Plan (NAP) for Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) in Eritrea” (GEF Project ID: 9641, GEF grant: USD 700,000)**, with UNEP as the implementing agency and UNITAR and the Ministry of Land, Water and Environment (MoLWE) as the executing agencies. This support was critical for establishing a national coordination mechanism, completing the national ASGM inventory, and preparing Eritrea’s NAP for the ASGM sector.

activities that paved the way for our formal accession to the Convention.

Regarding the SIP, Eritrea was successful in the Fourth Round of the Specific International Programme, with a project approved for funding by the Governing Board at its Tenth Meeting in January 2025. This outcome testifies to the Programme's demand-driven model and its ability to provide timely, targeted capacity-building support.

Eritrea's submission highlights the timeliness and adequacy of initial GEF support and encourages the financial mechanism to prioritize resources for the implementation of national action plans. The submission also notes that the SIP's streamlined, country-driven model is a valuable complement to larger GEF projects.

Section III: Information Organized by Performance Criteria

In accordance with the terms of reference for the third review of the financial mechanism (Annex to decision MC-6/11), Parties and stakeholders are invited to provide information organized according to the following performance criteria.

Criterion (a): Responsiveness of the GEF and the Specific International Programme

Please describe your experience with the responsiveness of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and/or the Specific International Programme (SIP) to guidance adopted by or provided by the Conference of the Parties. You may wish to address the alignment of funded projects with COP decisions, strategic priorities, and the needs of your country or region.

The GEF project (ID 9641) was fully aligned with the COP guidance on enabling activities for new and aspiring Parties. It directly supported the completion of a MIA and the development of a NAP for the ASGM sector, which is a key strategic priority under Article 7 of the Convention. Moreover, the SIP project approved for Eritrea in the Fourth Round was prepared in response to the COP-endorsed objective of building long-term institutional capacity to meet the Convention's obligations, thereby demonstrating the Programme's responsiveness to the specific needs of eligible LDC Parties. The financial mechanism has also supported technical training for Eritrean officials, for example through the provision of face-to-face and in-the-field training in December 2017 for mercury research in the ASGM sector.

Criterion (b): Impact on mercury supply, use, emissions and releases

Please describe the extent to which projects funded by the financial mechanism have reduced, or are expected to reduce, the supply, use, emissions and releases of mercury, and deliver other benefits in terms of Convention implementation. Where possible, please provide specific examples and quantitative data.

The GEF-funded enabling activity has had a direct impact by: (i) conducting a national inventory of ASGM activities using mercury; (ii) facilitating the establishment of a National Coordination Mechanism and a Stakeholder Advisory Group; and (iii) delivering a NAP for the ASGM sector, which sets out concrete measures to reduce and eventually eliminate mercury use in ASGM. By providing a solid evidence base and a nationally owned strategy, the project has laid the foundation for future emission and release reductions in the ASGM sector. The approved SIP project will further contribute by strengthening the national capacity to implement the NAP and monitor progress on mercury reduction.

Criterion (c): Transparency and timeliness of project approval processes

Please describe your experience with the transparency and timeliness of project approval processes under the financial mechanism. You may wish to address the clarity of decision-making procedures, communication with applicants, and the duration of the approval process.

The approval process for the GEF-6 enabling activity followed the standard GEF timeline for enabling activities and was carried out in a transparent manner, with clear roles for UNEP, UNITAR and MoLWE as the implementing and executing entities. For the SIP, Eritrea found the application procedures for the Fourth Round to be transparent and the communication with the SIP Secretariat to be effective and timely.

The announcement of successful applicants was made publicly and in a predictable manner, which is crucial for planning at the national level.

Criterion (d): Simplicity, flexibility and expeditiousness of procedures

Please describe your experience with the simplicity, flexibility and expeditiousness of the procedures for accessing funds and for implementing and reporting on projects. You may wish to address the administrative burden of application, reporting requirements, and any challenges encountered.

The project design and reporting requirements for the GEF enabling activity were found to be manageable for our national authorities. Eritrea appreciates the flexible approach of the SIP, which is designed as a demand-driven, voluntary and competitive programme. The application process for the Fourth Round was proportionate and allowed our national experts to prepare a competitive project proposal without excessive administrative burden. The flexibility of the SIP to fund smaller, targeted capacity-building activities is well suited to the needs of LDC Parties like Eritrea.

Criterion (e): Adequacy of resources

Please provide your views on the adequacy of resources available through the financial mechanism to support Convention implementation. You may wish to address whether the level of funding is sufficient to meet identified needs and priorities.

The GEF grant of USD 700,000 for the enabling activity was adequate for completing the MIA and the NAP for the ASGM sector. However, as an LDC Party that is now ready to move from planning to implementation, Eritrea considers that the level of resources available for implementing concrete mercury-reduction measures remains a challenge. The strong demand for SIP funding, which included Eritrea among the ten successful applicants in the Fourth Round, indicates that the resources available under the SIP should be further augmented in future rounds to meet the growing demand from eligible Parties. Similarly, co-financing for larger projects needs to be accessible to LDCs.

Criterion (f): Country ownership and sustainability

Please describe your experience with the level of country ownership and sustainability of activities funded by the financial mechanism. You may wish to address the involvement of national institutions, alignment with national priorities, and the sustainability of project outcomes beyond the funding period.

The GEF-funded enabling activity was executed jointly by UNITAR and the MoLWE, ensuring strong country ownership throughout the project cycle. The inception workshop held in Asmara on 25–26 July 2017 brought together the MoLWE, UNEP, UNITAR, government line ministries, industry, civil society and academia, and resulted in the establishment of a National Coordination Mechanism and a Stakeholder Advisory Group, thereby embedding the project outcomes into the national institutional framework. The SIP project similarly builds upon existing national structures, enhancing the sustainability of capacity-building results beyond the funding period.

Criterion (g): Level of stakeholder involvement

Please describe your experience with the level of stakeholder involvement in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects funded by the financial mechanism. You may wish to address the participation of civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities.

The GEF-funded project actively involved a wide range of stakeholders throughout its implementation. The inception workshop included representatives from government line ministries, selected key industries, civil society and academia. The project established both a National Coordination Mechanism and a Stakeholder Advisory Group, which provided a platform for continuous dialogue and input from affected communities, the private sector and non-governmental actors. This inclusive approach has also informed the design of the SIP project, which will continue to engage national stakeholders in its implementation.

Criterion (h): Benefits to groups in vulnerable situations

Please describe the extent to which projects funded by the financial mechanism have benefited groups in vulnerable situations, including women, children, indigenous peoples and local communities, and workers exposed to mercury.

The ASGM sector in Eritrea involves artisanal miners, many of whom come from vulnerable rural communities, as well as their families who may be exposed to mercury through contaminated sites and food chains. By supporting the preparation of a NAP for the ASGM sector, the GEF-funded project has contributed to designing strategies that target the reduction of mercury exposure for these vulnerable groups. The training provided under the project and the awareness-raising activities under the SIP project are designed to reach women and local communities engaged in or affected by ASGM activities, thereby delivering direct health and environmental benefits to those in vulnerable situations.

Criterion (i): Any other significant issues

Please provide information on any other significant issues related to the financial mechanism that you wish to bring to the attention of the Conference of the Parties.

Eritrea wishes to highlight the significant value of the financial mechanism in supporting LDC Parties from the very beginning of their engagement with the Convention. The GEF enabling activities played a crucial role in facilitating our formal accession to the Convention. We encourage the Conference of the Parties to ensure that the financial mechanism continues to provide adequate and predictable support for LDC Parties, particularly for the implementation of NAPs. We also recommend that the resources available under the SIP be increased in future funding rounds to meet the growing demand for targeted capacity-building support.

Section IV: Additional Information

Please provide any supporting documentation, data or references that may complement your submission (optional).

- 1. GEF Project Database entry for GEF Project ID 9641 (Eritrea).*
- 2. Minamata Convention on Mercury. News article: Eritrea becomes the 140th party to the Minamata Convention, 7 February 2023.*
- 3. Minamata Convention. Projects database entry for “Development of Minamata Initial Assessment and National Action Plan for Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining in Eritrea”.*