



Guide to designating National Focal Points (NFPs)

A practical, step-by-step guide for Parties and non-Parties nominating, replacing, or adding National Focal Points under Article 17, paragraph 4 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Last update: 21 July 2026.

1. Purpose and legal basis

Article 17, paragraph 4 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury requires each Party to designate a National Focal Point (NFP) for the exchange of information under the Convention, including in relation to the consent of importing Parties under Article 3. Non-Parties may also designate an NFP, in particular to facilitate implementation of the Convention's trade-related obligations with non-Parties under Article 3.

This guide explains how to complete and submit the designation form (Annex I) and the accompanying official nomination letter (Annex II), and covers the four scenarios: a first-time nomination, a replacement of an existing NFP, and an additional nomination alongside an existing NFP.

2. The role of the National Focal Point

National Focal Points are the key points of contact for the Secretariat in sharing information. They serve as custodians of information exchanged under the Convention, including trade-related information under Article 3 (e.g. consent of importing Parties for trade in mercury); and national reporting under Article 21.

At the national level, NFPs act as bridges for information sharing across governments and with stakeholders. They also coordinate with focal points of other multilateral environment agreements, as appropriate.

Where a Party designates more than one NFP, it is advisable to indicate in the "Note" section of the designation form which of the designated NFPs will be responsible for national reporting under Article 21. The designated NFP for reporting will receive the log-in credentials to the Online Reporting Tool at the start of each reporting cycle.

3. Documents required

Every designation, whatever the scenario, requires two documents submitted together:

1. **Annex I:** Designation form, completed and signed by the individual being designated (see section 5).
2. **Annex II:** Official nomination letter, on letterhead, from an entity duly authorized to communicate such information to the Secretariat. This is usually: the Government's official contact point to UNEP, a relevant line ministry (e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Environment, or Health), or the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva or to UNEP.

Both documents should be addressed to the Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, UNEP (Avenue de la Paix 8–14, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; e-mail: mea-minamatasecretariat@un.org).

4. The four nomination scenarios

At the top of the designation form (Annex I), three checkboxes indicate the type of nomination: first-time, replacement, or additional. A fourth situation, updating an existing NFP's own details, with no change of person, is not covered by any of the three boxes and is handled differently (see Scenario D below). Only one of the three boxes applies per form; tick the box that matches the situation of the individual named on that particular form.

Scenario A – First-time nomination

Box to tick: "First-time nomination"

- Use when the Party or non-Party has not previously designated an NFP, or is designating a person for the first time (no existing NFP is being replaced or supplemented).
- No further detail is required in the tick-box section beyond ticking this first box.

Scenario B – Replacement nomination

Box to tick: "Replacement of current National Focal Point(s)"

Also indicate: the name(s) of the NFP(s) being replaced, in the space provided next to the box.

- Use when the newly designated individual is taking over from, and replacing, a previously designated NFP.
- Example: designating Ms. B to replace Mr. A: tick this box and write "Mr. A" as the NFP being replaced.
- If the NFP is the same person but their details have changed (e.g. a new ministry or title), that is not a replacement (see Scenario D below).

Scenario C – Additional nomination

Box to tick: "Additional nomination to current National Focal Point(s)"

Also indicate: the name(s) of the current NFP(s) alongside whom the new individual will serve.

- Use when the Party or non-Party already has one or more NFPs in place and wishes to designate one or more further individuals, without removing any existing NFP.
- Example: designating Dr. C and Ms. D as additional NFPs: tick this box on each of their forms and indicate the name(s) of the current NFP(s).
- When more than one NFP is in place, use the "Note" section to specify which NFP is responsible for reporting under Article 21 (see section 2 above).

Scenario D – Update of an existing NFP's details

Box to tick: None. This is not a designation decision, so no box should be ticked.

Also indicate: the update in the "Note" section (e.g. "Updated contact/institutional details for [name], currently designated NFP, no change to designation status").

- Use when the same person remains the NFP but something about their record has changed, a new ministry, a new title, new contact details, with no one joining or leaving the role.
- This case is for the record only: it is not a first-time, replacement, or additional nomination, so none of the three boxes accurately describes it. Leave them blank rather than ticking one that misstates the situation.
- Submit an updated Annex I form for that individual with their current details, using the Note section to explain the update as shown above.
- The form template does not have a box for this case; this guide suggests leaving the boxes blank and using the Note field.

5. Rules that apply to every form

- **One form per individual.** Parties or non-Parties designating more than one focal point must submit a separate Annex I form for each designated individual. Do not list multiple people on a single form.
- **No self-nomination.** The designation cannot be signed or submitted by the person being designated as NFP. Another authorized official must complete, sign, and submit the nomination on that person's behalf.
- **Signature and date required.** The form must be signed and dated at the bottom by the submitting official, the person completing and submitting the NFP notification, not by the NFP being designated.
- **Authorized submitting entity.** The covering nomination letter (Annex II) must come from an entity authorized to communicate with the Secretariat: the Government's UNEP contact point, a relevant line ministry (e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Environment, or Health), or the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva or to UNEP, not from the NFP personally.
- **Publication.** Information submitted on designated NFPs is made available on the Convention website.

6. Step-by-step checklist

1. Confirm which scenario applies for each individual: first-time, replacement, additional, or an update to an existing NFP's details (section 4).
2. For each individual, complete one Annex I form: tick the correct box, indicate name(s) as required, and complete all personal and institutional details.
3. Where more than one NFP will be in place, note in the "Note" section of each relevant form who is responsible for Article 21 reporting.
4. Arrange for the submitting official (not the nominee) to sign and date the form (self-nomination can not be accepted).
5. Prepare the official nomination letter (Annex II) on letterhead, from an authorized entity, listing the individual(s) designated.
6. Submit the signed form(s) together with the nomination letter to the Executive Secretary at mea-minamatasecretariat@un.org.
7. Retain a copy for national records; the Secretariat will confirm receipt and publish updated NFP information on the Convention website.

7. Where to find the templates and further information

The designation form (Annex I) and model nomination letter (Annex II) are available from the Secretariat and on the Convention website at:

www.minamataconvention.org/en/parties/focal-points

For questions on a specific case, contact the Secretariat directly at mea-minamatasecretariat@un.org before submission.
