



**Conference of the Parties to the
Minamata Convention on Mercury
Sixth meeting**
Geneva, 3–7 November 2025
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**

**Activities of the Special Programme to support institutional
strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel,
Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention
on Mercury, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals
Management and the Global Framework on Chemicals****

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note sets out a report on the activities of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Global Framework on Chemicals. The report was submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme, which serves as the secretariat of the Special Programme. It is presented as received, without formal editing.

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** This document has not been formally edited.

Annex

Activities of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Global Framework on Chemicals

I. Introduction

1. The Special Programme to support institutional strengthening¹ at the national level to enhance the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) was established pursuant to the adoption of its Terms of Reference by the United Nations Environment Assembly, in UNEA resolution 1/5² as part of the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and waste. The Terms of Reference were amended by UNEA resolution 6/9³ to include support to the GFC.

2. The objective of the Special Programme is to support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of the integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and wastes, taking into account the national development strategies, plans and priorities of each country, to increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle.

3. The terms of reference of the Special Programme stipulate eligibility for support from the Programme as follows and note that support from the Special Programme will be available for developing countries, taking into account the special needs of least developed countries and small island developing states, and for countries with economies in transition, with priority given to those with least capacity. The eligibility and appraisal criteria are set out in the periodic calls for applications for funding⁴ issued by the Secretariat.

4. In March 2022, UNEA adopted resolution 5/7 on chemicals and waste, paragraph 16 of which decided to extend the duration of the Special Programme for a period of five years, in accordance with paragraph 24 of the terms of reference adopted in Environment Assembly resolution, 1/5, and to include the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 in the Special Programme. As a result, the Special Programme may receive contributions and applications for funding until September 2027 and may disburse funds until March 2030.

5. In February 2024, UNEA in resolution 6/9 requested the Executive Director of UNEP to facilitate coordination between the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, the Specific International Programme of the Minamata Convention and the Special Programme, within the scope of their respective mandates, in order to enhance complementarity and avoid duplication; and amended the terms of reference of the Special Programme, in order to take into account the Global Framework on Chemicals and its implementation.

6. The present document provides information on activities of the Special Programme since the last Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention.

¹ For the purposes of the Special Programme, institutional strengthening is defined as enhancing the sustainable institutional capacity of Governments to develop, adopt, monitor and enforce policy, legislation and regulation, as well as to gain access to financial and other resources for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Instruments for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle.

² Available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17285/K1402364.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>.

³ Available at <https://docs.un.org/en/UNEP/EA.6/Res.9>

⁴ See <https://www.unep.org/topics/chemicals-and-pollution-action/chemicals-management/special-programme/applying-funding>

II. Key achievements to date

7. Eight rounds of applications for funding have been completed, with the approval of 91 projects in 75 countries having a total requested budget of approximately USD 23,9 million. The eighth round of funding resulted in eight projects provisionally approved, subject to the availability of funds to support their implementation. Sixteen countries have had more than one project approved for funding under the Special Programme, which indicates that the countries concerned are continuing to build on their success to further strengthen their institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

8. Twenty-six Special Programme projects have completed implementation to date and have closed or are in the process of closing. Summaries of these projects' achievements are available on the Special Programme webpage⁵.

9. Overall, looking at progress reported to date against completed and ongoing Special Programme country projects as of 30 June 2025:

(a) 22 country projects have developed or updated a combined total of 34 chemical and/or waste management-related Policies, Plans or Strategies.

(b) 21 country projects have taken steps to establish a range of 27 multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms for chemicals and waste management.

(c) 23 country projects have made progress to ensure that the necessary chemicals and waste management expertise is available, including through training, awareness raising, research and analysis and/or tools developed.

(d) 12 country projects have prepared or updated elements of their chemical and/or waste management legal framework in the form a combined total of 19 pieces of primary or secondary legislation.

(e) Three country projects have ratified or taken steps to ratify the Rotterdam Convention, and nine country projects have ratified or taken steps to ratify the Minamata Convention.

(f) Seven country projects have submitted reports in compliance with their obligations under the relevant multilateral environmental agreements.

(g) Seven country projects have established or taken steps to establish a national chemicals and/or waste database and/or online information repository.

(h) Seven country projects have taken steps to establish a department or entity responsible for the sound management of chemicals and waste.

III. Governance of the Special Programme

10. The Executive Board is the decision-making body overseeing the Special Programme with the support of the Secretariat. The term of its representatives is in a two-year rotation. The composition of the Executive Board reflects a balance between donors and recipients as follows:

(a) Four representatives of recipient countries, reflecting equitable, geographical representation, drawn from the following United Nations regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean;

(b) One representative from a least developed country or a small island developing State on a rotational basis;

(c) Five donor representatives, which are not also recipient countries.

11. The Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, as amended in 2021, provide for alternate Board members to be identified for each term. As a result, for most Board seats, the nominations process for the term 2024-2026 included nominations for alternates as well as Board members, as indicated below.

12. The countries that are serving on the Executive Board during its 2024-2026 term are:

(a) Africa: Nigeria (member and alternate),

⁵ See <https://www.unep.org/topics/chemicals-and-pollution-action/chemicals-management/special-programme/special-programme-7>

- (b) Asia and Pacific: Thailand (member for the first year, alternate for the second year) and Maldives (alternate for the first year, member for the second year),
- (c) Central and Eastern Europe: Georgia (member); Armenia (alternate),
- (d) Latin America and the Caribbean: Brazil (member and alternate),
- (e) Least developed countries: Lesotho (member).

13. The donor representatives on the Executive Board are the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

14. At their first meeting held in hybrid format from 8 to 10 April 2024, the Executive Board elected Mr Helges Bandeira (Brazil), representing recipient countries, and Ms Anna Fransson (Sweden), representing donor countries, as co-chairs of the Executive Board.

15. The term of the current Executive Board will end on 2 February 2026. The process for nominations for membership of the Executive Board will be launched in August 2025.

IV. Meetings of the Executive Board

16. The Special Programme Executive Board has met twice since the last Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention. Decisions taken on earlier meetings are summarised in information documents provided to earlier COPs.

17. The ninth meeting of the Executive Board⁶ was held in hybrid format in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8 to 10 April 2024. During the meeting the Board approved eight new projects under the seventh round of funding, with a total budget of up to USD 1,9 million, and endorsed the arrangements for the launch of the eighth round of funding. In doing so the Board adopted some recommendations concerning regional/multi-country applications. The Board also adopted a risk management framework for the Special Programme and took decisions on three projects. The Board received an update on the operations of the Special Programme including the efforts to ramp up resource mobilization and endorsed the updated communications strategy for the Special Programme.

18. The tenth meeting of the Executive Board was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 17-19 March 2025⁷. During the meeting the Executive Board discussed the financial situation and scenarios outlined by the Secretariat, received an update on the implementation of the country project portfolio and took decisions on a number of projects, including cancellation of two approved projects where there had been significant delay in finalizing the project implementation arrangements and the project agreements. The Board conditionally approved eight new projects for funding under the eighth round of funding, subject to the identification of funds to support their implementation. With respect to the ninth funding round, in light of the financial situation the Board decided not to launch a new funding round until sufficient funds were available to support new projects. The Board also adopted an interpretation of paragraph 4 of the Special Programme Terms of Reference that seeks to avoid duplications between Special Programme projects and GEF-funded projects. Finally, the Board welcomed the presentation of the second assessment of closed projects, noting the results achieved and their contribution to the Special Programme's mandate and endorsed a new logo for the Special Programme.

19. In response to paragraph 5 of UNEA resolution 6/9, UNEP has arranged for two informal meetings, held on 9 April 2024 and 19 March 2025 respectively, between the Special Programme Executive Board, the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund Executive Board and the Minamata Convention Secretariat representing the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. These meetings provided an opportunity for sharing of information and discussion of common issues, in an effort to promote complementarity and avoid duplication among the three funding mechanisms.

V. Status of the Special Programme Trust Fund

20. The generous contributions of donors to the Special Programme trust fund and its operations continue to be greatly appreciated by the recipient countries. In spite of this, however, the financial

⁶ The report of the ninth meeting of the Executive Board is available on the Special Programme website at the following link: <https://www.unep.org/events/unep-event/ninth-special-programme-executive-board-meeting-support-institutional>

⁷ Advance report of the meeting available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/47599;jsessionid=E7A64EC6BC85F059A49C58427BB10EFB>

situation of the Trust Fund is becoming concerning, and a significant injection of funds is needed to carry the Special Programme through its extended period of duration.

21. An update of donor contributions since the establishment of the Special Programme Trust Fund in September 2015 is shown in table 1 below, amounting to a total of USD 35,9 million as at April 2025. Based on figures presented to the Executive Board at its tenth meeting, held in March 2025, the balance remaining for all operations of the Special Programme through to 2030 stood at USD4,2 million. In light of this situation the Executive Board conditionally approved eight projects under the eighth funding round, subject to the availability of funds, and decided not to launch a new funding round until funds are available to support new projects.

Table 1: **Contributions and pledges received 2015 – 2025 (all amounts in USD as 10 April 2025)**

Donor	Total amount pledged*/contributed (USD)
Austria	309,444
Belgium	286,590
Denmark	2,068,114
European Commission	18,880,200
Finland	360,732
Germany	3,175,255
Netherlands	762,755
Norway	2,155,967
Sweden	4,250,479
Switzerland	430,353
United Kingdom	1,215,073
United States of America	2,048,000
Total	35,942,963

**Pledge amounts will be adjusted with the exchange rate on the day of receipt*

22. In line with the Special Programme terms of reference, all signatories and parties to the conventions and other Governments with the capacity to do so, as well as from the private sector, including industry, foundations and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, are encouraged to contribute to the Special Programme Trust Fund.

VI. Status of the Implementation of Special Programme Funded projects

23. The Special Programme has to date completed eight rounds of applications for funding, bringing the total number of approved projects to 91, with eight new projects having been conditionally approved under the eighth round in March 2025, subject to the identification of funding to support their implementation. Information on the project portfolio is available in the Special Programme's webpage⁸ and PowerBI dashboard⁹. A summary of the status of projects approved per round is provided in table 2 below.

Table 2: **Summary of projects per round of funding**

Funding round	Total applications received (from total countries)	Total approved	Status
First (pilot) - 2016	54 (45)	7	Completed and closed/closing: 5
			Not completed, closed: 1
			Cancelled: 1
Second - 2017	43 (37)	17	Completed and closed/closing: 12

⁸ See project details at <https://www.unep.org/topics/chemicals-and-pollution-action/chemicals-management/special-programme/special-programme-7>

⁹ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme/special-programme-projects-database>.

			Ongoing:	5
Third - 2019	37 (34)	18	Completed and closed/closing:	9
			Not completed, closing:	1
			Ongoing:	8
Fourth - 2021	34 (35)	15	Ongoing:	14
			Cancelled:	1
Fifth - 2022	22 (22)	9	Ongoing ¹⁰ :	9
Sixth - 2023	19 (18)	9	Ongoing:	9
Seventh - 2024	17 (16)	8	Ongoing:	5
			Pending signature:	1
			Cancelled:	2
Eighth - 2025	26 (26)	8	All provisionally approved pending availability of funds	8
Total	252	91	Completed and closed/closing:	26
			Not completed, closed/closing:	2
			Pending signature:	1
			Pending availability of funds:	8
			Ongoing:	50
			Cancelled:	4

24. In 2022 the Secretariat undertook an assessment of closed projects to establish to what extent the projects achieved their respective logframes and to consider, retrospectively, how these projects addressed the Special Programme Core Indicators. The Secretariat repeated this exercise in 2024 for a second tranche of projects that have completed implementation or are close to completion¹¹. Lessons learned from that exercise have been incorporated into the Special Programme's ongoing work, including by means of a compendium of lessons learned that is made available as part of the application packages for each funding round from the seventh round onwards.

¹⁰ During its tenth meeting the Board authorised the Secretariat to suspend two projects that had not demonstrated sufficient engagement or progress in implementation. Following the meeting the Secretariat issued formal notices of suspension in line with the provisions of the respective project cooperation agreements. The partners concerned have since responded with sufficient engagement to allow the suspensions to be lifted, although the projects remain under close monitoring by the Secretariat.

¹¹ The first assessment of closed projects was undertaken during 2022 and presented to the Executive Board at its eighth meeting, in February 2023. The report is available at the following link: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/42168>. Country fact sheets considering the findings for the countries involved have been made available on the Special Programme webpage.

The second assessment was undertaken during 2024 and presented to the Executive Board at its tenth meeting, in March 2025 considered the following 11 projects: Angola, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia and Tajikistan. The report is available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/46882>.