

FINAL REPORT

Support to Post-ratification of the Minamata Convention to the Republic of Moldova by Building Phase-Down Capacities and Reducing Risks Associated with Mercury

for the implementation period August 2020 – 02 September 2023

Project ID 2019/03/CEE/MOL

Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Environment

Public Institution "National Office for Implementation of Environmental Projects"

27 October 2023

Chișinău

FINAL REPORT: Support to Post-ratification of the Minamata Convention to the Republic of Moldova by Building Phase-Down Capacities and Reducing Risks Associated with Mercury

1. Organization name: Ministry of Environment <i>(The Public Institution National Office for the Implementation of the Environment Projects – PI NOIEP), the Republic of Moldova</i>	2. Date: 27 October 2023
3. PCA & MoU #: Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA), made on 18 August 2020 signed between UNEP, represented by the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Government of the Republic of Moldova, represented by Ministry of Environment (including Amendment No 1 and Amendment No 2). Project ID 2019/03/CEE/MOL. Budget line: SB-011033.04.07/Cost Centre 11283/Fund 32MCP.	
4. Project start & end date: 3 September 2020 – 2 September 2023	
5. Primary contact person: The focal points: Director of PI NOIEP, Mr. Nicolae Arnăuț and Project Manager, Mrs. Cristina Lesnic on behalf of the Moldovan side. On behalf of UNEP, Ms. Marianne Bailey, Senior Coordination Officer in the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.	
6. Amount approved USD (\$): 209, 765 USD (\$) (two hundred nine thousand seven hundred and sixty-five United States dollars).	
7. Final expenditure (\$): 202 457,36 USD (\$)	
8. Project reach (m/w): unique number of beneficiaries involved 193 (men-65, women-128) only for project activities	

Narrative Report

a) Project Overview

- *Summary description of the response objectives*

1. This project "**Support to Post-ratification of the Minamata Convention to the Republic of Moldova by Building Phase-Down Capacities and Reducing Risks Associated with Mercury**" (hereinafter referred to as the Project) was implemented by the Public Institution "National Office for the Implementation of the Environment Projects (PI NOIEP)", under the Ministry of Environment in the period August 2020 – 2 September 2023, following the objective and scope of the project [*Source: <https://onipm.gov.md/>*].
2. The project has been implemented in the circumstances of several overlapping crises, such as Covid-19 outbreak and fragile context of the war in Ukraine and the large influx of refugee people in the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, Moldova's prospect for sustained peace, stability and shared prosperity remains hampered by the war in Ukraine. In addition, since February 24, 2022, until the date of the final report, in the Republic of Moldova have been introduced a state of emergency, according to the article 22 of the Law on the state of emergency, siege (curfew) and war, including the article 2 of the Decision of the Parliament 41/2022 while have been adopted several decisions of the Committee for Exceptional Situations, establishing various restrictions, measures, and actions for public and private institutions, citizens, and population. The decisions of the Committee for Exceptional Situations were mandatory for all. This mention is emphasized in the context in which the project kept its positive course and adapted measures were needed to organize some activities online or with a physical presence, without affecting the purpose and objectives assumed by the project.

3. The Republic of Moldova ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury in 2017, by the Law No 51/2017¹. Since 2021, Moldova has an independent and separate national authority – Ministry of Environment² dedicated to enhancing legal and policy framework, improve international treaties in the field of environment and to support capacity-building.
4. The general objective of the project was focused on the promotion of a nationally consistent approach to phase down use of mercury-containing products and reducing the risk of exposure in the Republic of Moldova, enabling the country's policy and strategic decision-making.
5. The project is aligned with the needs of the Republic of Moldova to improve the provisions of the Minamata Convention in the spirit of the treaty, to protect the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.
6. The Republic of Moldova have in place several law and bylaws: Law No 209/2016 on waste³, Law No 2777/2018 on chemical substances⁴, Law No 277/2023 regarding industrial emissions⁵, Governmental Decision No 212/2018 for approval of the Regulation on EE&E waste⁶, Governmental Decision No 586/2020 for approval of the Regulation of B&A and B&A waste⁷, Governmental Decision No 696/2018 for approval of the sanitary Regulation regarding the medical waste⁸, Governmental Decision No 731/2023 for approval of the Regulation regarding oil used⁹, Governmental Decision No 205/2023 for approval of the Regulation regarding cremation and co-cremation, Governmental Decision No. 501/2018 regarding the instructions for record keeping and reporting data and information on wastes and their management¹⁰; Governmental Decision No. 99/2018 on the approval of the List of waste¹¹.
7. From January 1, 2021, the Republic of Moldova is prohibited the import of objects, goods or products containing mercury or the addition of mercury/mercury compounds, other products and objects containing mercury compounds, in light with the Minamata's Convention provisions and project goal.
8. The project had a multipronged approach consisting of: **1)** Appropriate legal and operational framework on sound management of mercury and mercury wastes developed and endorsed by relevant Governments officials; **2)** Use of mercury containing lamps phased down and their waste reduced, by building technical and operational capacity of Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme (at stages of collection, transport, interim storage and decontamination, preparation for final disposal); **3)** Exposure to mercury containing measuring devices used in healthcare sector, particularly among women and children reduced; **4)** CEE Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention; and **5)** Conduct monitoring and review/evaluation and financial audit.
9. Overall, in the implementation of all activities under the project, the following activities have been conducted:
 - a)** Elaboration of the regulatory framework for mercury waste management by incorporation of the mercury waste management provisions within the regulatory framework; **b)** study visits conducted in Romania and Germany to learn of the best mercury and mercury waste interim and final storage solutions, involving representatives of national authorities responsible for mercury management to be familiarized with the sound

¹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133355&lang=ro#

² <https://www.mediu.gov.md/>

³ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135894&lang=ro#

⁴ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=112668&lang=ro

⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133705&lang=ro

⁶ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=102175&lang=ro

⁷ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=122845&lang=ro

⁸ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=108829&lang=ro

⁹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134207&lang=ro

¹⁰ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=108614&lang=ro

¹¹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=102107&lang=ro

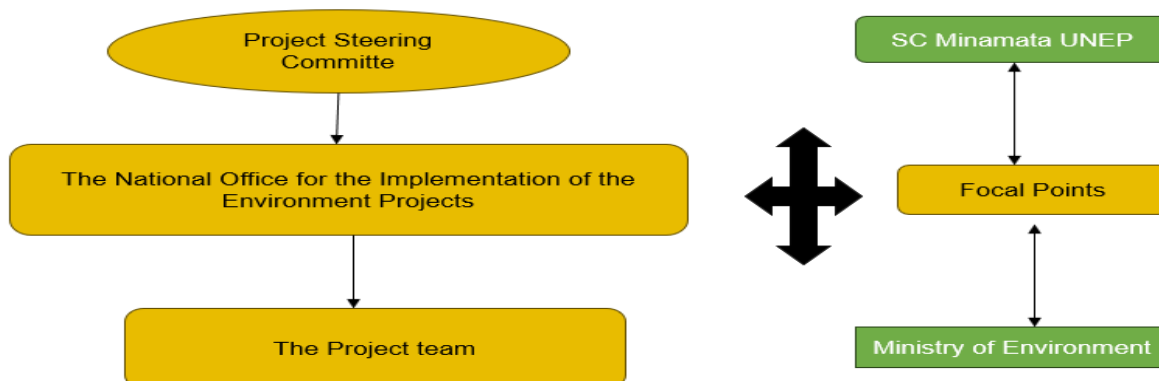
practice on elemental mercury/mercury waste storage; **c)** adapt and develop the national methodological guidelines with reference to environmentally sound management of mercury containing wastes, as stipulated in the Basel and Minamata Conventions; **d)** conduct trainings on the safe interim and final storage of mercury containing waste; **e)** assess status quo and quantities subject of life cycle management of mercury containing products in line with WEEE regulation (CFLs, LFL, e.g.); **f)** provide support in elaboration of specific chapters of operational plan of EPR scheme/PRO on lighting equipment; **g)** implementation of training of business operations on life cycle of mercury containing products; **h)** identification and assessment of healthcare facilities that still use/dispose of mercury containing measuring devices; **i)** undertake a cost-benefit analysis for replacement of mercury containing devices with safer alternatives; **ii)** provide healthcare facilities with solutions on reducing exposure resulting from inadequate storage practice of mercury waste; **j)** conduct awareness raising campaign on mercury related issues for the national stakeholders; **k)** develop the regional workshop; **l)** conduct monitoring and review/evaluation and financial audit.

10. The Republic of Moldova is not mercury producer country. An important step during the project implementation was to support further building of institutional, technical, and regulatory capacity of the country consistent with the Convention's provisions.
11. Therefore, in the efforts to build effective and reliable response for risks associated with mercury, the meaningful participation of women/girls played an important role for strengthening the security feeling and engagement, at all levels (execution and decision-making) and all processes. The synergy between environment and gender equality or environment-gender equality and security, even environment-gender equality and health contributed to anchoring the needs, expectations, and suggestions as a basic ground for societal transformation, social inclusion, and gender sensitive interconnected with environment, because environment crisis is not “gender neutral”. The project involved women in the project team, as trainers, as researchers, as participants and beneficiaries of the project. Women’s and girls’ full and equal participation in decision-making processes was a cross-cutting issue of the project and a priority.
12. PI NOIEP established an appropriate project team for the implementation of the project, composed by men and women, based on gender equality, who meet the highest standards of qualification and professional competence necessary for the achievement of the objectives and results of the Project.
13. The project has been implemented by PI NOIEP in cooperation with Ministry of Environment, supported by national authorities and institutions: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Custom Service, the General Prosecutor Office, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and involving environmental institutions: the Environmental Agency, the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, the Agency for Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities, and CSOs, partners and experts/consultants.
14. Furthermore, the project team was guided and oriented in the implementation process by the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury (“SC Minamata”).
15. The Steering Committee and its nominal composition were established and functional. The Steering Committee's Regulation was developed and adopted by the Minister's Order No 86 from April 14, 2021. The delegate members are representatives of different national stakeholders, such as Ministry of Environment, Environmental Protection Inspection, Customs Service under Ministry of Finance, General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations under Ministry of Interior, National Agency for Public Health, Medicines and Medical Devices Agency, both under Ministry of Health, General Prosecutor Office, PI NOIEP, General Police Inspectorate, business experts - US American Chamber of Commerce and NGOs – AO Eco Contact. The members of Steering Committee were entitled to provide support for the implementation of the activities of the project; to promote the directives lines according to the PCA and project documentation; to monitor the level of the implementation

of the activities; to examine the specific components of the project. The Steering Committee met 5 (five) times during the entire project to track the results and evolutions of the project and to reach long term sustainability¹².

16. Four interim progress reports have been submitted, on a semi-annual and annual basis to the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention in accordance with Clause XI of the PCA and three installments of project funding have been received after completion of activities before submitting the final report of the project.

- *Project implementation structure:*
- **The Steering Committee of the Project** (*the representatives of national institutions, CSOs, business sector*)
- **Project team within the Public Institution National Office for the Implementation of the Environment Projects – PI NOIEP** (*the personnel recruited*)
- **Ministry of Environment** (*final beneficiary*)



The project has been coordinated by PI NOIEP, under supervision of the Ministry of Environment. The project team has been created within PI NOIEP. The Project Steering Committee was created by Order of the Ministry of Environment and included national representatives from various ministries and state institutions, CSOs, experts in the field of environment. The Steering Committee had a specific Regulation and Rules. All the important decisions and the dynamic of the project were consulted with the Steering Committee. The Focal point of the MC was the role of the deputy-Chair of the Steering Committee and was in charge to synchronize the efforts of the implementation of the MC and project implementation. The Focal Points and project team established direct cooperation with the SC Minamata and were in charge to present/submit the progress reports and to provide any other relevant information.

b) Project Results and Indicators

- *The results of the project against response goal and objectives.*

17. During the implementation of the project, the following results were achieved:

¹² <https://mediu.gov.md/ro/content/3594>, <https://madr.gov.md/ro/content/3241>, <https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/content/4107>, <https://onipm.gov.md/>, <https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/search/node/minamata>

#1 Result: *Appropriate regulatory legal and operational framework on sound management of mercury and mercury wastes developed and endorsed by relevant Government officials.*

- **Draft Governmental Decision for the approval of the Regulation on the ecological management of mercury waste (including draft Regulation)** drafted and public consulted, accompanied by Analysis Impact (public consulted)

The Regulation on the ecological management of mercury waste includes classification of mercury waste, the list of mercury waste/mercury compounds, pictograms and hazard phrase codes for mercury waste, recovery/disposal operations for mercury waste, requirements for temporary storage of metallic mercury for periods exceeding one year, monitoring, inspection and emergency requirement, the elements for an intervention plan, list of alternative products to existing mercury products. The Regulation was consulted among environmental institutions, national authorities, and key stakeholders/beneficiaries, including public consultation on August 3, 2023¹³. Regulatory act was prepared for approval by the Government. The consultations have been organized in accordance with the Law 100/2017 regarding legal acts¹⁴.

- **The Guide for environmentally sound management of mercury waste¹⁵**

This guide provides practical support to responsible public entities, individuals and legal entities which are to hold or provide collection and storage of products/equipment that contain mercury/ mercury compounds.

The guide contains an analysis of the current situation in this regard in the Republic of Moldova and a description of the problems related to the ecological management of products/equipment containing mercury/mercury compounds. Attention is given to the process of identifying the actors involved in the management cycle of wastes containing mercury and their responsibilities. Mechanisms are defined to regulate the process of collection, accumulation, neutralization, transportation, storage and proper disposal, safe and harmless, of waste containing mercury, without endangering human health and without harming the environment.

The Guide describes the following aspects: legal framework, distinctive features of mercury, environmentally sound management of wastes containing mercury, examples of good practices in mercury waste management, Plan (draft) for the implementation of the Guide for environmentally sound management of mercury waste. The Guide was drafted and translated in Romanian and English.

- **Transfer of experience and lessons learned within two studies visits conducted in Romania and Germany for key state institutions managing chemicals**

In the period 3-7 April 2022, a study visit¹⁶ was organized in Romania to learn of the best mercury and mercury waste interim and final storage solutions. The study visit was conducted in Bucharest, Buzău, Brăila

¹³ <https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/content/4381>, <https://particip.gov.md/ro/document/stages/anunt-privind-organizarea-consultarii-publice-asupra-proiectului-hg-pentru-aprobarea-regulamentului-privind-gestionarea-ecologica-a-deseurilor-de-mercur/10773>

¹⁴ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135295&lang=ro#

¹⁵ <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/4.1%20Guide%20dor%20environmentally%20sound%20management%20of%20mercury%20waste%20%28EN%20version%29.pdf> (Guide for environmentally sound management of mercury waste)

¹⁶ <https://am.gov.md/ro/content/vizita-de-studiu-%C8%99i-documentare-%C3%AEn-rom%C3%A2nia-%C3%AEn-domeniul-gestion%C4%83rii-de%C8%99eurilor-de-mercur>, <https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/content/3798>

and Râmnicu-Vâlcea. Based on the bilateral cooperation between national authorities of the Republic of Moldova and Romania, which are both Parties to the Minamata Convention, the study visit involved 10 representatives (*7 women and 3 men*) of national stakeholders: Ministry of Environment (HQ, Environment Agency, Inspectorate for Environment Protection, National Agency for the Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities), Ministry of Interior (General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations), Ministry of Health, Customs Service, PI NOIEP. The visit was held in 3 main locations: SC Oltchim, Green WEEE and SC SetCar SA. The study tour had a profound impact on personal and professional growth of the participants, and on their understanding of mercury storage and disposal.

This visit helped the representatives of national authorities to develop new perspectives, become more open-minded, and develop the legal framework, to transfer the standards of the application of the EPR in the field of mercury storage, cooperation between environmental authorities and private sector, mercury waste storage and disposal, approximation of the national standards with EU directives, Minamata and Basel Convention, collection, recovery and disposal operations for mercury wastes, practical solutions. Furthermore, this activity was very effective for learning, networking, and establishing bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the Minamata & Basel Conventions platform.

Another study visit¹⁷ was carried out in Germany, at Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection in the period of 10-13 May 2023. The Moldovan delegation (1 man and 3 women) was represented by State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment. The visit included bilateral meetings at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, and Germany's presentations on the implementation of the Minamata Convention and on waste management at the EU and national level.

Moldovan delegation visited the German Environment Agency in Berlin. The representatives of the Ministry of Environment had a good opportunity to learn about: waste disposals of mercury and mercury compounds, monitoring of mercury in the German environment, reporting of emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds within the E-PRTR-Directive.

Both the study visit in Romania and the study tour in Germany inspired Moldova representatives with new ideas, which they brought home and developed into suggestions for their work. Also, the participants used their new professional contacts to establish further cooperation.

- **Training "Development of the legal, institutional and operational framework in the field of mercury waste management and safe storage. Challenges and realities" conducted on the safe storage of mercury among responsible national authorities¹⁸¹⁹²⁰²¹**

¹⁷ <https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/content/4287>

¹⁸ <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/8.%20Proiectul%20Regulament%20Regulamentului%20pentru%20gestionarea%20temporara%20a%20de%20C8%99eurilor%20cu%20mercur%20%283%29.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/8.1.%20Nota%20de%20fundamentare%20a%20Regulamentului%20pentru%20gestionarea%20ecologic%C4%83%20a%20de%20C8%99eurilor%20cu%20mercur%20%281%29.pdf>

²⁰ <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/8.2%20Tabelul%20de%20Concordan%C8%9B%C4%83%20mercur%20%20%281%29.pdf> and <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/8.3.%20Tabelul%20de%20Concordan%C8%9B%C4%83%20mercur%20%20%281%29.pdf>

²¹ <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/8.4.%20Analiza%20AIR%20mercur%20%281%29.pdf>

The training "*Development of the legal, institutional and operational framework in the field of mercury waste management and safe storage. Challenges and realities*" was carried out in the period 9-10 September 2021²². The activity involved 20 participants (11 women and 9 men) from various national stakeholders and partners.

The main topics discussed were the following: presentation of the SIP project, goal and objectives, inventory assessment on quantities subject of life cycle management of mercury containing products in line with Extended Producer Responsibility, the main areas of the Guide for environmentally sound management of mercury waste and other relevant subjects. The main conclusions of the participants after the training were focused to have more visibility and awareness campaigns, enhance the cooperation between national institutions and relevant stakeholders in the field of sound mercury waste management, acceleration of the substitution of mercury devices, specific intervention measures to solve the problems linked to metallic mercury confiscated by the law enforcement agencies, Hg waste collection points that must be well pre-arranged to avoid crisis situations, other subjects.

#2 Result: Uses of mercury containing lamps phased down and their waste reduced, by building technical and operational capacity of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Scheme

- **Assessment report on quantities subject of life cycle management of mercury containing products in line with Extended Producer Responsibility**²³

The present assessment is used for defining the volumes and support the elaboration of the operational plan for the EPR scheme on lighting equipment. The present report is structured in 4 thematic chapters:

Chapter I provides the overview of the Minamata Convention, its main provisions, the environmental occurrence of mercury along with the instruments and actions set by the Republic of Moldova to comply with the Minamata Convention's provisions; **Chapter II** includes the assessment of the volumes and lifecycle of mercury containing products in line with WEEE regulation nr. 212/2018 placed at market of the Republic of Moldova; **Chapter III** includes the summary of inventory of sources of mercury releases in the Republic of Moldova for 2018, conducted based on UNEP Toolkit Level 2 (version April 2015) and **Chapter IV** addresses the waste of mercury containing products and current stocks reported by the key public institutions, based on data collected by PI NOEIP during February-April 2021.

The findings of the Assessment Report set that the mercury content in the general waste stream originates from three main groups of inputs: 1) intentionally used mercury in discarded products and process waste; 2) natural mercury impurities in high volume materials (plastics, paper, etc.) and minerals; and 3) mercury as a human-generated trace pollutant in high volume materials. The country is making the first steps towards the establishment of a separate waste collection system, and, at present, the most used method of treating waste is disposal on sites, including the informal disposal. Report on Hg containing equipment status/quantities is elaborated.

Beside the fact that project didn't cover the metallic mercury confiscated by the law enforcement agencies, during the implementation of the project additional data are available for this area.

²² <https://www.madrm.gov.md/ro/content/3450>

²³ [https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/6.%20Assessment%20report%20on%20Hg%20%20product_EPR_FINAL.p](https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/6.%20Assessment%20report%20on%20Hg%20%20product_EPR_FINAL.pdf)
[df](https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/6.%20Assessment%20report%20on%20Hg%20%20product_EPR_FINAL.pdf) (Assessment report on quantities subject of life cycle management of mercury containing products in line with Extended Producer Responsibility)

- **The Guidance on the development of the Operational Plan for products/objects/devices containing mercury/mercury compounds²⁴**

The Operational Plan is a framework document for economic operator/economic operators which establish the objectives they want and are going to achieve, stipulate the measures/actions they need to undertake to achieve the objectives and detail the management mechanism for waste containing mercury/mercury compounds for the implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme. The Operational Plan is dedicated to individual or collective systems.

The Operational Plan mentioned provides as elements data identification, the products and categories of waste that are the subject of the operation plan, and its description, estimated quantities of products, the list of actions of the collective/individual system in the implementation of the EPR scheme, financial plan.

The Guidance on the development of the Operational Plan for products/objects/devices containing mercury/mercury compounds have been consulted with Ministry of Interior, Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, Environmental Agency, Public Property Agency.

- **Training of business operations on life cycle of mercury containing products conducted**

The training activity was held on March 17, 2022²⁵ (*Capacity building on the procedures for developing the Operational Plan for Hg objects/devices/products*).

The event focused on key stakeholders and various economic operators, including basic needs about Operational Plan for EPR scheme, education about drafting a model Operational Plan EPR, inclusion between national and private sector to implement Minamata Convention, the formal and operational steps to fulfil during the whole procedure, communication with environmental agencies, logistics aspects.

The plan was launched after national consultations and presented during the training event. A significant part of the training was to increase the capacity of economic operators to understand and to increase the responsibility to draft an appropriate Operational EPR scheme on lighting.

About 20 participants attended the training from national authorities and institutions, CSOs, economic operators (SRL Volta, LaFarge), other partners. The expectations of the participants during the training were to enhance the uniformity of application of legal framework, to establish a trustable dialogue and cooperation between national authorities and business actors, explanation of the role of Environmental Agency and Inspectorate for Environmental Protection during the EPR implementation, the mistakes in drafting EPR plans and interaction between economic operators and environmental/control authorities and institutions.

The environmental control authorities participated to guide and orient the economic operators based on the new draft of the Operational Plan for products/objects/devices containing mercury/mercury compounds.

²⁴ <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/5.%20Ghid%20privind%20elaborarea%20planului%20de%20operare%20pentru%20produseleobiecteledispozitivele%20ce%20con%C8%9Bin%20mercurcompu%C8%99i%20de%20mercur%20%C8%99i%20Plan%20de%20Actiuni.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/content/3777>

#3 Result: Exposure to mercury containing measuring devices in healthcare sector, particularly among women and children reduced

- The assessment report of institutions in the healthcare facilities that require the substitution of mercury measuring devices/objects/products in the Republic of Moldova developed²⁶

Following the data collected, the findings of the report showed that in the healthcare facilities remain about **15 719 Hg devices: 14 575 Hg thermometers and 1144 Hg tonometers**, mostly in Chișinău city and regional hospitals.

According to the Report a particular problem concerns medical institutions with a pediatric profile or maternity hospitals, which serve the population categories most vulnerable to exposure to mercury, from the perspective of the disastrous impact on the physical and intellectual development of the human body. In this sense, the Mother and Child Institute reported **449 thermometers** in stock, the Municipal Children's Clinical Hospital "V. Ignatenco" - **603 thermometers**, the Municipal Clinical Hospital for Contagious Diseases for Children - **150 thermometers**, the Municipal Clinical Hospital No. 1 - **408 thermometers**. Moreover, all district hospitals have maternity and pediatric wards, and district healthcare institutions frequently serve children and pregnant women through their family doctor.

The assessment Report established sets out the exhaustive list of Hg thermometers in healthcare facilities of the Republic of Moldova reported within the implementation of the project. The accuracy of the data depended on the data reported.

Disaggregated data per category of institution	Hg thermometers	Hg tonometers
Healthcare institutions on country level	5787	1
Public health Centers	593	9
Healthcare institutions in Chisinau (capital)	1474	1
Regional (district) hospitals	4118	1089
Regional (district) healthcare Centers	1831	31
Rural healthcare Centers	772	12
TOTAL	14575	1144

- Report on cost-benefit analysis regarding substitution of the Hg measuring devices in the Republic of Moldova with alternative solutions in healthcare institutions completed²⁷

The Report on cost-benefit analysis establish the potential cost of damages in the Republic of Moldova,

²⁶<https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/3.%20Raportul%20de%20evaluare%20a%20institu%C8%9Bilor%20din%20sectorul%20de%20s%C4%83n%C4%83tate%20care%20necesit%C4%83%20substituirea%20dispozitivelorobiectelorproduselor%20de%20m%C4%83surare%20cu%20mercur%20C3%AEEn%20Republica%20Moldova.pdf>

²⁷<https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/2.%20Raport%20cost-beneficiu.pdf>

about 12 495 USD/per Kg in the case of assuming the harmfulness threshold.

From other perspective, the pandemic outbreak accelerated the substitution/procurement of free Hg devices. Despite this, the results of the Report estimated the high level of damages in case of broken medical devices. Thus, **about 25,15 kg/per year** is estimated to be damaged within professional activity, that means approximately 314 249 USD as impact.

The Report proposes and describes the steps taken for substitution of Hg devices in healthcare institutions, the alternatives recommended for substitution of Hg devices, comparative studies, evaluation of the price for different categories of free Hg devices on the national market, the cost-benefit during procurement procedures, including technical specifications for alternatives devices.

- **The Communication and awareness Strategy for reducing the risk of mercury exposure drafted/in place²⁸**

The Strategy includes internal and external approach, the list of key players from health, environmental and educational field, the list of NGOs and associative community, the key messages for communication, the list of public events and public campaigns, the instruments and forms of communication, the sustainability of the project. The draft Strategy was consulted with MoE, health, and educational institutions.

Taking into consideration the goal of the project, based on the flagship initiative and cooperation with Ministry of Education and Research, an infographic was created <https://bit.ly/3DBo7fH> and disseminated in schools (*about 1231 schools, 31580 teachers and 33199 students had access to this information about how to manage in case of incident with mercury devices*)^{29,30}

Based on this Strategy, all the project activities carried out within the project have been published on the website: www.mediu.gov.md and taken into consideration for awareness campaigns.

The following media advertised the information about the Communication and awareness Strategy for reducing the risk of mercury exposure:

Strategia de comunicare și sensibilizare, ELABORATĂ: Mesajele CHEIE privind reducerea riscului de expunere la mercur:

<https://realitatea.md/strategia-de-comunicare-si-sensibilizare-elaborata-mesajele-cheie-privind-reducerea-riscului-de-expunere-la-mercur/>

A fost elaborată Strategia de comunicare și sensibilizare privind reducerea riscului de expunere la mercur <https://bani.md/a-fost-elaborata-strategia-de-comunicare-si-sensibilizare-privind-reducerea-riscului-de-expunere-la-mercur/>

În Republica Moldova se va desfășura o campanie privind riscul de expunere la mercur

<https://deschide.md/ro/stiri/social/88958/%C3%8En-Republica-Moldova-se-va-desf%C4%83%C8%99ura-o-campanie-privind-riscul-de-expunere-la-mercur.htm>

Strategia de protecție anti-mercur. Ce trebuie să știm

<https://10tv.md/strategia-de-protectie-anti-mercur-ce-trebuie-sa-stim/2021/07/22/>

²⁸ <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/1.%20Strategia%20de%20comunicare%20%C8%99i%20sensibilizare.pdf>

²⁹ <https://minamatomoldova.medium.com>

³⁰ <https://onipm.gov.md/sites/default/files/1.1%20INFO%20MERCUR%20M%C4%82SURI%20DE%20INTREPRINS%20Termometru%20Hg.pdf>

A fost elaborată Strategia de comunicare și sensibilizare privind reducerea riscului de expunere la mercur
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=180786354091213&id=107145991455250
Prezentare a proiectului „Suport în procesul post-ratificare a Convenției Minamata de către Republica Moldova prin consolidarea capacităților de eliminare și reducere a riscurilor asociate cu mercurul”
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=176395734530275&id=107145991455250

The positive information, interviews and other relevant data about the project were disseminated:
<https://jurnalist.md/2023/05/11/o-tara-libera-de-mercur/>
<https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/search/node/minamata>
<https://minamatamoldova.medium.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/MinamataConventionMEA>
<https://stiripozitive.eu/2023/05/10/o-tara-libera-de-mercur/>
<https://jurnalist.md/2023/05/11/o-tara-libera-de-mercur/>
<https://stiripozitive.eu/2023/05/10/o-tara-libera-de-mercur/>
<https://jurnalist.md/>
<https://mediu.gov.md/ro/content/4293>
<https://www.facebook.com/MinisterulMediuluiMoldova>

Broadly, the project influenced about 1515 people during the awareness campaign #Free Mercury Country³¹. Graphics cards can be viewed in **appendix A** to this Final Report.

- **Information training in the field of communication "Managing communicative competence and training in communication skills"**

Information training as part of awareness raising strategy for various national stakeholders, was conducted on May 13, 2022³². Under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and PI NOEIP, the training brings together the efforts of public sector (representatives of the Government institutions and Parliament), private sector, nongovernmental sector and mass-media. During the event, the target group was representatives from different sectors who are in charge for the communication. All institutions and participants remain committed to keep its open contributions to be deeply involved in sharing information about free mercury.

28 participants received information about the Communication and awareness strategy for reducing the risk of mercury exposure. Different simulations and practical exercises have been conducted to use communication tools, to elaborate institutional or inter-agency communication plans on exposure to mercury, to develop information campaign and to draft infographics, informational materials.

³¹ <https://diez.md/2023/05/23/o-tara-libera-de-mercur-ce-este-conventia-de-la-minamata-si-de-ce-este-importanta-pentru-protejarea-sanatatii-umane/>; https://youtu.be/jvg8_NISYrw, <https://stiripozitive.eu/2023/05/26/inspectoratul-pentru-protectia-mediului-va-controla-si-va-asigura-protectia-mediului-verificarea-pastrarii-si-evidentei-raportarii-deseurilor-toxice-pana-la-eliminarea-lor-finala/>; <https://stiripozitive.eu/2023/05/26/intr-o-lume-in-care-sursele-de-poluare-sunt-ataat-de-multe-este-bine-sa-ne-ingrijim-de-sanatate-si-de-mediul-si-sa-nu-ignoram-sfaturile-specialistilor/>; <https://stiripozitive.eu/2023/05/26/republica-moldova-are-deja-o-experienta-vasta-in-colectarea-transportarea-si-eliminarea-deseurilor-periculoase/>,
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=580009704112624&set=pcb.580010104112584>,
<https://stiripozitive.eu/2023/05/26/mesaje-pentru-o-tara-libera-de-mercur/>

³² <https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/content/3840>.

- **Assessment Report regarding the list of healthcare institutions/authorities benefiting from mercury-free alternative measurement devices, particularly among women and children**

A mapping study was conducted. According to the assessment Report, the Mother and Child Institute under the Ministry of Health has been proposed as the target institution for the distribution of free Hg thermometers and sphygmomanometers and the National Agency for Public Health (including regional NAPH) under the Ministry of Health to be subject for distribution of containers and equipment for storage of waste Hg.

The assessment Report has been consulted with Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Health, before the distribution of the equipment purchased.

As a result of the project, 200 mercury-free thermometers, 15 sphygmomanometers and 15 containers for storage of waste Hg have been disseminated to Ministry of Health (in particular the Mother and Child Institute and National Agency for Public Health), with impact to reduce the risks associated to mercury for women and children.

- **Adequate infrastructure for storage of mercury waste developed and mercury-free measuring devices purchased and disseminated in healthcare facilities, mainly destined for women and children, including consultations**

Within the project implementation were purchased **200 mercury-free thermometers, 15 sphygmomanometers and 15 containers for storage of mercury waste**, which have been disseminated by the Ministry of Environment to Ministry of Health.

The technical parameters of the containers have been designed by an independent expert and executed by a company. The storage capacity per one container is 135 units/lamps/CFLs or 1350 units Hg thermometers or 700 units Hg sphygmomanometers. Thus, overall capacity for adequate infrastructure is for reducing Hg risks from 2025 units lamps or 20 250 units Hg thermometers or 10 500 units Hg sphygmomanometers as impact of the project.

- **Training for local public administration "Effective and consolidated response regarding the prevention and reduction of risks associated with mercury/mercury-contaminated waste within the partnership between the local public administration and the environmental authorities of the Republic of Moldova"**

The activity was carried out on 24 November 2022, with the participation of the representatives from national central administration and local public administration. In fact, the event was attended by mayors, Inspectorate for Environmental Protection (including from regions), CSOs, and partners. About 12 national, local stakeholders and other key players took part.

The main goal of the event was to coordinate the efforts between local and central level to cooperate for the implementation of the Minamata Convention. Also, in terms of achievements, the event could empower local public administration representatives to implement the legal framework and standards of the Minamata & Basel Convention, strengthen the partnership between the public administration and the environmental authorities of the Republic of Moldova, provide information about case management and mercury risk reduction, promote professional cohesion at the local level in order to prevent the risks related

to the storage of mercury/mercury-contaminated waste.³³

#4 Result: CEE Regional workshop conducted on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region

The Concept and the agenda of the regional workshop on sharing experience in ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention in the region was prepared (text of concept and agenda agreed with the MC Secretariat, list of participants, practical note, registration form, invitations signed and sent to the participants), after the coordination with MoE and SC Minamata.

The regional workshop "Enhancing environmental response to address and reduce risks associated with mercury and building institutional capacities in the Central and South Eastern Europe" was carried out in the period 19-20 September 2022³⁴, in Chisinau for the member-states that ratified the Minamata Convention.

The workshop document and final report were prepared. The aim of this workshop was to facilitate a discussion among different actors.

The event was held with the participation of the representatives of environmental institutions from the Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Montenegro, the Republic of Slovenia, Bulgaria, Europol's EnviCrime. Also, the event was attended by the representatives of SC Minamata.

The participants shared national experience, challenges and opportunities, the legal framework and best practices applied.

Working closely with the participants, the regional workshop was an important platform to increase the cooperation and identified a number of challenges, key messages to consider and formulated a number of recommendations for the future. All participants remain committed to continuing efforts to implement the Minamata Convention to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds and to combat harmful effects.

#5 Result: Monitoring, Evaluation and Final Audit

- **Final Conference of the project conducted**

³³ <https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/content/4080>

³⁴ https://www.ipn.md/ro/cinci-ani-de-la-ratificarea-conventiei-minamata-au-fost-7967_1092321.html#ixzz7fQkASqaW < <https://radiochisinau.md/cinci-ani-de-la-ratificarea-conventiei-minamata-au-fost-reduce-sursele-prin-poluare-cu-mercur---167347.html> < <https://tvrmdova.md/article/ac7f95bdb7b5abda/cinci-ani-de-la-ratificarea-conventiei-minamata-au-fost-reduce-sursele-de-poluare-cu-mercur.html> < <https://rlive.md/declaratii-de-presa-despre-implementarea-conventiei-minamata-in-rm-si-eforturile-intreprinse-pentru-reducerea-surselor-de-poluare-cu-mercur-in-rm-si-in-regiune/> < <https://anticoruptie.md/ro/special/agenda-zilei20092022>, <https://www.jurnaltv.md/news/6accfe2b77fbf8b3/vvoz-rtuti-v-moldovu-zapreshchen.html>, <https://www.jurnaltv.md/news/58a38770dc7498f7/din-2022-autoritatile-au-interzis-importul-dispozitivelor-si-lucurilor-care-contin-mercur.html>, VIDEO Cinci ani de la ratificarea Convenției Minamata: Moldova a avansat în reducerea surselor de poluare cu mercur - Realitatea.md

On 14 August 2023, the Final Conference³⁵ of the project was organized, with the participation of the State Secretary, leadership of PI NOEIP and UN Resident Coordinator.

The Final Conference brought the beneficiaries of the project together to discuss and review the list of deliverables, the goals achieved, challenges and the sustainability of the project.

- **Steering Committee Meetings**

The Steering Committee met 5 (five) times during the entire project to track the results and evolutions of the project and to reach long term sustainability, once every 6 months. The Steering Committee was led by women, at State Secretary level, and deputy-Chair – women, head of Division within MoE. The Secretariat of the Steering Committee was led by the PI NOEIP (implementation partner).

- **Audit missions of the project conducted**

The first Financial Audit report for the period 01.09.2020 – 31.12.2021, was sent to SC Minamata by Letter 77-22 from 28.03.2022 (in accordance with Clause XII of the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement between Ministry of Environment and UNEP).

The second Financial Audit report, for the period 1 January 2022 – 2 September 2023, was conducted in the period between 4- 18 September 2023. By Letter No 426-23 from 20 October 2023 the Audit Report SIP Project was submitted to the SC Minamata.

- **Cooperation with SC Minamata (UNEP)**

Within the implementation process of the project, 4 progress interim reports have been submitted to the SC Minamata and approved and one final report for whole project. The project team participated in different activities related to the implementation of the project, in online discussions.

During the whole period of project implementation, SC Minamata offered excellent support, guidance and orientation. Clear and timely information through the project was a part of a wide-ranging communication between partners.

The project has provided unprecedented flexibility. An ambitious and sustainable aspect of the project remain the list of studies and analysis drafted and that can be used for other areas of cooperation or even project applications.

c) Cross-cutting themes

19. Project activities were designed to reach large numbers of people and distinctive groups. It has been firmly established that environment, health, education and security matters to be part of inclusive and effective approach.

20. The project prioritized a focus on women and girls during the project activities, as indicator to reduce risks associated with mercury waste. Hence, the project contributed to improve data collection to better reflect vulnerabilities and opportunities as dynamic, non-linear, contextual, relational and intersectional.

³⁵ <https://onipm.gov.md/content/evolu%C8%9Biile-implement%C4%83rii-proiectului-sip-unep-pentru-o-%C8%9Bbar%C4%83-liber%C4%83-de-mercur>

Indicator table on gender sensitive (see below)

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Gender Indicator Tracker per activity	Women	Men
Study visit in Romania (3-7.05.2021)	7	3
Study visit in Germany (10-13.04.2023)	3	1
Training (9-10.09.2021)	11	9
Training (24.11.2022)	20	10
Training (17.03.2023)	11	9
Training (13.05.2023)	24	5
Regional Workshop (19-20.09.2022)	26	11
Project team	2	3
Project Steering Committee	8	10
Final Conference	16	4
TOTAL	128	65

21. The activities carried out with the largest and various participation enabled the beneficiaries, in particular, to minimize and reduce the vulnerabilities, building cohesion among the institutions, institutions-business, central public administration and community with active participation.

22. Likewise, through the lens of the project we engaged environment-health-emergency-custom to be part of the process in the context of the Minamata Convention.

23. Communication was an essential process in our day-to-day life of the project. Several visibility materials about the project have been elaborated and dedicated to ensuring a large number of people who could learn about the project achievements or be involved in the project activities could be reached. The visibility materials were distributed in online or physical format.

24. As part of advocacy, the project team listened the views and concerns, explored the options of the project to help with dedicated experts/consultants, provided information to make informed decisions, helped to support in meetings or appointments, other actions.

d) Accountability

25. The project performance included monitoring and tracking tools of the project to ensure that all the tasks are completed on time. The part of monitoring mechanism was monthly timesheets, collection of data, statistics and information, weekly meetings with projects team, expert meetings, field visits, consultations and discussions, mitigation plans. In addition, it includes steps to figure out the hurdles or gaps and resolve them to increase the efficiency of the project.

26. As part of management mechanism, we boosted communication and trust between the team members to increase quality and reduce time.

e) Story of change

27. From the onset of the project, the Republic of Moldova didn't have the full legal framework in line with the Minamata Convention, in particular for interim sound storage of mercury waste and lack of institutional

capacity. The key institutions and public servants benefit from some favorable policies to enhance the capacity and skills.

28. Consequently, some adjustments have been required to address the specific needs in the field of legal, institutional and operational context. Thus, the legal framework was developed, and capacity-building strengthened.

29. Due to activities organized under the project, a trustable dialogue and network have been established.

30. Due to early prevention information and disseminated information, different risks faced by Hg emissions have been reduced, and substitution of Hg measuring devices in healthcare institutions has been achieved. Such experiences had a positive effect among personnel, women and children.

31. The project created a positive perception among the participants, experts, and institutions. Beneficiaries had an impressive satisfaction.

f) Budget:

32. The budget of the project was 209, 765 USD (\$). The level of absorption at the end of the project is about 97%. The implementation partner (PI NOEIP under the MoE) received the installments on time. Certain savings of the project are due to procurement of containers on local market. No significant variance of the budget in the implementation process.

g) Feedback:

33. Due to the fact that during the implementation of the project were identified new areas of cooperation, it is relevant to suggest reflecting about innovative solutions for mercury metallic confiscated by law enforcement agencies as part of interim storage through the lens of Minamata Convention.

h) Conclusions of the project and key points:

34. SIP Project "Support to Post-ratification of the Minamata Convention to the Republic of Moldova by Building Phase-Down Capacities and Reducing Risks Associated with Mercury" was relevant, effective, efficient, and focused on the specific needs of the Republic of Moldova in terms of reducing risks associated with mercury/mercury waste, enhance legal and institutional framework and building-capacity.

35. Specific focus of the project was concentrated to create trust and synergy in response to current evolutions and to reach long term sustainability between environmental and health agencies, supported by emergency in cooperation with CSOs and business actors.

36. The project outputs and indicators have been reached through lens of various studies, assessments, draft policies elaborated, training & workshops activities carried out and study visits to transfer the best experience and lesson learned, including procurement of free Hg measuring devices for healthcare facilities to substitute and storage Hg products/devices/objects.

37. On January 1, 2021, the Republic of Moldova prohibited the import of objects, goods or products containing mercury or the addition of mercury/mercury compounds, other products and objects containing mercury compounds, in line with the Minamata's Convention provisions and project goal.

38. The Key evidence and studies/researches of the project were used to draft the main policies/legal acts, such as the Regulation on the ecological management of mercury waste, the Guidance on the development of the Operational Plan for products/objects/devices containing mercury/mercury compounds, the Communication and awareness Strategy for reducing the risk of mercury exposure, the Guide for environmentally sound management of mercury waste and to use relevant arguments to promote and consult on official way.
39. The project respected gender balance and was sensitive to gender equality at all levels and at each process steps: the Steering Committee leadership and composition, project team, training activities, recruitment of experts/consultants, interlinkage between environment, health, and gender.
40. The project accelerated the substitution of Hg measuring devices in healthcare facilities, particularly for women and children with 200 free Hg thermometers and 15 free Hg sphygmomanometers (disseminated to the Mother and Child Institute under the Ministry of Health).
41. The project contributed to the development of storage infrastructure by 15 specific containers for storage of waste Hg measuring devices in healthcare facilities (National Agency for Public Health under the Ministry of Health).
42. The visibility of the project influenced a better understanding for the application of the Minamata & Basel Conventions, the principle of EPR, the mechanism of cooperation between national control agencies in the field of environment and business actors, and CSOs.
43. The Partner and project team received excellent, professional and timely support from the SC Minamata during the whole project implementation. The cooperation has been developed in the spirit of mutual trust and result-oriented approach.
44. Due to the overlapping crisis (Covid-19, war in Ukraine and refugee crisis), the partners mitigated the risks on time.
45. New areas of cooperation in the field of storage waste Hg have been identified for the Republic of Moldova, in particular metallic mercury confiscated by law enforcement agencies and case management in place.
46. National environmental authorities are committed to ensure the sustainability of the project and appropriate implementation of the Minamata Convention in line with international standards.
47. Broadly, the project influenced both aspects: legal framework and capacity building.

Signatures:

Director
P.I. "National Office for Implementation
of Environmental Projects"

Project Manager

Financial Consultant



Nicolae ARNĂUT



Cristina LESNIC



Veronica URSU

Appendix A:

<p>O ȚARĂ LIBERĂ DE MERCUR</p> 	<p>Deșeurile de mercur, inclusiv ale produselor și obiectelor ce conțin compuși de mercur, sunt periculoase pentru sănătate și pentru mediu.</p> 
<p>Fiecare cetățean este responsabil pentru reducerea și eliminarea deșeurilor de mercur.</p> 	<p>Din 1 ianuarie 2021, în Republica Moldova este interzis importul de obiecte, bunuri sau produse ce conțin mercur sau adaos de mercur, compuși de mercur.</p> 
<p>Produsele, dispozitivele și obiectele ce conțin compuși de mercur trebuie scoase din uz și administrate corect pentru a reduce riscurile și emisiile de deșeuri periculoase.</p> 	<p>Produsele, dispozitivele și obiectele ce conțin compuși de mercur trebuie înlocuite cu dispozitive alternative (termometre, sfigmomanometre).</p> 