

# GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Developing a National Action  
Plan to Reduce and,  
Where Feasible, Eliminate  
Mercury Use in Artisanal and  
Small-Scale Gold Mining



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a large, shallow metal tray. The tray contains a small pile of fine, golden-brown particles, likely gold dust, which is the focus of the document. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

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**September 2017**



The Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention at its first meeting in September 2017 agreed to the use of this guidance on the preparation of national action plans. It has been reprinted by the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury with funding from the European Union.

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## Foreword

The Minamata Convention on Mercury, opened for signature in October 2013 in Japan, creates a blueprint for actions to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. Article 7 of the Convention addresses the largest anthropogenic source of mercury pollution, artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). Under Article 7, countries where mercury is used in ASGM are required to take steps to reduce and, where feasible, eliminate the use of mercury. Because the ASGM sector is closely tied to complex economic development and poverty issues, the Convention allows flexible, country-specific solutions through the development of an ASGM National Action Plan (NAP). Although each country's NAP process will be unique, Annex C of the Minamata Convention provides a list of elements that must be included in each NAP.

This document represents an expansion of the UNEP *Guidance Document: Developing a National Strategic Plan to Reduce Mercury Use in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining* (UNEP 2011), and is intended to reflect advances in understanding of the ASGM sector. Although this guidance document is not legally binding and is not to be construed as a further elaboration or official interpretation of the Minamata Convention, it is intended to provide guidance to countries in formulating NAPs that are consistent with the requirements of the Minamata Convention, and provide technical, legal and policy information on issues related to ASGM, which may be useful when preparing and implementing the NAP. Although the use of this guidance is not a requirement under the Minamata Convention, this guidance is intended to assist countries with the preparation of their NAPs.

The document has been drafted by members of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership ASGM Partnership Area.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASGM	Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining
Au	Gold
COMTRADE	United Nations Statistical Division – Commercial Trade
Convention	Minamata Convention on Mercury
COP	Conference of the Parties
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
Hg	Mercury
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Mercury
INF	Information document
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SRI	Socially Responsible Investment
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WOA	Whole ore amalgamation

# Introduction



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