

GEF-8 REQUEST FOR MSP (1-STEP) APPROVAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION	3
Project Information	3
Project Summary	4
Project Description Overview	5
PROJECT COMPONENTS	5
PROJECT OUTLINE	8
A. PROJECT RATIONALE	8
B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	15
Project description	15
Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.	35
Core Indicators	37
Key Risks	39
C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES	42
D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS	43
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:	43
Stakeholder Engagement	43
Private Sector	44
Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks	44
E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS	44
Knowledge management	44
Benefits	44
ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES	47
GEF Financing Table	47
Project Preparation Grant (PPG)	47
Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation	47
Focal Area Elements	48
Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type	48
ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS	48
GEF Agency(ies) Certification	48
Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):	49
ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK	49
ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)	56
ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES	57
ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING	60
ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE	61

General Project Information

Project Information

Project Title:

Advancing Minamata Convention compliance through integrated governance, new infrastructure, and targeted engagement (IGNITE)

Region:

Europe and Central Asia

GEF Project ID:

12288

Country(ies):

Georgia

Type of Project:

MSP

GEF Agency(ies):

UNIDO

GEF Agency Project ID:

260048

Project Executing Entity(s):

Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

Project Executing Type:

CSO

GEF Focal Area (s):

Chemicals and Waste

Submission Date:

2/27/2026

Type of Trust Fund:

GET

Project Duration (Months):

48

GEF Project Grant: (a)

3,000,000.00

GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)

0.00

Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)

285,000.00

Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)

0.00

Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)

3,285,000.00

Total Co-financing

15,726,350.00

PPG Amount: (e)

50,000.00

PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)

4,750.00

PPG total amount: (e+f)

54,750.00

Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)

3,339,750.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No Competitive Window: No

Project Sector (CCM Only):

Taxonomy:

Focal Areas, Chemicals and Waste, Mercury, Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Stakeholders, Communications, Strategic Communications, Awareness Raising, Behavior change, Private Sector, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Beneficiaries, Type of Engagement, Participation, Information Dissemination, Consultation, Civil Society, Local Communities, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender results areas, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Capacity Development, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Women groups, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Generation, Innovation, Knowledge Exchange, Peer-to-Peer, Field Visit, Learning, Theory of change, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Public Campaigns, Large corporations

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B "project description". (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Georgia became a Party to the Minamata Convention on 17 July 2023. A 2017 national inventory, executed via GEF funding (GEF ID 5859) as part of the pre-ratification activities, identified the use and unsound disposal practices of mercury-added products (MAPs), including incineration and open burning, as the second-largest national source of mercury release into the environment, totaling 1,6 tonnes annually.

Despite the Government commitment, Georgia lacks the legal framework, infrastructure, and technological capacity for the environmentally sound management of MAPs and their associated waste. This gap leads to uncontrolled import, export and disposal of these products, hindering Georgia's ability to comply with the Convention.

The project aims to systematically reduce the threats that mercury poses to human health and environment in Georgia, through (1) building the public and private sector capacity for sound management of MAPs and their associated waste, (2) developing national technological capacity and expertise for mercury/MAPs waste collection and treatment, and (3) raising public/private sector awareness while also addressing the gender-differentiated impacts.

The project transforms Georgia's incomplete regulatory framework and non-existent systems for managing mercury/MAPs waste, which, paired with low public awareness, represent the root causes of the long-term, mercury-driven environmental degradation in Georgia.

Over four years, the project prevents at least 2.5 tonnes of mercury release, eliminate up to 1 tonne of collected mercury-containing waste, and prevent the inflow of estimated 5,5 tonnes of specific mercury-containing devices annually, amounting to 11 tonnes over the project execution, indirectly benefiting at least 1,000,000 people aged 18-65, 52% of whom are women.

Project Description Overview

Project Objective

To systematically reduce the threats posed by mercury-added products (MAPs) and the associated waste to health of female and male residents, and environment in Georgia

Project Components

Component 1: Establishing the National-level Legal and Regulatory Foundation for Sound Lifecycle Management of Mercury

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
833,712.00	4,356,520.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1: National legal and regulatory framework for Minamata Convention implementation **developed**, informed by an evidence-based understanding of the full mercury lifecycle in the country

Output:

Output 1.1.1: Baseline overview of the current legal and procedural frameworks related to the Minamata Convention requirements on mercury/mercury-added products trade and mercury-containing waste management conducted.

Output 1.1.2: Technical study on the national consumption of the mercury-added products and the mercury-containing waste generation and disposal, revealing the current patterns, developed.

Output 1.1.3: Draft legal acts addressing MAPs and mercury-containing waste life-cycle management developed through a participatory process and submitted for Government review.

Output 1.1.4: Institutional management modality and comprehensive national technical guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of mercury-containing waste streams developed and validated through consultations with the relevant state and municipal agencies.

Component 2: Implementation of an Integrated System for Mercury Waste Collection, Treatment, and Elimination

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,223,958.00	6,395,731.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1: A national capacity for mercury waste treatment established through pilot initiative and technology transferred to a private sector partner.

Outcome 2.2: A national mercury collection & elimination programme implemented, significantly reducing immediate threats to public health and direct environmental burden of mercury.

Output:

Output 2.1.1: Technology and the best international practices of sound management of mercury-containing waste implemented through the private sector partnership

Output 2.2.1: A programme for the collection of mercury waste stockpiles and unwanted MAPs from prioritized institutions established and implemented.

Output 2.2.2: A pilot 'take-back' gender-responsive public campaign for household mercury-added products collection successfully executed in selected municipalities.

Output 2.2.3: All mercury-containing waste and mercury-added products collected during the project managed through environmentally sound final elimination, utilizing local capacities established within the project and/or export routes.

Component 3: Strengthening National Technical Capacities, Knowledge Management and Strategic Communication

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
663,050.00	3,464,735.00

Outcome:

Outcome 3.1: The capacity of institutional and private sector entities for sound management of mercury enhanced, and awareness of mercury risks among the general public increased in a gender-sensitized manner.

Output:

Output 3.1.1: Institutional procedures updated and key staff in relevant state agencies trained with gender considerations to enable the enforcement of new mercury-related measures.

Output 3.1.2: Affected private sector entities informed and trained with gender considerations, with a particular focus on SMEs, to facilitate their compliance with new mercury-related regulations.

Output 3.1.3: Public awareness of mercury-related risks enhanced and project expertise institutionalized via strategic communication and knowledge management at national, regional and global levels

Component 4. Monitoring and evaluation

Component Type	Trust Fund
	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
136,423.00	712,872.00

Outcome:

Adaptive management, accountability, and effective dissemination of project results and lessons learned ensured through robust project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system

Output:

A comprehensive M&E system established and implemented throughout the project lifecycle.

MTR and TE conducted by UNIDO

PEE monitoring activities

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1: Establishing the National-level Legal and Regulatory Foundation for Sound Lifecycle Management of Mercury	833,712.00	4,356,520.00
Component 2: Implementation of an Integrated System for Mercury Waste Collection, Treatment, and Elimination	1,223,958.00	6,395,731.00
Component 3: Strengthening National Technical Capacities, Knowledge Management and Strategic Communication	663,050.00	3,464,735.00
Component 4. Monitoring and evaluation	136,423.00	712,872.00
Subtotal	2,857,143.00	14,929,858.00
Project Management Cost	142,857.00	796,492.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	3,000,000.00	15,726,350.00

Please provide justification

.

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

The Global Mercury Threat and the Minamata Convention

1. Mercury, a naturally occurring element, presents a significant global environmental and public health threat due to its unique persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic properties. As a powerful neurotoxin, even low levels of exposure can cause irreversible damage to the central nervous system, digestive and immune systems, lungs, and kidneys, with developing fetuses and young children being especially vulnerable. The World Health Organization identifies mercury as one of the top ten chemicals of major public health concern. Beyond human health, its ability to bioaccumulate in food chains and persist across environmental compartments, air, water, and soil, leads to severe ecosystem disruption, impacting biodiversity and the integrity of natural resources. The global scale and transboundary nature of mercury contamination demand dedicated action to protect human health and the environment from its anthropogenic releases.

2. The global community's commitment to addressing this pervasive threat is underscored by the Minamata Convention on Mercury, an international legally binding instrument dedicated to protecting human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. This foundational agreement establishes a framework for nations to manage and eventually eliminate mercury across its lifecycle, from primary mining to waste disposal. In alignment with its strategic commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration and broader environmental protection goals, Georgia has demonstrated dedication to addressing the mercury challenge. On July 17, 2023, Georgia ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury, with the Convention entering into force for the country on October 15, 2023

3. The widespread proliferation of mercury-added products (MAPs) and their subsequent waste represents a significant and challenging source of acute public health and environmental concerns. These products, from common household fluorescent lamps and batteries to critical medical and laboratory devices, effectively distribute vast quantities of mercury throughout society, creating a diffuse national stockpile within homes, public institutions, and commercial enterprises. The primary danger is realized at the end-of-life for these products, which can occur in several harmful ways. Even before entering the formal waste stream, accidental breakage of MAPs where they are used - in households, clinics, preschool educational institutions, schools or universities - can release toxic mercury vapor directly into indoor environments, posing an immediate health risk to occupants, with potential for disproportionate exposure for women and children who may spend more time in the mentioned indoor environments and domestic sphere. Furthermore, when disposed of improperly as general municipal solid waste, MAPs are inevitably broken or crushed in landfills, releasing liquid mercury that can contaminate soil and water through leachate, or emit toxic vapor into the atmosphere. If this waste is incinerated without specialized mercury-capture technology, the mercury is volatilized and becomes a source of long-range atmospheric pollution, contributing to global contamination. Each individual mercury-added product may contain only a small amount of mercury, but the cumulative total from millions of inappropriately discarded items results in a substantial and continuous release into the environment. Therefore, establishing a system for the

environmentally sound management of MAP waste is not merely a waste management issue; it is a fundamental and critical step in preventing widespread, chronic mercury pollution and fulfilling national commitments to protect environmental and human health.

National Context: The Proliferation of Mercury-Added Products and Threatened Vulnerable Population

4. The level I inventory conducted under the framework of the Mercury Initial Assessment (MIA) in 2017 confirmed the urgent need for measures to address mercury and its compounds in Georgia. According to the assessment, the total estimated mercury entering the environment countywide was approximately 4,2 tonnes per year as of 2014, of which a combined 50% was attributed to industrial activities such as primary metal, gold, and cement production. As for the remaining 50%, a significant portion of 39% is linked to mercury-added products and the associated waste management, with 28% coming from the use and disposal of products with mercury content and 11% specifically from mercury-containing waste incineration and open waste burning.

5. Elemental mercury is arguably one of the most dangerous substances within arm's reach of any citizen in Georgia through traditional mercury thermometers. The use of these thermometers is a deeply embedded cultural norm, driven by their affordability, their status as the default option offered by pharmacists, and a lingering perception among some medical professionals that they offer the most reliable readings. The COVID-19 pandemic has normalised frequent temperature monitoring, increasing thermometer use and the subsequent risk of breakage. Even before the pandemic, as per MIA report, approximately 260,000 mercury thermometers were sold annually. This high sales volume, in a country with just over one million households, suggests a constant cycle of replacement due to breakage. The result is a vast, decentralized stockpile of elemental mercury, a veritable "time bomb" in nearly every home, representing a significant public health blind spot. This risk is not confined to households; mercury thermometers and other mercury-containing medical devices are also prevalent in clinics, as well as in the nurse's offices of schools, universities, and kindergartens.

6. Currently in Georgia, the negative impacts of improperly managed mercury primarily affect the most vulnerable groups. First and foremost, this includes women, both as institutional workers and in their domestic roles. This is compounded by the fact that nurses, kindergarten and schoolteachers, and industrial cleaners are, in general, economically disadvantaged professions. It should also be noted that men who work in municipal waste collection services, and who also typically form an economically disadvantaged and vulnerable group, are likewise disproportionately exposed to hazardous substances discarded in municipal waste. Mercury-containing waste, placed in municipal landfill bins by households or private actors, therefore directly impacts those working in waste collection services. It is also noteworthy that waste pickers, who are among society's most vulnerable, are, by the same principle, exposed to the negative impacts of mercury and other hazardous wastes that are placed in municipal waste streams in a non-environmentally sound manner.

Regulatory Deficiencies and Failure of Current Systems

7. The 12-year delay in ratifying the Minamata Convention has resulted in significant gaps in national legislation, which have impeded Georgia's process of complying with its internationally undertaken commitments. This deficiency is characterized not only by a scarcity of legal instruments governing the circulation of mercury and MAPs but is also compounded by the limited capacity of state agencies relevant

to enforcement. Furthermore, although Government Resolution N349/2025 formally defines a list of specific mercury-added products requiring trade consent, it remains an isolated piece of legislation, unsupported by the bylaws and amendments needed to specify enforcement responsibilities, procedures, and penalties for non-compliance, rendering it legally powerless for both regulatory bodies and the actors they oversee. The latter is evidenced by the fact that mercury-added items are still imported and exported without any restriction, with the simplest illustration being the mercury-containing thermometers. Moreover, the lack of expertise in state institutions regarding the establishment of a functional system to regulate mercury/MAPs flows in the country, as well as their sound end-of-life management, makes already lengthy legal procedures and the process of reaching agreements between the state stakeholders even lengthier and more complicated, requiring international experience, best practices, technological support and strong, intentional advocacy. Thus, the overall legal environment, as well as enforcement mechanisms and the readiness and capacity of actors to enforce and comply, remain inadequate, which leads to a largely unregulated trade framework for MAPs.

8. Compounding the problem, the uncontrolled flow over the years has created a significant stock of mercury that will eventually require disposal; In particular, an average of 55 tonnes of potentially mercury-containing products - such as relays, switches, non-electronic thermostats, and fluorescent lamps - are imported into the country annually, as identified through HS-code based analysis of national customs import data. However, the customs authority lacks both the technical and the technological expertise to monitor these products effectively and prevent the inflow of those that specifically contain mercury. Besides, a disposal framework for end-of-life MAPs is also not established, leading to current unsound disposal practices that result in an annual release of 1.6 tonnes of mercury. While the Waste Management Code classifies discarded mercury items as 'hazardous waste,' this general designation is not supported by specific management guidelines. In addition to everything mentioned, the country lacks the dedicated infrastructure and arrangements necessary to handle such waste streams, even if detailed regulations were in place. This creates an unsolvable dilemma for the public: even if a spill from a broken thermometer is managed safely to avoid immediate health risks, the ultimate question of where the waste should go remains unanswered. There are no designated collection points for such household hazardous waste. While a handful of private operators exist, they primarily serve commercial clients, and requiring a citizen to pay for the disposal of a single broken thermometer is not a viable or attractive prospect. The inevitable result is that this hazardous waste is discarded with municipal solid waste, ultimately ending up in landfills and guaranteeing the long-term release of mercury into all environmental media. Consequently, Georgia remains vulnerable to the risks posed by mercury-added products at every stage of their lifecycle, from unregulated market entry to the unmanaged disposal of the associated waste.

9. Due to the absence of dedicated regulation, a wide range of items containing mercury historically have been freely imported and sold throughout the country. In the absence of a comprehensive intervention for mercury-added products (MAPs) and their associated waste, Georgia's current baseline is one of stagnation: mercury from these sources will continue to pose an uncontrolled threat to the environment and human health, while the country will remain unable to advance its commitments under the Minamata Convention. Without a dedicated effort to develop effective regulatory and enforcement systems, the unabated flow of MAPs into the Georgian market will perpetuate. Moreover, as the accumulated MAPs gradually reach their end-of-life, the problem will be compounded. Low public and private sector awareness regarding proper disposal methods, along with the absence of the regulatory framework and guidelines, ensures that the number of improperly discarded, mercury-containing items will only grow. Given that the robust legal framework for controlling trade with mercury/MAPs, as well as sound management protocols remain

undefined, the necessary infrastructure for their sound management will not develop organically either. As a result, under the current baseline, Georgia is expected to continue releasing/emitting at least 1.6 tonnes of mercury annually from MAPs and their associated waste alone - a notable figure considering the country's size and population. To avert severe, long-term environmental and health consequences, a targeted and well-defined intervention is of immense importance, as the status quo offers no prospect of self-correction.

Strategic Intervention Logic and Expected Environmental Benefits

10. Given the baseline of the major challenges Georgia is currently facing and the national priorities of the country, the intervention to systematically reduce the threats posed by mercury-added products (MAPs) and their associated waste, and thereby advance the country's adherence to the Minamata Convention, has been designed with a focus on four critical areas: establishing a robust legal and regulatory framework for MAPs and their waste; strengthening the capacity of the private sector and the public for sound management of mercury-added items; creating domestic technological capacity for mercury-containing waste treatment; and tackling the existing stockpile of legacy MAPs. To this end, the project will deliver the following key outcomes:

- National legal and regulatory framework for Minamata Convention implementation developed, informed by an evidence-based understanding of the full mercury lifecycle in the country.
- National policy and regulatory framework to enable the environmentally sound management of mercury waste adopted and implemented.
- A national capacity for mercury waste treatment established through pilot initiative and appropriate technology transferred to a private sector partner.
- A national mercury collection & elimination programme implemented, significantly reducing immediate threats to public health and direct environmental burden of mercury.
- The capacity of institutional and private sector entities for sound management of mercury enhanced, and awareness of mercury risks among the general public increased in a gender-sensitised manner.

Upon successful implementation, this intervention will trigger a phased transformation. The adoption of a comprehensive regulatory framework and enforcement mechanisms will curtail the uncontrolled import of new MAPs, the primary source of mercury into the country. This will lead to several key behavioral shifts. The private sector will predominantly transition to safer, mercury-free alternatives. State agencies, equipped with the necessary knowledge and capacity, will effectively enforce all MAP-related legislation. Furthermore, private sector entities granted still keeping MAPs will be capable to manage the resulting waste in an environmentally responsible manner, adhering to established guidelines and avoiding improper incineration, open dumping, or disposal in municipal landfills. Concurrently, an informed public, with awareness campaigns tailored to reach both women and men effectively, will be better protected from exposure and will cease contributing to the environmental release of mercury. Finally, the domestic recycling sector, empowered with new mercury treatment technology, will be positioned to meet the demand not only for domestic needs but for the broader region as well.

11. Ultimately, the intervention will establish a sustainable, nationwide system for mercury waste management, culminating in a significant and measurable reduction in Georgia's environmental mercury burden. By preventing up to 1.25 tonnes of mercury from entering the environment annually - which represents 80% reduction of the current 1.6 t/year baseline release/emission from unsound disposal of mercury-added products - the project will create a global environmental benefit of 2.5 tonnes of avoided mercury contamination within its lifecycle. By enabling effective customs control over the 55 t/year baseline of

potentially mercury-containing products imported into the country (identified through HS-code based customs analysis), the project will prevent the inflow of an estimated 5.5 t/year of mercury-containing products (conservatively assumed at 10% of total imports), totaling 11 tonnes over the project lifecycle. Additionally, 100-1,000 kg of legacy mercury-containing waste will be eliminated through institutional and public take-back programmes. The recurring annual reductions are contingent on the implementation of the necessary policies and processes regulating MAPs inflow and sound disposal, which are deemed to take place within years 1-2 of the project; the resulting reductions will continue through the remaining years of the project and indefinitely thereafter.

Alignment and Synergy with Existing Initiatives

12. The proposed intervention is strategically designed to align with Georgia's core national priorities and international commitments, translating them into time-bound activities across three policy levels: binding international commitments, the country's principal environmental programme, and a sectoral strategy addressing hazardous waste. First and foremost, the project directly supports Georgia in fulfilling its legally binding obligations under the Minamata Convention, which Georgia ratified on 17 July 2023. The project's outputs translate directly into Convention obligations: Component 1 develops the legal framework, lifecycle data, and institutional procedures required under Article 4 (mercury-added products), Article 8 (emissions to air), Article 9 (releases to land and water) and Article 11 (mercury wastes); Component 2 establishes the national capacity for environmentally sound treatment and elimination of mercury-containing waste required under Article 11 and contributes to the storage requirements under Article 10; and Component 3 supports awareness raising and information exchange under Articles 17 and 18. The baseline data generated under Output 1.1.2 will additionally feed the national reporting obligation under Article 21, which the country has been unable to discharge with its own resources since the 2017 Mercury Initial Assessment.

12b. Furthermore, this approach aligns seamlessly with Georgia's overarching domestic policies, particularly the priority of strengthening hazardous waste management capabilities as articulated in foundational documents like the National Waste Management Strategy for 2016-2030 and Action Plan 2022-2026, as well as the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP-4). Adopted by the Government of Georgia decree in September 2022, NEAP-4 is the country's principal strategic environmental document for the period 2022–2026 and identifies waste and chemicals management among its priority directions. Current compliance challenges with the Minamata Convention are elaborated under the chemicals management chapter of NEAP-4, which primarily emphasises the absence of an appropriate policy and legislative framework at the national level. Accordingly, Objective 10.3.2 in the Action Plan specifically focuses on 'the development of mercury regulatory legislation', which represents the part of a first project component.

12c The National Waste Management Strategy 2016–2030 and National Waste Management Action Plan 2022–2026, first adopted in 2016 under the Waste Management Code (2014), set out thirteen objectives across the waste hierarchy. The project addresses obligations under five of them. Specifically, Goal 1 of the Strategy aims to develop, implement, and enforce waste management legislation in accordance with EU requirements and international conventions; this is covered by the project's first component, which concerns mercury-related legislative and policy frameworks. Goal 3—the establishment and implementation of an efficient system for waste collection and transport—requires the creation of such a system for hazardous waste under Objective 3.3. The activities planned under the project's second component serve as a model for this, as they establish a similar collection and transportation framework. Additionally, Objective 9.1 under Goal 9 of the Strategy (strengthening waste management capacities and raising awareness), which focuses on improving the capacities of ministries and municipalities, directly aligns with both the institutional analysis performed under the first component and the enforcement and technical capacity-building trainings envisaged in the third component. Finally, the main goal of the Strategy addressed by the project is Goal 10—improving hazardous waste management—under which the objectives involve strengthening management facilities for such waste (10.1) and enhancing the capacity of the public and private sectors to manage it. The latter is covered by the project's second and third components, which establish mercury recycling capacity at

the national level, while simultaneously involving active consultations, information exchange, and training for private sector representatives from MAPS Holding and MAPS marketing entities. Taken together, these confirm that the project will serve as an instrument for delivering both national and international commitments and priorities. Finally, the above national instruments are themselves anchored in Georgia's commitments under the EU–Georgia Association Agreement (in force from 1 July 2016), specifically Title V, Chapter 3 (Environment) and Annex XXVI on environmental approximation.

13. This project is meticulously designed to fit within Georgia's current investment landscape and build directly on existing national efforts. As the sound management of hazardous substances and the fulfillment of obligations under multilateral environmental agreements are national priorities, Georgia has already undertaken several significant initiatives with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other donors.

14. The current project is built upon lessons learned and knowledge products from past GEF projects; through the project 'Strengthening national decision making towards ratification of the Minamata Convention and build capacity towards implementation of future provisions' (GEF Project ID: 5859, 2014-2018) a foundational work has been laid for Minamata Convention ratification by producing first-ever National Inventory of Mercury, along with a comprehensive assessment of the policy, regulatory, and institutional frameworks needed for ratification. The hazardous waste and chemicals projects such as the 'PCB-Free Electricity Distribution in Georgia' (GEF Project ID: 9227, 2018-present), and 'Reduction of Industrial Persistent Organic Pollutant Chemicals in Manufacturing and Recycling Sectors through Life-cycle Approaches in Georgia' (GEF Project ID: 11005; 2022-present), serve as exemplary undertakings preceding the proposed initiative.

15. Notable non-GEF initiatives the achievements of which the current project builds upon include "Support for the Ratification of the Minamata Convention in Georgia" (2022), funded by the Government of Sweden, which assisted the Government of Georgia in its efforts to ratify the Convention, which was successfully achieved in 2023.

16. Another initiative, "Enhancing national capacities, reporting and synergies between Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions and SAICM for the sound management of chemicals and waste in Georgia" (2022-2025), supported under the Special Programme, has also contributed to the Minamata process through official designation of the Convention's National Focal Point and conducting awareness-raising activities dedicated to the Convention's content.

Stakeholder Engagement and Gender-Sensitive Implementation

17. The landscape also includes a recently launched effort by the Convention Secretariat under the Specific International Programme: "Empowering National Capacities and Knowledge Management for Minamata Convention Compliance," specifically targeting mercury emissions and releases from industrial activities.

18. Crucially, this project's success and its ability to deliver Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) hinge on the active involvement of key stakeholders. The project's legal and regulatory strengthening will be centrally supported by key government bodies that provide the essential institutional backbone. These include the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) and its agencies; the Ministry of Finance, under which the Customs department operates; the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development; the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth; and the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs. The latter's involvement is particularly vital, as its professionals oversee adherence to established rules in medical institutions, which are expected to be the single biggest holders of MAPs, a sector where the substantial portion of workforce is female.

19. The private sector, including local SMEs, particularly waste management companies willing to expand into mercury waste treatment and importers/distributors of MAPs, along with the entities possessing MAPs, is a critical partner. The project will specifically build their capacity for compliance with the updated legal framework and the requirements for safe handling and storage of mercury waste. The direct engagement with state agencies, local municipalities, and community groups will be key in organising collection campaigns, ensuring local ownership, and securing broader public participation that is inclusive of both men and women. From round-table discussions during the legislative process to active participation in awareness and collection activities, these diverse actors will ensure the project's interventions are contextually relevant and effectively implemented.

19b. The project intentionally mainstreams gender considerations by targeting the specific professional and domestic pathways with high risk of mercury exposure. This includes targeting female workforce-dominated high-risk sectors, such as healthcare and education, including institutional cleaning duties, as well as the male-dominated waste collection sector. In response to the lack of recognition for the gender-differentiated health risks within institutional and public health frameworks, a lack of specialised occupational health and safety training tailored for the socially vulnerable frontline workforces, and low level of public health awareness, the project establishes gender-responsive measures. Namely, the differentiated vulnerabilities are addressed by establishing gender-responsive provisions within new regulatory frameworks and delivering specialized safety training to the personnel most likely to handle mercury-added products or contaminated waste streams. Recognizing women's roles as primary caregivers and household managers - who are frequently the first responders to domestic spillages - the project ensures they are reached by safety protocol awareness campaigns through carefully selected information channels. Additionally, the project provides the opportunity for them to remove hazardous items from their households through public take-back programmes in an environmentally sound manner.

Enablers, Barriers, and Long-term Sustainability

20. The project's success is underpinned by a powerful combination of international and national enabling factors. At the international level, Georgia's ratification of the Minamata Convention creates a binding legal obligation to act, while the effort under the Specific International Programme (SIP) provides focused technical and financial support for building upon. This external momentum is matched domestically by strong political will and clear alignment with foundational national policies, including the National Waste Management Strategy and the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP-4). Furthermore, political support stems not only from a desire to comply with international commitments but also from a practical incentive: the project's knowledge products - baseline studies on national patterns of mercury/MAP trade, consumption, and disposal - can serve as a primary input for the next round of national reporting to the Convention's secretariat. Notably, this is a responsibility the country cannot sufficiently meet in 2025, given that no dedicated resources have been allocated to systematic gathering of this data, leaving the nation's reporting capacity reliant on the outputs of the previous 'Mercury Initial Assessment' from 2017. Finally, the project does not start from a legal vacuum; it can build upon Georgia's existing Waste Management Code, which already provides a legal basis for introducing the legal responsibilities for managing hazardous materials. Together, these factors create a highly conducive environment for achieving the project's objectives.

21. Despite this strong foundation, the project faces several potential barriers that will require proactive management. The primary challenge lies in the legislative and regulatory process, which can be lengthy and complex, necessitating significant effort from the project team to facilitate and advocate for the timely

implementation of developed pieces of legislation, protocols and practices. A second key barrier may be a lack of willingness from private institutions that hold or use MAPs to cooperate with new regulations that could affect their operations. This is compounded by a well-documented social barrier: the general public's historically low engagement in environmental awareness activities, which could hinder the effectiveness of new collection and disposal programs. This challenge requires gender-sensitive outreach strategies to ensure that awareness campaigns resonate with and mobilize all segments of the community. Overcoming these procedural, corporate, and social hurdles will be critical to the project's success.

22. The outcomes of this project are designed to endure even in the face of uncertain future scenarios. By strengthening the legal framework and building national capacity for mercury control, Georgia will be better positioned to manage evolving mercury challenges, including potential shifts in global markets or consumption patterns. The enhanced regulatory environment will provide a durable mechanism for controlling future mercury inputs, while the established waste management capacities will ensure that legacy and new mercury waste are handled safely, regardless of future mercury sources. This project is a foundational step, enabling Georgia to adapt to and mitigate mercury risks effectively in the long term, ensuring compliance with its Minamata Convention obligations, and thereby safeguarding the public health and ecosystems from the harmful impacts.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

23. The project's ToC is based on an interplay amongst its three components: Component 1 will lead to the adoption of the mandatory legal and policy prerequisites that empower state enforcement and create market certainty. Component 2 will then facilitate the practical implementation of this new framework by establishing the physical technological infrastructure and a viable private-sector business model for mercury waste treatment. Finally, Component 3 will support the long-term sustainability of these systems by building the essential technical capacity of all stakeholders and accumulating the knowledge required for durable behavioral change.

23b. During the project development process, lessons learned and knowledge produced from previous GEF initiatives were utilized. Specifically, from the 'Strengthening National Decision-Making towards Ratification of the Minamata Convention and Building Capacity towards Implementation of Future Provisions' (GEF Project ID: 5859, 2014–2018), mercury sectoral estimates and legal and policy mapping were utilized to identify priority areas for meaningful interventions. Design elements were adapted from the 'PCB-Free Electricity Distribution in Georgia' project (GEF Project ID: 9227; 2018–present), particularly regarding the national level elimination of hazardous chemical stockpiles. Furthermore, the regulations adopted during that project, including the undertaken institutional dialogue steps, serve as an example for the development of mercury-specific regulations within the current initiative. Finally, the project 'Reduction of Industrial Persistent Organic Pollutant Chemicals in Manufacturing and Recycling Sectors through Life-

Cycle Approaches in Georgia' (GEF Project ID: 11005; 2022–present) informed the current strategy for private sector engagement, specifically concerning technology transfer.

Causal Pathways, Logic, and Key Assumptions

24. The project's logic begins with a clear assessment of the baseline problem, revealing that the unsound use and disposal of mercury-added products (MAPs) accounts for an estimated 1.6 tonnes of mercury released annually, and the problem is even more compounded by the annual import of up to 55 tonnes of potentially mercury-containing products, posing significant burden to local and global environment. This systemic failure is the direct result of critical, interconnected gaps: a legislative vacuum with legally powerless regulations; a total lack of dedicated infrastructure for collection and treatment; and low capacity of state agencies for enforcement. This creates an unsolvable dilemma for the public and institutions, leading to the creation of a vast, decentralized stockpile and the inevitable disposal of hazardous waste in municipal landfills, causing long-range pollution. In this baseline scenario of stagnation, the country cannot meet its legal obligations towards Minamata Convention. The project's ToC is therefore designed to dismantle the four distinct, interconnected barriers that create this failure:

Barrier 1: Weak and Fragmented Legal-Regulatory Framework

- Fragmented and incomplete legislation that lacks the necessary bylaws and supporting articles to be legally enforceable.
- Limited institutional capacity and technical expertise within state agencies to design, implement, or enforce a sound mercury management system.
- A lengthy and complex legislative and regulatory process, which requires significant and sustained advocacy to ensure the timely adoption of new legal acts and protocols.
- A critical lack of clearly defined institutional responsibilities for the lifecycle management of mercury waste, resulting in an absent or non-functional governance and management system.

Barrier 2: Lack of Infrastructure and Engagement from Private Waste Management Operators

- A total absence of domestic infrastructure for the environmentally sound collection, temporary storage, and final treatment of mercury waste.
- A lack of willingness from private institutions (waste handlers) to invest in a high-cost service like mercury treatment without a clear legal mandate and financial/technical de-risking.

Barrier 3: Pervasive Low Capacity and Public Awareness

- Pervasively low public awareness of the specific health risks of mercury and the correct procedures for safe handling and disposal.
- A well-documented social barrier of historically low public engagement in environmental awareness activities, which could hinder the effectiveness of new collection and disposal programmes.

Barrier 4: Unrecognised Gender-Differentiated Health Risks

- A widespread lack of recognition for the disproportionate, gender-based health risk within current institutional and public health frameworks, representing a systemic blind spot that current policies fail to address.
- The lack of specialized occupational health and safety training tailored for the female-dominated sectors, which results in high-risk and socially vulnerable frontline workforces being left without the skills to manage mercury safely.
- Generic public health awareness strategies failing to utilize the specific communication channels and tailored messaging required to reach women effectively in their roles as primary managers of household mercury risks.

Barrier 5: Economic Barriers and Market Resistance

- An affordability gap incentivizing price-sensitive segments of the population and institutions to prioritize the cheapest available options on the market over safer, more expensive alternatives.
- A potential lack of willingness from private institutions holding MAPs (e.g., hospitals, importers) to cooperate with new regulations that could create perceived operational costs or burdens.
- Limited interest among private market operators to transition towards supplying mercury-free products due to established supply chain dependencies.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS 1&4 THROUGH PROJECT COMPONENT 1

25. The project's three components are designed as interdependent causal pathways that directly correspond to these core barriers. The foundational logic of the intervention is that no physical infrastructure (Component 2) or sustainable capacity (Component 3) can be established without first creating a robust, evidence-based, agreed-upon and legally enforceable governance structure. This new structure is required to systematically dismantle Barrier 1 (the weak legal framework), and Barrier 4 (the unrecognized gender-differentiated health risks). Besides, the new framework will not only close existing legal loopholes and assign clear institutional responsibilities but also formally integrate a gender-responsive approach to address the occupational and domestic health risks that are currently overlooked and create the incentive for suppliers to offer mercury-free products to national consumers.

26. While designing the Component 1, the following assumptions have been made:

- **Key Assumption (Hypothesis 1):** *The establishment of a formal, binding legal framework is a prerequisite for durable change. This legal mandate is the primary driver that (a) empowers state agencies to enforce controls and (b) creates the stable, predictable market conditions necessary to incentivise private sector investment in a long-term disposal solution.*
- **Key Assumption (Hypothesis 2):** *In evidence-based advocacy, negotiations between parties proceed more effectively.*

27. Accordingly, the outputs of Component 1 are designed as a necessary and sufficient sequence to build this enabling framework. The causal chain begins with comprehensive, gender-responsive baseline studies (Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) to generate the critical evidence base quantifying MAPs consumption, identifying waste generation (e.i. entities, quantities) and current disposal patterns, analysing legal gaps, and formally documenting health risks in a gender-sensitive manner. This evidence is the prerequisite that directly informs the subsequent outputs: the participatory drafting of new, enforceable legal acts and amendments (Output 1.1.3) and the design of a durable, national management modality. This includes the development of detailed

technical ESM guidelines and, crucially, a clear system defining the institutional roles, responsibilities, and interactions for all actors including state agencies, the private sector entities, and citizens in terms of future mercury-containing waste collection and treatment procedures – the system which is currently totally absent (Output 1.1.4). Thus, this pathway moves logically from evidence to policy. It not only creates the legal mandate but also establishes the operational blueprint for a sustainable post-project system, ensuring that any actor (hospitals, laboratories, citizens, etc.) generating mercury waste in the future has a clear, functional, governed, and environmentally sound process to follow for its sound disposal. This creates the mandatory legal and technical foundation upon which all other project interventions are built.

28. The project's role in facilitating this process is particularly critical given the national context. As experience in Georgia has demonstrated, achieving consensus on the distribution of responsibilities among stakeholders for environmental legislation is an exceptionally complex challenge. Disagreements often stem from institutional limitations, such as insufficient staffing or a lack of awareness of the technical issues, or business interests, leaving acute environmental problems unresolved. This challenge is compounded by a lack of state agencies' resources to fund the intensive facilitation, advocacy, and resource-heavy multi-stakeholder consultations that are required to build such a consensus. Therefore, the project's intervention is essential not only for providing the technical outputs (the draft laws and system design) but also for providing the critical process (the facilitated, resourced, and sustained engagement) necessary to overcome these systemic hurdles and establish a functional governance system.

29. The described sequence of outputs is designed to lead to *Outcome 1.1: National legal and regulatory framework for Minamata Convention implementation developed, informed by an evidence-based understanding of the full mercury lifecycle in the country*. The component's *outputs* are the validated, technically sound, and stakeholder-supported draft legal acts and the comprehensive management system design, while the *outcome* is the formal *adoption* of this framework by the Government of Georgia. This transition from output to outcome is outside the project's direct control and relies on a key external assumption:

-Key Assumption (Hypothesis A): *The project assumes that the Government of Georgia maintains the political will to meet its Minamata Convention obligations, and that this commitment will ensure the timely review and adoption of the technically-sound legal package submitted by the project.*

30. Several external factors will influence the realisation of this outcome. The key enablers include: (1) Georgia's legally binding commitment under the ratified Minamata Convention, which creates a non-negotiable obligation to act; (2) The strong alignment of this framework with the country's national policies; and (3) The project's own design, which builds political buy-in from the start through participatory consultations with state representatives, making the final adoption a natural conclusion. The primary barrier is the procedural one identified in the project's risk assessment: the inherent length and complexity of the national legislative and bureaucratic adoption process, which could be delayed by shifting political priorities or administrative hurdles unrelated to the framework's quality.

ADDRESSING BARRIER 2 THROUGH PROJECT COMPONENT 2

31. The project's logic subsequently addresses *Barrier 2: lack of infrastructure and engagement from private waste management operators*. The legal framework established under Component 1, while foundational, is insufficient on its own, as it creates a compliance *obligation* without providing the physical *mechanism* to meet it. This results in an unfunded and inoperable mandate. To operationalise this new legal system and achieve the GEB,

two distinct interventions are required: first, the establishment of a long-term, economically viable domestic capacity for mercury waste treatment; and second, the demonstration of a safe, large-scale collection and disposal programme to manage the country's legacy stockpiles. Importantly, since the market for mercury recycling is uncertain, while capital costs are high, a direct project intervention is required to de-risk the market and catalyse private sector action.

32. Thus, while designing Component 2 the following assumption has been made:

- **Key Assumption (Hypothesis 3):** *The private sector will not invest in a high-cost service like mercury treatment without (a) the long-term market certainty provided by the new national legal mandate from Component 1, and (b) significant financial and technical de-risking from the project (subsidy, technology assessment) to make it an economically viable business model.*

- **Key Assumption (Hypothesis 4):** *Without a targeted action, existent mercury stockpiles will remain unaddressed for a long time and will constantly create a threat to the population*

33. Accordingly, the outputs of Component 2 are designed as a necessary and sufficient sequence to build this physical mechanism. The causal chain is initiated by Output 2.1.1 (Technology transfer and partnership), which is necessary to establish the cornerstone of long-term sustainability. In the absence of this output, Georgia would lack a durable, cost-effective domestic treatment solution, and the sound management of mercury waste (to be generated in the future) would cease upon project completion. This output establishes the core domestic treatment capacity and a viable post-project business model, which is the necessary prerequisite for a durable national management system. This new capacity, in turn, enables the project to execute the national collection programmes and domestically eliminate the collected items (Outputs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). These collection outputs are necessary to manage the immediate, acute health threat posed by the existing legacy stockpiles in institutions and households; in their absence, the new legal framework and treatment facility would only address future waste, but would not eliminate the stockpile mercury currently posing a risk. Furthermore, such a demonstration activity is bound to attract attention from both institutions and the public, which will enhance the outcomes of the project's awareness-raising initiatives. Finally, Output 2.2.3 (Final elimination) is the logical and necessary culmination, ensuring the collected stockpiles are permanently and safely eliminated, leveraging the new domestic facility (enabled by 2.1.1) while retaining an export route as a contingency. This integrated sequence of outputs is therefore sufficient to overcome Barrier 2, providing the essential tools (the physical infrastructure, a business incentive, and a collection system) that are required to complement the rules (the legal framework from Component 1) and make the entire national system operational and durable.

34. This sequence of outputs is designed to collectively achieve *Outcome 2.1: A national capacity for mercury waste treatment established through pilot initiative and technology transferred to a private sector partner* and *Outcome 2.2: A national mercury collection & elimination programme implemented, significantly reducing immediate threats to public health and direct environmental burden of mercury*. The realisation of these outcomes, which are partially outside the project's direct control sphere, depends on several external assumptions, enablers, and barriers.

- **Key Assumption (Hypothesis B):** *The project assumes that a selected private sector partner will remain a willing, technically competent, and financially solvent actor, capable of and interested in managing the new technology and business model as a long-term commercial service.*

- Key Assumption (Hypothesis C): *The project assumes that prioritised institutions (e.g., hospitals, universities) and the general public in pilot municipalities will be willing and motivated to participate in the collection programmes, and will not actively resist or ignore the collection efforts.*

35. The key enablers for this transition from output to outcome are: (1) The new legal framework from Component 1, which provides the *legal interest* for institutions to participate in collection; (2) The public awareness campaigns from Component 3 and incentives, which provide the motivation for the public to participate; and (3) The high reputational and health benefits for participating institutions and municipalities. The primary external barriers are: (1) A lack of interest from private institutions who may see cooperation as an operational burden, leading to low participation in the institutional collection; and (2) The historically low public engagement in environmental activities, which could lead to a failed public 'take-back' campaign despite the project's efforts.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS 3, 4 & 5 THROUGH PROJECT COMPONENT 3

36. Finally, if Barrier 3 (low capacity and awareness), Barrier 4 (gender-differentiated risks) and Barrier 5 (affordability gap) are not simultaneously addressed, the efforts under Components 1 and 2 will end up futile. Knowledge, enforcement capacity, willingness, and equity are essential for the new system to function. Without this, state agencies will lack the capacity to enforce the new laws, the public and private sectors representatives will lack the awareness and technical skills to comply with them, and women and low-income populations will remain disproportionately affected. The third component is designed to dismantle both the general knowledge and enforcement capacity deficit, the perpetuation of gender-disproportionate health risks and affordability barrier of the safer alternatives.

37. While designing the Component 3, the following assumption has been made:

- Key Assumption (Hypothesis 5): *The existence of laws and infrastructure is insufficient to guarantee compliance, participation, and adoption. The project's GEB can only be achieved if (a) state agencies have the technical capacity to enforce the new laws; (b) private/institutional staff have the OHS and technical skills to manage waste safely; (c) the public, particularly women as primary household managers, are made aware of the risks and are motivated to participate in the new collection systems; and (d) the market provides accessible and affordable mercury-free alternatives.*

38. Accordingly, the outputs of Component 3 are designed as a necessary and sufficient sequence to build human capacity across the entire mercury lifecycle. The pathway is logically structured to empower the key stakeholder groups: first, Output 3.1.1 (Strengthening State Agencies) is necessary to train the enforcers. In its absence, the new laws from Component 1 would remain unenforced as state representatives (e.g., customs personnel, market supervision personnel, etc.) would lack the updated procedures to implement them. Besides, without enforcement capacity in place, national suppliers of mercury-added products will not be incentivised to change their current supply chains or transition to mercury-free alternatives. This will effectively leave mercury-free items as scarce commodities on the market, keeping their prices high and driving the population toward the cheapest mercury-containing alternatives. Second, Output 3.1.2 (Strengthening Private Sector) is necessary to train the implementers. In its absence, the private partner and institutional staff (e.g., in hospitals, clinics) would lack the specific technical and OHS skills to safely manage the waste collected in Component 2, resulting in continued health risks and non-compliance. This output is a primary mechanism for mitigating Barrier 4, as it delivers tailored training and knowledge to the female-dominated frontline workforce. Third, Output 3.1.3 (Public Awareness) is necessary to engage the public. In

its absence, the household collection programmes in Component 2 would fail from a lack of participation, and unsafe domestic disposal would continue. This output also directly addresses Barrier 4 by targeting women as the primary household managers and decision-makers regarding the household purchases and household waste management. This capacity-building approach is therefore both sufficient and necessary, as it ensures that the *enforcers, implementers, and users* of the new system are all equipped with the specialised, gender-responsive knowledge required to make it operational and safe.

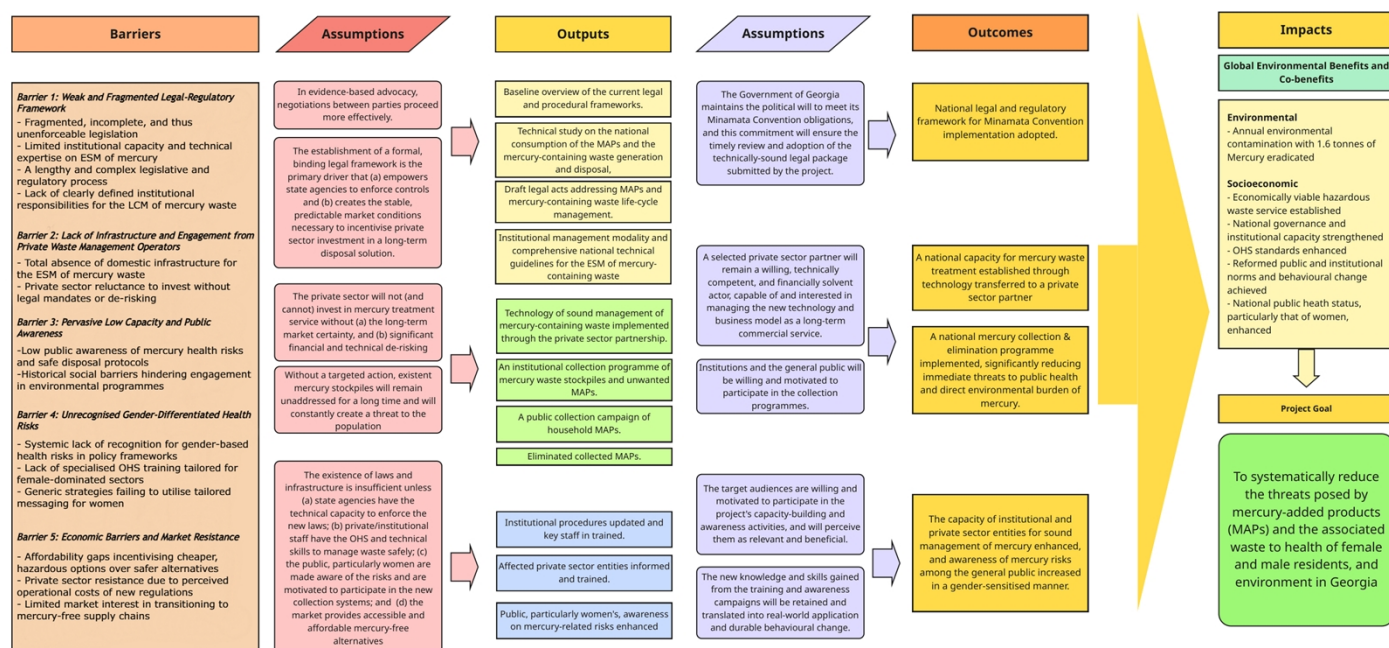
39. This set of outputs is designed to directly achieve *Outcome 3.1: The capacity of institutional and private sector entities for sound management of mercury enhanced, and awareness of mercury risks among the general public increased in a gender-sensitised manner*. The component's *outputs* are the delivery of gender-responsive training, accessible guidelines, and targeted awareness campaigns, whereas the *outcome* is the actual, measurable increase in knowledge, skills, and awareness, and the resulting behavioural change among the target groups. This transition from output to outcome depends on external assumptions:

- **Key Assumption (Hypothesis D):** *The project assumes that the target audiences (state officials, private sector staff, and the general public) are willing and motivated to participate in the project's capacity-building and awareness activities, and will perceive them as relevant and beneficial.*

- **Key Assumption (Hypothesis E):** *The project assumes that the new knowledge and skills gained from the training and awareness campaigns will be retained and translated into real-world application and durable behavioural change.*

40. The key enablers for this transition are: (1) The new legal measures and economic/health benefits, which create a strong, tangible demand for the knowledge and training offered; and (2) The project's gender-responsive and inclusive design (e.g., plain-language guidelines, multi-channel campaigns), which ensures the materials are accessible and usable. The primary external barrier is institutional inertia (resistance to new procedures) and the well-documented low public engagement in environmental activities, which could result in high-quality training and awareness materials being ignored by their target audiences.

The theory of change described above has been summarised as a diagram that follows (Figure 1).



PROJECT COMPONENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

Component 1: Establishing the National-level Legal and Regulatory Foundation for Sound Lifecycle Management of Mercury

41. This component is designed to establish the comprehensive legal, institutional, and technical foundation required for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of mercury and mercury waste in Georgia, in full compliance with the Minamata Convention. The methodology follows a logical progression, moving from initial analysis to the development of robust, stakeholder-validated regulatory frameworks.

42. The initial phase of the project involves a comprehensive legal and institutional gap analysis. A comparative review of Georgia's current national legislation against the Minamata Convention's obligations will be conducted. This analysis will adopt a gender-responsive approach, extending beyond purely technical definitions of waste to assess whether existing national health and labour laws adequately recognise the differentiated health impacts of mercury. Concurrently, a review of existing institutional procedures for controlling the trade of mercury-added products (MAPs) and managing mercury-containing waste will be undertaken. The methodology for this review will be designed to capture critical insights on practical challenges and on-the-ground risks by ensuring consultations include both agency leadership and the frontline staff responsible for implementation.

43. Following the legal and institutional review, the project will conduct in-depth technical studies to map the national mercury lifecycle. The study will identify the MAPs imported into Georgia over the last 10 years, detailing their quantities, distribution patterns, and key consuming sectors, as well as the quantities of resulting mercury-containing waste, its generating sectors, and current handling and disposal patterns. This investigation will incorporate a gender-disaggregated assessment of end-users and their specific roles. The study's sampling methodology will be designed to ensure representative data collection from diverse geographic typologies, including major urban centres, regional towns, and selected rural/remote communities, thereby capturing the full range of national disposal practices, such as open burning or river disposal. Given that the core environmental targets of the project are based on conservative estimates derived from the 2017 Mercury Initial Assessment and customs import data, and that the technical studies

to be conducted under Output 1.1.2 will provide updated, evidence-based figures in this regard, the activities related to these technical studies are scheduled for the first year of implementation. Should the findings reveal material divergence from the assumed baseline values, the corresponding core indicator targets will be revised accordingly and reported. Another critical element of these studies is confirming the availability of mercury-free alternatives, which will involve a full life-cycle impact analysis to review their composition, end-of-life disposal requirements, and any potential ancillary risks, such as being a different hazardous pollutant. Furthermore, the cost-effectiveness analysis for these alternatives will explicitly consider affordability for end-users, including SMEs and low-income households, to prevent new patterns of social exclusion.

44. The findings from these foundational studies will directly inform the development of new national regulatory and technical frameworks. Additionally, the project will research Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP), ensuring they are fully adapted to the Georgian local context rather than merely transferred. The selection process for BAT/BEP will notably include social welfare and gender equality as specific criteria alongside technical feasibility. Subsequently, based on the conducted analytical work, the project team will draft a package of new legal acts and/or amendments. This legislative development will be highly participatory. The project team will ensure that gender-disaggregated findings from the baseline studies are translated into specific, binding provisions on gender-responsive measures. The consultation process will be held in two rounds: a first round will engage relevant state stakeholders, with proactive measures to ensure both male and female stakeholders are included, followed by a final, multi-stakeholder consultation to guarantee that input from non-state actors is collected and presented at the negotiation table. The validated package will then be formally submitted to the government for review.

45. In parallel, the project will develop nationally tailored technical guidelines for the ESM of mercury-containing waste. To ensure maximum accessibility and adoption, these guidelines will be produced in two distinct formats: (1) a comprehensive technical document for agencies and operators, and (2) a plain-language summary and visual, pictogram-based guides (as an annex) for non-technical, frontline staff.

46. Finally, a comprehensive institutional management modality will be developed, detailing the roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms for all relevant actors. Additionally, a rapid response mechanism for public reports of mercury spills will be developed, establishing a single point of contact for citizens to receive instructions and mandating a specific entity to provide timely collection and sound management of the resulting hazardous waste. This entire package of guidance and modalities will be validated through a multi-stakeholder process involving not only state bodies but also the direct stakeholders who will be affected by their implementation.

National legal and regulatory framework for Minamata Convention implementation developed informed by an evidence-based understanding of the full mercury lifecycle in the country.

Output 1.1.1: Baseline overview of the current legal and procedural frameworks related to the MC requirements on mercury/MAPs trade and mercury-containing waste management conducted.

Activity 1 [1.1.1.1]: Conduct a comparative analysis of the compliance of current national legislation with the obligations stipulated by the Minamata Convention (MC), concerning mercury waste and trade in mercury and mercury-containing products.

Activity 2 [1.1.1.2]: Review the existing institutional procedures for controlling the trade of mercury and mercury-added products (MAPs) and the management of mercury-containing waste, in relation to the requirements of the MC.

Output 1.1.2: <i>Technical study on the national consumption of the MAPs and the mercury-containing waste generation and disposal, revealing the current patterns, developed.</i>	Activity 1 [1.1.2.1]: Identify the mercury-added products (MAPs) imported into Georgia over the last 10 years, including their quantities, distribution patterns, key consuming entities, and relevant sectors. Activity 2 [1.1.2.2]: Confirm the availability of mercury-free alternatives for the identified products, considering their technical specifications, cost-effectiveness, and life-cycle impact. Activity 3 [1.1.2.3]: Identify the quantities of mercury-containing waste generated, the relevant sectors, and the specific generating entities, along with the current patterns for the handling and disposal of this waste.
Output 1.1.3: <i>Draft legal acts addressing MAPs and mercury-containing waste life-cycle management developed through a participatory process and submitted for Government review.</i>	Activity 1 [1.1.3.1]: Develop recommendations for a new package of regulatory measures (in the form of amendments to existing regulations or the development of new ones), based on the findings of the conducted reviews and research. Activity 2 [1.1.3.2]: Conduct the first round of consultations with relevant state stakeholders to discuss, revise, and validate the proposed legal measures. Activity 3 [1.1.3.3]: Draft new legal acts and/or amendments to existing national legislation and by-laws addressing the life-cycle management of mercury-added products (MAPs) and mercury waste, based on the results of the preceding consultations. Activity 4 [1.1.3.4]: Facilitate the final round of multi-stakeholder consultations on the draft legal acts to ensure their technical soundness, legal consistency, enforceability, and institutional support prior to official submission. Activity 5 [1.1.3.5]: Officially submit the developed legislative package for the government review and provide ad-hoc technical support throughout the process.

Output 1.1.4: Institutional management modality and comprehensive national technical guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of mercury-containing waste streams developed and validated through consultations with the relevant state and municipal agencies.

Activity 1 [1.1.4.1]: Research and analyze Best Available Techniques/Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) for the environmentally sound management of mercury-containing waste.

Activity 2 [1.1.4.2]: Develop nationally tailored technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of mercury-containing waste, based on the preceding analysis, to cover critical aspects such as segregation, safe handling, temporary storage, and final treatment.

Activity 3 [1.1.4.3]: Develop a comprehensive institutional management modality for the sound management of mercury waste, detailing the specific roles, responsibilities, mandates, and coordination mechanisms between state agencies, municipal authorities, and the private sector.

Activity 4 [1.1.4.4]: Formulate a standard operating procedure for public-reported mercury spills, assigning accountability and a response mandate to a designated state or municipal body, and outlining the official protocol for citizens to follow for safe containment and reporting.

Activity 5 [1.1.4.3]: Validate the developed guidance on environmentally sound management of mercury-containing waste through multi-stakeholder consultations.

Component 2: Implementation of an Integrated System for Mercury Waste Collection, Treatment, and Elimination

47. Component 2 is designed to operationalise the foundational frameworks established in Component 1. It focuses on the tangible implementation of mercury waste management through two primary pillars: the development of sustainable private sector capacity for mercury treatment and the execution of comprehensive, targeted collection and elimination programmes for existing mercury stockpiles.

48. The project will foster this local capacity by engaging the national private sector operators through an open and transparent partner identification process. This process will utilise transparent criteria to ensure a fair assessment of both large-scale companies and smaller operators, including those run by women or under-represented groups. These criteria will include - (1) current technical capacity and licensed hazardous waste operations as minimum requirement; (2) demonstrated OHS management systems and staff training records; (3) geographic location of facility relative to populated areas, water bodies and natural habitats; (4) financial and organisational stability; (5) openness to technology transfer and capacity expansion Following the partner selection, a thorough technology assessment will be conducted. This assessment will incorporate a full life-cycle review, evaluating energy consumption, secondary waste generation, maintenance requirements, and alignment with national Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP). The executing entity will ensure that an equipment is procured from reputable vendors with performance guarantees. The executing entity will also strictly govern a technology implementation process; a

mandatory, site-specific Environmental and Social (E&S) screening of the partner's facility, incorporating all necessary engineering controls, will be requisite before the pilot intervention is implemented. The partner's workers will be briefed on mercury exposure threats and symptoms, trained on safety protocols, and provided with relevant equipment as well. After installment, a pre-commissioning safety verification of treatment technology will take place, site-specific E&S and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) plans will be considered prior to commissioning, which will be overseen by a qualified expert, and a mandatory environmental monitoring system will be operational from the outset.

49. A parallel track involves the systematic collection of existing institutional mercury stockpiles. Based on the mapping from Component 1, a prioritised list of institutions holding mercury waste will be created. The prioritisation criteria will be multi-faceted, extending beyond mere quantity to include geographic equity, thereby ensuring remote and underserved regions are included, and the vulnerability of the surrounding population, such as proximity to schools or water bodies. A comprehensive operational plan will detail all logistics and safety protocols, mandating that all temporary collection points and the central storage site undergo site-specific E&S screening and are equipped with minimum engineering controls, including secure, controlled access, impermeable flooring, and dedicated mercury spill kits. A core collection team will receive intensive, specialized training that is practical in nature, utilizing plain-language, visual materials and requiring mandatory hands-on demonstrations of all safety procedures.

50. In addition to institutional collection, the project will pilot a public 'take-back' programme in selected municipalities. The accompanying public awareness campaign will be explicitly gender-responsive. It will utilise channels known to be effective for reaching women, such as social media groups, health clinic information, and school newsletters, with messaging tailored to resonate with their roles as family caregivers. To ensure public safety, campaign materials will include a dedicated, visual 'Safe Transport Guide' utilizing pictograms to instruct residents on the safe handling and transport of items like thermometers to the collection points. The operational plans for these public collection points will mandate the stringent safety controls, including the collection points' setup, dedicated protocols for handling broken items, incident resolution and reporting protocols, and worker and public safety protocols.

51. The final stage of this component addresses the consolidated management and elimination of all collected waste. All material will be managed at a central storage facility governed by a detailed Stockpile Management and Inventory Protocol. To prevent this facility from becoming a secondary pollution source, the project will implement a robust compliance monitoring and enforcement framework, including regular inspections and audits (temperature control, mercury vapour control, container integrity inspections, worker health checks, etc.). A comprehensive plan for final elimination will then be prepared, outlining two potential routes: (1) For export, the plan will require documented proof of the destination facility's environmental soundness and all necessary transboundary permits. (2) For local treatment, this option will only be approved after the new private sector technology established within the project is fully commissioned and formally verified as meeting BAT/BEP criteria. Full chain-of-custody documentation from central storage to confirmed final disposal will be retained by the project executing entity.

A national capacity for mercury waste treatment established through pilot initiative and technology transferred to a private sector partner.

Output 2.1.1 Technology and the best international practices of sound management of mercury-containing waste implemented

Activity 1 [2.1.1.1]: Identify and engage existing private sector waste management companies to assess their interest, current

<i>through the private sector partnership.</i>	capabilities, and potential for expanding services to mercury waste treatment. Activity 2 [2.1.1.2]: Assess technology requirements for a selected private sector partner, ensuring alignment with national needs, developed national ESM guidelines for MAPs' waste, and Basel Convention guidelines. Activity 3 [2.1.1.3]: Plan a pilot intervention with a selected waste management company willing to expand into mercury waste treatment, aimed at building its technical and technological capabilities. Activity 4 [2.1.1.4]: Assist the selected company in implementing the mercury-containing waste treatment technology, including subsidisation of the procurement of the necessary equipment.
<i>A national mercury collection & elimination programme implemented, significantly reducing immediate threats to public health and direct environmental burden of mercury.</i>	
<i>Output 2.2.1: A programme for the collection of mercury waste stockpiles and unwanted MAPs from prioritised institutions established and implemented.</i>	Activity 1 [2.2.1.1]: Based on the mapping exercise carried out within the activities 1.1.2.1 and 1.1.2.3, create the prioritised list of individual entities holding the MAPs and mercury-containing waste, with indication of the quantities. Activity 2 [2.2.1.2]: Conduct formal outreach to prioritized institutions identified in the mapping exercise, presenting the collection programme and scheduling collection dates. Activity 3 [2.2.1.3]: Develop a comprehensive operational plan (Institutional Collection Programme) for the collection, including detailed safety protocols, logistics, designation of temporary collection points (as needed) and a central temporary storage site, and specialized training for a core collection team. Activity 4 [2.2.1.4]: Assemble and deliver intensive, specialized training to a core collection team and institutional staff on all safety protocols and logistical procedures. Activity 5 [2.2.1.5]: Execute the scheduled collection drives at participating institutions, ensuring safe collection, packaging, and transportation of end-of-life and unwanted mercury-added products to the central temporary storage facility.
<i>Output 2.2.2: A pilot 'take-back' gender-responsive public campaign for household MAPs collection successfully executed in selected municipalities.</i>	Activity 1 [2.2.2.1]: Develop selection criteria for and select the pilot municipalities for the public take-back campaign, in consultation with national stakeholders. Activity 2 [2.2.2.2]: Develop a comprehensive operational plan for the pilot public 'take-back' campaign (Public Collection

	Programme) for selected municipalities, including detailed safety protocols, logistics, designation of temporary collection points and temporary storage site and designing relevant incentives. Activity 3 [2.2.2.3]: Launch a targeted public awareness campaign in the pilot municipalities to inform residents about the collection event, providing clear instructions and detailing the locations, times, and incentives. Activity 4 [2.2.2.4]: Execute the public 'take-back' programme in selected municipalities, ensuring safe collection, packaging, and transportation of household MAPs to the central temporary storage facility.
Output 2.2.3: All mercury-containing waste and MAPs collected during the project managed through environmentally sound final elimination, utilizing local capacities established within the project and/or ESM export routes	Activity 1 [2.2.3.1]: Manage the consolidated stockpile securely at the storage facility in preparation for its final elimination. Activity 2 [2.2.3.2]: Prepare a comprehensive plan for the environmentally sound final elimination of mercury-containing waste and MAPs collected during the project. Activity 3 [2.2.3.3]: Eliminate the collected MAPs/waste, locally and/or abroad, in accordance with the developed plan.

Component 3: Strengthening National Technical Capacities, Knowledge Management and Strategic Communication

52. Component 3 focuses on ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project's interventions by embedding new policies and practices into the operational fabric of state, private sector, and public life through targeted capacity building, specialized training, and broad-based public awareness. The project will first address institutional capacity within relevant state agencies. This involves a review of existing human resources and operations, which will be guided by a mandatory gender-disaggregated analysis of all HR and operational data. The resulting updated procedures and enforcement mechanisms will be designed to explicitly integrate these gender-responsive findings. Specialised training modules on the new legislation and enforcement procedures will then be delivered. To ensure efficacy, the project will mandate a gender-balanced and role-balanced participation list, proactively requesting that agencies nominate both male and female staff from leadership and frontline operational roles to guarantee that capacity is built with the personnel directly responsible for implementation. Importantly, the project will procure special detection equipment for several strategically selected customs clearance points. This will help personnel control the inflow of mercury-containing products, which currently represents one of the most significant technological capacity gaps.

53. Concurrently, the project will facilitate compliance within the private sector. A targeted dissemination plan will deliver information on phase-out timelines and alternatives to importers and distributors. This plan

will include a specific component to target small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and rural/regional retailers through municipal partnerships and plain-language formats, ensuring equitable access to information. Comprehensible guidelines for the environmentally sound management of mercury waste will be developed, incorporating specific protocols for tasks most often performed by women and addressing their distinct health risks. Crucially, these guidelines will be produced in two formats: a comprehensive technical document for management, and a plain-language, pictogram-based summary (as an annex) for non-technical, frontline staff. Technical training for these entities will follow a similar principle, with the project ensuring that participating companies nominate staff from both management and relevant frontline/operational roles.

54. Finally, the project will undertake broad public awareness and knowledge dissemination. A multi-channel public education campaign will be implemented, based on a stakeholder analysis to ensure a true multi-channel approach. This will supplement digital media with low-tech, high-reach channels (e.g., radio, television, printed materials in municipal service centres), all using simple, plain, and visual language. The campaign design will be explicitly gender-responsive, using imagery that reflects women as key actors and placing materials in channels known to have high engagement with women. All technical policy briefs documenting the project's outcomes will be accompanied by 1-2 page, plain-language visual summaries (infographics or fact sheets) for public dissemination. The policy-brief suite will include a dedicated Gender Lessons Learned and Best Practices Brief, capturing the project's experience in advancing gender equality, women's empowerment, and gender mainstreaming — covering, at a minimum, the dual-tier capacity-building design for the female-dominated frontline workforce, the gender-responsive features of the public take-back campaign, the integration of gender-differentiated occupational health risks into the new legal and regulatory framework, and the operational lessons in reaching women through accessible, time-sensitive dissemination channels. The project will conclude with a national-level final validation workshop, for which the invitation list will be designed to ensure balanced representation, thereby guaranteeing that the crucial on-the-ground perspectives of implementing partners (such as the private sector partner, municipalities, and civil society) are included.

The capacity of institutional and private sector entities for sound management of mercury enhanced, and awareness of mercury risks among the general public increased in a gender-sensitised manner.

Output 3.1.1: Institutional procedures updated and key staff in relevant state agencies trained with gender considerations to enable the enforcement of new mercury-related measures.

Activity 1 [3.1.1.1]: Review the existing human resources of relevant state agencies.

Activity 2 [3.1.1.2]: Based on the review results, develop updated procedures to incorporate enforcement mechanisms for the new regulatory and policy measures into the agencies' day-to-day operations.

Activity 3 [3.1.1.3]: Procure appropriate scanners for the customs authority to control inflow potentially mercury-containing products.

Activity 4 [3.1.1.4]: Develop and deliver specialised training modules for officials of relevant state agencies on the new legislative and policy measures and the updated procedures related to their enforcement.

Output 3.1.2: Affected private sector entities informed and trained with gender considerations, with a particular focus on SMEs, to facilitate their compliance with new mercury-related regulations.	Activity 1 [3.1.2.1]: Develop and disseminate targeted information packages and conduct informational briefings for importers, distributors, and retailers on the list of MAPs selected for phase-out/phase-down, relevant timelines, and identified mercury-free alternatives. Activity 2 [3.1.2.2]: Prepare and disseminate comprehensible guidelines for entities still keeping specific MAPs on the environmentally sound management of mercury waste, including technical guidance and a clear definition of their roles and responsibilities. Activity 3 [3.1.2.3]: Develop and deliver technical training programs for entities holding MAPs on the environmentally sound management of mercury waste
Output 3.1.3: Public awareness of mercury-related risks enhanced and project expertise institutionalized via strategic communication and knowledge management at national, regional and global levels.	Activity 1 [3.1.3.1]: Design and implement a strategic communication and education campaign to enhance public awareness of mercury-related risks throughout the whole course of the project, covering its health effects, pathways of exposure, including the common household sources, and guidance on responsible consumer behaviours. Activity 2 [3.1.3.2]: Develop a knowledge management framework to institutionalise project expertise, capture and disseminate lessons learned and successes in advancing gender equality and empowering women, including preparation of a repository of technical policy briefs and other communication materials documenting project successes, challenges overcome, innovative approaches, and replicable models. Activity 3 [3.1.3.3]: Organize a national-level final validation workshop to share experiences and outcomes with stakeholders, and disseminate findings.

STAKEHOLDERS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Stakeholder Engagement and Co-benefits

55. The project is fundamentally designed around a model of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and collaboration, which ensures relevant stakeholders actively contribute to developing and implementing new governance, infrastructure, and capacity systems. This active participation establishes national ownership and creates the essential socioeconomic co-benefits that guarantee the project's success. The project's theory of change posits that the primary Global Environmental Benefit (GEB) can only be achieved by first delivering these prerequisite co-benefits. Project sustainability is therefore rooted in ensuring that key stakeholders gain specific, measurable benefits that incentivize their continued engagement.

55b. The project's primary stakeholders whose direct involvement is essential include national regulatory and enforcement authorities; the private sector, including waste management companies, local SMEs in mercury-relevant sectors, and importers, distributors and retailers of mercury-added products; institutional consumers such as hospitals, laboratories, universities, schools and kindergartens; local municipal authorities and their waste service operators; and the general public, with particular attention to vulnerable groups including women, children, and informal waste-sector workers exposed to mercury through the municipal waste stream. The project engages these stakeholders through four tailored modalities — Co-production, Consultation, Coordination, and Exchange of Information — calibrated to each group's role. (by Co-production it is understood the collaborative development and execution of project outputs where stakeholders are actively involved in designing solutions (e.g., Private sector partner in Component 2, women's groups designing the take-back campaign).

56. *National Regulatory and Enforcement Authorities* — including agencies under MEPA, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Finance (Customs), the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth — will engage primarily through co-production and coordination. Their contribution covers the development and validation of new legal acts, technical guidelines, the institutional management modality, and enforcement protocols under Components 1 and 3. In return, their primary co-benefit is *strengthening national governance and institutional capacity*. This enables the precise fulfillment of Minamata Convention obligations, strengthens their legal authority, and, via specialised training, equips them with the practical means to implement and enforce the new framework. This governance benefit is the core mechanism for achieving the GEB, establishing a permanent, legally-binding system that moves the country from a one-time clean-up to systemic, sustained risk reduction. At least 1,000 civil servants employed in agencies of MEPA, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance are expected to benefit directly from the technical assistance and capacity building delivered under this engagement.

57. The private sector actors, specifically waste management companies, will be engaged through co-production. During the stakeholder mapping exercise the 58 waste management companies have been identified; the selected partner will be engaged through co-production within the pilot initiative under Component 2 — receiving a subsidised technology transfer, tailored technical capacity building, and potentially management responsibility for the consolidated stockpile. The corresponding co-benefit is the establishment of an economically viable mercury waste treatment business in a newly regulated hazardous waste sector, supported by the expertise needed to operate it. This proven market incentive is what sustains the treatment infrastructure beyond project funding. Up to 15-20 employees of the selected waste management partner are expected to benefit from the improved financial opportunities.

58. The second group of private sector companies, including small, medium and large importers, distributors, retailers affected by the new regulatory regime will be engaged mainly through consultation and information exchange modalities. Over 626 trade companies in mercury-relevant sectors and 63 pharmacy chains identified through the mapping; these actors will provide data on import and consumption patterns to inform the regulatory work under Component 1, receiving targeted briefings on the MAP phase-out and on mercury-free alternatives, and, in the case of pharmacies and selected retailers, serving as collection points or incentive providers within the public take-back programme under Component 2. Their co-benefits are a predictable regulatory environment that allows them to plan supply chains and inventory transitions in advance, the training and information needed to comply with the new rules, and — for those participating in the take-back — an opportunity to strengthen consumer-facing engagement; at least 350 employees in this group are expected to benefit directly from the information and capacity building delivered.

58b. Institutional Consumers of MAPs - hospitals, laboratories, kindergartens, schools and universities - will engage through consultation and exchange of information. The mapping identified 168 hospitals and 191 public kindergartens (a Tbilisi-based sample, with the national totals substantially higher), 39 universities, and more than 2,295 schools. These institutions will share data on stockpiles and current disposal practices, host institutional collection events

under Component 2, and nominate staff for specialised ESM training under Component 3. They derive two co-benefits: the physical removal of legacy mercury liabilities from their premises, and the upskilling of their predominantly female frontline workforce in safe handling, segregation, and spill response. This is critical as it ensures the new regulatory framework is practical and enforceable. At least 100 high-risk employees of selected MAP-holder entities (hospitals, universities, schools, laboratories) — predominantly women — are expected to benefit directly from increased capacity and reduced risk of mercury exposure, alongside at least 500 high-risk institutional staff (350 women and 150 men) reached through the broader training programme.

59. Local Municipal Authorities, Civil Society Groups and Media play complementary roles in the public-facing components. Of the 69 municipalities outside Tbilisi mapped, those selected for the pilot will be engaged through coordination and co-production — they will co-plan and contribute to the execution of the household take-back campaigns under Component 2; the co-benefit is a local public health improvement, increased environmental awareness of residents, and enhanced municipal capacity for handling hazardous waste streams that municipalities currently lack the resources to manage. Civil society groups — 25 environmental NGOs, 119 women's NGOs and 39 health NGOs identified through the mapping — will be engaged primarily under Component 3 and, in the case of women's and youth NGOs, also under Component 2, through exchange of information complemented by consultation. Specifically, CSOs will support the dissemination of the multi-channel public awareness campaign and project knowledge products under Output 3.1.3, contribute to outreach to the predominantly female workforce in healthcare and education under Output 3.1.2, support the design and roll-out of the gender-responsive public take-back campaign in the pilot municipalities under Output 2.2.2, and be invited to the final multi-stakeholder consultation on the draft legislative package (Activity 1.1.3.4) and the national validation workshop (Activity 3.1.3.3). Their engagement will be most intensive in project years 2–4, aligned with the awareness campaign, the pilot take-back campaign, and the dissemination of final knowledge products. In return, CSOs benefit from enhanced technical knowledge and a strengthened advocacy role on mercury-related environmental and public health policy. It is also noted that the project's Executing Entity, the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC), is itself a CSO. The 96 mapped media outlets will be engaged via information exchange modality as well; the project will utilise these channels for reaching various demographics. The pilot municipalities will engage approximately 9,600 households corresponding to roughly 32,640 individuals at the Georgian average household size of 3.4 persons, with 52% women and 48% men, benefiting from the safe removal of mercury-added products from their homes through the public take-back campaign. Additionally, the awareness campaign delivered through civil society networks and the mapped 96 media outlets is projected to reach at least 1,000,000 civilians nationwide.

60. Finally, the General Public and Vulnerable Groups, particularly women and children, will contribute through information exchange and, partially co-production, as they will directly participate in the 'take-back' programmes and engage in the public awareness campaigns. The co-benefit is a measurable reduction in mercury exposure risk in homes and communities. The gender analysis reveals women are disproportionately at risk, acting as *de facto* first responders to mercury spills and forming the vast majority of the workforce in high-risk sectors. By designing gender-responsive frameworks, providing tailored OHS training directly to this frontline female workforce, and empowering women as primary household managers through awareness campaigns, the project directly addresses this systemic health inequality. This behavioural change is a prerequisite for managing the diffuse household stockpile, creating the public 'buy-in' and participation necessary for the collection programmes to succeed. Across Georgia, indirectly, at least 1,000,000 civilians aged 18–65 (51% women, 49% men) are expected to benefit from the developed procedural frameworks and from the resulting reduction of mercury releases into the environment, with women - as the population disproportionately exposed in both domestic and occupational settings - being the principal beneficiaries of the gender-responsive design.

Gender-related Aspects

61. The project recognises that mercury exposure risks are differentiated by gender due to distinct social roles, occupational demographics, and exposure pathways within the Georgian context. Women represent 51% of the national population aged 18-65 and are disproportionately concentrated in high-risk professional sectors. Namely, they constitute 74% of the healthcare workforce and approximately 82% of the total staff in the education sector. These demographics indicate that women bear the primary occupational burden of handling and disposing of mercury-added products, yet they frequently lack access to specialised technical training that is often directed toward male-dominated managerial or facility maintenance roles. Furthermore, in the domestic sphere, women's roles as primary caregivers and managers of household waste increase their vulnerability to toxic mercury vapour resulting from accidental breakages within the home.

62. The project design addresses and mainstreams these gender considerations across all three components; specifically, the project will ensure that all technical studies collect sex-disaggregated data and that draft legal acts incorporate mandatory gender-responsive language to protect vulnerable workforces. To dismantle existing barriers to technical expertise that the project's female audience is facing, the project will produce technical guidelines in accessible formats and language. Recognising that the project's gender-mainstreaming experience itself constitutes a public good, the project will codify its lessons learned and best practices on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in a dedicated Gender Lessons Learned and Best Practices document (under Output 3.1.3), and will disseminate it widely through dedicated gender-relevant channels in addition to the project's general dissemination routes. Awareness-raising and collection activities will be specifically tailored to reach women as key agents of change in household waste management by utilising accessible local channels and considering time-poverty constraints. These measures, which are further delineated within the Gender Action Plan (Annex H) of the project, ensure that the project delivers equitable socio-economic benefits and fosters the behavioural shifts required to achieve sustained global environmental benefits.

Knowledge Management and Learning

63. This project treats knowledge management not as a separate activity, but as a central pillar integrated into its design, aligning with the GEF's core objectives to inform policy dialogues and improve the impact of interventions. The methodology is structured to systematically identify, capture, synthesise, and disseminate knowledge at different levels, with gender equality, women's empowerment, and gender mainstreaming treated as a cross-cutting strand of the knowledge cycle: every project knowledge product will record, where applicable, the gender-related lessons learned and best practices that emerged during its production or use. The methodology is structured to systematically identify, capture, synthesise, and disseminate knowledge at different levels. All technical knowledge products generated will adhere to an open-access approach, ensuring broad usability and uptake by national policymakers, municipal authorities, private sector operators, the general public, and the global community through the Minamata Convention.

64. The project will first generate a comprehensive evidence base on the full mercury lifecycle in Georgia, which is currently absent. This foundational work will produce a comprehensive Legal Gap Analysis against Minamata Convention obligations, a suite of technical baseline studies providing the first national, gender-disaggregated data on MAPs imports, consumption, and waste patterns, and a critical analysis adapting global Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP) to the specific Georgian context. This evidence will be directly translated into high-level policy and technical knowledge products, principally the draft Legislative Package to be submitted to the government and the new National ESM Technical Guidelines. These guidelines will be produced in two distinct formats: a comprehensive technical

document for agencies and operators, and a plain-language, visual, pictogram-based guide for non-technical, frontline staff, thereby ensuring accessibility and practical uptake.

65. Beyond foundational frameworks, the project will meticulously capture and codify the practical, operational knowledge generated from its pilot interventions. The process of establishing the private sector partnership for mercury treatment will be fully documented, producing a Technology Assessment Report, site-specific Environmental and Social (E&S) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) plans, and formal Commissioning Reports. These documents will serve as a transparent and replicable model for future public-private partnerships in the hazardous waste sector. Furthermore, the project will develop a suite of detailed, replicable operational models for the collection programmes. These will include the Operational Plan for Institutional Collection, the Operational Plan for the Public 'Take-Back' Campaign, and the Stockpile Management and Inventory Protocol. These products will capture critical, on-the-ground lessons in logistics, risk management, public engagement, and safety protocols, forming an essential 'how-to' guide for scaling and replicating the collection programme model nationally.

65b. Alongside the technical and operational products, the project will produce a Gender Lessons Learned and Best Practices document, codifying the practical, operational knowledge generated by the project in advancing gender equality, women's empowerment, and gender mainstreaming. This will document, on the basis of evidence collected throughout implementation: (i) what worked, what did not, and why, in delivering the gender-responsive capacity-building design; (ii) operational lessons in designing and executing the gender-responsive public take-back campaigns, including channel selection, message-testing with women's groups, and accommodation of women's time-poverty constraints; (iii) the process and outcome of integrating gender-differentiated occupational and domestic health risks into the new national legal and regulatory framework; and (iv) the participation patterns of women in the project's consultation, validation, and training events, with adaptive-management responses to under-representation. This brief will form a transparent and replicable model for gender mainstreaming in future hazardous chemicals and waste projects in Georgia, the broader Caucasus, and the Minamata Convention community.

66. Finally, Component 3 is dedicated to ensuring the active dissemination, uptake, and long-term embedding of this knowledge. For institutional and private sector stakeholders, knowledge will be directly integrated into practice through specialised training modules focused on enforcement and compliance. For the general public, technical information on risks will be translated into a multi-channel, gender-responsive awareness campaign and practical tools. To inform policy at the national and global levels, the project's findings will be synthesised into accessible Policy Briefs, each accompanied by plain-language visual summaries, such as infographics, for broad dissemination. This ensures that the project's lessons contribute directly to the Minamata Convention's global knowledge base. The project's learning cycle will culminate in a national-level final validation workshop, designed to ensure balanced representation from all stakeholders, including government, the private partner, rural municipalities, and civil society, to validate outcomes and facilitate a comprehensive review of the lessons learned.

Generating Global Environmental Benefits

67. In the baseline scenario, without GEF intervention, Georgia would continue its trajectory of releasing an estimated 1.6 tonnes of mercury annually from the MAPs sector. There are no existing national drivers or financial mechanisms sufficient to overcome the complex, interlocking barriers of weak and fragmented legal-regulatory framework, lack of infrastructure, low capacity and public awareness and disproportionate gender-differentiated health risks. The status quo of uncontrolled mercury release and its associated threats to human health and global ecosystems would persist indefinitely.

68. The GEF investment is therefore catalytic. It enables the foundational work that the government currently lacks the dedicated resources to undertake. In particular, the legal and policy framework developed within the project will ensure the creation of a mandatory management system for end-of-life mercury-added products. This system does not currently exist, and its absence results in the annual release of 1.6 tonnes of mercury into the environment due to non-environmentally sound disposal methods.

69. Therefore, the legal framework, policy, and management modalities established by the project will prevent the release of mercury into the environment through this pathway.

70. Based on this logic, the project strives to achieve a reduction of 1.25 tonnes of emitted mercury annually - i.e. 2.5 tonnes of avoided release throughout the project lifecycle.

71. Additionally, the project will ensure control over the inflow of potentially mercury-containing products, which total an average of 55 tonnes annually (identified through HS-code based customs analysis), effectively preventing the entry of approximately 5.5 tonnes of mercury-containing products per year (i.e. 11 tonnes over project years 3 and 4). Furthermore, the project will ensure the elimination of 100 to 1,000 kilograms of mercury-containing products, which will be collected through institutional and public take-back collection programmes.

Innovation and Scaling Up

72. The project is inherently transformative for Georgia as it establishes an entire management system from the ground up. The most innovative element is the partnership model for transferring waste treatment technology. This approach creates a sustainable, in-country solution that can be scaled up. The initial pilot facility will serve as a national and potentially regional hub. Once the model is proven and the regulatory demand is established, the pioneering company or other market entrants can expand capacity to meet the full national need. The legal and regulatory framework developed is, by its nature, nationally scalable. The public awareness strategies and collection models piloted in selected municipalities can be readily replicated across the entire country, creating a pathway for a comprehensive, nationwide phase-out and sound management system for all mercury waste.

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this project, including financial management and procurement. If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

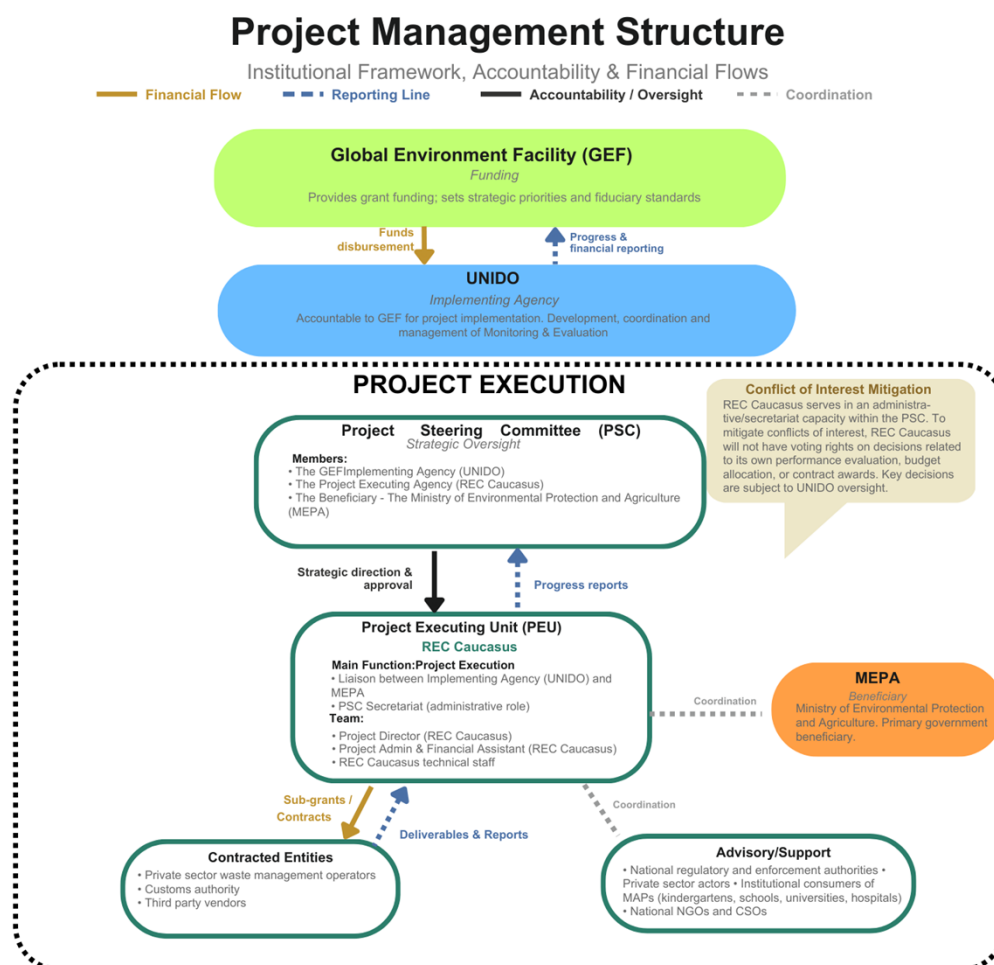
73. The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus) has been designated by the Recipient Government (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia - MEPA) as the Project Executing Agency. UNIDO will be the GEF Implementing Agency (IA) for the project. A task manager will be appointed to oversee the implementation of the project, assisted by a support staff. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA) will be the beneficiary of the project. REC Caucasus, with technical competence and administrative preparedness for entering into delivery-based contracts, will serve as the project Executing Entity (PEE).

74. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established by the MEPA and chaired by the representative of the MEPA. REC Caucasus will perform tasks of secretariat for the PSC. Along with the representatives of the MEPA, the PSC will be composed of the representatives from relevant line ministries and agencies, and

municipalities. The PSC will hold meetings at least twice a year, but additional meetings can be held if necessary. The PSC should make necessary decisions/recommendations in accordance with the rules and regulations of UNIDO and the GEF. UNIDO will be a member of the Project Steering Committee, participating in an advisory capacity, without exercising voting rights. All decisions adopted by the Project Steering Committee shall remain subject to UNIDO's non-objection decision, exercised in its capacity as the Implementing Agency responsible for project supervision and oversight, in accordance with UNIDO's applicable rules, policies, and procedures..

75. As may be required on specific issues, an advisory (ad hoc) group can be formed to offer any other guidance or expertise as required by the specific agenda of the PSC. Figure 2 presents the institutional structure with major stakeholders of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. The project will ensure good coordination with on-going GEF-financed and non-GEF initiatives being implemented by UNIDO and by other GEF international agencies.

Figure 2: Project management Structure



76. Legal clause - The Government of Georgia agrees to apply to the present project, mutatis mutandis, the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government, signed and entered into force on 1 July 1994.

77. Transfer of assets - Full or partial ownership of equipment/assets purchased under the project may be transferred to national counterparts and/or project beneficiaries during the project implementation as deemed appropriate by the government counterpart, in consultation with the UNIDO Project Manager.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

No, UNIDO as IA will not play an execution role.

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

78. The project will build on the results of the “Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) in Georgia” (GEF ID 5859). At the same time, a number of ongoing projects and initiatives in Georgia contribute to the project outcomes and outputs. Opportunities for collaboration and alignment with the following projects and strategies were explored at PPG phase.

79. Currently, the Regional Environmental Centre for Caucasus (RECC) is executing the UNIDO implemented GEF funded projects: 'Reduction of industrial persistent organic pollutant chemicals in manufacturing and recycling sectors through life-cycle approaches in Georgia' (GEF ID 11005; SAP: 220012); 'PCB-Free Electricity Distribution in Georgia' (GEF ID 9227; UNIDO Project ID 150214). The project will collaborate with these initiatives to maximize synergies. Coordination will focus on harmonizing life-cycle management approaches for mercury-added products (MAPs) and POPs-containing waste, ensuring a coherent national hazardous substance control strategy. Furthermore, the project will leverage communication channels and expertise from the POPs portfolio for awareness-raising campaigns targeting businesses and industrial stakeholders. Finally, partnerships and lessons in waste management technology transfer and private sector engagement from the PCB project will be utilized for establishing mercury waste treatment capacity under Component 2.

80. Furthermore, RECC is the Implementing Partner for the Minamata Specific International Programme (SIP) project 'Empowering National Capacities and Knowledge Management for Minamata Convention Compliance'. This direct institutional link is crucial for achieving comprehensive national compliance, as the SIP project is specifically focused on establishing the framework for controlling mercury emissions and releases from industrial and incineration processes (Minamata Articles 8 & 9), while the IGNITE project concentrates exclusively on the MAPs lifecycle (trade, collection, and waste management). This complementary approach ensures that both major sources of mercury contamination identified within the MIA (2017) are addressed without duplication, facilitating a unified legislative and regulatory environment.

Core Indicators

Indicator 9 Chemicals of global concern and their waste reduced

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
0.00	2.50	0.00	0.00

Indicator 9.1 Solid and liquid Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) removed or disposed (POPs type)

POPs type	Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
-----------	-------------------------------	---	-------------------------------	------------------------------

Indicator 9.2 Quantity of mercury reduced (metric tons)

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
	2.50		

Indicator 9.3 Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) Reduced/Phased out (metric tons)

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.4 Number of countries with legislation and policy implemented to control chemicals and waste (Use this sub-indicator in addition to one of the sub-indicators 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.5 Number of low-chemical/non-chemical systems implemented, particularly in food production, manufacturing and cities (Use this sub-indicator in addition to one of the sub-indicators 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.6 POPs/Mercury containing materials and products directly avoided

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
	11.00		

Indicator 9.7 Highly Hazardous Pesticides eliminated

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.8 Avoided residual plastic waste

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female		17,105		
Male		17,000		
Total	0	34,105	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Indicator 9.2 — Quantity of mercury reduced (2.5 metric tonnes): The baseline estimate is 1.6 tonnes of mercury released annually from the MAPs sector under the status quo, where no mandatory end-of-life management system exists; The project's legal, policy, and management framework will establish such a system, preventing release through non-environmentally sound disposal pathways. Applying this logic, the project targets an annual reduction of 1.25 tonnes of mercury emissions, yielding 2.5 tonnes of avoided release across the project lifecycle.

Indicator 9.6 — POPs/Mercury-containing materials and products directly avoided (11 metric tonnes, plus 0.1–1 tonne eliminated): HS-code-based customs analysis identified an average of 55 tonnes of potentially mercury-containing products entering Georgia annually. Through import controls established by the project, approximately 5.5 tonnes per year (10% of inflow) will be prevented from entering, totalling 11 tonnes. An additional 0.1–1 tonne of mercury-containing products will be directly eliminated through institutional and public take-back collection programmes.

Indicator 11 — People benefiting (34,105): Beneficiary counts are built bottom-up from defined target groups: 1,000 civil servants; 15–20 private sector waste management employees; 100 high-risk MAPs-holder staff; 350 importer/distributor/retailer employees; and approximately 32,640 individuals across 9,600 households in 5 pilot municipalities (using Georgia's average household size of 3.4), reached through the public take-back campaign.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
--	--------	---

CONTEXT

Climate	Low	The project is not highly sensitive to climate events, as interventions primarily involve policy (Component 1), capacity building and awareness raising (Components 2 & 3). Standard operational procedures will address any minor weather-related disruptions to collection schedules during pilot execution.
Environmental and Social	Moderate	Risk: Project's physical activities, including the installation and operation of the treatment technology, the collection and ADR-compliant transport of waste, and the management of the central storage facility and public-facing collection points, cause environmental pollution with mercury. Mitigation: This risk will be managed through a prevention and control approach, founded on prevention through planning, which mandates that no physical work can begin until a site-specific E&S screening and a detailed operational plan have been formally approved by the Executing Entity (RECC). These plans must include BAT/BEP-compliant technology and site-selection, engineering controls for all collection/storage sites, ADR-compliant vehicles, certified drivers and the UN-compliant containers. More detailed measures are provided within the ESMP document.
Political and Governance	Moderate	Risk: The legislative process faces delays, conflict of interest, or shifts in ministerial priorities, which hinders the project's ability to generate sufficient interest in either private sector or representatives of the relevant state agencies, as well as in general public, towards the capacity building and awareness raising activities regarding the sound management of mercury-containing waste, implementation of mercury treatment technology or participation and cooperation in collection events. Mitigation: The risk mitigation measure is weaved into the project design; specifically, under the output 1.3 there is a dedicated set of activities devoted to advocacy, state stakeholder 'buy-in' and achieving the agreed-upon vision, essential for swift advancement of the regulatory process. Thus, the project team will conduct continuous high-level engagement, facilitate cross-ministerial coordination, and ensure the legislative package is developed through a broad participatory process to secure strong, lasting political and institutional buy-in. Additionally, it is observable that political will is anchored by Georgia's recent ratification of the Minamata Convention.

INNOVATION

Institutional and Policy	Moderate	Risk: As a framework with no domestic precedent, the institutional management modality for the MAPs lifecycle carries innovation-specific risks: contested allocation of mandates, untested inter-institutional coordination, and unclear ownership of newly created functions such as the rapid response mechanism for mercury spills. Mitigation: The framework is co-produced with relevant state and municipal agencies through multi-stakeholder consultations under Output 1.1.4, validating mandates before adoption. Component 3 then embeds the agreed roles into updated agency procedures
--------------------------	----------	--

Technological	Moderate	Risk: Technical failure or insufficient capacity of the new mercury waste treatment technology piloted through the private sector partnership (Component 2), as the solution is new to the Georgian context. Mitigation: The technology transfer is supported by an initial subsidy to de-risk the investment and is preceded by BAT/BEP analysis, careful analysis of a Partner's technology needs and environmental and social impact assessments, to ensure the most robust, proven international practices are adopted. The pilot nature allows for adaptive management before scale-up.
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	Risk: Business model for an integrated mercury waste treatment system in existing waste management company (Component 2) fails to become financially self-sustaining after project completion, possibly due to low demand or unfavorable tariffs. Mitigation: The selection of the business model and technology will be preceded by the development of a detailed business case (as per Activity 2.1.1.2) to assess its financial viability. The regulatory framework developed in Component 1 will lead to market demand (i.e., by enforcing proper disposal) which anchors the business case. Besides, the project provides upfront support (subsidy) to lower the initial capital investment barrier for the private partner, enhancing long-term viability.

EXECUTION

Capacity	Low	Designated executing entity has relevant experience in projects execution, both at national level in Georgia and in the region. The HACT assessment conducted under the lead of UNOPS concluded low risk therefore standard mitigation measures will be put in place
Fiduciary	Low	Risk: Failure in ensuring full transparency, accountability, and clear separation of functions throughout the procurement process. Mitigation: All financial management and procurement procedures will be executed in full compliance with both RECC's established internal policies and the GEF/UNIDO Minimum Fiduciary Standards, and will be subject to the project's regular internal and external audits.
Stakeholder	Moderate	Risk: Stakeholders are unwilling to accept the regulatory and legal frameworks developed by the project. Mitigation: The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and Gender Action Plan (GAP) define the mechanisms for equitable management of stakeholders. Importantly, the SEP moves beyond simple consultation to 'Co-production.' The project actively mitigates resistance by involving state and private sector actors in the design of the new legal and regulatory frameworks, ensuring the new rules are practical and feasible. The potentially low level of public participation is mitigated by preliminary information campaigns.

Other		
-------	--	--

Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	The overarching risk to this project is moderate. Close monitoring of the identified risks and effective implementation of mitigation measures will ensure that the risks do not adversely impact the success and durability of the project.
---------------------	----------	--

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

81. The proposed intervention is fully aligned with the GEF-8 Programming Directions, specifically the Chemicals and Waste Focal Area Strategy (CWFA), contributing to the GEF-8 overarching goal of achieving systems-level transformation under the Healthy Planet, Healthy People framework.

The project addresses the Minamata Convention, directly matching the strategic pillars of the GEF CWFA:

Objective 1: Creation, strengthening, and supporting the enabling environment and policy coherence to transform the manufacture, use, and sound management of chemicals and to eliminate waste and chemical pollution. This is addressed by Component 1, which establishes the legal and regulatory framework needed for compliance and MAP lifecycle management in Georgia.

Objective 2: Prevention of future buildup of hazardous chemicals and waste in the environment, achieved by efforts of Component 1, focusing on the implementation of an integrated system for mercury waste collection, treatment, and elimination, and is further supported by Component 3, which strengthens national capacity for enforcing new regulations and raising public awareness..

Objective 3: Elimination of hazardous chemicals and waste, met through the transfer of treatment technology to a private sector partner and the systematic collection and safe elimination of existing legacy MAP stockpiles (Component 2).

The GEF-8 programming strategy mandates the inclusion of contributions to the Global Biodiversity Framework, demonstrating the interlinkages between environmental focal areas. Although primarily a CW project, the elimination of mercury directly generates global environmental benefits for nature and human health, contributing to Target 7: Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and human health, including by reducing nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, and pesticides by at least two thirds and eliminating the discharge of plastic waste. The project prevents the release of an estimated 2.5 tonnes of mercury within the two years of project from MAPs and associated waste (a potent neurotoxin), directly reducing chemical pollution to levels less harmful to ecosystem functions, biodiversity, and human health.

82. The project aligns seamlessly with Georgia's core national priorities, advancing three mutually reinforcing instruments. First, it directly delivers Georgia's obligations under the Minamata Convention, by addressing the country's second-largest source of mercury release: mercury-added products and their associated waste. Project outputs map onto Convention Articles 4 (MAPs), 10 (storage), 11 (waste), 17–18 (awareness and information) and 21 (reporting). Second, it implements priority Actions of the National Waste Management Strategy 2016–2030 and Action Plan 2022–2026, particularly Objective 10 (Improvement of hazardous waste management) and its Targets 10.1, 10.2 and 10.4. Third, the project advances chemicals management priorities of the Fourth National Environmental Action Programme (NEAP-4, 2022–2026), which incorporates Minamata Convention compliance into Georgia's principal environmental policy framework. At the regional level, the project supports Georgia's environmental approximation commitments under the EU–Georgia Association Agreement (Title V, Chapter 3; Annex XXVI), in particular alignment with Directive 2008/98/EC on waste and Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on mercury, and reinforces synergies with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to which Georgia is a Party.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Yes

If the project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Yes

2) Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement.

Yes

Select what role civil society will play in the project:

Consulted only; Yes

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor;

Co-financier; Yes

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body;

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Medium/Moderate		

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted.

Yes

Benefits

Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, as appropriate and these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environmental benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF, SCCF). This section identifies the direct beneficiaries from the project.

83. The IGNITE project is designed to generate significant, durable socioeconomic benefits that are *pre-requisites* for achieving primary Global Environmental Benefit (GEB). The project's theory of change posits that the GEB of preventing 2.5 metric tonnes of mercury release and eliminating at least 5 tonnes of mercury-

containing waste within the project duration can only be achieved and sustained by first delivering a core set of socioeconomic co-benefits at the national and local levels. These benefits create the institutional and public 'buy-in,' technical capacity, and economic incentives necessary for the sound management of mercury to continue long after the project's completion.

National Socioeconomic Benefits

84. The project's primary national socioeconomic benefits are achieved by transforming the national framework for hazardous waste management. This transformation begins with the establishment of a new, economically viable hazardous waste sector. By subsidising the transfer of specialised technology and building the technical capacity of a private sector partner, the project directly establishes a viable, sustainable business model. This economic co-benefit is a prerequisite for achieving the GEB; without a financially self-sustaining local partner, the system for collection and treatment would be compromised once project funding ceases. While the project's elimination of the legacy stockpile would prevent a full return to the 1.6 tonne baseline, the lack of a viable national partner for processing *newly generated* waste would create a capacity gap. This gap, even if a national legal obligation for sound disposal existed without the practical, institutional means to fulfil it, would serve as a significant disincentive for sustained national compliance. This benefit ensures the long-term durability of the GEB.

85 This aforementioned new economic sector in itself is enabled by strengthened national governance and institutional capacity. The project delivers this major governance benefit by developing and facilitating the adoption of a robust, gender-responsive legal and regulatory framework (Component 1) and providing the specialised training for state agencies (MEPA, Customs, Ministry of Health) to implement and enforce it. This strengthened capacity is the mechanism for achieving the GEB, as the new, enforced regulations are what curtail the uncontrolled import and disposal of MAPs. This governance benefit allows the project to move from a one-time clean-up to a permanent, systemic reduction of mercury releases.

86. Collectively, these interventions result in enhanced OHS (Occupational Health Safety) standards. The project establishes new, formal Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) protocols. Institutional compliance will be driven primarily by the new legal and policy requirements, whereas the project's provision of specialised OHS training and clear guidelines will serve as a critical *enabling* benefit. It equips institutions with the necessary tools and knowledge to protect their staff and meet their new legal obligations, thereby ensuring that the regulatory framework is practical, enforceable, and sustainable. This co-benefit is a prerequisite for the GEB, as it ensures that the new legal framework (the primary mechanism for the GEB) is not just a theoretical obligation but an enforceable system. By equipping institutions with the OHS tools to comply, the project ensures the long-term, systemic reduction of mercury releases.

87. A significant socioeconomic co-benefit of the project is the gender-sensitive enhancement of the national public health, which is achieved by mitigating largely disproportionate health risks. As revealed through the gender analysis, women are the *de facto* first responders to mercury spills in both domestic and institutional settings. They form the vast majority of the workforce in high-risk sectors, such as healthcare (74% women) and education (82% women), and also serve as the primary household managers. This exposes them to a significantly higher and often unrecognised risk of mercury exposure. By designing gender-responsive frameworks, providing tailored OHS training directly to this frontline female workforce, and empowering women as key actors in awareness campaigns, the project directly addresses this systemic inequality. This approach not only mitigates important public health risk and protects a vulnerable population but also

promotes gender equality by formally recognising and mitigating a disproportionate, gender-based occupational and domestic health hazard. This co-benefit is a critical prerequisite for the GEB, as these female-dominated sectors are the primary *source* of the mercury waste stockpile. By empowering and training the frontline staff who manage this waste, the project ensures that the waste is safely segregated and collected, which is the essential first step for its final elimination (the GEB).

88. Finally, the project will deliver a crucial social co-benefit in the form of reformed public and institutional norms and behavioural change. This change is achieved on two distinct levels: (1) Institutional Behaviour: At the institutional level, the project's new OHS protocols and technical training are designed to shift the day-to-day behaviours of staff in high-risk sectors. This is particularly relevant for the female-dominated frontline workforce (nurses, cleaners, teachers) who will be empowered with new, safe procedures for waste segregation and spill response. (2) Consumer Behaviour: At the consumer level, the project's intensive, multi-channel public awareness campaigns are designed to shift household norms. The current baseline is one of low awareness; this co-benefit is achieved by instilling a widespread understanding of mercury risks. This is a gender-responsive intervention, as women are the primary decision-makers for household purchases and domestic waste management. These behavioural changes are prerequisites for the GEB, as the diffuse household stockpile cannot be managed by regulation alone. By empowering women with clear, actionable guidance, their decisions to choose mercury-free products and their awareness in handling waste become critical factors in reducing mercury releases into the environment, creating the 'buy-in' and participation necessary for the collection programmes to succeed.

Local Socioeconomic Benefits

89. At the local level, the project's socioeconomic benefits are tangible, immediate, and geographically specific to the direct project beneficiaries. While the national benefits are systemic and policy-oriented, the local benefits are focused on direct, on-the-ground interventions. The most immediate local benefit is the direct reduction of health risks within specific communities and institutions. Through the collection programmes, the project will physically remove accumulated legacy stockpiles of mercury from *prioritised, high-risk community institutions* (such as specific hospitals, clinics, schools, and universities) and from households within the *selected pilot municipalities*. This action delivers a highly localised public health benefit by eliminating a direct source of potential mercury exposure for the staff, patients, students, and families in those specific locations. This action is the most direct translation possible: the local socioeconomic benefit (removing a toxic health hazard from a specific school) *is* the GEB (that same mercury is now captured and prevented from entering the local soil, water, and air).

90. This physical removal is paired with the targeted capacity building and empowerment of local-level stakeholders. Unlike the high-level institutional capacity built at the national level, this benefit is about empowering the local, frontline workforce. The project will provide specialised, gender-sensitive training on safe mercury handling and spill response directly to the staff *within the participating institutions* (e.g., nurses, janitorial staff, and teachers in the female-dominated healthcare and education sectors). Simultaneously, the pilot public awareness campaigns will empower residents *within those specific municipalities*, especially women as primary household managers, with the practical knowledge needed to protect their families. This localized social co-benefit is an essential prerequisite for the GEB. The national stockpile is diffuse, existing in thousands of individual locations, and is uncontrollable by national law alone. By empowering local actors and changing public behaviour at the source, the project ensures that mercury waste is properly segregated, making its collection and eventual elimination (the GEB) feasible.

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional / Global	Focal Area	Programm ing of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
UNIDO	GET	Georgia	Chemicals and Waste	Mercury	Grant	3,000,000.0 0	285,000 .00	3,285,000.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						3,000,000.0 0	285,000 .00	3,285,000.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

50000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

4750

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional / Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
UNIDO	GET	Georgia	Chemical s and Waste	Mercury	50,000.00	4,750.00	54,750.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)					50,000.00	4,750.00	54,750.00

Please provide justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
Total GEF Resources (\$)					0.00

Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
CW-2	GET	3,000,000.00	15,726,350.00
Total Project Cost (\$)		3,000,000.00	15,726,350.00

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Civil Society Organization	Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,439,350.00
Civil Society Organization	Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,187,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Wasteless	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,020,000.00
Private Sector	MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY LLC	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6,030,000.00
GEF Agency	UNIDO	Grant	Investment mobilized	50,000.00
Total Co-financing (\$)				15,726,350.00

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	2/17/2026	Ganna Onysko, Senior External Relations Officer	00431260263647	g.onysko@unido.org
Project Coordinator	2/17/2026	Rodica Ella Ivan, Industrial Development Officer	00431260265085	r.ivan@unido.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (Month, day, year)
Nino Tkhlava	Head of Environment and Climate Change Policy Department	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	10/10/2025

ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document.

Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification
Project Objective: To systematically reduce the threats posed by mercury-added products (MAPs) and the associated waste to health of female and male residents, and environment in Georgia.			
Indicator 1: GEF Core Indicator 9 Chemicals of global concern and their waste reduced <i>9.2 Quantity of mercury reduced</i> <i>9.6 POPs/Mercury containing materials and products directly avoided (in metric</i>	0 tonnes of mercury release reduced 0 tonnes of mercury waste collected and managed in an ESM manner	At least 2.5 tonnes of total avoided mercury release, derived from a 1.25 t/year reduction (80% of the 1.6 t/year baseline release from unsound disposal of mercury-containing products) achieved during project years 3 and 4.	- Technical study estimates on annual release and their major sectoral sources. - Official inventory logs from the central temporary storage facility. - Final elimination plan and corresponding reports.

Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification
tonnes)		At least 11 tonnes total volume of (1) prevented import of mercury-containing products, derived from a 5.5 t/year prevention (10% of the 55 t/year baseline annual import of potentially mercury-containing products) achieved during project years 3 and 4, and (2) 0.1-1 tonnes of legacy mercury-containing products collected through institutional and public take-back programmes consolidated, and prepared for final elimination.	- Customs data for measuring reduction in mercury containing-products imports.
Indicator 2: GEF Core Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments <i>Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment</i>	0 individuals	At least 1000 civil servants , employed in agencies of MEPA, MoH, Ministry of Finance, benefitting from the received technical assistance (20% women, 80% men) Up to 15-20 employees of the selected private sector waste management partner, benefitting from the improved financial opportunities (mostly men) At least 100 high-risk employees of selected MAPs holder entities (Hospitals, Universities, Schools, Labs), benefitting from increased capacity and reduced risk of mercury exposure (80% women, 20% men) Approximately 9,600 households across 5 pilot municipalities (corresponding to roughly 32,640 individuals at the Georgian average household size of 3.4 persons, with 52% women and 48% men), benefitting from the safe removal of mercury-added products from their homes through the public take-back campaign.	- Project progress reports. - Sex disaggregated participant/attendance lists and workshop reports.

Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification
		At least 350 employees of relevant importer, distributor and retailer entities, benefitting from received information (40% women, 60% men) 34 105 people in total	
Outcome 1.1: National legal and regulatory framework for Minamata Convention implementation developed, informed by an evidence-based understanding of the full mercury lifecycle in the country.			
Indicator 1.1.1: Level of improvement in Georgian legislation's compliance with the Minamata Convention.	None No specific system for mercury ESM compliance exists.	Midterm: Draft legal package is developed and validated by stakeholders. Project End: national compliance is demonstrably improved at least for 4 of Minamata Convention articles, as a result of the project's outputs.	- Official National Reports submitted to the Minamata Convention Secretariat. - Project's final impact summary report. - The adopted legislative package itself.
Indicator 1.1.2: Level of institutional adoption of the new national technical guidelines for ESM of mercury waste.	None No national technical guidelines for ESM of mercury waste are in use by state agencies.	Midterm: At least 3 key agencies have formally endorsed the new guidelines. Project End: At least 3 agencies (e.g., MEPA, Ministry of Health) have modified their internal processes to align with the sound management system developed by the project.	- Revised internal agency statutes or operational procedures. - Official letters from the agencies confirming the adoption and integration of the guidelines.
Indicator 1.1.3: Level of gender-responsiveness of the new national legal and regulatory framework for mercury life-cycle management.	None. Existing legal/policy documents do not incorporate gender-differentiated mercury impacts.	Midterm: (i) Comparative legal analysis report and MAPs consumption / waste generation study explicitly analyse gender-differentiated impacts and disaggregate end-user data by the gender role of the primary handler. (ii) Identified legislative and procedural gaps in the baseline review are categorised by their differentiated impact on women and men.	- Final comparative legal analysis report (Output 1.1.1.1). - Final MAPs consumption and waste generation study (Output 1.1.2.1). - Adopted/draft legal acts and amendments.

Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification
		Project End: At least 2 binding gender-responsive provisions — addressing, e.g., occupational health for the female-dominated frontline workforce and household-level exposure pathways — are incorporated into the adopted legal package and accompanying national technical guidelines.	
Indicator 1.1.4: Level of inclusive engagement of women in the legislative development process.	0 (no project-driven legislative consultations conducted at baseline).	Midterm: At least 20% of decision-makers engaged in legislative consultations are women, and insights from consultees on the baseline legal and procedural review are reported in a sex-disaggregated manner. Project End: ≥20% female representation sustained across all project legislative consultations and the technical validation workshop for the new national ESM guidelines, with sex-disaggregated participant records on file.	- Sex-disaggregated participant/attendance lists from consultation meetings and the validation workshop. - Minutes and records of legislative working groups. - Project progress reports.
Outcome 2.1: A national capacity for mercury waste treatment established through pilot initiative and technology transferred to a private sector partner.			
Indicator 2.1.1: Extent to which the new mercury treatment technology is operationalised and integrated into a sustainable national waste management pathway.	None 0 private facilities have the capacity or a business model for ESM of mercury waste.	Midterm: The new mercury treatment technology is fully installed, commissioned, and operational at the selected private partner's facility. Project End: At least 2 entities (local or regional) have expressed interest in using the partner facility's capacity for processing their mercury-containing products/waste.	- Meeting minutes with potential clients/partners. - Project progress reports. - Formal letters of interest from the interested entities.
Outcome 2.2: A national mercury collection & elimination programme implemented, significantly reducing immediate threats to public health and direct environmental burden of mercury.			

Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification
Indicator 2.2.1: Reduction in environmental and health risk from unsecured, high-priority mercury stockpiles.	100% of identified stockpiles in target institutions and communities remain unsecured and unmanaged.	Midterm: Operational plans for institutional and public collection are finalised. Project End: Stockpiles (both institutional and public) are successfully collected from at least 5 target municipalities.	- Waste collection and transport records (disaggregated by institution and municipality). - Official inventory logs from the central temporary storage facility. - Post-campaign implementation reports from the pilot municipalities.
indicator 2.2.2: level of public participation and behavioural change in response to the pilot 'take-back' programme	none baseline knowledge of mercury risks and ohs is low or non-existent.	Midterm: Public take-back campaign and institutional training modules are designed and launched. Project end: Compared to the baseline, the final public opinion survey shows at least a 20% increase in people who prefer non-mercury thermometers. compared to the baseline, the final institutional survey shows at least a 20% increase in frontline representatives who are informed about mercury-related ohs and know how to respond in case of an incident.	- Baseline and final public opinion survey reports - Baseline and final institutional knowledge/ohs survey reports.
Indicator 2.2.3: Level of mercury-risk reduction achieved through institutional collection and specialised training in female-workforce dominant sectors.	0% — no institutional collection conducted at baseline.	Midterm: Operational plan for institutional collection prioritises female-dominant sectors and mandates recording of source institutions' female workforce ratio; Training materials and ESM guidelines explicitly incorporate gender-responsive content	- Operational plan for institutional collection - Waste collection and transport records (disaggregated by source institution and sector).

Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification
		Project End: At least 60% of mercury waste collected by the project originates from female-dominant entities; at least 100 high-risk workers of such entities are trained on safety protocols.	- Sex-disaggregated workforce data from each source institution. - Institutional staff training reports. - Post-campaign implementation reports.
Indicator 2.2.4: Level of equitable participation and behavioural change among women in response to the pilot take-back programme.	None. Baseline knowledge of mercury risks among women is low or non-existent (to be established by the sex-disaggregated baseline public opinion survey).	Midterm: Public take-back campaign launched with dissemination channels and messaging specifically designed to reach women (e.g., health clinics, schools, women's NGOs, specific social media platforms). Project End: (i) Among female respondents specifically, the final public opinion survey shows at least a 20% increase in those preferring non-mercury thermometers, compared with the sex-disaggregated baseline. (ii) Women constitute at least 50% of participants depositing household MAPs at public take-back events.	- Sex-disaggregated baseline and final public opinion survey reports. - Sex-disaggregated participant records from take-back events. - Post-campaign implementation reports.
Outcome 3.1: The capacity of institutional and private sector entities for sound management of mercury enhanced, and awareness of mercury risks among the general public increased in a gender-sensitised manner.			
Indicator 3.1.1: Increase in public awareness and correct knowledge of mercury risks and disposal methods.	None	Midterm: Baseline public opinion survey completed (sex-disaggregated). Public awareness campaign designed and launched. Project End: Compared to the baseline survey, the final public opinion survey shows at least a 20% increase in respondents who correctly identify the hazardous properties of mercury and know the correct procedures for how to	- Baseline and final public opinion survey reports. - Public awareness campaign materials and dissemination reports.

Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification
		respond in case of an incident. Survey results are sex-disaggregated, with the same minimum 20% increase achieved among female respondents specifically, measured against the sex-disaggregated baseline.	
Indicator 3.1.2: Uptake and use of project-generated knowledge by national private sector stakeholders.	None	Midterm: At least 2 policy briefs and the national technical guidelines are developed and disseminated to all key private sector stakeholders, including SMEs. Project End: The management of at least 15% of the reached out private sector entities (importers, distributors, and retailers) which received the project's information packages and technical guidelines has verifiably updated its internal procurement, storage, or labelling procedures to reflect the new mercury-related regulatory requirements.	-Records from the project's structured follow-up survey with reached private sector entities. -Copies of updated internal procurement, storage, or labelling procedures from entities that made changes.
Indicator 3.1.3: Level of gender-responsive enforcement capacity built among state agencies (MEPA, MoH, Customs and other relevant entities) for mercury life-cycle management.	None. No specialised mercury-related enforcement training is currently delivered to state agency personnel.	Midterm: At least 3 state agencies have formally adopted updated institutional procedures and enforcement mechanisms that explicitly integrate gender-responsive requirements. Project End: At least 3 state agencies demonstrate a verifiable improvement in enforcement capacity, including gender-responsive measures.	- Adopted agency procedures and enforcement mechanisms containing gender-responsive provisions. - Post-training competency assessment results, disaggregated by sex

Outcome Level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification
Indicator 3.1.4: Level of inclusive engagement of women in the project's knowledge-sharing, awareness-raising and policy development fora.	0 (no project events held at baseline).	Midterm: Communication strategy and dissemination plan identifies and operationalises at least 4 channels known to effectively reach women (e.g., health clinics, schools, women's NGOs, specific social media platforms) for awareness and outreach. Project End: All project knowledge-sharing and policy development events (including the national-level final validation workshop) achieve at least 40% female participation, with sex-disaggregated reporting.	- Sex-disaggregated participant lists from all knowledge-sharing and policy events. - Communication strategy and dissemination plan. - Sex- and age-disaggregated campaign reach analytics (digital and in-person). - Public awareness campaign dissemination reports.

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
Inception workshop (hybrid)	10,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
ESMP development	5,000.00	4,000.00	1,000.00
Gender Assessment	5,000.00	4,000.00	1,000.00
Consultations with stakeholders, including prospective co-financing partners	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Development of project workplan and project document	10,000.00	6,000.00	4,000.00
CEO package development	17,000.00	12,000.00	5,000.00
Total	50,000.00	34,000.00	16,000.00

ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Georgia	41.9999	43.4999	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where project interventions are taking place as appropriate.

Geo Name ID <i>Required field if the location is not an exact site</i>	Location Name <i>Required field</i>	Latitude <i>Required field</i>	Longitude <i>Required field</i>	Location Description <i>Optional text field</i>	Activity Description <i>Optional text field</i>
614540	Georgia	41.9999	43.4999	The project country	Every project activity will take place in Georgia.
611716	Tbilisi (pilot take-back municipality 1 of 5 — urban centre; central location of the Project)	41.71667	44.83333	Largest urban centre; highest absolute volume of mercury-added products in circulation (thermometers, lamps, medical devices); concentration of hospitals, schools, laboratories; well-developed municipal infrastructure	Project coordination and management (all components); all legal/institutional gap analysis and baseline studies (Outputs 1.1.1–1.1.2); drafting and consultation on new legal acts and technical guidelines (Outputs 1.1.3–1.1.4); multi-stakeholder consultations and workshops; training for state agency staff (Output 3.1.1); knowledge management and public awareness coordination (Output 3.1.3);

					Pilot public take-back campaign for household mercury-added products (Activities 2.2.2.1–2.2.2.4); targeted public awareness campaign (Activity 3.1.3.1). NOTE: subject to final selection under Activity 2.2.2.1
828310	Kutaisi (pilot take-back municipality 2 of 5 — urban centre)	42.25178	42.69287	Third-largest city (~147,000 inh.); Imereti region, western Georgia. Major regional hospital, universities, and schools. Geographically distant from Tbilisi, ensuring western-region coverage. Strong municipal authority capacity.	Pilot public take-back campaign for household mercury-added products (Activities 2.2.2.1–2.2.2.4); targeted public awareness campaign (Activity 3.1.3.1). NOTE: subject to final selection under Activity 2.2.2.1
7667581	Telavi (pilot take-back municipality 3 of 5 — regional town)	41.91667	45.48333	Capital of Kakheti region, eastern Georgia (~20,000 inh.). Regional referral hospital and schools. Covers eastern Georgia, an area geographically and socioeconomically distinct from the capital. Moderate municipal capacity.	Pilot public take-back campaign for household mercury-added products (Activities 2.2.2.1–2.2.2.4); targeted public awareness campaign (Activity 3.1.3.1). NOTE: subject to final selection under Activity 2.2.2.1
615856	Akhalsikhe (pilot take-back municipality 4 of 5 — regional town)	41.6591	43.00987	Capital of Samtskhe-Javakheti region, southern Georgia (~18,000 inh.). Ethnically diverse, historically	Pilot public take-back campaign for household mercury-added products (Activities 2.2.2.1–2.2.2.4); targeted

				underserved. Limited existing waste management services. Regional hospital and schools. Covers southern Georgia.	public awareness campaign (Activity 3.1.3.1). NOTE: subject to final selection under Activity 2.2.2.1
612590	Oni (pilot take-back municipality 5 of 5 — rural/remote community)	42.65805	43.53349	Small mountain town (~4,000 inh.), Racha-Lechkhumi region, western Georgia. Remote mountainous location; very limited access to specialised waste services; historically underserved. Represents the equity requirement for rural/remote inclusion.	Pilot public take-back campaign for household mercury-added products (Activities 2.2.2.1–2.2.2.4); targeted public awareness campaign (Activity 3.1.3.1). NOTE: subject to final selection under Activity 2.2.2.1;
	To be confirmed — institutional collection sites (nationwide)	N/A	N/A	Hospitals, clinics, schools, universities, and scientific/medical laboratories across Georgia holding mercury-added products and mercury-containing waste. Specific sites to be identified through the baseline mapping exercise (Activities 1.1.2.1 and 1.1.2.3).	Institutional mercury waste collection programme (Activities 2.2.1.1–2.2.1.5); designation of temporary collection points and central temporary storage facility; specialised OHS training for institutional staff (Activity 2.2.1.4); ESM technical training for MAP-holding entities (Activity 3.1.2.3)
	To be confirmed — private sector partner facility	N/A	N/A	Industrial facility of the selected private sector waste management partner. Site to be identified	Installation and commissioning of mercury waste treatment technology (Activity 2.1.1.4); mercury

				during Activity 2.1.1.1.	treatment operations and technology transfer to the private sector partner; operation as central temporary storage facility for collected mercury waste pending final elimination (Activities 2.2.3.1–2.2.3.3)
	TBD	N/A	N/A	Main air cargo entry points for Georgia, operated by the Customs Department of the Revenue Service, with Highest volume of air freight, including imports of medical and laboratory equipment containing mercury.	Installation of mercury detection scanner to enable customs staff to identify and intercept mercury-added products (MAPs) subject to phase-out/phase-down under the Minamata Convention (Activity 3.1.1.3); training of customs staff on updated enforcement procedures for MAP import controls (Activity 3.1.1.4). NOTE: final selection of specific checkpoints subject to confirmation by the Customs.

ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

Attach agency safeguard screening/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts.

Title

260048_Georgia_ESMP_IGNITE

ES_Screening_260048_Georgia_IGNITE_signed

ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

The project detailed budget is uploaded as Annex G

Expenditure Category		Detailed Description	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Sub-Total	M&E	PMC	Total (USD)	Responsible Entity
Contractual services - Individuals		[2301] Field survey for the nationwide assessment of mercury-containing waste generation and disposal practices (questionnaire administration, and primary data collection at hospitals, laboratories, kindergartens, schools, universities, and selected industrial sites)	150000	0	0	150000			150000	RECC
		[2302] Compilation of a structured dataset of customs records on mercury-added product imports for the past 10 years	20000	0	0	20000			20000	RECC
		[2303] Translation services	33000	0	0	33000			33000	RECC
		[2304] Video production, infographic design, and audio-visual content development for the nationwide public awareness campaign and the knowledge dissemination products	0	0	65000	65000			65000	RECC
		[2305] Baseline, mid-point, and end-point measurement of GEF Core Indicators and project outcome indicators	0	0	0	0	18000		18000	RECC
		[2306] Monitoring of Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) risks and Gender Action Plan implementation	0	0	0	0	31000		31000	RECC
Contractual services - Companies		[2307] Graphic design, layout, printing, and distribution of the national technical guidelines for ESM of mercury-containing waste, the institutional management modality, and the SOP for public-reported mercury spills	60000	0	0	60000			60000	RECC
		[2308] Subcontract with the private sector company for procurement, delivery, installation, pre-commissioning	0	270000	0	270000			270000	RECC

	verification of mercury waste treatment equipment, and delivering operator training under the pilot intervention								
	[2309] Subcontract with the selected private sector partner to execute the institutional waste collection drives — secure packaging, on-site safety supervision, lifting, and transport to the central temporary storage	0	80000	0	80000			80000	RECC
	[2310] Subcontract with the selected private sector partner for collection point staffing, on-site safety supervision, and transportation to the storage site of items collected within public take-back campaign in the 5 municipalities	0	80000	0	80000			80000	RECC
	[2311] Media buying, content production, and channel placement for the municipality-level public awareness campaign accompanying the take-back initiative	0	35000	0	35000			35000	RECC
	[2312] Operation of the central temporary storage facility — site security, environmental monitoring, and routine inspections through the project lifecycle	0	30000	0	30000			30000	RECC
	[2313] Environmentally sound final elimination of all collected mercury-containing waste — domestic treatment capacity and/or Basel Convention export pathway, including specialised hazardous waste freight, packaging, customs handling, and third-party disposal certification	0	210000	0	21000 0			21000 0	RECC
	[2314] Translation, graphic design, layout, printing, and distribution of training modules, reference handbooks, information packages, and compliance guidelines for state agencies, importers/distributors/retailers, SMEs, and MAPs-holding entities	0	0	85000	85000			85000	RECC
	[2315] Media buying and social media management for execution of the nationwide multi-channel public awareness campaign	0	0	100000	10000 0			10000 0	RECC

		[2316] Development and ongoing maintenance of the project knowledge management platform and online repository of policy briefs, visual summaries, and lessons learned	0	0	15000	15000			15000	RECC
		[2317] Translation, graphic design, layout, printing, and distribution of policy briefs, infographics, plain-language visual summaries, and short-form video materials documenting project results for national, regional, and global dissemination	0	0	35000	35000			35000	RECC
		[2318] Midterm Evaluation	0	0	0	0	2500 0		25000	UNIDO
		[2319] Terminal Evaluation	0	0	0	0	2500 0		25000	UNIDO
		[2320] Audit	0	0	0	0		2000 0	20000	RECC (recruitment of independent external auditor)
		sub-total	263000	705000	300000	12680 00	9900 0	2000 0	13870 00	
International consultants		[1202-01] International Hazardous Waste Management Expert	15000	61000	0	76000			76000	RECC
		[1202-02] International Mercury Treatment Technology Specialist	20000	60000	0	80000			80000	RECC
		sub-total	35000	121000	0	15600 0	0	0	15600 0	
National staff and consultants	Staff	[1101] Project Director	0	0	0	0		4500 0	45000	RECC
		[1102] Project Coordinator	0	0	0	0		3547 6	35476	RECC
		[1103] Project Administrative Assistant	0	0	0	0	1721 1	2100 0	38211	RECC
		[1301] Financial Officer	0	0	0	0		2138 1	21381	RECC
	Consultants	[1201-01] Legal Expert	52000	6000	14000	72000			72000	RECC
		[1201-02] Waste Management Expert	50000	50000	9000	10900 0			10900 0	RECC
		[1201-03] Chemicals Management Expert	50000	25000	5000	80000			80000	RECC
		[1201-04] Institutional Expert	40000	0	30000	70000			70000	RECC
		[1201-05] Economist	20000	25000	11000	56000			56000	RECC
		[1201-06] Policy Analyst	30500	9000	26000	65500			65500	RECC
		[1201-07] Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Expert	20000	17000	28000	65000			65000	RECC
		[1201-08] Stakeholder Engagement and Knowledge Management Expert	23000	16000	37000	76000			76000	RECC
		sub-total	285500	148000	160000	59350 0	1721 1	1228 57	73356 8	
Goods		[4201] 4 mercury detection devices for customs clearance points	0	0	80000	80000			80000	RECC

		[4202] Personal protective equipment, mercury spill kits, certified hazardous waste containers, and safety consumables for the institutional collection programme and the public take-back campaign	0	40000	0	40000			40000	RECC
		[4203] Engineering controls and safety infrastructure for the temporary collection points and the central temporary storage	0	30000	0	30000			30000	RECC
		sub-total	0	70000	80000	150000	0	0	150000	
Trainings, Workshops, Meetings		[3301] National Workshops/Conferences (inception, validation, visibility, closing)	113000	0	18000	131000			131000	RECC
		[3302] Multi-stakeholder consultations (Roundtables, small-group consultations, focus groups)	95000	0	0	95000			95000	RECC
		[3303] Informational briefings and outreach meetings (for importers, distributors, retailers, civil society groups)	0	52000	25000	77000			77000	RECC
		[3303] Trainings (for collection team, institutional staff, private sector entities, state agencies and municipalities, MAPs holding entities)	0	30000	60000	90000			90000	RECC
		[3304] Awareness raising events (awareness events for the pilot take-back campaign across the 5 selected municipalities, national-level awareness campaign)	0	75000	0	75000			75000	RECC
		[3305] Project Steering Committee	0	0	0	0	3000		3000	RECC
		sub-total	208000	157000	103000	468000	3000	0	471000	
Travel		[1601] Travel Local	21212	17958	14650	53820	12908		66728	RECC
		[1602] International Travel/Air Fair	11400	2000	2400	15800			15800	RECC
		[1603] Per Diems and Accommodation	9600	3000	3000	15600	4304		19904	RECC
		sub-total	42212	22958	20050	85220	17212	0	102432	
		Component total	833712	1223958	663050	2720720	136423	142857	3000000	

Personnel as %
of total (GEF
norm: ≤33%)

29.7%

