Minamata initial assessment and national action plan for the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector in Afghanistan

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID

Project Type
EA

Type of Trust Fund
GET

CBIT
☐CBIT

Project Title
Minamata initial assessment and national action plan for the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector in Afghanistan

Countries
Afghanistan

Agency(ies)
UNIDO

Other Executing Partner(s):
National Environmental Protection Agency

Executing Partner Type
Others

GEF Focal Area
Chemicals and Waste

Taxonomy
Focal Areas, Enabling Activities, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Chemicals and Waste, Waste Management, Mercury, Stakeholders, Private Sector, SMEs, Type of Engagement, Consultation, Information Dissemination, Communications, Awareness Raising, Beneficiaries, Civil Society, Sustainable Development Goals, Sound Management of chemicals and waste, Best Available Technology / Best Environmental Practices, Artisanal and Scale Gold Mining, Hazardous Waste Management

Rio Markers
Climate Change Mitigation
Climate Change Mitigation 0

Climate Change Adaptation
Climate Change Adaptation 0

Type of Reports	Submission Date	Expected Implementation Start	Expected Completion Date	Expected Report Submission to Convention
Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA)	7/10/2020	9/14/2020	9/13/2023	12/30/2023

Duration
36In Months

Agency Fee($)
66,500

A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS

Objectives/Programs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount($)	Co-Fin Amount($)
CW-EA	GET	700,000	30,000
		Total Project Cost($) 700,000	**30,000**

B. Project description summary

Project Objective

National capacity and capability improved for prevention and management of mercury use, through the preparation of a Minamata Convention Initial Assessment (MIA) and a National Action Plan (NAP) for the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector

Project Component	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)

Project Component	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA)	1. MIA drafted, validated and ready for submission	1.1: Project coordination mechanism established and institutional gaps identified.	174,900	6,000
		1.2: Existing mercury regulations reviewed and policy reforms identified to prepare for implementation of the Minamata Convention.		
		1.3: A national mercury profile is established, based on the initial inventory and key sectors identified for intervention and investment to reduce, and where possible eliminate, the use, release and emissions of mercury.		
		1.4: Information is disseminated among relevant actors (academia, public and private sectors, and civil society.		
		1.5: MIA drafted, finalized and presented to relevant stakeholders.		

Project Component	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
National Action Plan (NAP)	2. Improved understanding of the scope of mercury in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector and strengthened national capacity to implement Article 7 of the Minamata Convention.	2.1: Establishment of a National ASGM coordination and information dissemination mechanism. 2.2: A comprehensive national analysis of the ASGM sector is completed to support the development of the roadmap to reduce mercury emissions and releases. 2.3 The needs assessment for institutional capacity to develop an environmental and public health strategy dedicated to the ASGM sector is completed. 2.4: Rapid assessment of the health situation carried out; leading to the initiation of the public health strategy drafting, including a curriculum for professionals and awareness-raising workshops.	327,000	15,000
	3. NAP finalized for endorsement by relevant stakeholders	3.1: NAP is drafted, finalized and presented to relevant stakeholders.	109,500	9,000

Project Component	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	GEF Project Financing($)	Confirmed Co-Financing($)
Monitoring and evaluation	4 Project achieves objectives	4.1: Regular monitoring is completed and final evaluation conducted	25,000	
		Sub Total ($)	**636,400**	**30,000**
Project Management Cost (PMC)				
			63,600	
		Sub Total($)	**63,600**	**0**
		Total Project Cost($)	**700,000**	**30,000**

C. Source of Co-Financing for the Project by Name and by Type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
GEF Agency	UNIDO	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	17,250
GEF Agency	UNIDO	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	12,750
			Total Co-Financing($)	**30,000**

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Not applicable

D. GEF Financing Resources Requested by Agency, Country and Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount($)	Fee($)
UNIDO	GET	Afghanistan	Chemicals and Waste	Mercury	700,000	66,500
				Total Gef Resources($)	**700,000**	**66,500**

Part II. Enabling Activity Justification

A. ENABLING ACTIVITY BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Provide brief information about projects implemented since a country became party to the convention and results achieved

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a Multilateral Environmental Agreement with the objective to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury. Major highlights of the Convention include a ban on new mercury mines, the phase-out of existing ones, the phase out of mercury use in a number of products and industrial processes, control measures on emissions to air and on releases from major industrial point sources, and the regulation of the artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Completing the life cycle approach of the Convention it also addresses interim storage of mercury, environmentally sound management of mercury waste and sites contaminated by mercury.

Afghanistan has ratified various international Convention to regulate and control the use, management and final disposal of chemicals and their wastes, such as the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Final Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

Aware of the threat that mercury can pose to human health and the environment worldwide, the Government has actively participated in international programs and agreements related to the issue, through the leadership of the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA).

Minamata Convention was approved after an internal ratification process, which was started from the recognition of national needs for obtaining membership of the Minamata Convention by the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA). The national analysis of the Convention and its review was done in accordance with national laws by the Ministry of Justice, pre-approved by the Council of Ministers, ratified by the National Assembly (Parliament and Senate), signed by the President through the Presidential Decree (No:197, Dated:11,2015). Finally the ratification of Minamata Convention identifying internal roles and procedures was published in the Official Gazette No. 1289, dated March 2018.

In order for Afghanistan to comply with its obligations under the Convention, several barriers must be addressed. These are:
(a) Institutional barrier: Institutional capacity building is required to implement this agreement. Since mercury involves several entities, an intersectoral approach is considered necessary;
(b) Political barrier: The legislative and policy framework is not adjusted to support the provisions set out in the agreement;
(c) Awareness barrier: There is little knowledge in both the governmental and private sector entities regarding the health hazards caused by mercury and its compounds with limited occupational safety mechanisms to reduce community exposure to mercury and its compounds; and
(d) Technology barrier: There is limited knowledge of mercury-free technologies and are not available in the country.

With ratification of the Convention, Afghanistan requires assistance in formulating and implementing a detailed comprehensive program through cost-benefit analysis within the context of its national development efforts.

There are laws, regulations and policies, which are directly and indirectly relevant for implementation of the Minamata Conventions, such as: Environment Law, Pesticides Law, Public Health Law, Commerce Law, Mining Law, Investment Law, Goods Trading Law and Trade Law, Statistics Law, National Standard Law, Pesticides Regulation, Regulation of Industrial Chemical Tools, Regulation of Unintentional Productions, Import Regulation, Waste Disposal Regulation, National Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Policy, National Waste Management Policy, National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention and National Environmental Strategy. These law, Regulations, policies, and plan are implemented by MAIL (Minister Agriculture Irrigation and livestock), MEW (Ministry of Energy and Water) , MoF (Ministry of Finance), MOPH(Ministry of Public Health) , MoMP (Ministry of Mines and Petroleum), MoUDL (Ministry of Urban Development and Land , ANSA (Afghanistan National Standard Authority, NEPA , MoFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), MoIA (Ministry of Interior Affairs).

Minamata Initial Assessment

The development of the Initial Assessment of the Minamata Convention (MIA) provides basic and essential information to implement policies and strategies for decision making, as well as development plans that identify the priority sectors and main activities of mercury and its compounds carried out in the country. Its major component is the elaboration of a national inventory of mercury and its compounds. Such an inventory will provide useful information such as:

(a) The import, distribution, storage, supply, trade and transboundary movement of mercury wastes and their compounds;
(b) Uses, stockpiles and their location of mercury and its compounds in different sectors;
(c) The management of mercury products, mercury compounds and mercury wastes; and
(d) Identification and estimation of the national level of contamination of mercury and its compounds.
(e) The institutional and legal capacity of Afghanistan to implement the Convention.

The mercury inventory will be carried out using the tools designed by UNEP. Under the MIA component of this project information dissemination activities are included and a national intervention plan identifying priorities action for the implementation of the Convention is identified.

National Action Plan (NAP) for the ASGM sector

The ASGM sector is a specific and currently the highest source of mercury release, affecting the health of many communities and pollution of the world's environment. Therefore a specific article dedicated to regulate this sector was developed: Article 7. This article determines that countries need to notify to the Secretariat that ASGM activities are more than insignificant and if they have done so, they must develop a National Action Plan (NAP) in order to reduce and where feasible eliminate the use of mercury and mercury compounds. This Plan needs to be submitted by the country to the Secretariat within three years after the Convention enters into force for it, or three years after the notification to the Secretariat, whichever is later. A review of the progress in implementing this Plan needs to be provided every three years.
In accordance with Article 7 and Annex C of the Convention, as well as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Programming Directions and the GEF guidelines given by the Conference of the parties to the GEF, it is noted that each signatory Party that is subject to the provisions of paragraph 3 of the Article shall include in its NAP:
(a) National objectives and targets for mercury removal;
(b) Measurement and control strategies for mercury use worst practices;
    I. Gold amalgamation with mercury;
    II. Exposure of amalgam burning or processed amalgam;
    III. Burning of amalgam in residential areas; and

IV. Leaching of cyanide in sediment, in crude ore or rocks containing added mercury, without first removing the mercury.

(c) Control measures in the formalization and environmental regulation of ASGM;

(d) Reference estimates of the quantities of mercury used and the practices used in the extraction and treatment of artisanal and small-scale gold in its territory;

(e) Promotion of strategies for mercury-free methods;

(f) Strategies for the management and control of illegal trade in mercury and its compounds, both in domestic and external sources for use in the extraction and processing of gold in ASGM;

(g) Strategies to engage stakeholders in the implementation and continued development of the National Action Plan;

(h) A draft initial public health strategy on the study of mercury concentrations in mining; and people exposed in the use and handling of mercury, as well as mercury emissions and releases into air, water and soil; including the collection of health data, training for health workers, and raising awareness in health centers;

(i) Strategies to prevent exposure of vulnerable populations to mercury used in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, particularly children and women of childbearing age, especially pregnant women;

(j) Strategies to provide information for artisanal and small-scale gold miners in communities where mining takes place or communities affected by the activity; and

(k) Develop a timeline for the implementation of the National Action Plan.

While an explicit focus on health activities is not included in the NAP, the plan proposal could contain the actions stipulated in Article 16 of the Convention linked to this area.

Afghanistan is a mountainous country with complex geological pattern and rich in natural resources, including gold mines such as Neboe Wismati, Vakadur and Zarkashan.
The geological survey of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has identified gold deposits in 105 locations so far which need further research and survey in the future for more detailed information.
According to officially available information, currently no major legal gold mine extraction take place in the country. Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining takes place illegally and is mainly conducted in the rivers of Kokcha and Amo. Anecdotally, artisanal gold mining has occurred in Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz and Takhar provinces (North West) and Ghazni province (central).
Further research is needed to collect new data on the production volume, the processing technologies used and on the export of gold from this entire gold mining sector.
The mining contract is issued by the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, but the commercial license is being issued by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. In case of the extraction or production of gold or any other mineral resources, the mining company/miners must conduct the environment impact assessment process. The governmental capacity to control and enforce this regulation is low. In addition mining takes place in remote areas that can be reached only by long and cumbersome travel.

The request for financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Chemicals and Wastes focal area is justified by investing in supporting activities to help Afghanistan to meet essential communication requirements related to the Convention, make informed policy decisions, and help prioritize activities.

The activities of the MIA and NAP will complement national efforts to significantly reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals and wastes of global importance to human health and the environment.

In addition, the project will strengthen Afghanistan's national capacity to comply with the obligations of the Minamata Convention and promote the effective implementation of its provisions. To achieve this, the proposed activities will help the Government, industry and private sector partners and civil society to better understand national mercury related operations and emissions and raise awareness of risks to human health and ecosystems.

With the support of the GEF, sources of pollution will be systematically identified that will allow areas to be selected for future interventions. Institutional needs assessments, as well as policy analysis, will help Afghanistan identify possible barriers to implementing the Convention. GEF resources will also help the country to disseminate the project's achievements at the national level and will help gain international support as well as investments for additional projects in Afghanistan and promote sound management of chemicals and wastes as a key component of inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

Information on mercury in Afghanistan

The level of mercury in the environment of Afghanistan is increasing due to discharge from hydroelectric, mining, pulp, and paper industries. Incineration of municipal and medical waste and emissions from coal-using power plants also contribute to high levels of mercury.

Even though there is no official data on the use or emission of mercury, it is evident that it is vastly used and emitted by various sectors. Mercury released from ongoing human activity in Afghanistan can be separated into four broad categories. The first category is “area sources”. Landfills, dental preparations, and laboratory use are defined as area sources. The second category is combustion processes. These include coal use as primary energy source in households, medical waste incinerators, and municipal waste combustion. The third category is the manufacturers of metals, chlor-alkali, and cement. Other industrial processes fall into the fourth category.

Afghanistan is a country that is facing energy poverty. Only about 30% of its population has access to clean, affordable and reliable energy. The energy poverty in the country has led household to use coal as a primary energy source which is both affordable compared to other sources and at the same easily accessible on the market. Most of the production factories in the country use coal as their primary energy source as well, which makes already damaged situation worsen. Furthermore, Afghanistan is swiftly moving towards development, this advancement increases the demand and production of cement in the country. The cement production industry is developing very rapidly and therefore causes large amount of mercury emission to the atmosphere.

It should be noted that accurate data regarding the usage and emission of mercury are lacking. This lack of data has several reasons: the country has been in war or conflict situation for more than 40 years. It was extremely difficult to establish and enforce a proper monitoring and reporting system on the use, release and emission of mercury in such unstable situation. Further, it was very difficult to mobilize resources for such an initiative

Afghanistan needs a holistic assessment of the situation in the country.

According to the Ministry of Mine and Petroleum information, Afghanistan has 7 major gold mines including “Ragh” gold mine (called “Vecador” as well) which is located in Badakhshan province, “Semeti” gold mine in Takhar province, “Zarakshan” gold mine in Ghazni province, “Vecador” gold mine in Badakhshan province, “Hesarak” gold mine in Logar province, “Kundelan” gold mine in Zabul province and “Qarazaghan” gold mine in Baghlan province.

“Vecador” is one of the most popular gold mines of Afghanistan located in “Kuwilar Vecador” of Ragh district 100 KM of Faiz Abad city and based on a research from Doctor Naqibullah Sahak, professor of Geology faculty of Kabul Polytechnich, thickness of this gold mine is 2 meters, length of 350 meters and can be seen to 110 meters according its droop. Qarazaghan of Baghlan province the second popular gold mines of Afghanistan. Is located in the Qarazaghan region Doshi district of Baghlan province. It is unclear how and which volume of gold is extracted from this mines.

Official data on the ASGM sector were not collected anymore due to different reasons such as lack of resources, missing legal incentive and the informality of the sector. The ratification of the Minamata Convention offers an opportunity to raise this topic higher at the political agenda. Conduction of a deeper assessment of the sector through the NAP will provide the basis for further improving the environmental, social and economic sustainability of this sector.

Gender

Since the level of mercury exposure and subsequent impact on human health are determined by social and biological factors, women, children and men may be exposed to different types, frequencies and levels of mercury. Therefore, gender inclusion and integration will be incorporated as a fundamental part of the project.

This issue will be addressed based on UNIDO's gender policy, which includes, among other measures, promoting the participation of women and vulnerable groups in information exchange and dissemination events, in the project coordination unit and in the national committee, as well as in stakeholder groups (e.g. by consulting women during the analysis of the ASGM sector and during the assessment of the health impacts of mercury use).

Special attention will be paid to gender equality when assessing and inviting members to participate in the Project Coordination Committee and when inviting different actors to awareness-raising workshops. During the staff selection process, female candidates will be encouraged to apply. If two candidates have similar technical qualifications, preference will be given to women.

B. ENABLING ACTIVITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES

The proposal should briefly justify and describe the project framework. Identify also key stakeholders involved in the project including the private sector, civil society organizations, local and indigenous communities, and their respective roles, as applicable. Describe also how the gender equality and women’s empowerment are considered in project design and implementation

Execution arrangement

The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) is foreseen to be the executing entity.
NEPA, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Industries and Commerce will be the main institutional counterparts, providing national leadership to the present initiative, being responsible for the day-to-day management of the project and providing technical expertise in artisanal mining for the development of all activities related to mercury and other aspects of the Minamata Convention, as well as the responsible development of the ASGM sector.

The Project Coordination Committee (PCC) will be established to follow up this initiative and will organize activities that will be approved regularly by the senior management. The PCC will be made up of technical and normative representatives from the MoMP, MEW, MoPH, DABS, MoUDL, KM, Representatives of relevant Industries, Representative of Artisanal, Small Scale and Large Gold Mining Sector, Representatives of Civil Society, Kabul University and the UNIDO-Afghanistan. The PCC will provide strategic inputs, review project work plan, monitor and advise on progress, facilitate access to data and information.
NEPA will act as the Chair of this Committee.

All project modifications will be carried out in accordance with UNIDO rules and regulations and the GEF standards called ''GEF Project and Programmatic Approach Cycles'' (GEF/C.39 / Inf.3), ''GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy (GEF/C.50/08/Rev.01) and ''Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy'' (GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01).

The NEPA and Ministry of Mines and Petroleum will provide national leadership and technical support to activities related to the ASGM sector and the MIA in close collaboration with Chamber of Commerce and UNIDO.

The Ministry of Health will be responsible for regulations and governance of the Public Health related issues. For this initiative, it will provide national leadership and technical support to health related activities, in close collaboration with main institutional partners.

Parties interested in the use of mercury and its compounds, as well as ASGM, including academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, will participate in the development of the Minamata Initial Assessment as well as the NAP. This stakeholder network will be involved in raising awareness of mercury users to increase awareness, share knowledge and promote technology transfer to reduce or eliminate the use of mercury and its compounds. Municipal, regional and national governments will also be involved.

Project Management Unit will be a team of subject matter experts composed of national and international consultants as well as technical specialists. They will be recruited to provide technical support during the implementation of this project. The team will be selected on the basis of its technical expertise to assist in the development of a comprehensive analysis of mercury-related activities and to plan activities to improve national capacity. A national project coordinator (NPC) will lead the this project management unit. The NPC will be recruited to work only for this project. The Project Management Unit and the National Project Coordinator will be recruited by NEPA at once and in close coordination with UNIDO.

The results of the proposed project will improve national capacity to establish a strategy that contributes to the fulfillment of Afghanistan's commitments to the Minamata convention, the strengthening of the capacity of stakeholders involved in mercury management in the ASGM sector, and the finalization of the NAP and the MIA and validation with stakeholders for submission to the Minamata convention secretariat by the government of Afghanistan.

The project activities will complement the needs for the elaboration of the MIA and NAP, through assistance to the government and relevant partners in the sector linked to uses in products and processes, waste management, emissions and releases of mercury and its compounds, using the methodology developed by UNEP and a legislative and institutional gap analysis with respect to mercury issues in Afghanistan.

The project will support ASGM in the country in formulating a clear road map to prevent, reduce the use and/or eliminate, if feasible, the use of mercury, through raising awareness of the risks to human health and the country's ecosystems. This will include:

(a) analysis of the ASGM sector, including the main mining areas, miners and private sector involved, stakeholders, level of formalization and other relevant information, as well as an assessment of women's and children's participation;
(b) inventory, with the amount of mercury used, and practices employed in the ASGM sector in the country;
(c) assessment of institutional capacity in the health sector, mainly in areas where ASGM activities are taking place, to collect data on the population's mercury exposure, and to conduct training and awareness-raising activities;

(d) baseline on consumption of mercury and other harmful chemicals including cyanide;

(e) options for the elimination of practices specified in annex c of the convention;

(f) strategies to prevent mercury exposure, together with health authorities with a special focus on vulnerable populations, such as women and children;

(g) definition of measures for the formalization of the ASGM sector;

(h) strategies to manage trade and prevent mercury diversion;

(i) strategies to involve stakeholders in the implementation and ongoing development of the NAP;

(j) awareness-raising activities targeting ASGM miners and affected communities, as well as national and regional legislators;

(k) a roadmap for mercury reduction in the sector, including necessary interventions and possible sources of funding for subsequent implementation.

(l) strategies that provide information on ASGM in the mining sector, and affected communities

(m) timeline for the implementation of the national action plan.

The project will focus on evaluating the departments and/or municipalities with the greatest artisanal and small-scale mining activity, where mercury is used. GEF resources will help Afghanistan identify and prioritize the most sensitive areas for future investments and interventions through the promotion of sound management of chemicals and waste as a key component of green industrial growth.

Most of the socio-economic benefits associated with this project will manifest when the necessary interventions under the Convention are implemented, contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1 (poverty reduction) 3 (good health and well-being), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 15 (life on land). 17 (partnerships for the goals)

The following key national stakeholders will be consulted and involved throughout the project implementation process as follows:

National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MoUDL), Kabul Municipality (KM), Afghanistan Chamber of Industry and Mines, Kabul University (KU) and Private Sector Entities.

UNIDO will act as the GEF Implementing Agency for the project. The UNIDO Project Manager will provide continuous technical advice as well as coordinate and supervise activities.

Gender equality
In support of GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming, gender issues are mainstreamed in the project at all levels. Gender equality is ensured by granting representatives of both genders equitable access to sensitization, training and capacity building activities, by ensuring an equitable representation of both genders in all project committees and by ensuring an equitable representation of women and men among the experts to be recruited for the execution of this project. The TORs for project recruited experts will request them to complete the basic online course; I Know Gender Course on UN Women's e-Learning Campus https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org.

C. DESCRIBE THE ENABLING ACTIVITY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Discuss the work intended to be undertaken and the output expected from each activity as outlined in Table A

This project sets out the activities necessary to prepare an MIA and NAP to support the efficient implementation of the Minamata Convention within the national context. It also sets out the activities needed to improve national capacity and mercury management in various sectors, including ASGM, through the preparation of a National Action Plan.

The project will help Afghanistan plan these activities while incorporating sound mercury management into legal and institutional structures that are fully aligned with national priorities.

The initiative will also help the country gather baseline information on mercury use, emissions and releases that will serve as input for the design of future interventions required by the treaty such as an inventory on emissions from relevant industrial point sources or the environmental sound management of mercury waste.
The project will also provide an assessment of the situation in the artisanal and small scale gold mining sector as well as an inventory/characterization of ASGM that will assist in the design of future interventions to meet Convention obligations. The actions contained in the NAP will generate global environmental and socio-economic benefits, as well as transform mercury management into a priority on the country's sustainable development agenda.

As per UNIDO Environmental and Social Safeguards Policies and Procedures (ESSPP), the project has been categorized as "C". Although no further specific environmental and/or social assessment is required for category C projects, environmental and social safeguards and their relevance will be duly considered in all the training, advisory services and capacity building activities to be undertaken.

The activities planned by product are listed below:

MIA
Outcomes 1 MIA drafted, validated and ready for submission

Output 1.1: Project coordination mechanism established and institutional gaps identified

Activity 1.1.1 Establish an Inter-Institutional Technical Committee (ITC) to follow up the project. (ITC will carry out the same functions as the Project National Steering Committee)
Activity 1.1.2 Conduct national project coordination meetings.
Activity 1.1.3 Identify institutional capacity gaps and barriers.
Activity 1.1.4 Organize capacity building and training workshops. (in capacity-building programs there should be focused on institutional needs and sustainability of these programs).

Output 1.2: Existing mercury regulations reviewed and policy reforms identified to prepare for implementation of the Minamata Convention.
Activity 1.2.1 Evaluate existing policy structures, strategies, laws and regulations.
Activity 1.2.2 Inform policy makers of the importance of including mercury regulation in the existing national legal framework in order to have instruments for compliance with the Minamata Convention.
Activity 1.2.3 Prepare a list of necessary regulations related to mercury and its compounds taking into consideration the vulnerabilities of different gender groups.

Output 1.3: A national mercury profile is established, based on the initial inventory and key sectors identified for intervention and investment to reduce, and where possible eliminate, the use, release and emissions of mercury.
Activity 1.3.1 Conduct national capacity training on the inventory of mercury and its compounds.
Activity 1.3.2 Identify key stakeholders that contribute to reduce/eliminate use.
Activity 1.3.3 Collect information for the initial national inventory of mercury and its compounds (mercury emission and release sources, vulnerable actors, among others).
Activity 1.3.4 Draft initial national inventory of mercury and its compounds.

Output 1.4: Information is disseminated among relevant actors (academia, public and private sectors, and civil society).
Activity 1.4.1 Develop communication materials taking into account the impacts of mercury and its compounds, as well as the vulnerability of different gender groups.
Activity 1.4.2 Organize and carry out awareness-raising campaigns and workshops to adapt the timing and location of events to the needs of different gender groups.

Output 1.5: MIA drafted, finalized and presented to relevant stakeholders.

Activity 1.5.1 Draft the MIA according to the inventory and its analysis.
Activity 1.5.2 Develop intervention plans.
Activity 1.5.3 Conduct stakeholder validation meetings.
Activity 1.5.4 Finalize the MIA.
Activity 1.5.5 Define the date of implementation of an action plan derived from the MIA.

National Action Plan

Outcome 2 Improved understanding of the scope of mercury in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector and strengthened national capacity to implement Article 7 of the Minamata Convention.

Output 2.1: Establishment of a National ASGM coordination and information dissemination mechanism.

Activity 2.1.1: Conduct a national start-up workshop.
Activity 2.1.2: Establish national ASGM coordination mechanisms (CTI will also be the coordination mechanism for the NAP activities)
Activity 2.1.3: Develop strategies to involve stakeholders in the implementation and ongoing development of the NAP.
Activity 2.1.4: Develop communication materials, taking into account the impacts of mercury on different gender groups.
Activity 2.1.5: Organize and conduct events and workshops to disseminate and share information, taking into account the time and geographical constraints of both men and women.

Output 2.2: A comprehensive national analysis of the ASGM sector is completed to support the development of the roadmap to reduce mercury emissions and releases.
Activity 2.2.1: Collect and analyze data on the ASGM sector (e.g., amount of mercury used and practices employed; number of major gold mines and miners; stakeholders, including miners, ,and ethnic communities and the private sector, as well as the level of formalization of the sector).
Activity 2.2.2 Define national and mercury use objectives and reduction targets.
Activity 2.2.3 Define measures to facilitate the formalization or regulation of the ASGM sector.
Activity 2.2.4 Finalize strategies to promote the reduction of mercury use and consequently mercury emissions and releases in the sector and actions to eliminate the worst practices mentioned in Annex C of the Minamata Convention.
Activity 2.2.5 Identify possible sources of funding needed to implement the roadmap as part of the NAP.

Output 2.3: The needs assessment for institutional capacity to develop an environmental and public health strategy dedicated to the ASGM sector is completed.
Activity 2.3.1 Consult Directors and health personnel of the different municipalities where ASGM exists, representatives of various ministries and other stakeholders.
Activity 2.3.2 Identify institutional capacity gaps/barriers
Activity 2.3.3 Finalize the needs assessment report related to institutional capacity on public health and identify elements for an environmental and public health strategy .

Output 2.4: Rapid assessment of the health situation carried out; leading to the initiation of the public health strategy drafting, including a curriculum for professionals and awareness-raising workshops.

Activity 2.4.1 Assessment of mercury exposure and health situation of miners in areas with presence of artisanal mining in the country*.
Activity 2.4.2 Plan and adapt the survey tools to the Afghan context.
Activity 2.4.3 Conduct consultation with the community and health service providers in selected ASGM areas.
Activity 2.4.4 Analyze the data collected and prepare recommendations.
Activity 2.4.5 Initiate the elaboration of a public health strategy for the ASGM sector taking into account the vulnerability of different gender groups.

Activity 2.4.6 Final workshop for delivery of results to stakeholders.

*Note: primary monitoring (i.e. human biomonitoring) is considered outside the scope of the project and the rapid assessment of the health situation. The main objective of the rapid assessment is to identify health behavioral patterns among miners and their families in order to determine the most effective entry point for creating a link with them. For example, in cases where miners do not use health services in ASGM, awareness-raising efforts may be necessary through mobile clinics or as part of other social mobilization efforts undertaken by the health sector. The Rapid Health Situation Assessment also seeks to identify the current capacities of local health centers to identify and address ASGM-related health problems. This latter information is necessary to work on the design and message of the training activities that will be carried out within the framework of the NAP. In this aspect, synergies with other relevant initiatives should be considered because through mining censuses, monitoring, surveillance and control of the Mining Reserve Areas.

Outcome 3 NAP drafted, validated and ready for submission to the Secretariat

Output 3.1: NAP is drafted, finalized and presented to relevant stakeholders.

Activity 3.1.1 Draft the NAP in accordance with the comprehensive analysis report (Output 2.2) and in line with the NAP guidance document.
Activity 3.1.2 Conduct stakeholder validation meetings.
Activity 3.1.3 Finalize the NAP.
Activity 3.1.4 Define NAP implementation date.
Activity 3.1.5. Distribution of NAP to relevant stakeholders

Outcome 4 Project achieves objectives

Output 4.1 Regular monitoring is completed and final self evaluation is conducted

D. DESCRIBE, IF POSSIBLE, THE EXPECTED COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT

The GEF resources will help the Afghan government and its partners understand the use of mercury throughout the country as well as in the ASGM sector and how to minimize it, as well as increase awareness of the risks to human health and the environment.

The resources will also help broaden the dissemination of the project's achievements at the national level to promote other initiatives in the future. The GEF will not only help streamline interventions and capacity building efforts related to the ASGM sector, but will also ensure that key stakeholders involved in compliance with Article 7 and Annex C of the Convention are sufficiently aware of and committed to the design and delivery of the activities outlined in the roadmap.

To ensure cost-effectiveness, the infrastructure and human resources of the government counterpart and executing agency involved in the project will be used efficiently. Most project activities will be carried out by national experts. This will help improve local and national capacity to manage mercury and contribute to the cost effectiveness of the project by reducing consultancy fees and travel expenses.

Project implementation and execution is expected to be low risk. UNIDO has strong experience in promoting environmentally sound management of mercury in the ASGM sector and in developing MIA both in Asia and in other regions. Further UNIDO plays an important role at the global level by co-leading the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector and the uses, emissions and releases of mercury in different industrial sectors within the Global Mercury Partnership.

In addition, UNIDO also has extensive experience in supporting activities related to the Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans and their updates. In the same vein, UNIDO is carrying out activities under the Montreal Protocol.

The mercury MIA and NAP project will complement the country's efforts to significantly reduce exposure to chemicals and wastes of global significance harmful to humans and the environment. The presence of UNIDO offices in the country and the region is also ensure the smooth running of project activities.

E. DESCRIBE, DESCRIBE THE BUDGETED M & E PLAN

Monitoring will be based on various levels of review, quality control and feedback by UNIDO HQ and UNIDO Field Office. Globally, follow-up and monitoring will be carried out by UNIDO, via calls, virtual and other meeting, 1-3 country visits, pending on the security situation and the travel policies.

The Project Steering Committee will meet on a regular basis to: (a) review the annual work plan, (b) assess progress against the outcomes and outputs indicated in the project logical framework and other relevant documents , (c) review reports, as well as (d) assess any gaps or weaknesses, and subsequently take appropriate adaptive decisions.

The work plan for the second year will be based on the results obtained during the first year, including associated budget allocations, in accordance with GEF, UNIDO rules and guidelines and GEF Council documents, namely GEF/C.39.09, GEF/C.39.03/Inf.3, GEF/C.50/08/Rev.01 and GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01. The designated staff of the UNIDO field office in Afghanistan will attend and participate in monitoring and evaluation visits as required. The final self-evaluation, which will be carried out by an independent national evaluator, will be organized by the UNIDO project manager with the support of the UNIDO Independent Evaluation office, and submitted to the donor within 90 days after the end of the project.

M&E Programme: The main project executing partner will be responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the project, reporting to UNIDO on a bi-annual basis. The progress of the activities and outputs in relation to their respective goals and desired outcomes will be assessed by the executing partners through the means of verification and impact indicators contained in the Project Results Framework (cf. annex C).

Financial monitoring: All project costs will be accounted for and documented. Financial reports from the executing entity will be required in accordance with UNIDO's standard accounting procedures. In accordance with the GEF and UNIDO monitoring and evaluation policy, monitoring studies (such as National Portfolio of Evaluations or thematic evaluations) may be initiated and conducted. All project partners and contractors are required to (a) make available studies, reports and other documentation related to the project and (b) facilitate interviews with staff involved in project activities.

Legal context clause: This project is governed by the provisions of the Revised Standard Technical Assistance Agreement concluded between the United Nations and Specialised Agencies and the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, on 10 May 1956 and revised on 2 December 1968.

F. EXPLAIN THE DEVIATIONS FROM TYPICAL COST RANGES (WHERE APPLICABLE)

not applicable

Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And Gef Agency(ies)

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

Focal Point Name	Focal Point Title	Ministry	Signed Date
Schah Zaman Maiwandi	Director General of National Environmental Protection Agency	National Environmental Protection Agency	4/18/2020

B. Convention Participation

Convention	Date of Ratification/Accession	National Focal Point
Minamata Convention on Mercury	5/2/2017	Mr. Idrees Malyar

Submitted to GEF Secretariat Review

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