

Report of the ACAP Mercury Project Steering Group Meeting

St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

November 7-8, 2013

Participants:

1. Ritta Hemmi, Consulate General of Finland in St. Petersburg
2. Matti Verta, Finnish Environmental Institute, Finland
3. Vladislav Barsukov, Polar Foundation and Ecosafety, Russian Federation (vice-chair)
4. Marianne Bailey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, USA (chair)
5. Husamuddin Ahmadzai, representing Sweden and NEFCO
6. Alona Yefimenko, Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples Secretariat
7. Dinara Skavronskaya, Saami OOSMO
8. Alexander Romanov, SRI Atmosphere, St. Petersburg
9. Eirik H. Steindal, Norwegian Environment Agency, Norway
10. Gunnar Futsaeter, UNEP
11. Mikala Klint, Danish Ministry of Environment, EPA, Denmark

Opening of Meeting:

ACAP Chair Jaakko Henttonen gave opening remarks to the group. Chair Henttonen noted that mercury is one of the most promising areas of cooperation under ACAP and one that can achieve concrete results. The next ACAP WG meeting will take place in February and it is his hope that the PSI will be operational or close to operational by then, noting that 2014 will mark the 5th anniversary of the PSI Declaration. If it does not become operational, there will be a very difficult situation with donor funding expiring and an inability to get projects moving forward. He also noted that, with a recent Arctic Council decision on observers, engaging more with other key countries on mercury will be possible.

The host of the meeting, Ritta Hemmi of the Consulate General of Finland, provided an overview of the Consulate's work, a history of the wonderful facilities in St. Petersburg, and information on her work, relevant to the Mercury PSG, as a co-chair of the Barents Hotspots initiative.

The ACAP Mercury PSG Chair, Marianne Bailey, thanked the hosts (Ms. Hemmi as well as Matti Verta of the Finnish Environmental Institute) for bringing the group together for its first face-to-face meeting since March 2011. She noted that while our group is small, we have a big responsibility and a unique opportunity to advance mercury work, given a convergence of events – the completion of the Minamata Convention, the near-term operation of the PSI, and member country developments in this area. Vice-Chair Vladislav Barsukov made opening remarks on the federal mercury management in the Russian Federation and the need to create an overall management system. The group reviewed the agenda and logistics.

Review of overall status of ACAP project actions:

ACAP September Meeting decisions – The group reviewed relevant decisions of the ACAP meeting, particularly their approval of two Mercury PSG projects and a decision to address the mercury waste proposal as soon as possible.

PSI – NEFCO updated the group on PSI activities, noting that the PSI may have a preparatory meeting soon; that preliminary criteria for projects include that they must be Arctic Council approved and that they must follow normal project approval processes; and that the PSI has about 16 million Euros in pledges, deposits and allocations, with about 25% tentatively allocated to mercury demonstration projects. Additional monies could be available once projects are concretized.

UNEP/GEF/Russia project – Alexander Romanov gave a presentation on the “Pilot Project on the Development of a Mercury Inventory in the Russian Federation.” This project, which will build upon the 2005 ACAP inventory, runs from May 2013 to May 2016 and has \$1 million in funding from the GEF, with MNRE of the Russian Federation as the national executive agency and SRI as the technical manager under the direction of MNRE. An inception meeting was held in July 2013. Please refer to the full presentation for details; the following is a brief summary.

Component 1 – translate UNEP toolkit, provide basic mercury management information to relevant stakeholders.

Component 2 – develop mercury inventories for relevant industrial sources, including awareness workshops. They have agreements with certain industry associations already in place.

Component 3 – assess and strengthen monitoring and analytical capacity (environmental and human), including assessing labs, collecting available data, and capacity building.

Component 4 – prioritize sources, conduct mercury management gap analysis, develop initial national action plan.

Component 5 – lessons learned, final report, strategies.

Discussion covered possible participation by PSG participants in various planned workshops, which can include observers (though the project has limited opportunity to fund travel); possibility to cooperate with AMAP; plan to use the USEPA monitoring toolkit; desire to involve non-ferrous metals industry which does not have a Russian association; possible linkages with similar efforts in other countries including China; and the expectation that sources covered would align with the Minamata Convention. IPS also mentioned the importance of involvement of indigenous community groups and possible linkage to IPCAP PSG, and Alexander noted that RAIPON had been invited to the inception workshop.

Mercury Emissions Reduction Technology Workshop Project

Marianne summarized the workshop proposal that had been approved by the PSG, and by ACAP in September. Husamuddin Ahmadzai noted common elements between the proposal, the non-ferrous metals approved proposal, and the GEF project. He announced that Sweden was prepared to contribute some funding to support part of the workshop, focused on cleaner technologies for non-ferrous metals

smelting. The Swedish EPA can support this with up to 24,000 Euros, as long as the workshop takes place in 2014. This is also related to an ongoing Sweden-Russia bilateral activity. He noted that a requirement for this to be a PSI project would be that it has a concrete outcome, leading to investment(s). The workshop could appropriately be broad, but with breakout sessions, and that it should include an integrated approach on releases to all media.

The group discussed the fact that the project still requires a project owner and a Russia-based coordinator, and options for that. Vladislav advised that MNRE should make those decisions. The group agreed that Marianne would write to Mr. Ivlev, encouraging MNRE to be the project owner and to designate an in-country coordinator. The communication would also invite the Ministry to make clarifying comments on the project write-up, which has already been approved. The close relationship of the workshop project to the GEF project was noted, but the group also noted that the workshop proposal is not intended to support the GEF project and that they are separate efforts. The workshop is focused on sectors that ACAP identified long ago, and the best practices to operationalize within those sectors.

The group then discussed the risk that the PSI may not be operational in 2014. Because this is a relatively small project, and because it can be a catalyst to drive all of our other efforts forward, the group agreed to a back-up plan under which, if the PSI does not become operational in early 2014, we would seek to augment the Sweden contribution with contributions from our participants to fund specific aspects of the workshop. Eiric Steindal offered to look into the possibility of funding from Norway. Unallocated UNEP funds might also be a possibility. For this purpose we will need a more detailed budget, and Marianne agreed that USEPA would begin to develop that with help from others. This back-up plan would have the workshop take place in 2014; the group discussed advantages and disadvantages of having it early or late in 2014.

Non-ferrous Metals Smelter Project

Husammudin summarized this project, which has been approved by the PSG, and by ACAP in the September meeting. NEFCO will be the coordinator, assuming that the PSI is on board. The PSI supervising committee will be very small, perhaps 1 representative from each co-lead representing the stakeholders (e.g. the Mercury PSG represented by MNRE, USEPA, NEFCO, and the project owner). The Swedish EPA proposed contribution to the above workshop and the bilateral Sweden-Russia project can cover the first component of this project. A well thought through approach to the industry is needed. The group agreed that the Chelyabinsk zinc smelter is the optimal location for the project, based on emissions and previous scoping work already conducted. It has new owners, the Ural Mining and Metallurgical Company and the Russia Copper Company. The waste aspects of the project were discussed briefly. The project is expected to cover best practice and implementation of waste management with due attention to multimedia releases.

The group agreed that NEFCO should engage the Ministry, and that Husamuddin and Vladislav would work together to arrange a meeting within approximately one month.

Mercury Waste Management Proposal

Vladislav presented this proposal, noting that the objectives cover the establishment of mercury-containing waste categories and amounts, as well as collection, transportation, and storage. The expected duration is 15 months with a cost expected to be \$2 million. The project owner would be MNRE. He noted that the ACAP September meeting decided that the Ministry would identify the implementing organization, and that Ecosafety has been proposed as an option, and that there would be an agreement between ACAP and Russian Federation bodies on introduction and use of project results. He noted the focus on the Arctic regions, and that the project builds on the experience of the previous ACAP project led by Denmark. The project would result in a management strategy proposed to oblasts for review, and would build on changes in legislation over the past year.

The group welcomed the proposal and noted its importance. There was discussion of the previous Danish project which ended before it was completed, seemingly due to differences between national and local authorities, and whether this project could integrate or bridge the gaps. Mikala Klint noted that the previous project reports include a significant amount of data and information which should be used for this proposal but also need to be updated to complete certain components of this proposal. The connections between the two efforts will be very important.

Discussion also focused on relationship of this proposal to a broader proposal under consideration within the IHWM PSG. Vladislav clarified that the mercury proposal is intended to be a component of this broader project. It was also noted that a breakdown of the financing would be needed in order to move this proposal forward to the PSI.

The group discussed the scope of the project, and that it covers waste from large enterprises, small enterprises and public buildings, and households. Existing data collection systems do not cover all these levels and a standard database would be a good idea, though questions of who owns, updates and maintains the database must be considered. The existing database is used by Rostekhnadzor to calculate waste payments. Other methods for determining mercury product waste quantities were discussed. There was also discussion about scope in terms of what waste streams covered; it is not just mercury-containing lamps but all mercury waste, but whether from mercury-containing products as well as industry needs to be determined. The proposal envisions implementing the strategy in one or two regions. It was noted that the Barents hotspots for mercury could be considered as pilot areas (eg Nenets). A possible UNEP-managed waste project in Belarus may be instructive.

Vladislav welcomed, and the group agreed to provide, comments in writing. The group agreed that an overall management system is the longer-term objective and that it should form part of an Integrated Hazardous Waste Management Strategy. Vladislav was referring to an updated version of the proposal and indicated he would circulate this version for written comments.

Other matters:

Alona Yefimenko of the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) and Dinara Skavronskaya of the Saami Council gave an informative presentation on “Involving Indigenous Peoples”, and the work through IPCAP to address contaminants issues in indigenous communities in remote areas of the Arctic. Past activities of the Permanent Participating Organizations include the 2004 RAIPON-AMAP project on Persistent Toxic Substances, Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the North; a 2004 ACAP/GCI project on Community-Based Models for PCB Mitigation and Dioxin/Furan Reduction in the Arctic; and a 2005 ACAP/RAIPON project on Inventory of Unaccounted Sources of PCBs and Obsolete Pesticides in the Indigenous Communities of Russian Chukotka. The IPS’ contaminants report, developed for Indigenous Peoples’ participation in implementation of the Stockholm Convention, includes a school toolkit on contaminants and food safety in the Russian Arctic. IPS gave an update on the status re: relocation to the Arctic Council Secretariat in Tromso.

The group discussed the ACAP website’s mercury section, and brainstormed about recommendations for improvements. These ideas will be transmitted to the Secretariat by Marianne.

With respect to the PSG’s other two work areas, the group agreed that industrial gold mining is encompassed by non-ferrous metals smelting, such that the workshop would be the best first step in determining any possible future work on this. Artisanal gold mining is difficult to work on because it is illegal in Russia, though types of small-scale mining using mercury may be allowed. Small-scale gold mining is licensed by the Ministry of Industry and cannot use mercury or polluting practices. MNRE issues licenses to develop gold fields. The group agreed that past assessments are important, including 2005 assessment which noted 5.5 tons of mercury emissions from ASGM in RF, or a Mercury Watch database which indicates 11 tons, and the UNEP-AMAP 2013 assessment.

Next steps:

The next meeting of the group should take place by teleconference between January 15-30, 2013. Marianne will distribute specific city call-in numbers as well as the general number.

Tasks:

- Provide draft meeting minutes to group for review – within a week (late) -- Marianne
- Communicate with MNRE on workshop project including recommendation to MNRE on project owner – Marianne, November
- Provide most recent waste proposal – Vladislav, November
- Comment on waste proposal – all, within two weeks
- Provide recommendations to Secretariat on website – Marianne, asap
- Develop more detailed budget for workshop – USEPA
- Look into funding possibilities for specific workshop line items – all