



GEF/UNDP Project: Demonstrating and Promoting Best Techniques and Practices for Reducing Healthcare Waste to Avoid Environmental Releases of Dioxins and Mercury



PROJECT SUMMARY

The goal of this project is to protect public health and the global environment from the impacts of dioxin and mercury releases. It will accomplish this by demonstrating practices and technologies that limit the amount of healthcare waste generated, eliminate the burning of healthcare waste, and reduce the quantity of broken mercury-containing devices that are improperly handled, discarded or burned. The project involves seven strategically selected countries – Argentina, India, Latvia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Senegal and Vietnam – that represent four of the six official U.N. languages and all of the world’s five development regions. An additional component aimed at developing locally produced, affordable, non-burn healthcare waste treatment technologies is taking place in Tanzania. The project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to facilitate the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on reducing persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The project supports the policies of the World Health Organization as well as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by improving health delivery systems and integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs.

PROJECT IMPORTANCE

Incineration and open burning of healthcare waste generate highly toxic dioxins and furans and are major sources of mercury pollution. This project presents a strategic opportunity to effectively reduce the transport of these persistent organic pollutants and mercury from the health sector to the global environment. Through direct involvement of health professionals and health institutions, the project engages the health sector as important allies in protecting the environment and public health. If replicated and sustained nationally, best practices and techniques initiated during the project’s

implementation are expected to reduce the release of an estimated 187 g TEQ of dioxins and 2,910 kg of mercury to the environment each year from participating countries’ healthcare sectors. The project also lays the groundwork for sustainability, replicability and the scaling-up of best techniques and practices at the local, regional, national and international levels.

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of this project is to protect public health and the global environment from the impacts of dioxin and mercury releases. To achieve this, the project is demonstrating best environmental practices and best available technologies at healthcare facilities that have been selected to serve as models for each participating country and region. The project also involves the development of affordable waste treatment technologies, a review of national policies on healthcare waste management, the enhancement of national training programs, and the dissemination of project results nationally and internationally. These activities are reflected in the following eight project objectives:

1. Establish model facilities and programs to exemplify best practices in healthcare waste management.
2. Deploy and evaluate commercially available, non-incineration healthcare waste treatment technologies appropriate to the needs of each country.
3. Develop, manufacture and deploy affordable, small-scale non-incineration technologies for use in sub-Saharan Africa.
4. Introduce and evaluate the use of mercury-free devices in model facilities.
5. Establish or enhance training programs to build capacity for the implementation of best practices

and technologies both within and beyond the model facilities and programs.

6. Review and update relevant policies.
7. Disseminate project results and materials to stakeholders and hold conferences or workshops to encourage replication.
8. Make project results on demonstrated best techniques and practices available for dissemination and scaling-up regionally and globally.

PROJECT PARTNERS AND STRUCTURE

The project is a globally coordinated demonstration in eight countries. As such, the Global Project Team (GPT) is ultimately responsible for the successful coordination and execution of all project components. The Global Project Team also provides technical and policy expertise and assistance to all project partners. Technical experts in the GPT work with coordinators and consultants in each country to develop a common framework for healthcare waste management, consistent assessment methodologies, and universal best practices and appropriate technologies consistent with Stockholm Convention guidance documents, World Health Organization policies, and other international guidelines. The Global Project Team promotes synergy by sharing national experiences and lessons learned among the eight countries.

Within each country, a National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) composed of relevant stakeholders ensures that support for the project is maintained at all levels of government and within related sectors of society. The National Project Steering Committee assists in seeking co-financing to support project outputs and activities, monitors and evaluates national project activities, and reviews and approves the national work plan and significant project decisions at the national level, in consultation with the Global Project Team.

The National Project Steering Committee also provides guidance to the National Working Group (NWG), which is composed of stakeholders who are more actively engaged in implementing project activities on a day-to-day basis. Members of the National Working Group assist in the collection and dissemination of information on policy, economic, scientific and technical issues, and are responsible for maintaining regular contact with the NPSC and the

Global Project Team and advising those bodies on the progress of the implementation of project activities.

The National Working Group provides guidance and assistance to the National Project Coordinator (and National Technical Consultant, in countries in which these roles are performed by two people). It is the responsibility of the National Project Coordinator to coordinate all aspects of day-to-day project activities in the participating country. The National Project Coordinator works closely with the National Working Group, National Project Steering Committee and the Global Project Team to coordinate, monitor, and facilitate the execution of all national work plan activities properly and on schedule.

The National Technical Consultant, in countries in which this position is not jointly held by the National Project Coordinator, is responsible for successfully implementing a cost-effective alternative systems approach to healthcare waste management in the model facilities selected for participation in this project. This involves collaborating with facility staff to introduce and promote improved waste management practices and technologies, coordinating the training and capacity-building project activities as outlined in the national work plan, and participating in the dissemination of project results. The National Technical Consultant is also responsible for developing and implementing a strategy for aligning national and sub-national healthcare waste management policies with project goals, in collaboration with the National Project Coordinator, National Working Group, National Project Steering Committee, and the Global Project Team.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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