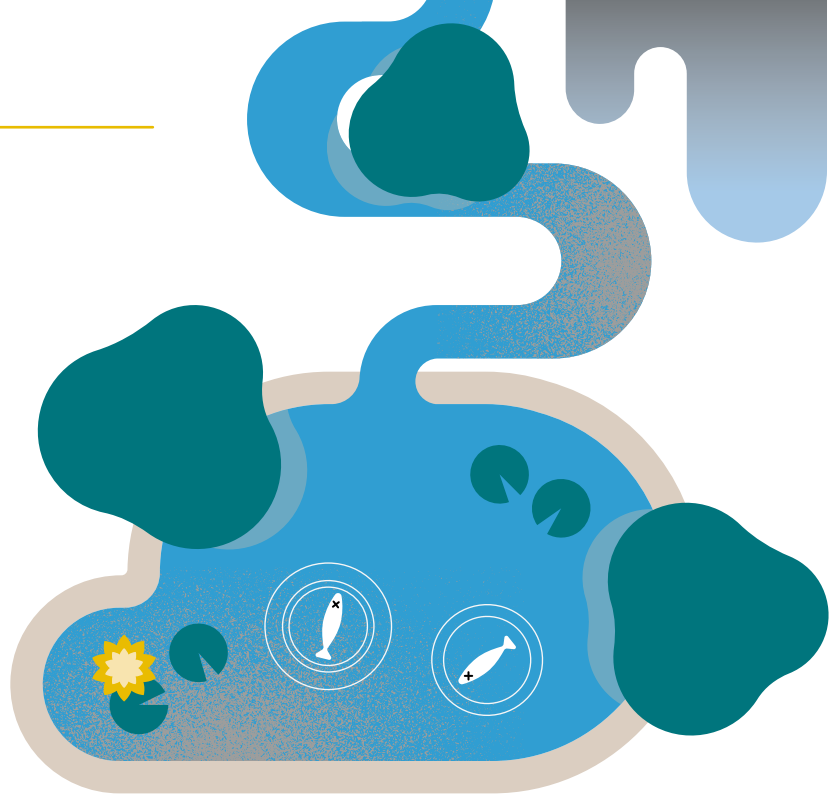


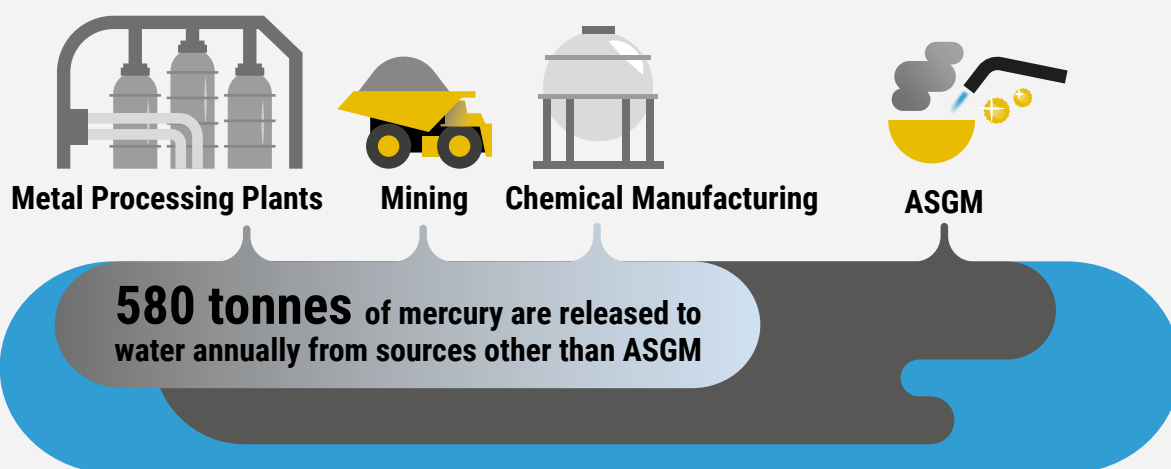
MERCURY RELEASES



- ▶ Mercury released into land and water from anthropogenic sources **can persist for decades** in the environment, accumulating in **sediments**, entering the **food chain**, and impacting **human and environmental health**.
- ▶ **580 tonnes of mercury are released to water** annually from sources other than artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM).
- ▶ Once mercury enters aquatic environments, it becomes extremely difficult to remove, leading to the conversion of mercury into methylmercury, a **highly toxic form that accumulates in fish and shellfish**. The bioaccumulation of mercury in fish

poses serious health risks to humans and wildlife, particularly in regions where fish consumption is high.

- ▶ Many communities, particularly **Indigenous Peoples and coastal populations**, are disproportionately affected due to their reliance on fishing for food and livelihoods.
- ▶ Industrial wastewater from mining, chemical manufacturing, and metal processing plants is **one of the most significant sources of mercury discharges** into rivers and oceans, severely impacting those who eat fish as well as causing additional direct exposure from contaminated soil.



WHAT THE CONVENTION SAYS

The Minamata Convention on Mercury requires Parties to control mercury releases to land and water from relevant point sources. It promotes the use of best available techniques and best environmental practices (**BAT/BEP**) to minimize pollution from industrial activities. Under **Article 9**, Parties are required to:

- **Identify relevant point sources of mercury releases to land and water**, including industrial wastewater discharges from sectors covered under the Convention.
- Establish **inventories of mercury releases** from these sources to serve as a foundation for the development of effective control strategies.
- Implement **control measures utilizing best available techniques and best environmental practices (BAT/BEP)**, in line with the guidance adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

WHAT WE DO

- ▶ Parties are **developing and updating national inventories of mercury releases** to land and water as a basis for identifying priority sources and implementing control measures.
- ▶ Parties are encouraged to **apply the BAT/BEP guidance adopted by the COP**, tailoring strategies to national circumstances and sector-specific conditions.
- ▶ Through their **national reports**, Parties are expected to provide information on actions taken to control mercury releases such as wastewater treatment initiatives or switching to mercury-free processes.
- ▶ The secretariat facilitates the **exchange of information and technical cooperation** among Parties and stakeholders.

REFERENCES

- [Minamata Convention text and annexes](#)
- [Guidance on mercury releases](#) and [technical reference document](#)
- [Minamata Online](#)
- [Global Mercury Assessment 2018](#)

MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a global treaty that helps countries to control, reduce and eliminate mercury across all its life-stages with the objective to protect human health and the environment.

It is named after the bay in Japan where, in the mid-20th century, mercury-tainted industrial wastewater poisoned thousands of people, leading to severe health damage that became known as the “Minamata disease”.

Since it entered into force on 16 August 2017, Parties have been working together to control the mercury supply and trade, reduce the use, emissions and releases of mercury, raise public awareness, and build the necessary institutional capacity.

Minamata Convention website
<https://minamataconvention.org>

