



a toxics-free future

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International SAICM Implementation Project (ISIP)

In 2010, in an effort to demonstrate SAICM implementation via IPEN Participating Organizations, IPEN launched an International SAICM Implementation Project, also known as ISIP. ISIP aims to mobilize resources for initial enabling activities pertaining to national priorities, in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy.

In particular, the ISIP supports the Governance objective of SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 26, which calls for enhanced "cooperation on the sound management of chemicals between Governments, the private sector and civil society at the national, regional and global levels."

In addition, ISIP builds on the 2008-2009 Global SAICM Outreach Campaign to raise awareness about SAICM and strengthen collaboration among the public interest, health and labor sectors.

ISIP Objectives

ISIP's four objectives include:

- Promoting the need for sound chemicals management
- Advancing National SAICM Implementation
- Promoting global SAICM implementation by global civil society
- Building capacity among NGOs developing countries and countries with economies in transition

Title of activity: Rapid Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact and Human Rights Aspect of Mercury Use in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Hotspots in Indonesia

NGO: BaliFokus

Country: Indonesia

Date: November, 2012

Elements of SAICM Covered:

Promote reduction of the risks posed to human health and the environment (57); Help develop comprehensive national profiles or country situation reports about mercury (1, 166); Programs to monitor mercury to assess exposure (66, 82); Promote the development and use of products and processes that pose lesser risks (44); Take immediate action to reduce the risk to human health and the environment posed on a global scale by mercury in products and production processes (59); Participation in activities related to the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on mercury

Description of mercury that is available in the market:

Mercury is a common ingredient found in cosmetics (skin lightening soaps and creams, eye makeup cleansing products and mascara), some light bulbs (CFL), dental amalgam and household thermometers. In Indonesia, however, large amount of liquid mercury is illegally traded and used in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector.

Description of the most common forms of mercury exposure:

In Indonesia, people are mostly exposed to mercury through the water, fish and food chain, and from the air from healthcare facilities, specifically from broken mercury thermometers and exposure from amalgam dental fillings. Additionally, exposure comes from coal-fired power plants and artisanal and small-scale gold mining activities.

Moreover, communities living near to and in the surrounding area of the ASGM area are at high risk to mercury exposure. For example, the communities living within Lebak Gedong in Lebak, West Java Province, in the ASGM hotspot area of Poboya in Palu, Central Sulawesi Province, and also in Sekotong, West Lombok Regency of West Nusa Tenggara Province are at high risk. These three regions are widely recognized as part of the largest ASGM hotspots in Indonesia.

Environment and Human Rights

Over the years, the international community has increased its awareness on the relationship between the environment and human rights. Living in a healthy and toxics-free environment is a basic human right and imperative to pursuing sustainable development and sustainable livelihoods.

Description of human sources of mercury:

The poor practice of CFL bulbs crushing and leakage of mercury-based thermometers and sphygmomanometers are some of the well-known human activities that could release mercury at the health care facility.

Furthermore, in Indonesia, ASGM is identified as the largest source of mercury release from intentional use. Through ASGM activities, mercury emissions will be spread out into the air, and eventually will be deposited in water bodies, soil and the food chains. For example, people live downstream of the polluted water would directly suffer from mercury residues that flow from upstream, where the ASGM operates.

In regards to the ASGM hotspots distribution, in 2006, there were about 576 hotspots of ASGM identified in Indonesia involving about 50,000 miners (Geology Resource Center, 2006). As the gold price was hiked up, coupled by the economic crises and poor law enforcement, the number of hotspots was almost doubled in 2010, and involved about 250,000 miners with more than 1,000,000 people affected and risking their lives from ASGM activities (Ismawati, 2010).

Description of the levels of mercury release and exposure:

BaliFokus conducted a mercury inventory study on the estimation of mercury release in Indonesia in 2012 using the Toolkit provided by UNEP (Level-1), BaliFokus estimated, at the minimum, 183,200 Kg of Hg is released every year to the environment in Indonesia. The top five individual mercury release categories are; (1) Gold extraction with mercury amalgamation, (2) Oil and gas production, (3) Coal combustion and other coal use, (4) Waste incineration and open waste burning, and (5) Use and disposal of other products.

Description of the damage caused by mercury:

In ASGM, particularly for children, the hazards derived from mercury use and the harsh working environment are obvious. They are physical and psychological hazards; e.g., abuse, forced to work underground or under the water for a long time, and other exploitative practices that are highly dangerous. Children age 10-18 are often "achievers," and boys especially like challenges. They want to perform well, go for the extra mile, and are inexperienced and

untrained in dealing with hazards. Tools are not made for them, so they pose more hazards. There are no personal protection devices for children. Additionally, they are also not organized, and are powerless. Girls are at special risk. They often begin to work at a younger age and have a double work burden (at home and in the fields). They frequently work longer hours, and in different cultural settings may get poorer nutrition. Both boys and girls are exposed to a high risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Miners who have been working with mercury for many years face a very high risk to mercury exposure. People who have been exposed to mercury would experience headaches, feel terribly weak, have a bitter taste in their mouths, and would also have tremors and coordination problems. Mercury is a neurotoxin, as it affects the cerebellum, which is the part of the brain that helps humans move properly and coordinate movements. Mercury also harms the kidneys and other organs, but the neurological damage is irreversible.

Description of the laws currently regulating mercury:

Current national legislation considers mercury as part of toxics, which is highly dangerous. Its use is permitted, but selective and limited only. However, there is a wide gap between the goals of the legislation and the practice at the ground.

Mercury can only be imported by a designated agency (PT. Indonesia Trade Centre) and the end user (CFL manufacturer or thermometer and sphygmomanometer manufacturers). However, mercury could be easily found in the market and in ASGM hotspots, and is widely used in many parts of ASGM sites.

Description of the efforts to deal with mercury:

So far, the government, through the Technical Working Group on Mercury, has not yet issued a national action plan on managing mercury. Actions in the field are limited to gathering baseline data, focusing on the number of ASGM hotspots and the level of mercury releases to the environment and humans.

Description of what forces support and oppose the Mercury Treaty, the public participation consultation process, and the level of public awareness of the treaty process:

Indonesia participated in all mercury negotiations meetings, led by the Ministry of Environment. Socialization and consultation with the public and other stakeholders is very limited. So far, the socialization has only taken place in Jakarta, the capital city.

The general public is aware of the treaty process and the media has widely covered the progress of the negotiation. The general public is also aware of the Minamata tragedy and the harmful effects of mercury to their health and to the environment.

Project Outcome:

Description of the activity conducted:

- Conducted research and interviewed the community at 3 ASGM hotspots (Lebak Gedong in Lebak District of West Java Province, Poboya in Palu of Central Sulawesi Province, and Sekotong in West Lombok Regency of West Nusa Tenggara Province);
- Updated the map of Indonesia ASGM hotspots;
- Conducted rapid assessment of the socio-economic impact and human rights aspect of mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining hotspots in Indonesia;
- Published the study result related to mercury management in Indonesia (in cooperation with Indonesian Center for Environmental Law/ ICEL);

- Sent out recommendations to reduce and eliminate the impacts of mercury on human health to policy makers and local stakeholders.

Impact on target groups:

BaliFokus implemented questionnaire sampling, direct interviews, and discussions as tools to engage with the target groups and collect the data.

Impact on target policies:

The target is to formulate a set of recommendations and present it directly to the Indonesia Technical Working Group on Mercury. BaliFokus has presented the data and recommendations to the Working Group. The study report has been accepted and Banten Province has been identified as one of the key ASGM hotspots. No further responses have yet been received regarding the human rights issues and the mercury pollution in ASGM hotspots. National agencies refer it to local government's policy and responsibilities.

Outreach to stakeholders:

Type of stakeholder: government, academia, and NGOs.

- Ministry of Environment;
- Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources;
- University of Tadulako;
- University of Mataram;
- Bandung Institute of Technology;
- Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI);
- Indonesian Center for Environment Law;
- Local community groups.

Deliverables, outputs and/or products:

Report of Rapid Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact and Human Rights Aspect of Mercury Use in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Hotspots in Indonesia - in English and Bahasa.

Communication efforts:

As a result of the research, we managed to inform the public about the results and the project itself through dissemination of the report to journalists, other NGOs, and through BaliFokus' website

SAICM National Focal Point:

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Recommendations, from a public interest, NGO perspective, on reducing and eliminating human sources of mercury:

To prevent further damage, there are several recommendations that can be done by relevant stakeholders:

Local governments:

- Establish a multi-stakeholders forum on ASGM management;
- Identify and legalize ASGM activities in the region;
- Conduct rapid assessment followed by a baseline data survey;
- Develop a local action plan to eliminate and ban the use of mercury in ASGM.

Local community leaders:

- Uphold human rights and the rights to a healthy living environment;

- Establish community committees or use the existing body/forum to discuss the ASGM issues;
- Prohibit the use of mercury in ASGM;
- Coordinate with the local government agencies and other stakeholders.

ASGM miners:

- Form a cooperative or small business unit;
- Register with the local authority;
- Keep a list and identity of all workers;
- Employ no child labor or workers aged under 18;
- Prepare and sign written working contracts with all workers;
- Provide health and safety insurance for all workers;
- Provide and apply all health and safety protections for all workers;
- Use non-mercury methods in gold extraction processes;
- Develop and implement environmental management for all ASGM activities;
- Develop and implement environmental rehabilitation when ASGM activities are finished;
- Uphold human rights and sustainable livelihoods over economic interests.

Academia and civil society:

- Promote, support and advocate the elimination and ban of the use of mercury in ASGM;
- Share and disseminate relevant information to the stakeholders;
- Participate in the decision making process;
- Get involved in environmental, social, economic, health and human rights monitoring;
- Promote sustainable livelihoods and uphold human rights above all.