

Global Observation System for Mercury (GOS4M)

A Flagship of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO)

Membership Agreement

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Global Observation System for Mercury (GOS4M)

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Membership Agreement

Section 1 – Parties to this Agreement and scope

- The scope of this Membership Agreement is to build a partnership of Institutions that carry out activities related to the Minamata Convention, be research- or policy-oriented activities, which include, but not limited to, monitoring mercury contamination in air and terrestrial ecosystems and impact on human health, modelling the fate of mercury between and within environmental compartments, and carrying out capacity building and transfer of knowledge programmes.
- Membership is open to any existing mercury monitoring and research network and consortia as well as to universities, research institutions and government organizations.

Section 2 – Association and disassociation of Applicants

- An Organisation that has signed this Agreement becomes a Member of the Steering Committee.
- A Member may disassociate itself from this Agreement by addressing a written request to the Steering Committee.

Section 3 – Rational and Objectives of GOS4M

The Global Observation System for Mercury (GOS4M) (www.gos4m.org) is a flagship initiative of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO – www.earthobservations.org) and is part of the GEO Work Programme (2016-2025). GOS4M has a strong foundation on the outcomes of the former GEO Task on Health Surveillance [HE-02 “Tracking Pollutants”] established as a part of the GEO Work Plan (2009-2015).

GOS⁴M is aimed to support all interested Parties in the implementation of the Minamata Convention. The core of GOS4M business plan’s objective is to support the Nations, Minamata Convention Secretariat, UN Environment and others interested Parties and Stakeholders to contribute to fulfil the COP (Conference of the Parties) decisions and requests related to, but not limited by, capacity-building and technical assistance to developing country Parties (Article 15), research, development and monitoring (Article 19) and Effectiveness Evaluation of the convention (Article 22). The overarching goal of GOS4M is to promote actions aiming to provide comparable global monitoring mercury data and validated modelling frameworks. In order to achieve this objective, GOS4M’s key goal is to promote the establishment of a federation of existing regional and global monitoring networks that would allow to provide global comparable monitoring data for the purpose of the convention. The availability of comparable mercury monitoring data would foster the validation of numerical and statistical models used to assess the fate of mercury from local to global scales with changing emission regimes and climate, and source-receptor relationships. Another important goal of GOS4M is to support Nations and all interested Parties in developing their own national or/and regional monitoring programme by providing technical assistance and promoting capacity building programmes for setting up new monitoring sites in areas where no mercury monitoring facilities and expertise are available.

Specific objectives of GOS4M are:

- To increase the availability and quality of Earth Observation data acquired by in-situ, off-shore and satellite sensors that may well contribute to improve our capability to track mercury releases, establish source-receptor relationships, assess their fate and impact with changing emission regimes and climate;

- To promote the establishment of a federation of existing mercury monitoring networks and programs in order to facilitate the access to available data and knowledge on mercury levels in different environmental matrixes by the scientific community, policy makers and stakeholders;
- To promote the harmonization of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) used by existing monitoring networks measuring the concentrations of mercury species in ambient air and precipitation samples as well as in biota.
- To harmonize the metadata description, archiving and data sharing methodologies used by existing mercury monitoring networks and programs;
- To contribute to improve the global coverage of currently available mercury monitoring data by promoting the establishment of new monitoring sites in areas that do not have monitoring capabilities and facilities. The use of Passive Air Samplers (PASSs) is considered a cost-effective method for achieving this goal;
- To promote intercomparisons and validation of existing modelling frameworks and tools used to assess the fate of mercury in and between atmospheric and terrestrial compartments.
- To contribute to the development of downstream services designed to perform cost-benefit analysis of different strategies aiming to reduce the level of mercury in environmental media and human exposure.
- To develop advanced web services aiming to facilitate the access and use of state-of-the-art scientific information and data by policy makers and stakeholders.

Section 4 – Objectives of the Agreement

- The Applicant agrees to provide access to mercury monitoring data produced by the monitoring network and program that are part of this signed Agreement (Annex - I).
- The Applicant may decide to provide access to raw data or/and QA/QC internally approved data sets in agreement with the internal policy and business plan of the network or/and programme that has been proposed as contributor to GOS4M.
- The Applicant has no obligation in continuing to be part of GOS4M if the Applicant decide to discontinue its membership.
- The Applicant will be a Member of the GOS4M Steering Committee and as such will be invited to Steering Committee meetings with right to express one vote.

Section 5 – Description of monitoring station(s) and/or network and/or database

- The Applicant will share information on the data produced by its network/programme by providing the information requested in Annex-I.
- The Applicant will inform the Steering Committee on any change that may occur in its programme and information reported in Annex-I.

Section 6 – Collaborative Data Analysis and Publication

- The Applicant agrees to collaborate within the GOS4M community, if interested, in the data analysis, inter-comparison of new methods/technologies and setting up the data catalogue.
- The Applicant agrees to collaborate to publish data in brochures, reports, scientific journals and in public presentation like for example meeting and workshops.

Section 7 – Intellectual property rights

Applicable Law

Nothing in this Membership Agreement should be read to alter the scope and application of Intellectual Property Rights and benefit sharing agreements as determined under relevant laws, regulations and international agreements of Participants.

Access to Data

To the greatest extent possible, the GOS4M portal is an open-access facility. All users whether GOS4M Members, end-users or others, should have equal access to databases and reports that are part of GOS4M.

Intellectual Property Rights

Being GOS4M part of GEO WP, the Members agree on the GEO data sharing principles and promotes the free dissemination and access to data sets provided directly or indirectly (through ftp or a dedicated link) through the GOS4M portal.

Attribution

GOS4M seeks to ensure that the owner/publisher of data is acknowledged and requests that such attribution be maintained in any subsequent use of the data as reported in the metadata description of the data set.

Any other issues related to the intellectual property rights that is not clearly mentioned in this agreement is regulated by the appropriate international law.

Section 8 – Acceptance of Annexes

The Applicant declares to accept the content of the following annexes:

- Annex-I: GOS4M - Information shared by the Applicant
- Annex-II: GOS4M - Governing Bodies and Rules

Section 9 – Modifications to this Agreement

This Agreement can be modified by the Steering Committee upon a written request submitted by one or more members of GOS4M to the Steering Committee.

Section 10 – Signatures

The Applicant

Institution full name:

Authorized representative (first and last name):

Role in the Organization:

Signature:

Stamp of the organization:

Date:

ANNEX - I

Global Mercury Observation System (GMOS)

Information shared by the Applicant

<p>Description of the Monitoring network (<i>attachments can be used to provide information requested in the table below</i>)</p> <p>The list of parameters reported below is only indicative, the Applicant may change this list in order to reflect the peculiarity of its own monitoring programme and information that would be made available to GOS4M community.</p> <p>It is requested to provide metadata information for each data set that would be shared and made available through www.gos4m.org</p>	
<i>Example of requested information:</i>	
Map showing the location of Monitoring Stations along with LAT/LON of each site	
Members of the network	
Synthetic description of the network	
Air/water/biota data	
Parameter and unit of measurement	
Method of measurements	
Information related to implemented SOPs	
Information related to QA/QC procedures	
WWW or FTP link to access to data sets	

ANNEX - II

Global Observation System for Mercury (GOS⁴M)

Governing Bodies and Rules

1. The governance structure

The organisational structure of GOS⁴M comprises the following two Governing Bodies:

1. A Steering Committee
2. A Scientific Advisory Board

Members of each Governing Body are appointed every three years following rules reported in the Section-5.

Each Governing Body shall elect among Members a **Chair** and three **co-Chairs**. The election of **Chair** and **co-Chairs** follows the rules reported in Section 5.

The co-Chairs shall support the Chair in her/his activity.

The **Chair** shall lead the Body in cooperation with co-Chairs. The Chair shall convene meetings, prepare and send the agenda, prepare and circulate the minutes for approval by all Members.

2. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) is in charge to ensure the achievement of goals and objectives of GOS⁴M as reported in Section 3 of this Membership Agreement.

The SC is in charge to:

- ensure the efficient management and implementation of the GOS⁴M Business Plan (BP) [refer to GEO WP (2017-2019)];
- revise the BP by considering the suggestions that may be provided by its members and by the SAB;
- liaise with participating organisations and institutions supporting the gathering and collection of mercury data and information;
- ensure an efficient communication and outreach activities;
- coordinate the sharing of up-to-date information provided by GOS⁴M Members with all interested Parties;
- ensure that GOS⁴M portal provides state-of-the-art information, data, tools in support of Parties of the MC;
- promote the development of joint cooperation activities and projects among its members and between its members and other organisations;
- peer-review the reports and guidance documents produced by GOS⁴M;
- report to GEO Secretariat on the progress of GOS⁴M and its major achievements;

The Steering Committee will consist of:

- One Representative of each participating Network and Programme, and
- One Representative from each UN Caucus

Representatives of each UN Caucus will ensure an efficient liaison between the SC Members and representatives of regional, national and local organizations that coordinate monitoring or capacity building programmes that may provide a valuable contribution to the achievement of the GOS⁴M goals.

3. Scientific Advisory Board

The **Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)** is a subsidiary body established to advise the Steering Committee on matters relating to current and future mercury science and technology information.

The **SAB** is composed of nine (9) members plus members of the ad-hoc Expert Group, who are distinguished experts in one or more mercury research and policy domain who have provided a significant contribution to advancement of science and policy related to the global mercury pollution and its effects on human health.

The members of the **SAB** are nominated by the **SC** and is led by two **co-Chairs**.

The co-chairs are nominated by consensus by SAB members and have to be from different UN Caucuses.

Responsibility of the SAB

The **SAB** is expected to provide the scientific guidance and direction to GOS4M community on different aspects related to mercury science in the environment and human health as detailed in Section-3 of this agreement. The SAB's members will be engaged by the SC to review all scientific material and products before these became of public domain as well as may be asked by the SC to provide an input to the revision of the Business Plan of GOS4M.

The **SAB** can establish an Expert Group (EG) to cover expertise not available among its members. **The Expert Group** would comprise well known experts on emerging topics that might be relevant for the GOS4M activities. As preliminary assessment of emerging cross-cutting research topics and technological recent innovations, the EG may involve experts in the following domains:

- Metadata definition and implementation rules, management and integration with the GEOSS Common Infrastructure and data sharing and data management principles;
- Intercomparison and harmonization of QA/QC protocols and standard operating procedures adopted in existing monitoring networks and programmes;
- Atmospheric, marine and ecosystems modelling: intercomparison, testing and upgrade of regional and global models that may be used for assessing different scenarios of policy implementation and policy effectiveness evaluation;
- Biota: preparation and merging of databases on mercury contamination.

4. Preparation and organisation of meetings

Meetings of each of the Governing Bodies may be held on annual basis by physical presence, teleconference or others telecommunication means.

It is encouraged to held joint SC and SAB meetings to the extend possible.

The co-chair of a Governing Body is responsible to convene such meetings. Meetings can also be convened upon request of one or more Members of the Body.

The date and venue of the meetings of a Governing Body are decided by consensus of all members.

The chairperson of a Governing Body shall prepare and send to each Member of that Body the draft agenda no later than 14 days preceding the meeting and ask for further input to the agenda.

Any agenda item requiring a decision by the Members of a Governing Body must be identified as such on the agenda and where necessary provided with a companion document.

Each Governing Body shall report its activity on annual basis and all reports/minutes of the meetings shall be published on the GOS4M website.

5. Representation in meetings and voting

Members of the Governing Bodies:

- are expected to be present or represented at meetings of the Governing Body;
- may appoint an authorized substitute or a proxy to attend, take decision and vote at the meetings;
- may participate in meetings in person or virtually;
- shall participate in a cooperative manner in the meetings.

Each Member present or represented in the meeting of each Governing Body shall have one vote.

All decisions of the Governing Body should be taken by consensus, in case a consensus is not achieved a quorum shall consist on a majority as follow:

- simple majority: 50% of the membership + 1 vote
- qualified majority: 2/3 (66.66%)

In the case that the meeting is held via teleconference or other telecommunication means the co-Chairs shall inform the Members of the Governing body on the outcome of the vote and possible prepare a detailed report.