

CONCEPT NOTE

Towards a coordinated, multi-sectoral lead management approach in low- and middle-income countries: Consultations in Asia-Pacific region

Date: 10 July 2025

Time: 12:00-13:30 CET

Location: Online event Microsoft Teams (English only)

Background

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with the support of the European Commission and Ministry of Environment of Japan, is facilitating a consultation on lead sources and management in Asia-Pacific countries.

This initiative comes at a crucial juncture, as previous international efforts around lead exposure reduction primarily targeted single sources of lead contamination, such as leaded petrol and paint. However, a growing body of research highlights the wide variety of sources impacting lead exposure, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), encompassing various industries and consumer products.

Recognizing that policy and regulatory approaches to addressing sources of lead exposure may vary, adopting a comprehensive look at lead management policies in LMICs across sectors holds immense promise. By embracing a holistic perspective, it becomes feasible to discern the primary drivers of lead exposure with greater clarity, increase awareness of policymakers, and pave the way for the development of cohesive, enduring mitigation strategies, action plans, and other relevant instruments. Moreover, addressing lead management on a multi-sectoral basis empowers stakeholders to forge vital connections between lead mitigation efforts and broader development objectives or societal priorities, thereby enhancing the mobilization of resources towards this critical cause. Through promoting collaborative action and a multifaceted approach, these consultations aim to catalyze impactful change in safeguarding public health and environmental well-being across the Asia-Pacific region.

Objectives

The aim of this consultation is to explore the feasibility of a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach by LMIC national governments to manage sources of lead exposure.

The objectives of the consultations include to:

- facilitate the exchange of information among Asia-Pacific countries on existing lead management activities and needs;
- understand sources of lead exposure and applicable regulations identified at the country or regional level;
- present examples of coordinated multi-sectoral lead management approaches, including country-level efforts;
- discuss current barriers and opportunities for lead exposure reduction action, including a coordinated and multi-sectoral lead management approach.

AGENDA

Moderator: Ms. Mihaela Paun, Programme Management Officer, Chemicals and Health Branch, United Nations Environment Programme

Welcome and introductions (5 min.)

UNEP, Chemicals and Health Branch

Setting the scene on lead management (20 min.)

Overview of Lead Pollution Issues in Asia-Pacific (10 min.)

Ms. Emily Nash, UNEP Lead management expert

Examples of coordinated multi-sectoral lead management approaches (10 min.)

Dr. Indu Bhushan, Chairman, Pahle India Foundation - India Working Group on Lead Poisoning

Panel discussion – Country Representatives (30 min.)

Mr. Kinley Dorjee, Research Officer, Ministry of Health, Bhutan - National blood lead survey and lead source assessments

Ms. Amelia Rachmatunisa, Senior Environmental Impact Management, Directorate of Hazardous and Non-Hazardous Waste, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia - Management of lead as a hazardous substance, including used lead-acid batteries

Mr. Laska Sophal, Director, Department of Hazardous Substances Management, Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Cambodia - Development of a lead paint law

Panel discussion – International Organizations and Civil Society Representatives (20 min.)

- *Mr. Mushtaq Memon, Programme Management Officer, Regional Coordinator, Chemicals, Waste management & Air Quality Sub-programme, UNEP Asia-Pacific Office*
- *Mr. Abheet Solomon - Senior Advisor, Environment, CEED-Programme Group, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*
- *Mr. Jeiel Guarino, Global Lead Paint Elimination Campaigner, IPEN (International Pollutants Elimination Network)*
- *Representative from the World Health Organization (WHO) (TBC)*

Questions and Open Discussion (10 min.)

- *All participants*

Conclusions and Final Remarks (5 min.)

Questions for panelists:

1. What strategies have been successful in identifying and addressing sources of lead exposure in Asia-Pacific countries? This could be either high concentration sources (such as industrial hotspots), or more diffuse sources of exposure (that may be lower concentration, but more ubiquitous). What sort of monitoring mechanisms are required and what are the current challenges?
2. How can Asia-Pacific countries leverage existing lead management activities to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing nationally and across the region?
3. What practical steps can be taken to overcome barriers to implementing a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach to lead management, and how can stakeholders collaborate to address these challenges effectively? What are the roles of various stakeholder groups (government, NGOs, academia, industry, local communities)?
4. How can stakeholders in Asia-Pacific countries align their efforts in lead management with broader development goals and societal priorities, and what strategies can be implemented to improve the mobilization of resources for this purpose?
5. How can the international community support Asia-Pacific countries in developing and implementing comprehensive and multi-sectoral lead management strategies that align with broader development objectives and priorities?