

## **Advisory Board (AB) of the ICMGP conference**

### White Paper

#### **1. Introduction**

Considerable scientific knowledge has been developed on sources and emissions of mercury, its pathways and cycling through the environment, human and wildlife exposure, and impacts on human and wildlife health. Scientists, researchers, and policy makers agree that mercury exposure today threatens human and wildlife health in many regions of the globe. The scientific knowledge, obtained through studies conducted by scientists and researchers across all continents, formed the basis for the decision by policy makers to develop an international agreement to reduce emissions, releases, and exposure to mercury, known as the Minamata Convention of the UN Environment Programme. Prior to the earliest negotiations of the Minamata Convention, the International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP), was first held in Gavle Sweden in 1990. Since then, it has been an important gathering for sharing and assessing our knowledge on mercury as a global environmental pollutant, as well as identifying solutions to reducing releases, emissions, and exposures to this pollutant. Therefore, active engagement in events like ICMGP allows stakeholders to address challenges and develop effective strategies for a healthier, sustainable future, safeguarding human and wildlife health from mercury pollution. Moreover, the ICMGP has been the premier mercury science meeting at which future research needs are discussed, as well as measures for enhancing the implementation efficiency of the Minamata Convention.

Fifteen successful ICMGP conferences have been organized to date. During discussions at recent conferences, it was strongly recommended that an Advisory Board (AB) be established to not only support and strengthen the achievement of ICMGP's goals but also to ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts. The Advisory Board's role would be instrumental in guiding the ongoing initiatives of the ICMGP and facilitating the progression towards the formation of a Mercury Society. This step towards sustainability aims to create a lasting impact on addressing mercury pollution, fostering collaboration, and promoting a healthier and more environmentally conscious future.

#### **2. Mission**

Mission of the AB is to:

- To ensure the long-term sustainability of ICMGP conference series,
- Uphold and recognize the traditions of the ICMGP conference,
- Provide strategic thinking to ensure the ongoing effectiveness and benefits of the ICMGP conference to the research, government, industry, and resource management communities in changing times,
- Monitor the progress of ICMGP organization, offer suggestions, and intervene, when necessary to enhance its success,
- Promote the dissemination and application of valuable research outcome for the benefit of society and the environment,

- Provide the advice to the Scientific Steering Committees (SSCs) of individual ICMGP conferences in the selection of appropriate locations to host the conferences and to provide efficient contact with conference stakeholders through participation in the work of the SSCs, and
- Initiate and guide discussions concerning the establishment of the Mercury Society as a legally recognized and financially independent entity. This involves strategic planning, coordination, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders to formalize the Mercury Society's structure and operations.

### **3. Main tasks of the AB**

Main tasks of the AB include:

- Ensure the sustainability of the ICMGP by:
  - Providing sound guidance on how to select appropriate conference organizers,
  - Providing consistency for the ICMGP,
  - Providing guidance to ensure that equity, diversity and including are all well represented in the ICMGP conference makeup,
  - Identifying appropriate strategies for challenging and changing times,
  - Safeguarding that the scope of the conference is appropriate for the ICMGP community,
  - Intervening when the values of the conference are not being met,
  - Investigating the viability of a formal Mercury Society.
- Ensure that the practices of implementing the conference are upheld by:
  - Providing recommendations on financial success,
  - Providing guidance on the operational makeup of the scientific steering committee and associated committees,
  - Verifying that the key scientific principles of the ICMGP are being met,
  - Ensuring that there are no conflicts of interest by the Chairs or SSC members.
- Provide advice and guidance to the conference chairs in respect of the need for global representation on the Scientific Steering Committee, ideas on future locations of ICMGP conferences, as well as share past conference templates, protocols, and procedures that may assist their planning logistics of the ICMGP conference,
- Act as a sounding board to conference chairs and SSCs on operating the ICMGP,
- Support SSCs by providing contacts with scientific and non-scientific stakeholders of the ICMGP conferences and promote the continuity of interactions between Hg scientists and non-scientific users of mercury research results, including encouraging participation in the conference by relevant stakeholders and potential exhibitors of various equipment at the ICMGP conferences,
- Provide updated list of potential ICMGP sponsors,
- Liaise with representatives of the Minamata Convention on Mercury on “synergies” between the convention and the ICMGP conference series, and

- Lead discussions on establishing the Mercury Society. This involves strategic planning, coordination, and collaboration with stakeholders to formalize the society's structure and operations. The ultimate goal is to create a sustainable institution dedicated to addressing mercury pollution and promoting research, management, and solutions. By leading these discussions, the Advisory Board aims to establish a dedicated platform supporting ongoing efforts to tackle global mercury-related challenges.

#### **4. Composition of the AB**

In the initial stage, e.g. up to the 16<sup>th</sup> ICMGP in Cape Town, the following Chairpersons of previous ICMGP conferences have agreed to form the AB:

Milena Horvat, Alexandra Steffen, Lynwill Martin, Charles Driscoll, Xinbin Feng, Lesley Sloss, Joy leaner, Celia Y. Chen and Jozef Pacyna. The members of the AB are named as ICMGP Ambassadors.

Terms and composition of the AB are as follows:

1. Chair of the AB
2. 2 x co chairs
3. Members

The AB membership will be comprised of past ICMGP chairs. Past chairs are limited to 2 members represented per conference.

A quorum of members to have a meeting must be 60% of the membership. If such a quorum is not present, the decisions made at the meeting are only valid with agreement from 60% of the membership.

The AB will act on behalf of the good of the ICMGP, participate in discussions, deliberations, and decisions in a courteous and professional manner.

The role of the chairperson is to:

- Convene and lead the meetings,
- Present the agenda, and
- Call any votes.

The role of the co-chairs is:

- Take minutes of the meetings and provide them in a timely manner to the members, and
- Represent the chairperson should they not be available.

The Chairperson of the ICMGP AB in its initial stage is Jozef Pacyna.

#### **5. Modus Operandi**

- The AB members will meet in person at the ICMGP conference, where possible,

- The AB will primarily work virtually and meet on a 2-year basis, and
- The Chairperson and vice-Chairperson of the AB will be selected by the AB members for a 2-year cadency at a physical meeting.

In summary, the role of the Advisory Board is to support the organization of the ICMGP conference series and promote the long-term viability of future ICMGP conferences. It is not meant to be an overarching body impacting the scientific program of a given ICMGP. Instead, the Advisory Board focuses on strategic planning, financial support, institutional partnerships, legacy initiatives, continuous improvement, knowledge dissemination, and other activities to ensure the sustainability and success of the conference series.