



## 'Improving Environmental Management in the Mining Sector of Suriname with Emphasis on Artisanal and Small-Scale Goldmining' (EMSAGS)

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**Date** : 07 June 2022  
**Location** : Conference room Ministry of Natural Resources  
**Meeting** : High level information sharing on EMSAGS Project  
**Time** : 10:00 am. – 12:00 pm.

### **Attendees:**

- Minister of Natural Resources,
- Minister of Finance,
- Minister of Public Health,
- Minister of Spatial Planning and Environment,
- Directors and Deputy Directors of abovementioned Ministries,
- Director NIMOS,
- Representative of the Planning Bureau,
- Representatives of the Directorate of Tax,
- Chairman of the Project Board,
- Other members of the Project Board,
- EMSAGS PMU.

### **Program:**

- 10:00 am: Welcome and introduction by Chair Project Board, Thania Chin-A-Lin
- 10:05 am: Formal opening by Mining Director, Mrs. P. Simons
- 10:10 am: Welcome Acting Director NIMOS, Cedric Nelom
- 10:15 am: Presentation EMSAGS Project by PC, Sandra Bihari
- 10:45 am: Q&A
- 10:55 am: Presentation of posters to Ministers by Chair Project Board, Thania Chin-A-Lin
- 11:00 am: Closing by Chair Project Board, Thania Chin-A-Lin.



### **Welcome word from Minister of Natural Resources**

The Minister welcomed the attendees and indicated that the EMSAGS project is a very important project for the mining sector of Suriname. All stakeholders should be optimally involved since that is the only way the project will be successful.

### **Welcome and introduction by Chair of the Project Board, Thania Chin-A-Lin**

The Chairman welcomed the attendees and gave a short introduction of the project. She stated that the use of mercury in the mining sector is a national issue that requires a national approach. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources, together with NIMOS which falls under the Ministry of ROM. Today marks the beginning of information exchange with all Ministries to raise high level government attention to this project and the issue of environmental pollution, deforestation and pollution of waterways due to mercury use.

### **Opening by Director of Mining, Preciosa Simons**

The Director indicated that mining has traditionally been the driving force of the economy in Suriname. In mining, not only the environment plays a role, but also the right to life. the Government must help to keep these two aspects in balance. The use of mercury in small-scale gold mining has negative consequences, therefore, mercury use must be eliminated in phases. Through this project we want to give an impetus to combating mercury pollution in a responsible manner.

### **Welcome word by Director NIMOS, Cedric Nelom**

The Director of NIMOS emphasizes that there will be an intervention within the project, the success of which will depend on coordination and cooperation from the government.



### Questions, comments and next steps

- **Minister Natural Resources:**

What is the specific status of the project?

Is the target of 50% reduction in mercury use in 10 years realistic? Should it not be adjusted more ambitiously?

What is the current situation with regard to carbon stocks assessment?

- **Director NIMOS:**

The target of reduction of mercury use can be adjusted taking into account that other substances such as cyanide are also used in small scale mining.

- **Minister of Finance:**

Enforcement of the use of mercury should be increased. Recommendation: make enforcement an integral part of the current project so that the objective of the project does not get lost. Projects/organizations should also not work alongside each other, but complementary to each other.

- **Minister Natural Resources:**

Other projects/initiatives are being developed to identify mercury smuggling and gold smuggling. There is also another project that focuses on Forest Smart Mining.

- **Chair Project Board:**

Mercury enters the country illegally. This will have to be mapped out properly in order to plan monitoring and the phasing out of mercury use. Not only the Ministry of Natural Resources has a role to play in this, but also the Ministry of Justice and Police, the Tax Authorities, Customs Office and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, among others.



▪ **Minister of Finance:**

What is the state of affairs since the start of the project in 2018?

○ **Chair Project Board:**

There was a delay at the start of the project due to staffing of the PMU, among other things. In addition, the COVID pandemic also caused delays. At the beginning of 2021, the project was relaunched.

○ **Project coördinator:**

The delay within the project has influenced the project status. Due to the backlog, there is enormous pressure on the implementing partners and the PMU to achieve the goals set. This is also the case, because the donor has indicated that the project will not be extended. In order to compensate for the backlog, certain activities have been adjusted, such as outcome 2. The Project Board has approved that within outcome 2 the draft mining law and stakeholder engagement consultations will be supported. Discussion on the start-up of the MTECs are being accelerated and joint ventures are being entered into with organizations with similar objectives, such as WWF which is at an advanced stage of setting up demo sites in Brokopondo and Snesi kondre.

▪ **Minister Spatial Planning and Environment:**

The project design occurred years ago and some activities are outdated and need to be revisited. Also, there are many overlaps between existing projects within the environmental portfolio. Recommendation: streamline the project to assess if all elements of the project still need to be implemented.

○ **Chair project board:**

We realize that there are parts in the project that are somewhat outdated, but we have planned to carry out activities within the framework of the project that in support of other existing laws/regulations, for example, the mining law.



With regard to setting up a structure to monitor and control the use of mercury, the guidelines already exist, but a structure needs to be set up for the practical execution of the guidelines. With regard to enforcement, the project is committed to elaborating state decrees that are linked to the mining law.

▪ **Minister Health:**

Some recommendations regarding cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health:

- Set up a biomonitoring program to determine to what extent the target group is already exposed to mercury.
- Conduct an awareness campaign in collaboration with the Medical Mission using their network.
- The malaria program also has an extensive network that can be used for the awareness campaign.
- Investigate which research options can be carried out together with the Dutch National Institute for Health and the Environment (RIVM), with whom there is close cooperation.

**Presentation of posters to Ministers by Chair project board, Thania Chin-A-Lin**

The Chair of the Project Board hands over a set of two posters of the project to the Ministers. One with regard to environmental aspects and the other with regard to health aspects.