



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
A LEAD-FREE FUTURE**

A Global Framework to End Childhood Lead Poisoning

May 2026

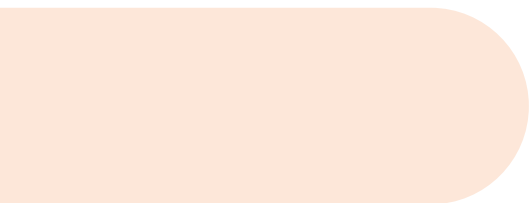
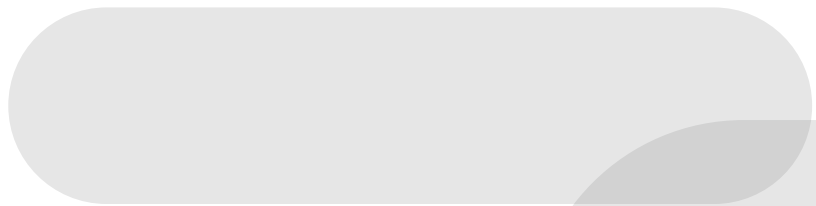




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Disclaimer

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Suggestions and comments are welcome and may be sent to leadfreefuture@unicef.org.

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Acronyms

Africa CDC	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BLL	blood lead level
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
GBD	Global Burden of Disease
DFIs	development finance institutions
IFIs	international financial institutions
ILPPW	International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week
OAS	Organization of American States
ODA	official development assistance
PLF	Partnership for a Lead-Free Future
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation



Introduction and vision

Childhood lead poisoning remains one of the most widespread and preventable threats to children's health and development worldwide. More than 1 billion children¹ are exposed to lead through everyday environments and products, often without warning and with long-lasting consequences. Even low levels of exposure impair brain development, reduce learning potential, and affect people's health across their life course, with lasting impacts on families, communities and national economies.

Over recent decades, governments and partners have made important progress in addressing specific sources of lead exposure. Yet lead remains present across multiple pathways – particularly in low- and middle-income countries – such as consumer products, foods, cosmetics, water delivery systems, informal used lead-acid battery recycling and industrial activities. Efforts to address these risks have often been fragmented, limited by gaps in data, uneven enforcement, insufficient coordination across sectors and a lack of sustained investment. As a result, progress has not kept pace with what is technically feasible or urgently needed.

The Partnership for a Lead-Free Future (PLF) was established in recognition of this challenge. Ending childhood lead poisoning requires sustained

country leadership supported by coordinated global and regional engagement. The PLF brings together governments, international organizations, funders, researchers, civil society, industry and regional and global networks in a voluntary partnership focused on a shared goal: ending childhood lead poisoning by 2040. Through its convening role, the Partnership helps align efforts, support learning, and maintain momentum around a long-term objective that no single actor can achieve alone.

This document lays out a Global Framework to End Childhood Lead Poisoning by 2040. The Framework provides a shared direction through which the PLF will drive and support collective action across the partnership. It is designed to align existing efforts, clarify roles and expectations, and create a common

¹ Global Health Data Exchange, Global Burden of Disease Study 2023 (GBD 2023) Lead Exposure Estimates 1990-2023, GHDx, 2023, <<https://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/ihme-data/gbd-2023-lead-exposure-estimates-1990-2023>>.

reference point for engagement, investment and accountability. The Framework does not prescribe how countries or partners should act; rather, it establishes a clear direction of travel while allowing flexibility across contexts and capacities. The Framework is primarily designed to support action in low- and middle-income countries, where exposure burdens are highest and system gaps are most pronounced. While many elements may be relevant in other contexts, the indicators do not fully capture the scope of remaining challenges in high income countries, including localized exposure, legacy contamination, and persistent disparities. The selection of 2040 as the target date for this effort was based on ambitious estimates by multiple partners. The Framework is designed to align with and support existing global and regional policy processes, including voluntary and legally binding frameworks related to chemicals-management, public health and environmental protection.

At the core of the Framework is a set of global indicators, laid out in the first chapter, on accountability and impact. It was developed in consultation with partners that define what progress looks like in measurable terms. They link country-level systems and actions – such as data availability, source identification, surveillance, policy and enforcement – to reductions in childhood blood lead levels, while recognizing the importance of a sustained global enabling environment. The indicators are intentionally practical, designed to provide indicative guideposts for progress, support alignment, learning, course correction.

The indicators and targets provide a structured way to articulate priorities across ministries, track progress, and situate national efforts within a broader global movement. By focusing on systems, outcomes and sustained engagement, the

Framework supports decision-making, helps identify gaps, and facilitates alignment of external support with national priorities – while respecting different starting points and approaches.

The overall Framework reflects a growing recognition that ending childhood lead poisoning is not only a public health imperative, but also a development, equity and economic priority. Reducing lead exposure contributes to stronger education outcomes, a more productive workforce, and healthier, more resilient communities. It aligns with broader goals related to human capital development, environmental protection and sustainable growth.

The Framework translates this shared vision into a practical framework for action through three distinct and complementary sections. The **Accountability and Impact** section presents a road map for progress – its indicators, targets and mechanisms for tracking progress and the methodology of how the indicators and targets were developed and how information will be collected for tracking them. The **Partner Engagement section** describes how diverse stakeholders can participate in and strengthen the Partnership. The **Investment Opportunities** section outlines pathways to mobilize and align resources in support of the interim targets and the 2040 goal.

This Framework represents a collective commitment to act with greater coordination, clarity and purpose. The evidence is clear, the tools are available, and the costs of inaction – borne disproportionately by children – are too high. With sustained country leadership and coordinated action through the PLF, the coming years can mark a decisive shift towards ending childhood lead poisoning and securing a healthier future for generations to come.

Accountability and impact: Roadmap to 2040

Overall intention

The intention of this road map is to track progress and support coordination across the global effort to end lead exposure by 2040. The aim of this document is to describe what progress towards a lead-free future looks like in a common, measurable way, without prescribing how countries or partners should get there.² This road map is one component of the broader Framework and is intended to operationalize the Framework's shared vision and principles.

The indicators included in this section were developed in consultation with PLF partners and are meant to offer a unifying framework for alignment, tracking and communication across the PLF – a 'direction of travel' rather than an implementation plan. They were designed to capture the wide range of approaches low- and middle-income countries and partners are taking and can take – from addressing specific sources such as lead paint, spices and recycling, to strengthening systems for surveillance, enforcement and data availability.

Rather than focusing narrowly on a single pathway, the framework highlights and values the diversity of approaches used to reduce lead exposure, while also focusing on key indicators for ease of tracking and communicating progress. It also provides a

shared lens through which governments, partners and funders can measure progress, identify gaps and align investments. While participation in the Framework is voluntary, the use of shared indicators, transparent reporting and peer learning is intended to strengthen accountability and encourage alignment with national, regional and global commitments. While indicators may be revisited as experience grows, this remains an option, not an expectation. The goal is a stable, consistent framework that evolves only as necessary.

The following sections lay out the indicator structure, definitions and measurement notes, data-collection process, and methodology for their development.



² For guidance on specific strategies the PLF provides high-level guidance through the PLF Toolkit so that countries can develop their own national roadmaps based on their specific contexts; see: www.leadfreefuture.org/toolkit/toolkit-end-childhood-lead-poisoning.

Indicator structure

The indicator framework reflects a progression in low- and middle-income countries from national capacity-building to measurable health-related gains, supported by sustained global engagement (see also Table 1). As such, the indicators are not intended to comprehensively reflect all dimensions of lead exposure in higher-income settings, where challenges may be more localized, legacy driven or equity related.

Country-level indicators

Six indicators track the systems and enabling conditions necessary to reduce lead exposure. They measure progress on data availability, regulatory and policy frameworks, surveillance, implementation capacity and enforcement. Together, they signal whether a country has the practical foundation required to identify and eliminate major sources of lead exposure.

Global enabling factor indicators

These indicators capture the extent of ongoing global investment, prioritization and partner engagement necessary to sustain national action. Continued

global support reinforces national progress and helps maintain ambition. Global engagement also helps address transboundary and market-wide sources of lead exposure (such as measurement technology supply chains), which individual countries cannot fully control on their own.













Together, these indicator sets form a coherent monitoring and accountability system, linking local progress to global commitments. The global indicators are intentionally designed to drive country progress – maintaining attention and investment at the international level that, in turn, enables national action. The final outcome indicators for 2040 are intentionally focused on the ultimate goal, which is ending childhood lead poisoning.

Outcome indicator

This indicator measures changes in childhood blood lead levels as the primary outcome of effective national systems and actions. It functions as a cumulative indicator – reflecting the combined impact of multiple interventions and policies across sectors.



Table 1. Country-level, global enabling factor and outcome indicators

Indicators*	2027	2030	2035	2040
Country-level indicators				Outcome goal   95% reduction in children under 5 (12-59 months) with BLL >5 mg/dL*
 1. Number of countries that have representative childhood blood lead level data	20	60	110	
 2. Number of countries that have identified high-priority sources of lead exposure	20	60	110	
 3. Number of countries that have an action plan to address priority exposure sources	20	50	100	
 4. Number of countries conducting routine surveillance and assessment	10	40	80	
 5. Number of countries with new or revised laws to address prioritized sources of lead exposure	5	20	40	
 6. Number of countries making progress addressing at least 1 out of the top 3 priority sources of lead exposure	20	60	80	
Global enabling factor indicators				 Our shared 2040 impact goal
 7. Lead is an investment priority		>\$750 million invested in lead programming globally (cumulative 2023–2030)	>\$850 million invested in lead programming globally (cumulative 2030–2040)	
 8. Lead is a global priority	115 partners of the PLF, with at least 50 LMIC governments	100 LMICs are members of the PLF		
Outcome indicator				
 9. Reduction in childhood blood lead levels (BLLs)	10 countries showing reductions			

* Please note that a baseline is not available for these indicators, which reflect informed estimates based on available data and expert input rather than precise starting measurements. The absence of a baseline underscores a critical gap in data and highlights the urgent need to strengthen measurement systems as a foundational step towards progress.

Data-collection process

The Secretariat will facilitate global data-collection and reporting for the Partnership for a Lead-Free Future (PLF) Framework and country governments will lead and own the national process, supported closely by implementing partners.

Governments will be responsible for the voluntary, official submission of data and progress reports, while implementing partners will help gather, validate and organize data as part of their technical and operational collaboration. This shared model recognizes that many countries depend on implementing partners for data generation, capacity support and analysis, while reinforcing that national governments hold primary accountability for progress and submission.

The PLF Secretariat will provide submission guidance and a standardized tool to guide governments and their implementing partners through the process (see Sample questionnaire for country submissions for type of information that will be collected).

Once country submissions are received, the PLF Secretariat will compile and analyse data, aggregating results across all indicators and benchmarking progress. The findings will be compiled into an annual global progress report, released each year during International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (ILPPW). This report will highlight trends, country examples and key findings, providing a platform for collective accountability and learning across the lead ecosystem. The Secretariat will make selected, aggregated data and analytical outputs publicly available where appropriate, following review and validation processes, while respecting country ownership, data sensitivity and confidentiality considerations.

This process is designed to balance accountability, comparability and shared ownership while minimizing the reporting burden on governments. It will also create a consistent annual rhythm for data-sharing and reflection, supporting both transparency and action across PLF partners.



Indicator methodology

The methodology underpinning the Framework is designed to provide a rigorous yet practical framework for tracking progress towards the elimination of childhood lead poisoning. It balances technical precision with flexibility, ensuring that indicators can be applied consistently across diverse country contexts while evolving as data availability, technologies and priorities advance. Each indicator was selected through consultation with partners, country leaders and experts on the subject to reflect meaningful, measurable change. This section describes the intention of each indicator and provides further definition for each one.

Governments are given discretion to determine whether they have sufficient data or evidence for each indicator. Where applicable, the use of terms such as ‘in progress’ allows for flexible interpretation by national decision-makers, ensuring that countries can report progress consistent with their own systems and timelines.

Country-level indicators

1. Countries have representative childhood blood lead level data

This indicator measures whether a country has representative data on childhood lead exposure, as understanding the prevalence of childhood BLLs is one essential component of effective policy action. Representative data on BLLs among children under the age of five was chosen because this group is the most biologically vulnerable, absorbing more lead per body weight and suffering irreversible developmental impacts. There is no safe level of lead in the blood; however, the 5 µg/dL threshold aligns with the World Health Organization’s benchmark to trigger public health action, enabling global comparability and reflecting health equity considerations.³ Discussions acknowledged potential future shifts towards alternative biomarkers or

modelling tools, but blood lead testing remains the most direct and actionable metric. Countries have flexibility in defining representativeness – whether national, subnational or survey-based – to encourage ownership and participation even in low-data environments. Where available, such data may also help identify geographic or population-level hotspots to inform targeted action. Governments are given discretion to determine whether they have sufficient data or evidence for reporting, and the use of ‘in progress’ allows flexible interpretation as national systems evolve.

2. Countries have identified high-priority sources of lead exposure

This indicator accounts for the fact that a government must have an understanding of exposure sources in order to identify and prioritize them effectively. It reflects that governments benefit from sufficient data and evidence on sources to determine which are high priority, and that prioritization should be based on documented analysis rather than assumption as much as possible. The inclusion of ‘high-priority’ was deliberate, allowing flexibility for countries to address either the largest or most tractable sources of exposure. In doing so, countries may distinguish between upstream sources (e.g., industrial emissions, mining, recycling), downstream exposure pathways (e.g., contaminated food or water) and consumer products containing lead, recognizing that identification and mitigation strategies may differ across these categories. In addition to current, active sources such as industrial emissions and consumer products, this may include legacy sources, such as contaminated sites, as well as exposure linked to industrial and commercial activities across supply chains. Prioritization does not imply a strictly sequential approach; countries may address multiple sources in parallel across sectors, reflecting different mandates, capacities and opportunities

³ WHO, 2021, WHO guideline for the clinical management of exposure to lead, p. 42; <https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/47967c06-bfa9-44b8-9f2b-52f04a353c05/content>

for coordinated action. While comprehensive source assessments may be resource-intensive, this indicator accommodates incremental data-collection and decision-making. The process of prioritization itself is valuable, as it establishes the evidence base for national planning, regulatory action and blood lead surveillance.



3. Countries have an action plan to address priority sources of lead exposure

This indicator reflects a government's commitment to coordinated, multisectoral action. A technical working group was originally considered as an indicator of coordination and governance, but an action plan was chosen instead because it is more inclusive and adaptable across different systems. The concept of an 'action plan' was intentionally broad to capture diverse policy instruments, ranging from stand-alone lead plans to integrated health or environmental strategies. The emphasis on plans that both identify and mitigate exposure ensures operational relevance. Rather than mandating specific formats or timelines, the framework assesses inclusion of components such as coordination mechanisms, including designation of a national focal point; stakeholder engagement, resource allocation, awareness-raising; training, including for doctors, nurses and peripheral health workers; establishment of lead poisoning referral centres. This flexibility allows adaptation across governance systems while preserving comparability through structured reporting criteria and reflects national ownership of implementation approaches.



4. Countries conducting routine surveillance and assessments

Routine surveillance represents the transition from ad hoc or one-time studies to sustained

systems that inform policy and enforcement.

This indicator captures systems at all stages of development – from early, emerging efforts to more advanced, institutionalized national programmes. The definition intentionally encompasses a broad range of system maturity, including those still developing data management, laboratory and human resource capacity. Emphasis is placed on functionality rather than sophistication: a system that routinely collects, analyses and uses data to inform action, regardless of scale, qualifies as routine surveillance of blood lead levels and regular assessments of environmental levels. Where appropriate, surveillance systems may be integrated into existing health platforms, including maternal health services, to strengthen early identification of exposure risks. Additionally, it has been noted that lab capacity is an important part of routine surveillance. This indicator will include a sub-indicator on the capacity to conduct blood testing as well as environmental testing, and responses will be analysed and shared as appropriate. The indicator is designed to capture both early and advanced systems, ensuring progress is recognized at every stage of system strengthening and integration.



5. Countries with new or revised laws to address prioritized sources of lead exposure

Laws⁴ are among the most durable and measurable indicators of national commitment. This indicator captures enactment and revision of laws, regulations and mandatory standards targeting key sources of lead exposure. Enforcement provisions are explicitly included, recognizing that legislation alone does not ensure change. Effective frameworks incorporate mechanisms for compliance and monitoring, and penalties to ensure accountability. However, the framework

⁴ A law is any mandatory legal requirement with consequences for noncompliance. It can be a statute, a regulation or a standard, as long as it includes an enforcement mechanism.

also recognizes that enforcement capacity varies across contexts and should be considered as part of assessing implementation strength. The inclusion of enforcement addresses the common gap between legal adoption and implementation, ensuring that laws are actionable and sustained. To strengthen this, the indicator also considers the presence of practical implementation measures – such as concentration limits, bans, labelling requirements, testing protocols and institutional capacity for enforcement. The decision to emphasize legally binding measures – rather than voluntary standards – reflects the need for enforceable accountability mechanisms. The inclusion of multiple policy stages (no action, in process, enacted, active enforcement) provides a nuanced picture of progress and acknowledges the time required for legal reform. Cross-references to global initiatives, such as the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint and the Global Lead-Free Water Initiative, ensure alignment and reduce duplication.



6. Country is making progress at addressing at least one out of the top three priority sources of lead exposure

This indicator measures tangible, source-specific progress that may translate into measurable changes in exposure or outcomes. By focusing on the ‘top three’ sources identified through national assessments or other means chosen by governments, the indicator encourages countries to prioritize action while maintaining flexibility. Progress is defined broadly – covering policy development, resource allocation, partner engagement or implementation – to recognize the diversity of

pathways to success. This may include actions such as remediation of contaminated sites and reduction of exposures linked to industrial activities and consumer products. It also allows recognition of early-, mid- and late-stage efforts, with ‘addressed’ representing sources that have been effectively resolved or eliminated as population-level risks. The PLF Secretariat will aggregate these data to identify global trends and highlight areas of rapid progress or persistent challenge. Findings will be analysed to identify patterns across regions, highlight areas where momentum is strongest, and guide collective support and resource alignment to accelerate results.

Global enabling factor indicators



7. Lead is an investment priority

This indicator tracks the extent to which lead mitigation is prioritized through financial commitments at the global and national levels. It measures cumulative funding towards lead programming since 2023, providing a clear signal of donor and government willingness to allocate resources at scale. For the purposes of this indicator, cumulative investment refers to external grant and grant-equivalent financing – including private philanthropy, bilateral and multilateral funding – and does not include domestic resource mobilization nor loans from International financial institutions (IFIs). Tracking investment reflects both the magnitude and durability of financial support required to enable sustained country action and achieve reductions in childhood lead exposure for long-term national health and economic benefit.



8. Lead is a global priority

This indicator tracks the extent to which lead exposure is recognized and elevated as a shared global priority. PLF membership serves as a proxy for political and institutional commitment, reflecting governments' and partners' willingness to formally engage, coordinate, and align around the goal of ending childhood lead poisoning. Tracking membership over time captures the breadth of global engagement and signals sustained attention, collective accountability and momentum in support of country-led action.

Outcome indicator



9. Reduction in childhood blood lead levels

An interim outcome indicator was included to ensure that meaningful progress is being made as the global community works towards 2040. It is designed to reflect the transition from activities to measurable impact, confirming that collective efforts are translating into real reductions in lead exposure. This approach is not perfect, but it is preferable to measure progress imperfectly than not to measure it at all.

Given that an estimated 1 billion children globally are affected by lead poisoning, establishing credible and actionable baselines is essential. Countries are encouraged to use the results of their first nationally representative blood lead level (BLL) survey as their baseline, recognizing that each country will begin from a different starting point. Where national data are not yet available, countries may use Global Burden of Disease (GBD) estimates as a temporary substitute; however, generating national data continues to be strongly encouraged to improve accuracy, ownership and policy relevance.

Until 2030, progress under this indicator will be reported as a binary measure – whether or not a country is demonstrating progress. After 2030, the indicator will shift to a quantitative format, tracking the percentage reduction in the proportion of children aged under 5 years (12–59 months) with blood lead levels at or above 5 µg/dL, with milestones of 50 per cent reduction by 2030 and 95 per cent by 2040. This phased approach allows countries to first establish systems and address major sources, while setting a clear trajectory towards substantial impact.

The 5 µg/dL reference level was selected as a pragmatic and policy-relevant benchmark, aligned with WHO standards, while explicitly acknowledging that no level of lead exposure is known to be without harm. It has been widely used in global reporting and national programmes as an action threshold, making it a useful and comparable reference point across countries and over time. As WHO guidance evolves, this reference level and associated reporting are expected to be updated to remain aligned with the latest scientific evidence and global standards.

The 95 per cent reduction target by 2040 reflects the highest level of progress achieved by any country to date, demonstrating that the necessary systems, tools and knowledge exist to reach near-universal protection. It signals that large-scale reduction is feasible with sustained effort, while also recognizing that different and potentially more targeted approaches may be needed to move from near-elimination towards zero exposure.

The target date of 2040 represents an ambitious but technically achievable horizon, contingent on scaled financing, strengthened systems and sustained country leadership.

Partner engagement and collaboration

Table 2: Partner responsibilities

<p>Shared across all partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Share tools, data, and lessons through PLF platforms □ Contribute to government-led reporting and global progress tracking □ Support aligned advocacy to maintain visibility and momentum 	
<p>National governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Set national priorities and integrate lead into policies and plans □ Generate and use data to identify sources and guide action □ Lead reporting and share progress, policies, and implementation experience 	<p>International financial institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Integrate lead into financing, safeguards, and diagnostics □ Fund large-scale mitigation (infrastructure, systems, reform) □ Link lead reduction to economic and human capital outcomes
<p>Implementing partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Support governments with data, source assessment, and reporting □ Pilot and scale interventions to reduce exposure □ Contribute tools, case studies, and operational learning 	<p>Research and academic institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Generate evidence on exposure, sources, and interventions □ Translate findings into policy-relevant insights □ Contribute data, methods, and learning to PLF platforms
<p>Funders and donors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Invest across research, policy, and implementation gaps □ Align funding with priority needs and underfunded areas □ Coordinate with others and share funding data to reduce duplication 	<p>Civil society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Raise awareness and support community engagement □ Contribute evidence, insights, and advocacy □ Sustain attention and accountability across contexts
<p>Multilateral organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Integrate lead into sectoral programmes and policy dialogue □ Provide technical assistance, tools, and capacity support □ Support data systems, reporting, and global alignment 	<p>Private sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Reduce or eliminate lead in products and processes □ Assess and manage risks across operations and supply chains □ Share technical expertise and support safer alternatives
<p>PLF Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Coordinate the Partnership and maintain alignment across stakeholders □ Curate and share tools, data, and learning through PLF platforms □ Track activities, surface gaps, and connect partners, resources, and country needs 	<p>Global and regional platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Align frameworks, indicators, and reporting approaches □ Facilitate coordination and shared learning across actors □ Elevate lead in global and regional agendas

Achieving the targets laid out in the Framework will require sustained engagement from a wide range of actors working in different roles and contexts. While progress depends on country leadership, it is strengthened when governments, partners, funders and institutions align their efforts, learn from one another, and contribute to a shared global picture of progress.

This section describes how different stakeholder groups can engage with the PLF and contribute

to greater collective progress towards ending childhood lead poisoning. It is intentionally non-prescriptive. Contributions will vary based on mandate, capacity and stage of engagement, and participation in the Partnership is voluntary. The purpose of this section is to offer practical examples of how different constituencies can relate their work to the Global Framework to End Childhood Lead Poisoning and, by doing so, strengthen coordination, learning and collective impact.

Shared responsibilities across the partnership

All partners play a role in shaping global priorities by sharing their experiences and expertise to inform the Framework to 2040. To increase collaboration and maximize coordination, partners are encouraged to share best practices, tools, lessons learned and country experiences through PLF platforms, including the knowledge hub and the global map of lead-related projects; to contribute, in ways appropriate to their context, to the annual, government-led reporting process towards the Framework goals by providing information, analysis and context that support a coherent global picture of progress while reinforcing country ownership and minimizing burden; and to support sustained advocacy and collective awareness-raising by using

aligned messages, evidence and shared moments of visibility to keep lead elevated as a global public health and development priority and maintain momentum towards the 2040 goal. Partners are encouraged to align efforts with relevant global and regional policy frameworks, and to support countries in integrating Framework priorities into national policies and commitments where appropriate. At the same time, progress ultimately depends on action at the community level, and partners are encouraged to engage and empower communities to support local ownership, awareness and sustained implementation of lead exposure prevention efforts.

National governments

National governments in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are central to ending childhood lead poisoning because they set national priorities, own data and reporting processes, and exercise authority over policy, regulation and enforcement. Ministries and agencies responsible for health, environment, industry, trade, customs, standards, consumer protection and occupational safety – at national and subnational levels – create the enabling conditions for progress across all country-level

indicators in this Framework. They thus also play a central role to inform the global priorities and guide action on the ground.

LMIC governments can contribute in ways that reflect their context and stage of progress. This may include including a focus on reducing lead poisoning within national health, environment or child development agendas; integrating it into existing strategies and sectoral plans; designating

leadership and coordination mechanisms; and clarifying roles across ministries. Governments may support the collection and use of childhood blood lead level data, identify and prioritize major sources of exposure, and use evidence to inform planning, regulation and enforcement. Developing or updating national action plans, strengthening laws and standards, allocating domestic resources, and taking action on at least one priority source of exposure all support sustained progress.

In engaging with the PLF, LMIC governments lead the submission of information for annual reporting against the Framework indicators, and regularly share examples of national policies, programmes and implementation experiences. These contributions support peer learning and help build a clearer global picture of progress towards ending childhood lead poisoning by 2040. They

also provide tangible opportunities to showcase government leadership and progress on a regional and global scale.

High income country governments play a role in providing best practices and technical assistance, while also continuing to monitor public health and sources of lead exposure and addressing remaining sources of exposure within their own contexts, including legacy contamination and population-level disparities that may not be fully captured by the Framework indicators. These governments can also strengthen their contribution by enacting and enforcing regulations that extend producer responsibility to multinational corporations headquartered within their jurisdictions, ensuring accountability for lead-related risks across operations and supply chains in LMICs.

Implementing partners

Implementing partners support country-led action by working directly with governments and communities to translate evidence and plans into practice. Local and international NGOs, civil society organizations, community-based organizations and individual experts play an important role in advancing progress across multiple Framework indicators while reinforcing national ownership.

Implementing partners can contribute by supporting government leadership and coordination, working alongside designated focal points and multisectoral groups, and assisting governments in engaging with the PLF. They often support:

- The collection, validation and organization of information related to childhood blood lead levels.
- Conduct or support source assessments.
- Help governments compile and summarize information for reporting against the Framework indicators in a consistent, low-burden way.

Implementing partners also help translate research into policy-relevant insights, pilot and scale interventions to address priority sources of exposure, strengthen surveillance and laboratory systems, build capacity among health workers and inspectors, and support community awareness and risk communication.

Within the PLF, implementing partners contribute to shared learning and coordination by proactively contributing resources, tools and case examples to the knowledge hub; sharing information on ongoing and planned activities through the global projects map; and supporting collective learning across the Partnership.

Bilateral donors and philanthropic funders

Funders and donors shape the pace and scale of progress towards ending childhood lead poisoning by influencing where resources are directed and sustained. Bilateral donors, philanthropic foundations and other grant-making institutions play a key role in enabling action across the lead ecosystem.

Funders can contribute by investing across the full range of needs, including research and information generation, advocacy and policy engagement, surveillance and monitoring systems, and implementation and scale-up of effective interventions. They may support underfunded geographies or sources, enable transitions from

research to policy or pilots to scale, and provide multi-year or flexible funding where sustained effort is required. Integrating lead mitigation into broader health, education, environment and development investments can increase efficiency and reach, while reflecting the multisectoral nature of lead exposure.

Through engagement with the PLF, funders can strengthen collective impact by sharing information on lead-related investments, contributing to global tracking of funding against the framework targets, coordinating with other donors to reduce duplication, and supporting shared learning and advocacy through PLF platforms.

Multilateral organizations and the United Nations system

Multilateral organizations play a central role in shaping global priorities, supporting country systems, and integrating lead exposure prevention into broader health, environment and development agendas. United Nations agencies, regional bodies and international organizations bring normative authority, technical expertise and convening power that can help accelerate country-led progress.

Multilateral organizations can contribute by integrating lead exposure prevention into existing programmes and policy dialogue across health, environment, child development, nutrition, WASH, chemicals, urban and economic development portfolios. They work directly with governments to support the collection, compilation and validation of information aligned with the Framework indicators, including incorporation of lead-related questions into routine surveys, surveillance systems and administrative data. Multilaterals can also

strengthen country capacity through technical assistance, tools and training; support laboratory networks and data platforms; and develop harmonized guidance and methodologies that improve comparability while remaining adaptable to national contexts. Multilateral organizations can also support alignment between the Framework and relevant global and regional policy processes, including those related to chemicals and waste, to help elevate commitments and strengthen country-level implementation.

Within the PLF, multilateral organizations contribute through participation in its steering committee, helping guide strategic direction, alignment and collective priorities. They also support annual reporting on progress towards the Framework goals, contribute resources to PLF platforms and reinforce alignment across global efforts.

International financial institutions

International and development finance institutions play a distinct role in ending childhood lead poisoning by enabling large-scale, sustained investments and embedding lead mitigation into core development priorities. Institutions such as the World Bank and regional development banks influence infrastructure, environmental, health, urban and industrial systems that can either exacerbate or reduce lead exposure. They are also uniquely positioned to engage ministries of finance, linking lead exposure reduction to fiscal sustainability, human capital development and long-term economic growth.

Development finance institutions (DFIs) can contribute by integrating lead considerations into existing operations and actively financing lead mitigation. This includes screening investments for lead-related risks and opportunities; incorporating lead into environmental, social and health safeguards; and using diagnostics and analytics to highlight lead as a constraint to health, learning and economic productivity. DFIs can also finance lead

mitigation through lending operations by including lead-related components in health, environment, urban, housing, water and education projects; supporting lead-safe housing upgrades, water system improvements, pollution control, and battery recycling reform; and financing surveillance systems, laboratory infrastructure and institutional capacity. They may also support strengthened import controls and border management systems, including capacity for testing and enforcement to prevent the circulation of lead-containing products and the illegal transboundary movement of hazardous waste. Policy-based financing can support lead-related laws, standards and enforcement mechanisms, while concessional finance and blended instruments can help de-risk the adoption of lead-safe technologies.

Within the PLF, development finance institutions may align investments with the Framework indicators, coordinate with governments, donors and implementing partners, and contribute information on lead-related financing to support global tracking and shared accountability.



Regional bodies and platforms

Regional bodies play an important role in advancing progress towards ending childhood lead poisoning by shaping regional priorities, supporting harmonization and facilitating collaboration across countries. These include institutions such as the African Union (AU), the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Organization of American States (OAS), Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and other regional political, technical and economic bodies.

Regional bodies can contribute by elevating lead exposure within regional health, environment and development agendas; supporting the alignment of policies, standards and approaches across countries; and facilitating regional dialogue on

shared sources of lead exposure, such as trade, manufacturing, waste and cross-border markets. They may support regional guidance, data initiatives or peer-learning mechanisms that help countries strengthen surveillance, source identification, regulation and enforcement. Regional bodies can also help integrate lead into existing regional strategies, action plans and platforms, reducing duplication while reinforcing country-led efforts.

Through engagement with the Partnership for a Lead-Free Future, regional bodies can contribute to shared learning and coordination by linking regional initiatives to the Framework indicators, sharing regional analyses and examples through PLF platforms, supporting country participation in annual reporting processes, and reinforcing collective advocacy and visibility across regions in support of the 2040 goal.

Research and academic institutions

Research and academic institutions strengthen efforts to end childhood lead poisoning by generating evidence that informs priorities, policy and investment. Universities, research institutions, academic consortia and independent research organizations contribute insights on exposure, sources, health impacts, costs and intervention effectiveness.

Research and academia can contribute by improving measurement and filling evidence gaps that limit action. This includes generating new information on childhood blood lead levels and exposure pathways; identifying emerging or under-addressed sources of lead exposure; and strengthening methods for surveillance, source attribution and evaluation. In addition to source assessment,

research institutions play an important role in advancing implementation-focused research to identify practical, context-specific interventions that effectively reduce exposure, including, where appropriate, rigorous evaluation approaches such as randomized or quasi-experimental studies. Research institutions can also produce analyses that clarify the health, economic and social returns of lead mitigation and translate findings into policy-relevant insights that support uptake into national plans, regulations and programme design. Universities and international scientific societies – such as those focused on exposure science and environmental epidemiology – can further support this work through global collaboration, capacity-building and engagement of researchers across diverse country contexts, including LMICs.

Within the PLF, research engagement is coordinated by the Center for Global Development, which supports standing calls for research, synthesis and learning, and facilitates regular exchange through newsletters and other knowledge products.

Research partners are encouraged to align work with the Framework indicators and country priorities, contribute resources to the knowledge hub, and inform annual reporting on progress towards the Framework goals.

Civil society organizations

Civil society organizations – including local and international NGOs, community-based organizations, advocacy groups and professional associations – play an important role in advancing progress towards ending childhood lead poisoning. In many contexts, civil society actors overlap with implementing partners, research institutions and advocacy networks, and their contributions often span multiple areas of engagement. Their proximity to communities and on-the-ground realities provides valuable insight into exposure pathways, lived experience and the practical implications of policy and programmatic action. Civil society organizations play a critical role in sustaining long-term engagement, providing continuity across political cycles, and anchoring efforts within communities.

Civil society organizations may contribute by supporting community awareness and risk

communication; documenting exposure risks and impacts; engaging in policy dialogue and advocacy; and providing independent analysis and feedback that inform national action and global learning. Civil society also plays an important role in sustaining public attention and strategic communication – helping translate evidence into accessible narratives, elevate lived experience and maintain momentum even as political and funding cycles change. Through engagement with the PLF, civil society actors can:

- Share tools, lessons learned and community-level insights through PLF platforms.
- Contribute evidence that supports government-led reporting and learning.
- Participate in collective advocacy and awareness-raising efforts that help sustain attention to lead as a public health, equity and development priority.



Private sector actors and market stakeholders

Private sector actors influence many of the products, materials and processes that shape lead exposure and mitigation. Manufacturers, importers and exporters, recyclers, paint and cookware producers, testing technology companies, laboratories and other businesses play an important role in addressing market-wide and transboundary sources of lead exposure and advancing safer alternatives. They also play a critical role in contributing to, and mitigating, lead exposure through their operations, supply chains and waste management practices, including through industrial activities such as mining and smelting.

Private sector contributions can include adopting and strengthening internal policies to reduce or eliminate lead in products, materials and processes; aligning corporate standards with national regulations and international best practices; and integrating lead considerations into environmental, health and safety systems. Companies may assess and disclose lead-related risks within products

or supply chains, invest in safer materials and technologies, and share technical expertise related to manufacturing, testing, quality assurance and compliance. This includes preventing and addressing lead contamination arising from production processes, supply chains and legacy impacts such as contaminated sites. Private sector actors may also support lead mitigation through corporate social responsibility or social impact investments, partner with governments or implementing organizations on country-led efforts, and engage constructively in policy and standards development.

Through engagement with the PLF, private sector actors can participate in learning and coordination by contributing relevant tools, case examples and insights to the knowledge hub, sharing information on activities through the global projects map, and supporting collective efforts to reduce lead exposure across sectors while maintaining a level playing field.



Global partnerships and networks

Global partnerships and networks play an important role in aligning efforts, amplifying advocacy and sustaining momentum towards ending childhood lead poisoning. These include the PLF Secretariat and aligned global and regional partnerships and initiatives such as the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, as well as networks working across chemicals, health, environment and child development. Through their convening power and cross-sector reach, these partnerships help elevate lead exposure on global and regional agendas and connect otherwise fragmented efforts.

Global partnerships and networks can contribute by aligning frameworks, indicators and reporting approaches with the Framework where appropriate, helping reduce duplication and improve coherence. They can support coordinated advocacy and shared messaging that elevate lead as a global public

health and development priority, including through common moments such as International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, as well as by integrating lead into related global initiatives, strategies and policy dialogues. Networks can also build on existing tools and platforms, facilitate collaboration across regions and sectors, and support peer learning by sharing guidance, tools and country experiences.

Within the PLF, global partnerships and networks support coordination, learning and accountability by participating in PLF convenings and processes; contributing resources, tools and case examples to the knowledge hub; sharing information through the global projects map; and supporting annual reporting towards the Framework goals. Together, these contributions help sustain visibility, reinforce alignment, and maintain ambition across the global effort to end childhood lead poisoning by 2040.

Role of the PLF Secretariat

The PLF Secretariat is housed in UNICEF and provides overall coordination, governance, and knowledge management for the Partnership for a Lead-Free Future. The PLF is a knowledge hub for tools and best practices, catalysing action and awareness, and connecting governments, civil society, donors and the private sector to end childhood lead poisoning by 2040.

In its role as a knowledge hub to strengthen the evidence base and empower stakeholders to take effective action, the Secretariat develops and shares practical resources – including toolkits, webinars, and expert videos – that support governments, partners and communities.

The Secretariat catalyses action through advocacy and awareness raising to showcase progress under the framework to end childhood lead poisoning by 2040.

The Secretariat connects and coordinates stakeholders engaged in childhood lead poisoning prevention by tracking activities, documenting the work of PLF partners and helping them stay informed and aligned. It also aims to match country needs with technical assistance and donor investments, ensuring resources are mobilized effectively.

Resource mobilization and investment opportunities

Table 3: Financing the Lead Agenda

Sources of financing	What it funds	Primary role in financing
Domestic (LMIC governments)	Policies, enforcement, systems, long-term integration	Core and sustaining financing; anchors national ownership
Bilateral and philanthropy	TA, pilots, evidence, catalytic investments	Catalytic funding; fills gaps and enables scale-up
Multilaterals	Programmes, systems, capacity, integration	Integration into sector programmes and country systems
DFIs/IFIs	Large-scale investments (infrastructure, systems)	Scaled financing and system modernization
Private sector	Safer production, innovation, compliance	Investment in risk reduction and market transformation

Purpose and focus

Financing and attention to childhood lead poisoning have increased dramatically since early 2024, reflecting stronger evidence, growing momentum and expanding partner engagement. This momentum has supported progress, including increased investment in technical assistance, evidence-generation and interventions addressing priority sources of exposure.

However, investment remains insufficient to achieve interim targets and the 2040 goal at the pace required. The UNICEF Investment Case⁵ estimates a remaining modest global investment gap of approximately US\$1.6 billion, underscoring the need to scale up resources and strengthen the alignment of financing with Framework priorities. These estimates focus primarily on

5 Partnership For A Lead-Free Future, Investment-case: Ending childhood lead poisoning by 2040, PLF, September 2025, <www.leadfreefuture.org/events-and-resources/knowledge-library/investment-case-ending-childhood-lead-poisoning-2040>.

global and external resources and therefore likely understate the full scale of investment required, and they do not account for substantial national investments that LMIC governments are expected to undertake through matching or co-financing mechanisms, estimated at approximately US\$6–8 billion by 2040. Domestic resource mobilization therefore represents a critical pillar of delivering on the Framework and a key signal of national commitment to ending childhood lead poisoning.

This section outlines investment opportunities and pathways for donors and partners to support achievement of interim targets and the 2040 goal. While the focus is primarily on external financing – including grants, grant-equivalent resources and loans that can play a catalytic role and support global and regional action – the Framework can only be sustainably delivered through a

combination of external and domestic resources. Sustainable prevention depends on nationally financed regulatory enforcement, surveillance systems, and long-term integration of lead mitigation into public budgets beyond time-bound external assistance. This section also clarifies the role of the Partnership for a Lead-Free Future (PLF) in supporting alignment, coordination and match-making across partners.

Taken together, this Framework is grounded in four core principles: placing LMIC leadership and domestic investment at the centre; recognizing the catalytic role of external financing; promoting more joined-up donor action, and leveraging larger capital flows – particularly through international financial institutions – to support sustained implementation at scale.

Investment as core to delivering on the Framework

The Framework and associated indicators provide the shared model for progress, including interim targets, milestones and indicators. Achieving these targets depends on sustained and coordinated investment by donors and LMIC country governments alike. Resource mobilization is therefore essential to delivering on the Framework, with external financing playing an important catalytic role in enabling and incentivizing domestic investment.

Resource mobilization will be guided by several considerations:

- Financing should support progress against Framework pillars, indicators and interim targets, reflecting country context and readiness.

- New investments should strengthen and scale effective efforts already under way or target gaps, reducing fragmentation and avoidable duplication.
- Mobilization should target underfunded geographies, sources and enabling functions.
- Resources should support partners best positioned to deliver against identified needs, including in ways that unlock domestic resources.
- The financing base should be diversified by engaging new partner categories and instruments, consistent with the scale of the remaining gap.

These considerations apply across the lead ecosystem and are intended to support collective progress across all actors.

Identifying and promoting investment opportunities

Accelerating progress requires moving beyond fragmented funding towards a more structured approach to understanding investment flows, identifying constraints and mobilizing targeted resources. PLF will work with donors and partners to refine a practical approach to categorizing investments, recognizing differences in donor systems and constraints.

Establishing a shared understanding of current investments

Resource mobilization begins with clarity on what is already being financed. PLF will engage current and prospective donors to develop a shared picture of the investment landscape, including financial contributions, technical assistance and in-kind support.

This donor-informed starting point enables partners to identify concentrations, duplication and opportunities to expand or align portfolios, supporting PLF's objective of driving greater collective impact. PLF will support a light-touch method for tagging and categorizing investments without creating burdensome requirements.

A flexible approach to investment categorization

PLF will support an approach to investment visibility that is donor-informed, aligned to this Framework, informed by existing investment cases, and validated through annual country reporting and partner consultation.

Categorization may include indicator area, geography, technical or source focus, investment modality and the constraint being addressed. Identifying gap types can focus mobilization on recurring constraints, including those involving data and diagnostics, regulations and policy, enforcement, implementation capacity, technology and financing.

Overlaying investments against the Framework and investment cases

Where feasible, categorized investments can be reviewed against the road map in this document and also against existing investment cases to strengthen alignment and support coordinated mobilization.

This overlay can help identify well-supported areas; areas where investment is thin or fragmented; geographies where investment is misaligned with burden and readiness; and opportunities where catalytic financing could unlock larger-scale implementation.

Validation through annual country reporting and partner consultation

Annual country reporting provides signals on progress, readiness and constraints and helps reduce the risk of mismatch between external financing and national capacity or prioritization.

Country reporting and partner consultation are project- and activity-focused and do not capture or cost domestic budget allocations. PLF does not seek to map domestic resource mobilization. Rather, reporting is used to contextualize external investments by identifying priority actions, implementation constraints and areas where additional external financing, technical assistance or coordination could add value.

Gap analysis to guide targeted mobilization

Combining investment visibility, Framework overlay, and country reporting enables structured gap analysis to identify:

- Duplication and opportunities to align roles.
- Underfunded Framework pillars and enabling functions.

- Underserved geographies and sources.
- Targeted opportunities for additional investment.

The PLF Secretariat will make relevant gap information available through targeted donor engagement and convenings.



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Role of PLF in coordination, visibility, match-making and financing alignment

PLF has no authority over investment decisions and does not allocate financing. Its role is to support implementation through convening, coordination, transparency and facilitation that reduce fragmentation and transaction costs and strengthen alignment with Framework priorities. A core objective of this role is to promote more joined-up donor action – across bilateral, philanthropic, multilateral and other partners – by encouraging collaboration, harmonization and efficiency in how external resources are deployed, including through pooled or ‘virtual pooled’ approaches that align around shared goals while respecting individual funding streams.

Coordination and visibility

The PLF Secretariat tracks activities and documents partner contributions to progress against the Framework indicators. The global map of lead projects supports this by elevating existing work, strengthening visibility of partner efforts, amplifying new and locally based partners, and helping identify opportunities for alignment and gap-filling. This reinforces resource mobilization by building on ongoing efforts and clarifying where additional support can add value.

Match-making and alignment

PLF supports match-making by connecting donors, implementers, technical partners and country priorities reflected in annual reporting and the identified indicators, consistent with partner roles and comparative advantage. This includes facilitating dialogue across partner communities to align financing with implementation pipelines, readiness and identified constraints, and to support complementary action across different donor categories.

Pooled and coordinated financing opportunities

Where appropriate, PLF will support and advocate for joint pooled funds, coordinated appeals or virtual pooled financing approaches – where partners align around shared priorities and targets while maintaining separate funding streams – that are aligned with the Framework and reinforce collective priorities, while respecting partner mandates and decision-making processes.

Innovative and catalytic financing approaches

PLF can also help identify and convene partners around innovative and catalytic financing opportunities – such as blended finance, results-based approaches, debt swaps or other mechanisms – where these are well suited to addressing priority constraints, mobilizing additional resources or accelerating scale, particularly in tandem with domestic and traditional financing.

There are many definitions of innovative finance. The World Bank Group defines innovative finance as financing approaches that help to

- Generate additional development funds by tapping new funding sources.
- Enhance the efficiency of financial flows.
- Make financing more results-oriented by linking funding to measurable performance.

While definitions vary, these approaches broadly seek to mobilize additional resources beyond domestic budgets and official development assistance (ODA), improve the efficiency of financing, and strengthen development results. Based on country context, Framework priorities and partner mandates, the PLF Secretariat will support donors and partners to explore whether innovative financing mechanisms could help accelerate delivery of Framework priorities.

Mobilizing diversified investment: Pathways for different partners

Delivering on the Framework depends first and foremost on leadership, ownership and sustained investment by low- and middle-income country (LMIC) governments. None of the actions outlined in the Framework can be achieved at scale or sustained without strong national prioritization, domestic resource mobilization and the integration of lead prevention and mitigation into country systems and budgets. At the same time, closing the remaining investment gap and accelerating progress will require mobilizing global and external resources that complement, catalyse and help unlock domestic efforts. This section therefore focuses primarily on pathways for external partners to support LMIC-led action, recognizing that different partner communities bring distinct financing instruments, risk tolerances and operational levers. PLF will support resource mobilization approaches that align external financing with country priorities and match financing modalities to the types of investments required, including policy and regulatory reform, system strengthening, enforcement capacity and capital investments to reduce exposure from priority sources. The sustainability of progress will depend on the extent to which countries are able to institutionalize and finance these efforts through national systems.

National governments and domestic resources are at the core of efforts to end childhood lead poisoning and play an indispensable role in driving progress. LMIC governments can ensure the sustainability of their efforts by anchoring them within national development agendas and by committing domestic resources through in-country cost-matching, private sector engagement and co-financing. These governments, being the most familiar with national policy, regulatory and political contexts, are best positioned to identify priority exposure pathways, sequence reforms, and integrate lead mitigation into national strategies and sector plans. In practical terms, LMIC financing contributions include integrating efforts to end lead poisoning into national planning and budgeting processes across health, nutrition, early childhood development, education, WASH, environmental health, chemicals-management and consumer protection, as well as allocating resources for regulation and enforcement, surveillance and monitoring systems, laboratory capacity and remediation of priority sources. Domestic co-financing is a critical pillar of the overall financing architecture, both in its own right and as a foundation for effective use of long-term external financing. Strengthening sustainable national financing systems – including budget integration, recurrent financing and institutional funding mechanisms – is essential to ensure that progress can be maintained beyond time-bound external support.



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Bilateral donors are well positioned to accelerate progress by embedding lead poisoning prevention and mitigation into development portfolios and country programmes. This includes integrating their efforts into health-system strengthening, nutrition and early childhood development programmes, education and learning initiatives, maternal health, WASH and environmental health platforms, chemicals-management and consumer protection efforts. Bilateral support can also fill critical enabling gaps that frequently constrain implementation, including investments in laboratory capacity, surveillance and monitoring systems, regulatory development and enforcement strengthening. Multi-year commitments can help sustain national implementation, including the support of sequenced reforms from evidence-generation to policy development and enforcement. Bilateral donors can also bring technical expertise informed by lessons learned and research.

Philanthropic foundations and other grant-making institutions can provide flexible, multi-year financing to address binding constraints and accelerate scale-up. This includes catalytic support for evidence-generation to identify exposure pathways; development and testing of scalable intervention models; regulatory and compliance approaches; and time-bound 'bridge' investments that enable the transition from pilot schemes to national adoption. Foundations are often able to support work that is essential for system change

but difficult to finance through traditional windows, including coordination, implementation design, costed action plans and monitoring systems that position countries to absorb larger-scale investment. In addition to global philanthropy, domestic and regional philanthropic actors may offer important opportunities for context-specific support and co-financing where relevant. Many philanthropic funders are thematic or source-focused, with portfolios organized around outcomes or specific exposure pathways, requiring tailored evidence and communications that link lead mitigation to priorities such as human capital and development impact.

Multilateral agencies and the United Nations system can support scale through integration into national, regional and global platforms and sector programmes, including health, nutrition, early childhood development, education, WASH, chemicals-management and environmental health. In practice, this can include direct programme financing aligned with Framework priorities, technical assistance and capacity-strengthening, convening discussions and information exchange, and support to institutional systems that enable sustained action. A key pathway for increasing multilateral investment is to ensure efforts to end lead poisoning is reflected in national planning, budgeting and multi-sector strategies and incorporated into existing programme modalities rather than treated as stand-alone activities.



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International financial institutions and regional finance resources at the scale needed for sustained implementation and structural modernization, particularly where capital investment is required. There are several practical pathways for leveraging IFI financing:

- **Integration into sector lending.** Lead risk mitigation can be incorporated into lending operations in sectors where exposure pathways are concentrated, such as environment and pollution management, urban development, housing, water and sanitation, health systems, education, industrial development and circular economy programming. This may include components for laboratory systems, surveillance, regulatory enforcement capacity, environmental monitoring and remediation approaches.
- **Concessional finance for modernization and compliance.** Concessional loans or blended packages can support the modernization of systems that reduce exposure at scale, including improvements in lead-acid battery manufacturing and recycling systems, hazardous waste management, industrial compliance infrastructure and contaminated site management.
- **Policy-based financing and reform-linked operations.** Where appropriate, policy loans or reform-linked financing can support regulatory strengthening, enforcement capacity, and adoption of standards, including where changes require sustained institutional support.
- **Safeguards and investment conditionalities.** Environmental and societal safeguard approaches and procurement standards provide a lever to reduce exposure risks in IFI-funded infrastructure and industrial operations. Incorporating lead considerations into relevant safeguards, quality standards and monitoring requirements can help prevent new exposures and strengthen implementation incentives.

Effective engagement with IFIs requires translating the Framework and other identified priorities into investment-ready components that align with IFI mandates and project cycles. In many cases, this also requires the strategic use of grant resources – such as donor-supported trust funds – to support project preparation, investment cases, upstream policy work, regional or cross-border coordination and the use of grants or subsidized financing to liberate additional resources. These grant resources can play a highly catalytic role by unlocking significantly larger volumes of IFI lending, often at multiples of grant funding. Given that such financing is predominantly loan-based, even when concessional, these approaches will be most effective where aligned with considerations of country debt sustainability and national financing strategies. This includes developing credible evidence packages, costed implementation pathways and delivery arrangements that can be incorporated into pipeline projects, alongside clear articulation of the economic benefits and risk reduction.

Private sector actors, including manufacturers, recyclers, supply chain stakeholders, laboratories and technology partners, sit at the centre of global efforts to prevent and mitigate lead exposure, given their role in both generating risk and enabling solutions. Engagement can include strengthening product safety compliance, supporting safer materials and manufacturing processes, investing in quality assurance and testing ecosystems, and deploying innovation in diagnostics and monitoring. In some contexts, private sector entities may also be recipients of financing – including loan, equity or blended instruments provided through DFIs or regional banks – to support modernization, compliance and the transition to lead-safe production and recycling. Effective engagement requires clear standards, credible testing capacity and transparent compliance expectations. Clear regulatory frameworks and enforcement are essential to ensure accountability of businesses for lead-related risks and impacts.

Next steps

To operationalize this approach, PLF will prioritize practical steps that strengthen coordination and enable targeted mobilization while avoiding new burdens on countries and partners.

First, the PLF will engage current and prospective donors to develop a shared understanding of existing investments and support a light-touch approach to categorizing investments to enable alignment and gap identification.

Second, the PLF will connect this investment understanding to the Framework, drawing on existing investment cases and validating it through annual country reporting and partner consultation, to identify underfunded priority areas and opportunities to reduce duplication and strengthen complementarity.

Third, the PLF will use information on financing needs, gaps and opportunities to support targeted donor engagement and outreach tailored to different donor communities and thematic interests, while reinforcing PLF's role in convening, visibility and match-making.

Through these steps, paired with global advocacy on the importance of a lead-free future, PLF aims to support LMIC-led action by mobilizing catalytic external resources, promoting more coordinated and joined-up donor investments, and helping unlock larger-scale financing – particularly through development finance institutions – aligned with Framework priorities. Together, these efforts are intended to strengthen alignment, efficiency, and scale across the full range of actors working to deliver interim targets and the 2040 goal of ending childhood lead poisoning.



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Annex: Sample questionnaire for country submissions

The following information will be requested from country governments as part of their submissions.

Country-level indicators



1. Countries have representative childhood blood lead level data

Sufficient data to be actionable around the prevalence of childhood lead poisoning (≥ 5 ug/dL) in children under 5 (12–59 months), as determined by country governments.

Measurement notes

- Do you have representative data on childhood blood lead levels? [y/n]
- What is the percentage of children under 5 (12–59 months) with a BLL ≥ 5 ug/dL?
- What is the percentage of children under the age of 18 or 20 with a BLL ≥ 5 ug/dL?
- What are the sources of the data? [report/link]
- What geographic area does the data represent? [national, subnational, urban areas, rural areas, with option to add more detail]
- Has the data been used to identify priority areas or ‘hotspots’ for targeted action? [y/n/if yes, describe]
- What year was the data collected?
- How was the data collected [and analysed]? [capillary, venous][point of care, lab-based]



2. Countries have identified high-priority sources of lead exposure

Sufficient contextual evidence to identify high-priority sources of exposure and which might be deemed high priority, as determined by country governments.

Measurement notes

- Do you have sufficient data/evidence to identify and prioritize sources of lead exposure? (y/n)
Please select all that apply from the following list of sources which you have identified as high priority:

Manufacturing and industrial contamination sources

- Lead-acid battery manufacturing and recycling
- Electronic waste
- Industrial releases
- Mining, including artisanal and small-scale
- Occupational safety and health

Environmental/media exposure sources

- Drinking water systems (to include pipes, fittings and fixtures used in new drinking water systems)
- Legacy paint (lead-based paint on existing surfaces that can create lead dust when disturbed)
- Foods
- Spices

Consumer products/end-use exposure sources

- Cosmetics
- Traditional medicines
- Glazed ceramics
- Metallic cookware
- Newly manufactured paint
- Toys
- Jewellery
- Plastics
- Fishing weights and ammunition

Other

- Other [specify]
- What was your process for prioritizing sources? [short answer]
- What is the source of the data? [report/ink]
- What geographic area does the data represent? [national, subnational, metropolitan, with option to add more detail]
- What year were the data collected?
- How was the data analysed? [field portable analyser or lab-based]
- Was a source assessment carried out to inform prioritization? [y/n]



3. Countries have an action plan to address priority sources of lead exposure

An action plan is any document that includes a plan to identify, mitigate and monitor lead exposure and a coordination mechanism to facilitate engagement of key government and non-government stakeholders.

Measurement notes

- Does the national government have an action plan to identify, mitigate and monitor lead exposure?
- What government stakeholders and ministries are included?
- What non-governmental stakeholders are included? [CSO, academia, industry]
- Does your government have a plan for associated resources to deliver on the action plan? [y/n]
- Is there an active coordination body, such as a technical working group? [y/n]
- Does it have a timeline and/or milestones? [y/n]
- Are you conducting awareness-raising, i.e., focused on elevating policymaker and/or public understanding of lead as an issue?
- Please provide a copy of your action plan here.



4. Countries conducting routine surveillance and assessment

Measures whether a country operates a functional system that routinely (e.g., at least 3 times over 6 years) reports on blood lead levels, environmental lead levels or consumer products, to inform and support lead mitigation. Routine blood lead surveillance can also include sentinel surveillance of health events for a limited population that may be generalizable to the general population.

Measurement notes

- Have you conducted any surveillance and assessment of concentrations of lead in:
 - Biological: Blood [y/n], Bone [y/n]
 - Environmental: Soil, water, air, vegetation, foods, spices, traditional medicines and consumer products.
 - If yes, which sources of environmental lead exposure were assessed [Soil, water, air, vegetation, foods, spices, traditional medicines and consumer products]
- What ages does your blood lead level data represent?
 - 0–4 years
 - 5–10
 - 10–19
 - 20+
- What geographic area do your data represent? [national, subnational with option to add more detail][biological, environmental]
- Does the government have in place systems to conduct routine surveillance of children’s blood? [y/n] (e.g., at least 3 times over 6 years)
- Does the government have in place systems to conduct routine assessment of environmental lead exposure? [y/n] (e.g., at least 2 times over 6 years)
 - If yes, please specify which sources of environmental lead exposure are being regularly assessed [soil, water, air, vegetation, foods, spices, traditional medicines and consumer products]
- Does your government have trained personnel in the following areas related to lead exposure? [y/n] [surveillance, environmental sample and risk assessment, lab analysis, clinical management of lead, other]
- Do your country have the capacity to test for lead in blood? [y/n][labs/point of care]
- Does your country have testing capacity for environmental samples and consumer products for lead? [y/n] [labs/portable]
- Do you have an online system or tool to store surveillance and environmental assessment data and make it available? [centralized digital system, no centralized digital system, publicly available]
- What actions are being taken with surveillance and environmental assessment data? [enforcement actions, updating clinical or standard operating procedures, resource allocations amended, other]
- Are the data being analysed and used to inform the implementation of the action plan? [y/n]



5. Countries with new or revised laws to address prioritized sources of lead exposure

Measures the extent to which a country has formally enacted policies, legally binding laws or mandatory standards aimed at eliminating or controlling major sources of lead exposure. Progress is assessed based on the enactment of comprehensive legal frameworks covering priority lead sources and including provisions establishing enforcement mechanisms.

A law is any mandatory legal requirement with consequences for noncompliance. It can be a statute, a regulation or a standard, as long as it includes an enforcement mechanism.

Measurement notes

Form will include the following list of sources with an option to indicate the status of current laws.

	Not a significant source	No action	In process	Enacted	Active enforcement
Manufacturing and industrial contamination sources					
lead-acid battery manufacturing and recycling					
electronic waste					
industrial releases					
mining, including artisanal and small-scale					
occupational safety and health					
Environmental/media exposure sources					
drinking water systems (to include pipes, fittings and fixtures used in new drinking water systems)					
legacy paint					
foods					
spices					
Consumer products/end-use exposure sources					
cosmetics					
traditional medicines					
glazed ceramics					
metallic cookware					
newly manufactured paint					
toys					
jewellery					
plastics					
fishing weights and ammunition					
Other					
other [specify]					

For each option selected:

Name of policy:

Year enacted:



6. Countries making progress at addressing at least one out of top three priority sources of lead exposure

Using data on sources, country has chosen and is addressing at least one of the top three causes.

Making progress is at the discretion of the government and can include: committing resources or staff; engaging partners; demonstrated reduction in environmental exposure (soil, water, air, vegetation, foods, spices, traditional medicines and consumer products), developing policies on an issue, such as implementation and enforcement of new regulatory measures; or documented compliance with regulatory standards or closure of identified exposure sites.

Measurement notes

Form will include the following list of sources with the opportunity to select status of progress on high-priority sources as follows:

	No action	In process	Addressed
Manufacturing and industrial contamination sources			
lead-acid battery manufacturing and recycling			
electronic waste			
industrial releases			
mining, including artisanal and small-scale			
occupational safety and health			
Environmental/media exposure sources			
drinking water systems (to include pipes, fittings and fixtures used in new drinking water systems)			
legacy paint			
foods			
spices			
Consumer products/end-use exposure sources			
cosmetics			
traditional medicines			
glazed ceramics			
metallic cookware			
newly manufactured paint			
toys			
jewellery			
plastics			
fishing weights and ammunition			
Other			
other [specify]			

Global enabling factor indicators

The following indicators will be collected globally and aggregated by the PLF Secretariat.



7. Lead is an investment priority

Tracks cumulative external funding towards lead programming since 2023, reflecting the level of financial commitment to lead mitigation globally. For this indicator, funding includes external grant and grant-equivalent financing (e.g., philanthropy, bilateral and multilateral support) and excludes domestic resources and IFI loans.

Measurement (PLF Secretariat):

- Cumulative external funding towards lead since 2023 (USD)



8. Lead is a global priority

Tracks the extent to which lead exposure is elevated as a shared global priority. Membership in the PLF serves as a proxy for political and institutional commitment.

Measurement (PLF Secretariat):

- Number of countries that are members of the PLF

Outcome indicator



9. Reduction in childhood blood lead levels

Tracks reductions in blood lead levels over time, as an interim measure that progress is being made, and as the ultimate measure that the PLF goal of ending childhood lead poisoning has been achieved. This indicator reflects the collective progress and impact across the other indicators.

Measurement notes

Baseline measurement

(Use first national survey where available; otherwise use GBD 2023 estimate)

Percentage of children aged under 5 years (12–59 months) with BLL \geq 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$

Numerator:

Denominator:

Data source:

Data method: (survey or modelled estimate)

Year:

Most recent measurement (endline or latest available)

Percentage of children aged under 5 years (12–59 months) with BLL \geq 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$

Numerator:

Denominator:

Data source:

Data method: (survey or modelled estimate)

Year:

Progress assessment

yes – the country has demonstrated a reduction relative to baseline

no – no measurable reduction yet

(After 2030, report percentage reduction from baseline: _____%)

Subnational progress (if national-level reduction is not yet observed)

Have subnational reductions been observed?

yes no

If yes, please provide details:

Geographic region:

Baseline measurement:

Percentage of children under aged 5 years (12–59 months) with BLL \geq 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$

Numerator:

Denominator:

Data source:

Data method: (survey or modelled estimate)

Year:

Most recent measurement:

Percentage of children aged under 5 years (12–59 months) with BLL \geq 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$

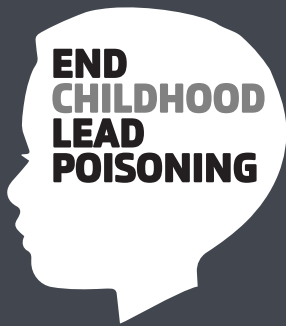
Numerator:

Denominator:

Data source:

Data method: (survey or modelled estimate)

Year:



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