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Report

# Documentation of planetGOLD Programme: Communication Interventions in Kenya

January 2025

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## Acknowledgments

This report has benefited from the valuable expertise and perspectives of a number of technical experts and researchers. Along with the authors listed below, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the project staff and partners with the planetGOLD project in Kenya who generously provided their time, feedback and perspectives to this publication.

The planetGOLD Kenya project is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry.

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This document has been drafted and published under the planetGOLD programme funded by the Global Environment Facility, led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and Conservation International. For more information, visit [www.planetgold.org](http://www.planetgold.org)

## Abbreviations/Acronyms

Abbreviation/Acronym	Definition
ASGM	Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining
ASM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IC	Information Communication
IEC	Information Education Communication
MECCF	Ministry of Environment Climate Change and Forestry
NAP	National Action Plan
NECC	National Environmental Complaints Committee
NEMA	National Environmental Management Authority
NETFUND	National Environmental Trust Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# Executive Summary

The planetGOLD Kenya project's communication strategy is the project's approach for reaching out to key stakeholders via selected channels of communication. The country's communication strategy was designed using the planetGOLD global communication strategy as a framework, but with an emphasis on context. All communication on the project was targeted at planetGOLD's objective to reduce the use of mercury in ASGM by facilitating the formalization of the ASGM industry and promoting responsible mining. The following interventions were implemented with the communication strategy

1. **Intervention 1:** "Say no to mercury." This is an awareness creation on the dangers on mercury use by miners for processing gold. It was the flagship communication campaign theme of the project.
2. **Intervention 2:** Campaigns on advancement of mercury free processing equipment and technology linked to finance opportunities

These communication interventions yielded some impacts on achieving project results including:

1. Mainstreaming mercury awareness and behavioral change on mercury uses for gold processing
2. Training and capacity building of mining groups on the impacts of mercury
3. Training and capacity building for Government staff to help management mining activities at the county level.
4. Formation of mining cooperatives
5. Development of financial workbooks; materials that provide information on access to finance and financial literacy

## 1 Introduction

The artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector in Kenya, which holds significant but underexplored gold reserves and supports the livelihoods of over one million individuals (UNDP, 2022), has the potential to drive socially and environmentally sustainable economic development, particularly in the western areas. The artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector in Kenya is consistently expanding, with over 250,000 miners engaged primarily in informal operations as their principal source of livelihood.

In western Kenya, rapid population expansion and a lack of employment opportunities for youth render artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) a vital source of revenue for miners to cover their daily expenses. Miners often work under poor and substandard conditions, utilizing primarily primitive tools and basic technologies that employ the use of hazardous chemicals like mercury and cyanide, which release harmful pollutants into the environment, severely impacting the health of miners and other individuals in the mining community.

The majority of ASGM enterprises in Kenya continue to operate informally. The country lacked regulated legal framework from ASM until 2016, with formalization efforts taking place since then. Formalization presents an opportunity for the advancement and adoption of environmentally sustainable alternative technologies that benefit both the ecosystem and miners. This transformation requires the comprehensive formalization of the sector, which would then enable miners to get training on cleaner, mercury-free technologies. and, importantly, enhancing their access to funding and investment in these technologies.

The planetGOLD Kenya project was launched in 2019 and is implemented by Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its objective is to reduce the use of mercury in ASGM by facilitating the formalization of the ASGM industry and promoting responsible mining. The project included activities to enhance the capacity of the government and business sectors, and to improve regulatory frameworks. Formalization would enhance ASGM operations' access to sufficient financial and technical services for the adoption of mercury-free ore processing. The project also aims to pilot and instruct miners in the application of optimal technologies that eradicate mercury.

Specifically, planetGOLD Kenya is supporting 6 mining communities to reduce mercury use by 1.5 tons over the course of the five-year project. The project implementation strategy has four key pillars:

1. Support formalization of the ASGM sector
2. Provide technical assistance and training on alternative technologies
3. Help miners access financing for mercury free technologies
4. Raise awareness and disseminate best practices

This report outlines Kenya's communication strategy for disseminating information regarding project interventions aimed at increasing knowledge of the effects of mercury usage and promoting better practices. The project, via the communication strategy, identifies communication channels for disseminating information to key stakeholders and the broader public.

## 2 Background on Communication Interventions

### Background and Context

The use of mercury coupled with poor working conditions continue to be a challenge for the over 250,000 artisanal miners working in the sector. The mining sector contributes approximately 0.8% to Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with a projected target to elevate this figure to 10% by 2030<sup>1</sup>. ASM in Kenya provides livelihood support for many unemployed youth and women just like other resource rich countries in Africa (Hilson, 2016)<sup>2</sup>.

Notwithstanding the significance of ASM in providing income for low-income individuals and rural populations, ASM continues to be defined by its negative impacts including concerns over inadequate working conditions, land degradation, water pollution, health, safety, and other environmental challenges stemming from mostly illegal ASM activities. This has resulted in marginalization of formal funding and access to finance due to its predominately informal character. In line with Minamata Convention on Mercury, the project's flagship communication campaign was to raise awareness on the negative impacts of mercury with the hash tag '**say no to mercury**'.

The planetGOLD communication strategy was an integral part of the project's engagement with stakeholders and disseminating information. The strategy was developed following:

1. Desk study analysis of project documents to fully link objectives and targets.
2. Baseline information on Kenya's ASM sector and its challenges.
3. Site visits to project locations to obtain direct insights into the issues faced by the sector, particularly with mercury usage.
  - Stakeholder mapping/ engagement including engaging state agencies with mining sector regulatory oversight drawn from the Technical advisory committee on mining (meets quarterly) with members from State Department for Mining, Ministry of Environment Climate Change and Forestry (MECCF), National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), National Environment Complaints Committee(NECC), National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND) Ministry of Health, State Department for Cooperatives, The National Treasury, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, County Governments and Civil Society etc. Mining groups and associations were also engaged to get their buy in and inputs for the drafting comms strategy.
4. Second round of stakeholder engagement following the draft communication plan to solicit additional comments.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mining.go.ke/sites/default/files/SDM%20SP%20DRAFT.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Hilson, G. (2016). Farming, small-scale mining and rural livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa: A critical overview. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 3(2), 547-563.

5. Validation of final communication strategy documents with stakeholders.

The communication channels were purposeful in targeting different stakeholders. It also included feedback channels to enhance the implementation plan for successfully reaching target audiences.

## Communication Interventions Chosen

As previously stated, the communication intervention was directly related to the planetGOLD global project's main goal of minimizing the use of mercury in ASGM by aiding the formalization of the ASGM business and promoting responsible mining. In addition to raising awareness about the dangers of mercury use, the communication interventions focused on training and capacity building for the adoption of alternative mercury-free processing equipment/technology, as well as financial literacy for access to finance, which was facilitated by miners' formalization into cooperatives.

The next sections provide further details about the selected and implemented communication intervention.

### 3 Communication Intervention 1: “Say No To Mercury”

#SayNoToMercury intervention was the flagship communication campaign of the Kenya project on sensitization and awareness creation on dangers of mercury use in mining operations. This was part of the broader objective of influencing positive perceptions about artisanal mining.

#### Description of the Intervention

This intervention focused on awareness creation on the dangers on mercury (Say no to mercury) using different languages including English, Swahili and native speaking languages dominant at various communities and mining sites. The project developed Information Communication (IC) materials for communication campaigns, including tagline messages and dissemination of information to various stakeholders through identified channels that produced optimal results. The communication channels employed were strategic meetings, reports, planetGOLD and MEF websites, social media platforms, factsheets, project documents, webinars, roadshows, radio talk shows, advertisements, roll up banners, Information Education Communication (IEC) materials, and workshops among others. Due to the health-related effects of mercury, the project team partnered with health volunteers to promote awareness of the dangers associated with mercury usage through drama and skits in multiple local languages.

Additionally, the project team and volunteers participated in various activities, including engaging

mining groups with the campaign's objectives and distribution of campaign materials. These groups acted as gatekeepers for community access, facilitating the campaign's engagement with its target audiences. Involving miners as a fundamental component of the campaign fostered trust and acceptance of the initiative, addressing the skepticism stemming from past exploitation and unfulfilled promises from other campaigns. The project's collaboration with government agencies was crucial in gaining the miners' trust as well.



Figure 1: #SayNoToMercury branded campaign materials



Figure 2: Mercury awareness campaign materials



Figure 3: Branded Pens for #SayNoToMercury Campaign

## Partners and Key Stakeholders

The planetGOLD project relied on strategic partnerships with relevant government ministries and agencies, as well as key mining sector stakeholders, to obtain positive results from project implementation. This project mapped and identified key stakeholders, building on the existing ASM stakeholder groupings from National Action Plan (NAP), planetGOLD project document and other stakeholders who joined further into the project. This stakeholder list includes:

1. Technical advisory committee on mining (meets quarterly) with members from:
  - State Department for Mining,
  - MECCF,
  - NEMA,
  - NECC,
  - NETFUND,
  - Ministry of Health,
  - Ministry of Water and Irrigation
  - State Department for Cooperatives
  - The National Treasury
  - Civil Society
2. Miner groups and associations
3. Community leaders
4. County mining committee members
5. Traditional Authorities
6. Like minded Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Civil Society Organization (CSO)

## **Main Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts**

The main outcomes of this intervention achieved were:

1. The "Say No to Mercury" campaign was effectively executed in all project areas, enhancing awareness of the detrimental effects of mercury use in mining.
2. The production of information and communication materials including branded cups, water bottles, brochures, flyers, t shirts, polo shirts and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for different stakeholders' targets.
3. Partnerships with mainstream media houses in project areas to reach wider audiences.
4. Support for training and capacity building of miners on the dangers of mercury use through formation of cooperatives
5. Development of database for miners with key biometrics and relevant data to enhance the design of support for targeted groups.
6. Training and capacity building of stakeholders including relevant government agencies who in partnership with the project dissemination of information to target audiences
7. Production of workbooks for miners safe working conditions

The following impacts were measured for this intervention:

1. Behavioral change related to mercury usage at mining sites. This was observed and measured from the number of success stories/ lessons learnt documented, number of miners sensitized, number of social media posts, best practices produced and shared in accordance with the project's performance indicators.
2. Formation of 70 artisanal mining cooperatives to lead say no to mercury campaign following project execution.
3. Youth in mining trained as awareness champions to ensure constant communication about the dangers of mercury usage on mine sites.

## **4 Communication Intervention 2: Campaign on advancement of mercury free processing equipment and technology linked to finance opportunities**

### **Description of the Intervention**

The campaign on advancement of mercury free processing equipment linked to finance opportunities was aligned to two of the project's pillars. The aim was to introduce miners to more efficient alternative mercury processing technology and equipment. This intervention enhances knowledge on the awareness of the impacts of mercury by training miners on the adoption of efficient and responsible mining practices that positively impact on their gold production. This campaign was linked to how miners can access the right financial assistance and credit facility from banks and financial institutions to purchase these mercury free alternative processing technology and equipment.

Additionally, the objective of this campaign was to persuade the financial institutions to take advantage of the investment opportunities that exist in the ASGM sector. The project consequently initiated engagements with various financial institutions and banks to encourage them to capitalize on investment prospects within the ASGM sector. The project facilitated the training and capacity building of miners in partnership with government and county mining committees through the mining cooperatives focused on the following targeted areas:

1. Processing technologies that employ more efficient approaches to gold processing.
2. Financial literacy and bookkeeping
3. Accessing loans and credit facility from banks and financial institutions

## Partners and Key Stakeholders

The following partners and stakeholders were instrumental in the implementation of this intervention

1. State Department for Mining
2. MECCF
3. Environmental Authorities (NECC, NETFUND)
4. NEMA
5. State Department for Cooperatives
6. The National Treasury
7. Ministry of Water and Irrigation
8. Banks and financial institutions
9. Miner groups and associations
10. Community leaders
11. County mining committee members
12. Traditional Authorities
13. Like minded Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Civil Society Organization (CSO)

## Main Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts

The main outcomes for this intervention were support for the facilitation of miners' access to finance.

1. Development of financial workbooks.<sup>3,4</sup> These materials provide information on access to finance and financial literacy. Materials for training and capacity building are tailored to different literacy levels and languages spoken by targeted miners and other stakeholders for capacity building and training
2. Technology workbook on capacity building and training on mercury free technology and processing techniques
3. Workbooks for miners safe working conditions
4. Database for miners (including biometrics and relevant data)

The campaign on alternate gold processing technology connected to access to finance has had

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.planetgold.org/sites/default/files/planetGOLD%20Kenya.%202022%20MOE%20ASGM%20TRAINING%20MODULE.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.planetgold.org/sites/default/files/planetGOLD%20Kenya.%202022.%20Financial%20Literacy%20Handbook.pdf>

some effects on the sector, including the following.

- 1 Some miners have grown to appreciate the prospects of using mercury-free processing alternatives/ technologies and eagerly await their acceptance. This was observed from the number of miners sensitized and are willing to adopt mercury free alternatives in the performance indicators of the project's M&E framework. Miners were reached through road shows, field visits and sensitization workshops.
- 2 The formation of miner cooperatives has made it easier for miners to obtain loans and credit from banks and financial institutions.
- 3 The project has trained 776 miners on basic financial management, including record keeping, business operations/ entrepreneurship and awareness on formal financing in the project sites identified in the project document<sup>5</sup>.
- 4 There is growing political goodwill and government support for the formalization of ASM observed from current sector reforms and framework in place for artisanal mining.
- 5 Banks and financial institutions are becoming open to engaging with miners and offering support.

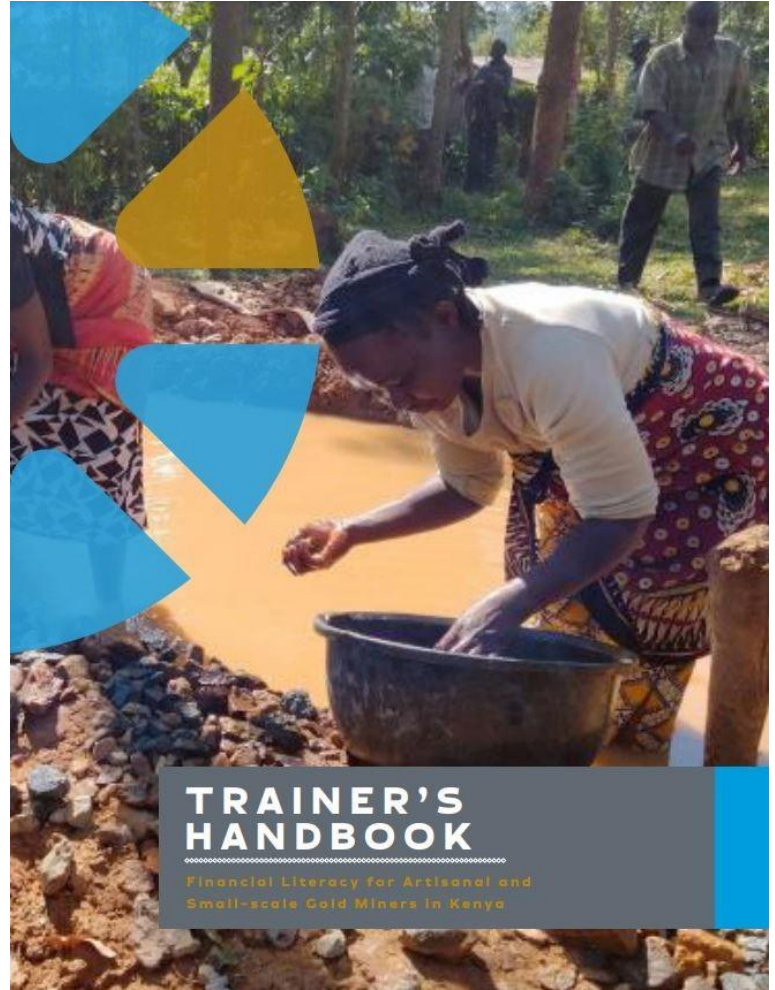


Figure 4: Financial workbook developed by planetGOLD Kenya

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<https://www.planetgold.org/sites/default/files/Documentation%20of%20planetGOLD%20Kenya%20ASGM%20Fi nancial%20Inclusion%20Interventions.pdf>

## 5 Sustainability

The planetGOLD project designed to impact the ASM sector beyond its life span and has in place adequate plans and strategies for its sustainability post implementation. A key strategy for sustainability was the partnership with the Government and its agencies in implementing project activities through existing government structures. The training and capacity of county staff responsible for mining in project areas, as well as County mining committee members overseeing the implementation of essential project activities, will facilitate the sustainability of project initiatives and subsequently enhance future programs and interventions. Furthermore, the project has in place multiple strategies for the sustainability of its activities, including

1. The Formation of mining committees of targeted miner groups, including gender, safety, and awareness advocates, to facilitate ongoing communication and education regarding responsible mining practices among miners.
1. Establishment of site committees with miners from different cooperatives to progress communication of project initiatives on dangers of mercury use through to post project
2. The project has engaged and trained some youth in mining with substantial social media following to progress communication of awareness creation and sensitization
3. The use of drama, skits and theatre for awareness creation on the impacts of mercury has been adopted in the project areas as ways for communicating to stakeholders like miners, mining groups and community members.
4. Capacity building of selected individuals from partner institutions like the State Department for Mining, NEMA and Counties to post campaign messages post project implementation.

## 6 Cross-cutting Issues

### Gender

The communication interventions intentionally focused on women to integrate gender considerations into project activities related to access to formal licenses, financing, and training and capacity building. The establishment of all-women cooperatives was essential in promoting women's engagement in critical decision-making roles and facilitating their acceptability within mining communities.

Gender-sensitive training and capacity building in alternative processing techniques and financial literacy initiatives were developed to address various categories of women, utilizing data from a compilation of information obtained from cooperatives and other women's organizations. Importantly, evaluation of project intervention reveals that output of 74 women trained was

significantly lower than the 108 trained men indicating a need for enhancement in subsequent programs.

## **7 Findings, Experiences and Lessons Learned**

### **Highlights of Communication Interventions**

The following are highlights of lessons learned from of communication interventions.

1. The experiences of involving diverse stakeholders and integrating their perspectives to enhance implementation techniques underscore the significance of communication in executing a behavioral change campaign, such as the avoidance of mercury use.
2. It is essential to equip the communication team with the requisite tools and logistics to successfully convey project interventions.
3. Campaigns in rural areas necessitate substantial mobilization; hence, sufficient finances must be readily accessible to facilitate project execution.
4. The project must procure various mercury free equipment intended as alternatives for demonstrating mercury free processing techniques simultaneously with awareness campaign. This will make the campaign to depart from mercury use more effective.
5. Projects must demonstrate various mercury technology alternatives for stakeholder and mining group input regarding the most appropriate option for their requirements.
6. Knowledge sharing and experiences from stakeholders and mining groups are crucial for enhancing implementation techniques to attain optimal outcomes.
7. It is important to integrate stakeholder perspectives to enhance implementation, particularly focusing on the appropriate project beneficiaries.
8. For sustainability, it is crucial to delineate the transition plan following project completion. This should be rooted in established structures within governmental agencies at national and subnational levels.

### **Alignment with planetGOLD programme-wide communications strategy**

The project country communication plan was prepared with the planetGOLD programme's global communication strategy as a reference document. It established the foundation for the template to formulate the national communication strategy tailored to the unique environment of Kenya's mining sector. The specificity of the country communication strategy was focused on the following

1. The best channel to reach different target stakeholders and which is generalized by the global communication strategy
2. The country strategy has specific messaging objective unlike the global communication strategy has an objective to communicate project themes
3. The country communication strategy mapping of stakeholders to communicate specific intervention
4. Provide solutions on how to address challenges to communication
5. Feedback mechanisms is exclusive to the planetGOLD Kenya communication strategy in contrast to the planetGOLD global communication strategy.

The branding of materials within the country communication strategy was entirely consistent with the brand guidelines for global communication materials, which proved beneficial due to the precise specifications for logo placement, design, and other elements.

## Changes Observed in Perceptions or Coverage of ASGM

The change in observed coverage of ASM was documented mostly in project regions and at the corridors of government partners. The media focus directed towards the sector cannot be exclusively ascribed to the project; rather, it can be characterized as a collaborative initiative among industry stakeholders, spearheaded by the government, aimed at formalizing the sector.

The following were specific observations made to suggest changes in perceptions of ASGM

1. Local media coverage of awareness campaigns in mining areas
2. Miners in project areas have come to value the potential of mercury-free processing alternatives and are keenly anticipating their adoption.
3. Growing political goodwill and government support to the formalization of ASGM
4. Banks and financial institutions' increased readiness to collaborate with mining groups to provide diverse credit and lending services observed from the number of financial institutions engaged and persuaded in the project's performance indicators<sup>6</sup>.

## Specific Factors for Success

### Targets achieved under communication interventions

The most important achievement of the communication interventions beyond the development of the country communication strategy was the awareness dubbed '**say no to mercury**'. This was instrumental in giving the project the needed visibility through its information communication

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.planetgold.org/sites/default/files/Documentation%20of%20planetGOLD%20Kenya%20ASGM%20Financial%20Inclusion%20Interventions.pdf>

materials to make an impact and achieve its main objective.

The campaign promoting alternative mercury-free technology and access to financing was positively welcomed by targeted stakeholders and recipients who are eager for a demonstration of the alternatives to mercury. The reasons for the successes were attributed to the purposeful targeting of stakeholders including miners, mining groups and artisanal mining committees and their ownership of the campaigns. Additional factors were ascribed to the trust established through interactions with stakeholders and regular participation with implementation plans and subsequent actions. Ultimately, collaboration with government entities at both national and subnational levels was crucial due to the prevailing mistrust and historical experiences of miners and privately led initiatives.

### **Targets not achieved under communication interventions**

The communication effort was predominantly successful in relation to its objectives and targets. However, there is opportunity for development in some areas that yielded suboptimal results, including

1. Capacity building and training: There were a relatively low number of miners trained on various interventions especially women trained in alternative processing techniques and financial literacy on access to finance. The project team attributed this to budgetary constraints that inhibited the training of more people than achieved.
2. Budgetary flexibility for contingency allocation. This would facilitate the smooth execution of the implementation strategy with minimal drawbacks.

# Appendix: Branded planetGOLD IC Materials



Figure 5: Branded planetGOLD umbrella



Fig 6: Branded planetGOLD reflector jackets



Figure 7: Branded planetGOLD caps



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