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Report

# Documentation of planetGOLD Programme: Communication Interventions in the Philippines

February 2025

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	6
1 Introduction .....	8
2 Background on Communication Interventions .....	9
Background and Context.....	9
Partners and Key Stakeholders.....	10
3 Communication Interventions Evaluated .....	11
Awareness Campaigns & Events.....	12
Description of the Intervention.....	12
Awareness Campaigns and Events .....	12
4 Communicating via Trainings and Partnerships.....	17
Main Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts.....	17
5 Communications via Social Media and Digital Platforms .....	18
Description of the Intervention.....	18
Main Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts.....	21
6 Communications via Print Media and Publications .....	23
Description of the Intervention.....	23
Main Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts.....	26
7 Sustainability .....	27
8 Cross-cutting Issues .....	28
Gender .....	28
Findings, Experiences and Lessons Learned .....	32
Highlights of Communication Interventions .....	32
Alignment with planetGOLD programme-wide communications strategy .....	32
Changes Observed in Perceptions or Coverage of ASGM .....	33
Specific Factors for Success .....	33
Recommendations for Future Interventions.....	34
Annex: Documents Reviewed .....	36

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The planetGOLD Philippines project was implemented by the UN Environment Programme, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and executed by the Artisanal Gold Council (AGC) in partnership with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

### Primary Authors:

- Dr Abby Efua Hilson, University of Kent
- Professor (Dr) Giorgio de Tomi, University of São Paulo

**Editorial Support:** Susan Keane; Jennifer Wilmore Scroggins – Natural Resources Defense Council

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## Abbreviations/Acronyms

Abbreviation/Acronym	Definition
<b>AGC</b>	Artisanal Gold Council
<b>ASGM</b>	Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining

Abbreviation/Acronym	Definition
ASM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
BGI	Better Gold Initiative
BSP	<i>Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas</i> (Central Bank of the Republic of Philippines)
CNSC	Camarines Norte State College
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSF	Credit Surety Fund
DBP	Development Bank of the Philippines
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
ECQ	Enhanced Community Quarantine
EMB	Environmental Management Bureau
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFI	Government Financial Institutions
GIR	Gross International Reserves
LGU	Local Government Unit
MB	<i>Minahang Bayan</i>
MFPS	Mercury-Free processing System
MGB	Mines and Geosciences Bureau
MMT	Multi-Partite Monitoring Team
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MPSPC	Mountain Province State Polytechnic College
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NSBSSMAI	Northern Sagada Barangay Small-Scale Mining Association, Inc.
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PMRB	Provincial Mining Regulatory Board
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SMBC	Samahan ng mga Minero sa Barangay Casalugan
SSM	Small-Scale Mining
SSMC	Small-scale mining contract
TWG	Technical Working group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



Abbreviation/Acronym	Definition
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

# Executive Summary

The planetGOLD Philippines communication strategy served as the thread linking all the other project objectives. It encompassed three major categories of interventions.

1. **Intervention 1 - Awareness Campaigns and Events:** Multiple campaigns and events, such as the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) Champion Spotlight Series, the "Youth for Responsible Gold" educational roadshow, and the "The Gold Talk" radio programs, were employed to raise awareness and educate miners and children on the impacts of mercury, promoting responsible practices and fostering community dedication to responsible ASGM. The project utilized innovative engagement strategies, including an interactive photo and video booth, at major local and national events such as the Sagada *Etag* Festival, Paracale *Pabirik* Festival, Bantayog Festival, Mining Philippines: International Conference and Exhibition, and the Media Kapihan Series. These efforts expanded audience reach and visibility, further amplified by TV and radio broadcasts, interviews, and online features. Training and partnership efforts were crucial in sensitizing stakeholders about the ASGM sector's benefits, opportunities, and challenges. The project partnered with academic institutions and ASGM associations to help ensure sustained awareness and support for responsible ASGM practices.
2. **Intervention 2 - Communications via Social Media and Digital Platforms:** The second communication intervention by the planetGOLD Philippines project effectively utilized social media and digital platforms to reach a broad audience, including the general public, government officials, and ASGM operators. The use of Facebook and the project's webpage allowed the project to effectively disseminate information, engage stakeholders, and promote awareness about mercury-free ASGM. In addition to these platforms, the project engaged stakeholders through the production of impactful video content, including a documentary film series highlighting the challenges and successes of marginalized ASGM operators.
3. **Intervention 3 - Communications via Print Media and Publications:** The final communications intervention utilized print media and publications to create awareness about ASGM and mercury, addressing the digital exclusion that limits engagement of marginalized groups. Newsletters, article publications, brochures, infographics, booklets, and storybooks were released to highlight achievements, provide updates, and promote gender equality and empowerment within the ASGM community. These materials were also translated into two local languages used in the project sites.

Key impacts of these interventions include:

- The project successfully achieved its targets through sustained collaboration and strengthened communications with local, national, and international stakeholders. Notable among these are the established relationships with ASGM associations, MGB, academic institutions, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and the media
- The project's social media platforms continue to be used to create awareness of ASGM and the impacts of mercury. The usage statistics on the Facebook posts, webpage, and film and documentary series continue to grow.
- The effectiveness of the communications strategy was demonstrated through the achievement of key objectives from the Better Technology and Techniques, Formalization, and Access to Finance and Markets components of the project.

# 1 Introduction

The Global Environment Facility (GEF)-sponsored planetGOLD Philippines project was launched in 2019 aiming to empower ASGM sector operators to reduce, eliminate, and avoid the use of mercury through various technologies. The planetGOLD Philippines project implemented by the UN Environment Programme and UN Industrial Development Organization is a collaboration between Artisanal Gold Council (AGC), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). The project sites are Sagada in the Mountain Province and Paracale in Camarines Norte. With more than 70% of the ore produced in the Philippines coming from the ASGM sector, the planetGOLD project is well-positioned to yield significant health and environmental benefits.

The Philippines project has four objectives:

1. **Formalization:** Bridging local ASGM workers into the formal economy fosters sector professionalization. This component enhances governmental monitoring to better oversee miners and allow miners to better access government incentives.
2. **Access to Finance and Markets:** Establishing sustainable financial opportunities for local artisanal and small-scale gold miners, improving linkage to both local gold markets and international gold investors.
3. **Better Technology and Techniques:** Improving local mining performance with productivity-enhancing, mercury-free technologies, and management techniques
4. **Knowledge Management:** Showcasing of Filipino game-changers and success stories to both national and global audiences, enabling communities to benefit from shared experiences and insights garnered from other projects.

This report provides a comprehensive review of the communications strategy employed by planetGOLD Philippines in their efforts to achieve the fourth objective of promoting awareness about the impacts of mercury and disseminating lessons learned and best practices for achieving mercury-free ASGM.

The report begins with a discussion on the background context for the communication strategies. It then unpacks three communication interventions employed. This is followed by a discussion on the factors critical for sustaining the inroads made in raising awareness on ASGM. Lastly, the report provides lessons learned and recommendations for future interventions.

## 2 Background on Communication Interventions

### Background and Context

ASGM in the Philippines is a crucial contributor to the economy, albeit perceived with a mix of recognition and concern. It is estimated that ASGM provides a livelihood for approximately 500,000 individuals and their families, 75% of whom are engaged in subsistence mining. Extant literature projects the number of women and children in the sector to be around 30,000, with 18% of them being women. When support services are accounted for, it is estimated that about 2.3 million people benefit from the sector. Despite its economic significance, ASGM is perceived negatively due to serious environmental and health concerns, particularly because of mercury use.

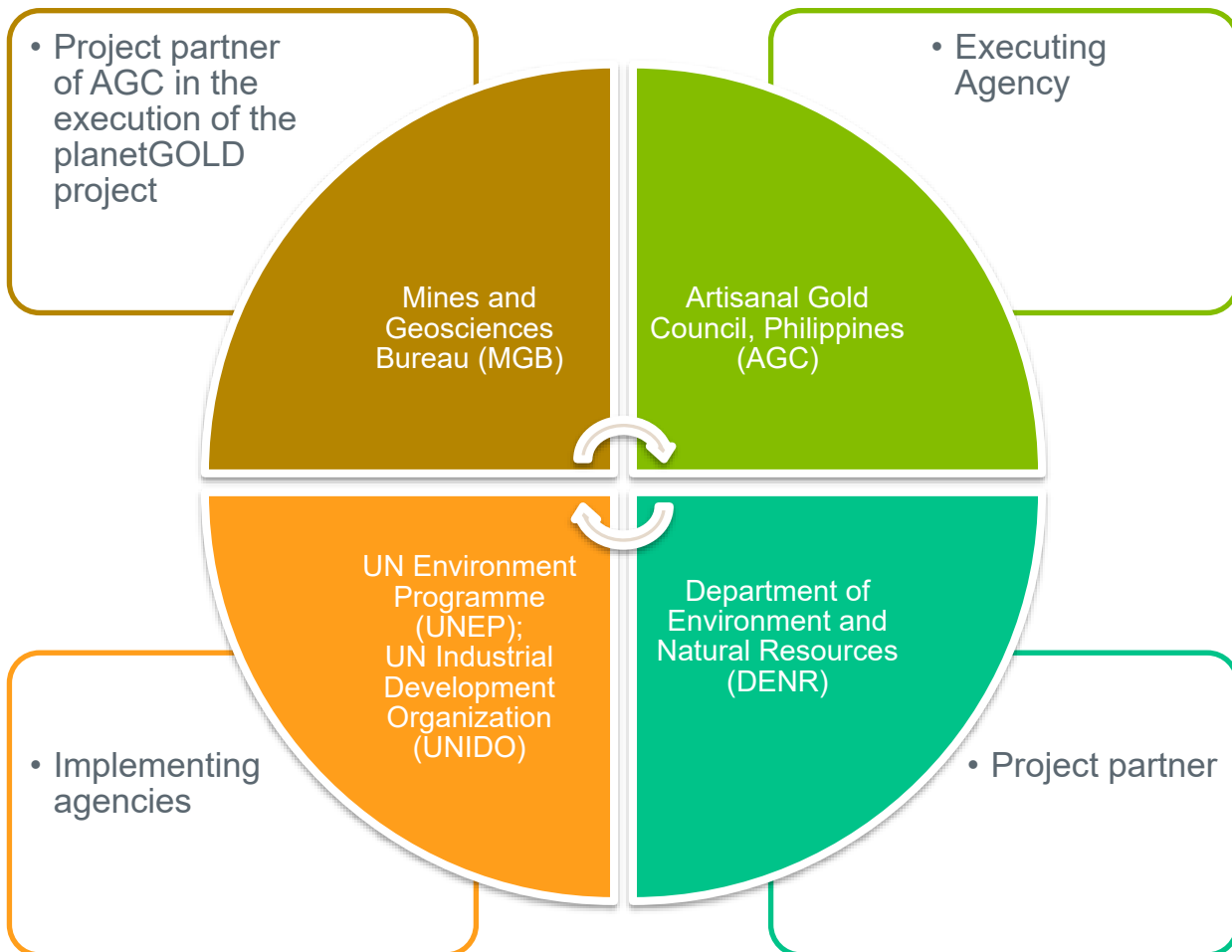
The planetGOLD Philippines project sought to address many of these issues. To achieve its objectives, planetGOLD assembled a team to conduct a baseline study in 2019. However, the team quickly realized the project required a special presidential authority (SPA) for the executing agency to work with government agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). Securing the special presidential authority took seven months—an unusual achievement in itself, as this was the quickest time any project had taken to get approval. This delay meant that the implementation of the planetGOLD project did not start until 2020. Nevertheless, with personnel from state agencies, the team began pre-implementation activities, including conducting site assessments and gathering background information on potential project sites. Through this preliminary work, the two project sites were chosen: the Municipality of Sagada in the Mountain Province and the Municipality of Paracale in the province of Camarines Norte.

The pre-implementation study collected data on the demographics of miners in the areas, incidences of child labor, governance structures and challenges, the legal landscape, and training needs. Subsequently, a comprehensive analysis of the legal frameworks and the strengths and weaknesses of existing financial schemes in the sector was conducted, as these were crucial aspects of the planetGOLD project. At the project's inception in 2019, communication was not considered a central channel for delivering project objectives, and clear guidelines were not laid out. This approach was taken to avoid diverting attention from the plight of mining communities and instead focus on using communication as a tool for disseminating findings. However, the contextual study involving government agencies, financial institutions, an environmental NGO, miners, and local and regional state leaders unearthed the significance of a communication strategy. This strategy was needed to address the project's strategic areas of formalization, financial inclusion, showcasing environmentally safe technologies, and national and sub-national coordination efforts. Media perception of ASGM in the Philippines, like that globally, is negative, and a communication strategy premised on developing trust among key stakeholders was identified as crucial to redefining the important economic activity of ASGM.

# Partners and Key Stakeholders

The project required engagement with a wide range of stakeholders due to the multifaceted nature of the communication interventions. Strategic partnerships and alliances were essential to achieving the project's objectives. Relationships with partners and key stakeholders were needed to ensure effective implementation, consistent monitoring, and sustainable outcomes. Figure 1 showcases the core working group of the planetGOLD Philippines project.

**Figure 1: The planetGOLD Philippines Core Working Group**



### 3 Communication Interventions Evaluated

The effectiveness of the planetGOLD project hinged on a simple yet far-reaching communications strategy tailored to miners, their communities, national and local state agents, and other stakeholders. The project achieved a significant number of communications outcomes due to the calculated interventions put in place. These interventions can be summarized into three main categories:

- 1 **Awareness Campaigns and Events:** Various training projects were conducted to broaden the perspectives of miners and operators in ancillary industries. Exhibitions and roadshows were also used to reach those in the most remote communities.
- 2 **Communications via Social Media and Digital Platforms:** As the top social media user globally, the planetGOLD Philippines Project leveraged these platforms to raise awareness about the importance of ASGM to the country, its operators, and stakeholders. Social media was also used to educate the public on the environmental, health, and social impacts of mercury use in mining.
- 3 **Communications via Print Media and Publications:** The project recognized the importance of educating not only adults but also children about the harmful effects of mercury. Print media and educational publications played a key role in deepening children's understanding and reinforcing the lessons from various activities. Complementing these efforts was the distribution of project-branded merchandise such as printed T-shirts, notebooks, pouches, bags, caps, and umbrellas. These items were given to miners and other stakeholders to promote project visibility and familiarity, and were also used as prizes and souvenirs during events.

The next three sections provide further details on these interventions.

# Awareness Campaigns & Events

Fundamental to achieving the first four objectives of the planetGOLD project was the facilitation of a cohesive working relationship between miners, their communities, government agencies, NGOs and the broader Filipino population.

## Description of the Intervention

This intervention was the cornerstone of the communications strategy developed for the project in the Philippines. It has two interconnected components. First, awareness campaigns and events were harnessed to give maximum presence to ASGM in the mining communities and nationally. Second, training and partnership programs were put in place to facilitate dialogue between all relevant stakeholders and to broaden understanding and empathy toward the benefits of a well-supported and sustainably financed and operated ASGM activity. This intervention was employed at multiple points in the duration of the project.

## Awareness Campaigns and Events

The planetGOLD project used a myriad of campaigns and event platforms aimed at various stakeholders as a channel for raising awareness of the importance of ASGM, financing opportunities and for educating miners and children on the impacts of mercury. Each of the campaigns/events listed here demonstrates the breadth of communications that facilitated the achievement of the planetGOLD goals in the Philippines.

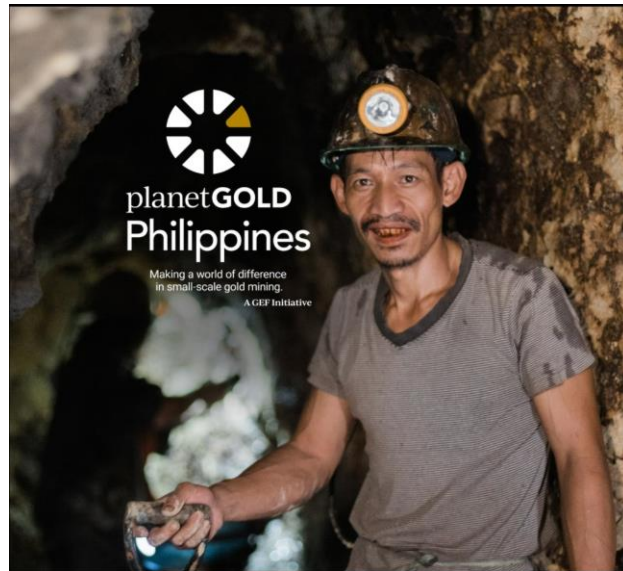
**ASGM Champion Spotlight Series:** The ASGM Champion Spotlight Series was a monthly campaign put together by the team to highlight one of the many men and women in the ASGM sector who represent and inspire change in their communities. The Spotlight series seeks to bring their stories and efforts to the forefront, raising awareness about the challenges they face and sharing how these Champions have made a significant impact in shaping the ASGM sector in their regions.

The planetGOLD Philippines also maximized international celebration days by posting quotes, interviews, and messages from stakeholders and partners about artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). These were shared during global observances such as Women's Month, Earth Month, and others—aligning the project with broader advocacy campaigns that support gender equality, environmental sustainability, and responsible mining. This strategy helped amplify key messages and connect the ASGM agenda to global movements and audiences.

## Image 1: ASGM Champion Spotlight Series Winners



**June 2024 ASGM Champion Spotlight**  
Hon. Felicito Dula, Mayor of Sagada, Mountain Province



**April 2024 ASGM Champion Spotlight**  
Ronnie Baday, ASGM miner from Barangay Fidelisan, Sagada, Mountain Province

Image 1 is an example of how the campaign was ran and was retrieved from the planetGOLD Philippines Facebook page. Distinctively, this planetGOLD project did not only spotlight the miners themselves but also included government personnel who were changemakers within their communities.

**Youth for Responsible Gold – Educational Roadshow Series:** The Artisanal Gold Council, through the planetGOLD Philippines project, launched the "Youth for Responsible Gold" educational roadshow to promote a safer, cleaner, and more equitable ASGM sector. This initiative targeted elementary and high school students and teachers, encouraging them to advocate for responsible mining. The events highlighted the socio-economic and cultural contributions of the ASGM sector, promoted responsible practices, and instilled a sense of responsibility among the youth and children.

The educational roadshows were held on November 28–29 and December 1–2, 2023 in Sagada, Mountain Province, and on March 30, April 1, and April 5–6, 2025 in Paracale, Camarines Norte. *Image 2* shows the winner of the roadshow slogan contest in Sagada, Mt Province.

The series featured a range of engaging activities, including a documentary film screening, interactive storytelling, drawing and coloring activities, a collaborative mural painting by student artists, a photo exhibit, and a game booth. The events culminated in contests such as essay writing, poster making, jingle creation, spoken word poetry, and slogan-making. During the mural painting reveal at the closing program, students, guests, organizers, and teachers left their handprints on the mural — a symbol of the community's shared commitment to responsible ASGM practices.

As part of the initiative, "Youth for Responsible Gold Champions" were also selected from among the participants — individuals who demonstrated leadership, passion, and a willingness to advocate for responsible small-scale mining. Overall, the educational roadshow engaged over 400 students, along with dedicated teachers and barangay volunteers from both project sites.

## Image 2: Youth for Responsible Gold Mining – Roadshow Slogan Winner



Grade 6 Student Ezra Soliaban shows her slogan, which won 1st place.

**The GOLD Talk Radio Programs:** The planetGOLD Philippines project, in collaboration with the Camarines Norte Provincial Information Office, launched *“The Gold Talk: Sa Responsableng Pagmimina, Lahat Ginhawa!”* (*In Responsible Mining, All Will Prosper*)—the first-ever radio program in the country dedicated to promoting responsible gold mining practices and amplifying the voices of small-scale gold miners.

This groundbreaking initiative served as a platform to spotlight the ASGM sector’s vital contributions to both local and national development. It also aimed to empower miners by providing reliable information, facilitating timely discussions, and addressing pressing issues within the sector. *Image 3* shows the official poster promoting the radio program.

## Image 3: The Gold Talk Radio Show Poster



The program was born out of insights from the 2021 planetGOLD Philippines Contextual Study, which highlighted radio as a key communication tool for communities. The premiere episode aired on 25 June 2023 on Radyo Pilipinas 96.9 FM, featuring news updates, a guest interview, project announcements, and an interactive trivia segment.

Building on its success, planetGOLD Philippines partnered with the Philippine Broadcasting Service - Bureau of Broadcast Services (PBS-BBS) and DZRH 107.3 FM Radyo Pilipinas Bontoc to launch the Mountain Province edition of *The Gold Talk* in April 2024.

To date, 14 episodes have been aired, with 8 more episodes scheduled before the project concludes. Notably, the Provincial Information Office of Camarines Norte has pledged to continue the radio program even after the project's completion—a strong testament to its impact and sustainability.

As part of the ASGM Champion Spotlight Series, the *Behind the Gold Rush* interactive photo and video booth was designed to honor individuals and groups advocating for a cleaner, safer, and more responsible ASGM sector in the Philippines. The booth featured a range of infographic materials that helped visitors better understand and appreciate the project's goals and the realities of the ASGM sector.

This engaging exhibit was showcased at various local festivals and events across project sites, as well as at Mining Philippines 2023. Its goal was to celebrate the contributions of ASGM Champions from diverse sectors and to inspire others to support responsible mining.

Visitors participated in interactive games for a chance to win project-branded merchandise. The booth also included a photo backdrop and advocacy statement placards, encouraging guests to take photos and share them online using hashtags like #MakeMercuryHistory.

**Media Kapihan Series:** One of the key success factors of the planetGOLD Philippines communications strategy was strategic partnerships, particularly with the media. The Media Kapihan Series, titled "*Kapihan Tungo sa Responsableng Minahan*" (*Coffee Talks Towards Responsible Mining*), was developed and implemented by the Artisanal Gold Council (AGC), a Canadian-based charitable organization leading the implementation of the planetGOLD Philippines project.

The series consisted of two rounds, each with three legs, totaling six sessions held between 2023 and 2025. These sessions took place in Quezon City (Metro Manila), Daet (Camarines Norte), Bontoc (Mountain Province), Naga City (Camarines Sur), and Baguio City (Benguet).

The Kapihan Series brought together around 60 journalists from national and local media outlets. It helped establish a network of media professionals who would later cover project-related events, feature the initiative in their stories, and even invite project representatives as guest speakers and expert sources for their programs and publications.

The series also raised awareness among media practitioners about the project's goals and the realities of the ASGM sector, helping to challenge negative stereotypes and shift public perception. Moreover, it opened up opportunities for future collaborations between the project and media stakeholders committed to promoting responsible mining in the Philippines.

**Media Features, Engagement, and Training:** Another key strategy for increasing media visibility of the project was actively seeking media coverage through interviews and guest appearances. Through a consistent presence on Facebook and strong media relations, the AGC and the planetGOLD Philippines project have come to be recognized as leading experts on ASGM in the Philippines. As a result, there have been multiple instances

where media outlets initiated contact with the team to request expert opinions, data, and insights on ASGM.

The project's media presence expanded across multiple platforms, including television broadcasts, digital news features, radio programs, and print publications. The media were regularly invited to cover key project events, such as Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signings between AGC and partner mining associations, trainings, turnover ceremonies, and public information campaigns.

Some notable media features included:

- TV guesting and feature interviews on PTV-4, a state-run broadcaster
- Radio segments on local and national stations, such as Radyo Pilipinas
- An hour-long documentary feature on TV5, hosted by a prominent journalist-documentarian
- Online coverage by local, national and international media outlets such as Rappler, Reuters, and others

These features contributed to raising awareness of the project and highlighting ASGM in a more nuanced and accurate light—both locally and globally.

In addition to outreach and visibility, the project also focused on capacity building for media. AGC conducted communications and media workshops for local journalists to strengthen their understanding and improve their reporting on ASGM.

Furthermore, AGC supported planetGOLD Global in organizing a Solutions Journalism Training for international journalists. Held in Paracale, Camarines Norte—one of the project sites—the training gathered five foreign journalists and one Filipino journalist, selected through a rigorous application process. The workshop emphasized creating new narratives around ASGM by focusing on solutions and community resilience, rather than just the challenges.

**Community Billboards and Mural Paintings:** Youth engagement activities included art contests, mural painting, and interactive games, which fostered creativity and helped participants gain a deeper understanding of responsible mining in an enjoyable and interactive manner. Billboards were also used to champion responsible ASGM practices.

**Participation in External Forums and Workshops:** Another effective strategy that enhanced stakeholder engagement was the project team's active participation in various local and international forums and workshops not organized by planetGOLD. These engagements provided valuable opportunities to connect with other ASGM-related stakeholders, share insights, and amplify the project's goals.

Notable examples include participation in:

- The 2023 Mining Philippines Conference
- The OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains
- The COP-5 of the Minamata Convention
- Multiple focus group discussions (FGDs) and consultations hosted by partner organizations on ASGM-related issues

In addition, the project played a significant role in supporting three National Assemblies of the National Coalition of Small-Scale Miners in the Philippines, Inc. (NatCOA). In 2022, the project even sponsored the membership fees of 20 small-scale mining associations across the country, including its two partner associations, to help boost representation and ensure that the voices of small-scale miners are included in national dialogues and policy discussions.

The project also continued to support the participation of its partner mining associations in subsequent national assemblies, reinforcing its commitment to empowering miners and fostering collaboration within the sector.

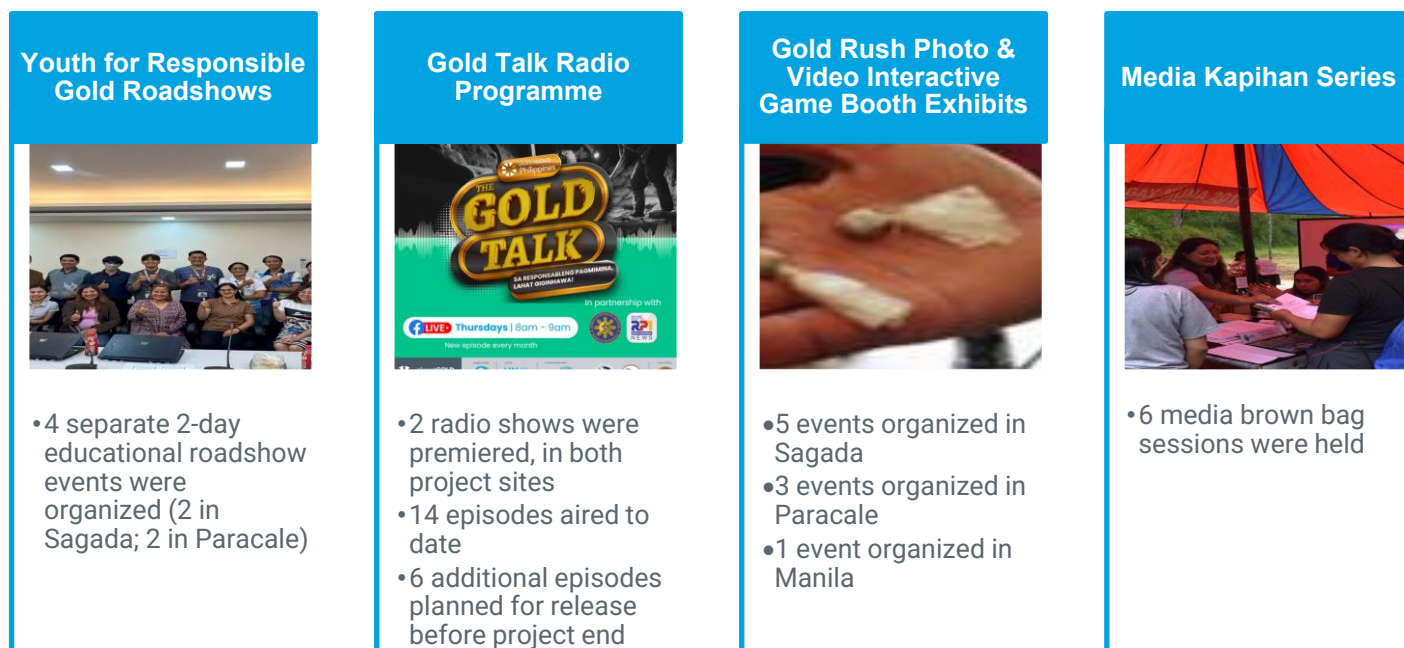
## 4 Communicating via Trainings and Partnerships

The realization of the planetGOLD objectives was crucially tied to sensitizing all stakeholders about the benefits, opportunities, threats, and challenges of the ASGM sector. Sustained training platforms were employed and workshop events were conducted, broadly encompassing policy workshops, capacity development, and general training activities. To boost engagement, events were advertised and updated via Facebook, email, and WhatsApp. The planetGOLD Philippines partnered with academic institutions, media groups, private institution, and ASGM associations such as Northern Sagada Barangay Small Scale Mining Association, Inc (NSBSSMAI) and Samahan ng mga Minero sa Barangay Casalugan (SMBC) and collaborated on multiple capacity development projects with national and local partners.

### Main Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts

The awareness raising and events communication intervention resulted in multiple significant outcomes and impacts. Serving as the foundation for the other three project components, the strategies implemented within this intervention have facilitated the achievement of various goals across those components. Specifically, in terms of communication, notable outcomes and impacts include extensive training of miners and government officials, capacity building workshops and grassroots awareness on impacts of mercury in ASGM.

**Figure 2: Summary of Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts**



## 5 Communications via Social Media and Digital Platforms

The second communication intervention leveraged social media and digital platforms to effectively reach a broader audience, including the general public, government officials, and ASGM operators. By utilizing these tools, the intervention aimed to disseminate information, engage stakeholders, and promote awareness about the project's goals and achievements.

### Description of the Intervention

Social media and digital platforms played a crucial role in the planetGOLD Philippines project by enhancing communication and outreach efforts. YouTube videos, Facebook, and the planetGOLD Philippines webpage were some of the activities engaged in by the project.

Facebook served as a key platform for disseminating information about artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) and promoting mercury-free practices. This digital strategy allowed the project to reach a wider audience—engaging communities, stakeholders, and the general public with relevant, timely content. The first planetGOLD Philippines Facebook page was created in 2019 but encountered multiple issues with Meta, eventually leading to its suspension. Meta flagged the page for allegedly impersonating the official project page.

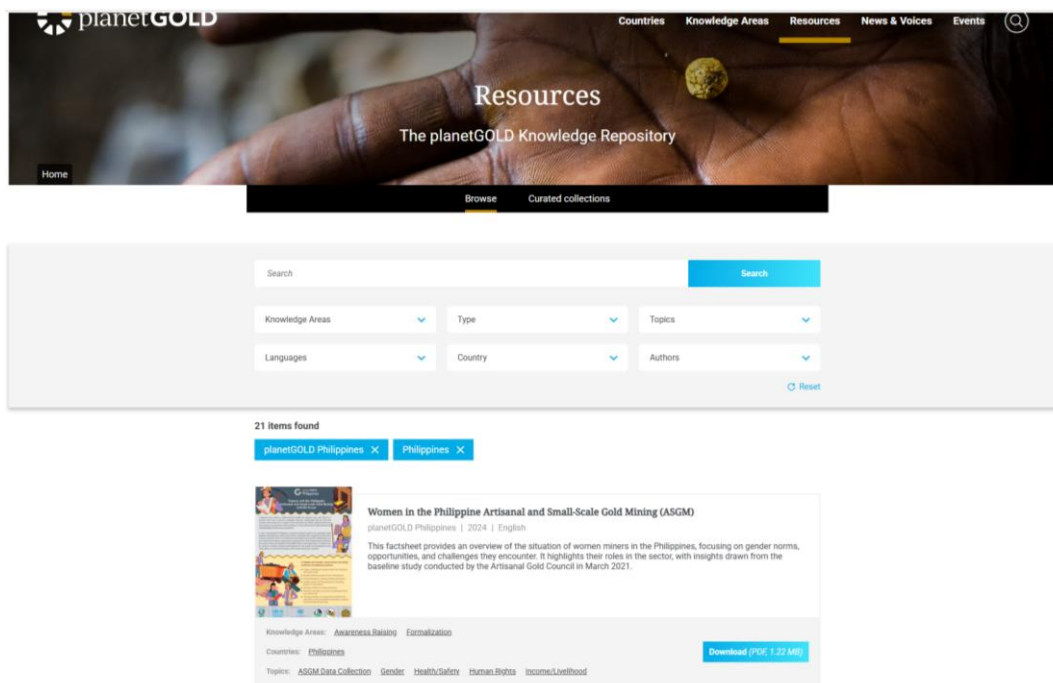
As a result, a second and current Facebook page was launched in February 2022. Since then, it has been regularly updated with project photos, newsletters, videos, posters, and other educational materials. Despite being relatively new, the page has already gathered 8,000+ followers as of April 2025, steadily building a digital community supportive of responsible ASGM practices in the Philippines.

To address the absence of a comprehensive repository of ASGM materials and ensure the preservation of data collected and lessons learned from the project, a country level webpage was developed within the global planetGOLD programme website. This centralized digital resource is designed to provide access to educational materials, updates, and best practices for ASGM communities.

The planetGOLD Philippines webpage serves as a comprehensive repository of resources on artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) in the country. It features a wide range of materials—including documents, reports, and practical guides—covering key topics such as mercury-free technologies, environmental impact reduction, and formalization processes.

This digital platform is a vital tool for researchers, policymakers, miners, and development practitioners who are working to improve and support responsible ASGM practices in the Philippines. Notably, the Philippines consistently ranks as the top source of visitors to the global planetGOLD website, with the Philippines project page among the site's top five most viewed pages.

**Figure 3: Philippines Resources on the Global planetGOLD Knowledge Management Platform**



Moreover, the project leveraged social media campaigns and digital tools to engage the youth and promote responsible mining practices. Initiatives such as the "Youth for Responsible Gold" educational roadshows utilized storytelling, interactive games, and digital media to raise awareness among young people about the dangers of mercury and the importance of sustainable mining. These efforts not only educated the youth but also empowered them to become advocates for mercury-free mining, fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and community involvement.

**Videos:** The planetGOLD Philippines produced a [documentary film series](#) dubbed the 'Power of Gold: Stories from the Ground' that employs compelling storytelling to illuminate the challenges, achievements, and transformations experienced by the most marginalized ASGM operators. This series provides a profound insight into their journeys, emphasizing their resilience and dedication in overcoming obstacles and driving positive change within the sector. The series were disseminated via in person screenings, Facebook and YouTube.

**Image 3: Episode 1 of the Power of Gold Series**



#PowerofGold Episode 1 | Occupying the Mines: The Challenges and Opportunities ...

Additionally, to illustrate the transition of artisanal and small-scale miners to mercury-free practices, planetGOLD launched "Dispatches From The Field." This series of short videos included three unique feature stories from the Philippines, highlighting the challenges and successes of miners on their journey to adopting safer, more responsible mercury-free methods. The first episode aired via YouTube in October 2022. The project Facebook page was used to galvanize interest in the video and subsequent series.

#### Image 4: Dispatches from the Field Episode 1



Another key digital strategy of the project is the development of a Knowledge Management (KM) Platform, which will be hosted on the official website of the project’s partner government agency—the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). This platform is designed to streamline and simplify the formalization process for small-scale miners in the Philippines.

Once fully operational, all applications for formalization will be processed through this centralized digital platform, making the process more efficient, transparent, and accessible to miners across the country.

In addition to facilitating formalization, the KM platform will serve as a data and information hub, offering stakeholders easy access to relevant facts, statistics, and resources about artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) in the Philippines.

Importantly, the platform is designed for long-term sustainability and will be maintained by the government even after the project concludes, ensuring continued support for ASGM formalization and responsible mining practices.

## Main Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts

The social media communications channels proved a very useful way to educate and engage with the public on ASGM in the Philippines. The planetGOLD Philippines used a myriad of metrics to capture the impacts of the social media and digital efforts.

The social media and digital platforms campaign has been exceptionally successful, evidenced by the high level of engagement and growing number of followers. The Facebook page, for example, remains active, and it is expected to attract even more followers in the future. Additionally, the planetGOLD Philippines section of the programme website has delivered essential information on ASGM, addressing the barriers that previously hampered permitting and formalization processes.

**Figure 4: Summary of Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts**



**Social Media - Facebook**

- 471 Facebook group members
- 8,585 followers
- 997,851 post engagement;
- 998,071 people reached comprising of 7,193 followers and 996,989 non-followers



**Philippines Resources on the Webpage**

- A project webpage was developed in collaboration with the global project
- Contains information, education and communications materials (IEC)
- Engagement numbers not tracked but some of the articles have been cited on Google Scholar



**Videos**

- Created the Power of Gold documentary film series, various other video products, and contributed to production of Dispatches from the Field video features about the project
- Number of views on YouTube of various project related videos: Approximately 24,100, as of February 2025

## 6 Communications via Print Media and Publications

The final communication intervention utilized print media and publications to raise awareness about ASGM and mercury-related issues. While digital platforms play a major role in information dissemination, digital exclusion continues to limit access for marginalized groups, especially those in remote mining communities. To ensure that artisanal and small-scale gold miners (ASGM) and other critical stakeholders were not left behind, printed materials were used to complement digital efforts, making key information more accessible.

To further boost project visibility and community engagement, the project also produced and distributed a variety of branded merchandise—including t-shirts, umbrellas, pouches, bags, caps, notebooks, and more. These items were given to miners, community members, and government partners. Wearing or using these materials served as a way for them to proudly champion the project in their own spaces.

These items also functioned as prizes, tokens, and event souvenirs, attracting participants to booths and project-led activities. More than just promotional materials, they became tools for community ownership and increase awareness of responsible, mercury-free ASGM practices.

### Description of the Intervention

This intervention was novel as it brought the youth into the fold of creating awareness on the environmental, health and safety impacts of using mercury. Newsletters, article publications and storybooks were used.

**Newsletters:** The project released quarterly newsletters that highlight achievements, news, and updates on the project. The newsletters served as an important communication tool, keeping stakeholders informed about the latest developments and successes within the project. The first edition of the newsletter was released in January 2023. The maiden publication was a recap of the project since its inception and highlights of future events.

Subscription to the newsletter was free and could be conveniently done via the website, as shown in Image 5. This accessibility ensured that a wide range of stakeholders could stay informed about the latest updates, achievements, and news related to the project.

**Publications:** The planetGOLD project developed *knowledge products* which comprised of brochures, infographics, booklets and storybooks on ASGM and mercury. As with all other publications by planetGOLD. The knowledge products are open access and available for public consumption globally. All the publications are available for downloading.

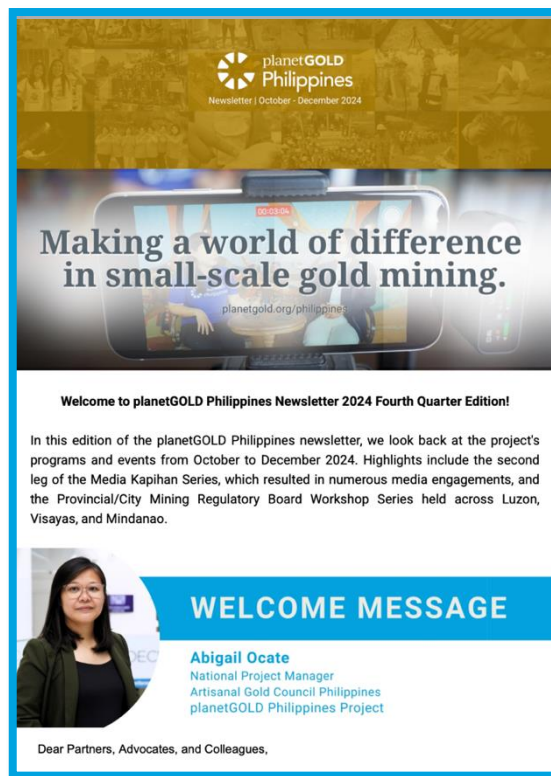



Image 5: Excerpt from project newsletter

The *knowledge products* are accessible through the planetgold.org website, where they have been meticulously categorized by knowledge area, related country, and topic of concern. This organization ensures that users can easily find relevant information tailored to their specific needs and interests.

**Figure 5: Knowledge Products**



Brochures	Storybooks	Infographics	Booklet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brochure on planetGOLD Philippines Project</li> <li>• Brochure on the planetGOLD Philippines Mercury-Free Processing System (MFPS) in Paracale, Camarines Norte</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mina Minera (Mina the Miner) Storybook</li> <li>• Si Miko, Maya, at ang Ginintuang Lambak (Miko, Maya, and the Golden Valley) Storybook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infographic on COVID</li> <li>• Infographic on Mercury Use in ASGM and the Effects of Mercury Exposure to Human Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booklet on Formal Gold Trading in the Philippines</li> </ul>

The **Mina Minera Storybook** is a notable *knowledge product* created by the planetGOLD Philippines project. Published in English in 2023, the first edition emphasizes gender inclusion by narrating the contributions of a female miner to her livelihood and the well-being of her family. This storybook not only highlights the significant role of women in the mining sector but also serves as an educational tool to promote gender equality and empowerment within ASGM community. The storybook features in-text translations in Tagalog and Kankana-ey, making it more accessible to diverse audiences.

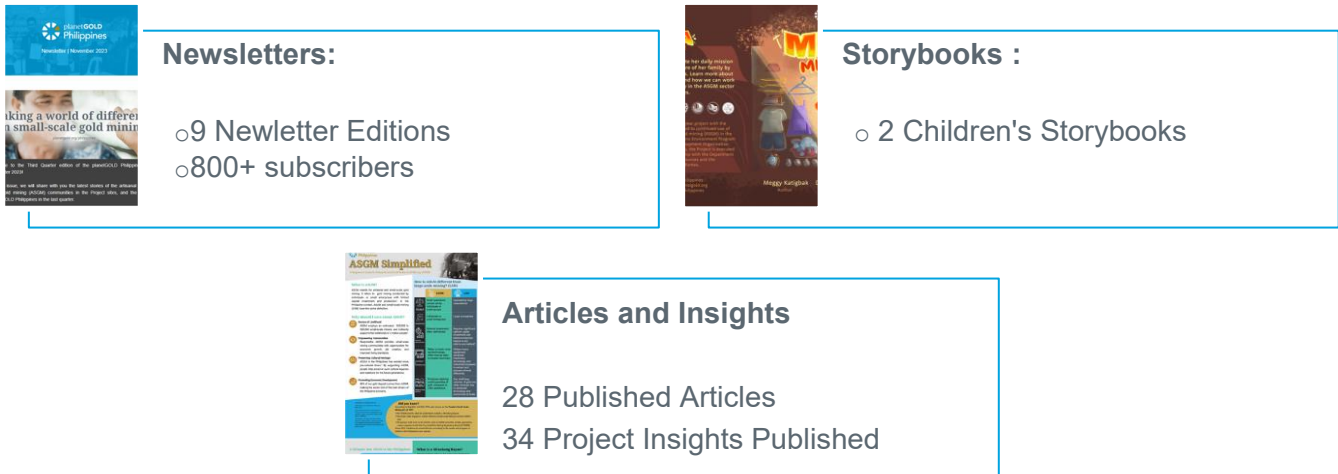
**Image 6: Sample Children’s Storybook**



# Main Outcomes, Outputs and Impacts

Several materials were developed through this communication intervention, which have far-reaching benefits as they have been added to the programme website and are advertised on the Facebook page. Figure 6 summarizes the output from this communications strategy.

**Figure 6: Statistics on Print and Digital Media Products**



## 7 Sustainability

The planetGOLD Philippines communication interventions effectively utilized a wide range of channels to achieve the objectives under Component 4 of the planetGOLD project. Among these efforts, two of the most sustainable outcomes stand out.

First, the continued development of the Philippines resources section on the global planetGOLD website has proven to be a valuable legacy. This platform will continue to be updated beyond the life of the project, serving as a vital repository of ASGM-related information in the Philippines. It offers a wealth of resources for education, advocacy, and policy-making, and supports baseline studies for local and national government agencies, NGOs, mining companies, and related sectors.

Second, the creation of the Knowledge Management (KM) Platform, which will be integrated into the official website of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), ensures long-term sustainability and institutional ownership. This platform will become the Philippine government's official digital hub for ASGM-related formalization processes and information, continuing to benefit stakeholders even after the project concludes.

Furthermore, the YouTube videos created will remain valuable educational tools for current and future generations. The workshops and capacity-building events have laid the foundation for preparing ASGM operators for the formalization of their operations. These efforts also equip government officials with strategies to support mercury-free and environmentally sound ASGM practices, ensuring the project's long-lasting impact on the sector.

The Facebook page has been incredibly beneficial to the communication efforts of planetGOLD Philippines. Its growing popularity has made it an effective medium for engaging stakeholders and disseminating key information about mercury-free artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) in the Philippines. By providing timely updates and fostering a sense of community, the page plays a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting responsible mining practices. The communications interventions could be sustained should the Artisanal Gold Council Philippines continue to use the Facebook page, or convert its followers to follow a similar page once the project closes, continuing to utilize hashtags such as [#BehindTheGoldRush](#) and [#MakeMercuryHistory](#) to facilitate education and awareness creation about ASGM and avoiding the use of mercury in the Philippines.

## 8 Cross-cutting Issues

### Gender

Gender mainstreaming was central to the planetGOLD Philippines project. The contextual study conducted by planetGOLD Philippines highlighted several gender issues in ASGM at the two project sites, which were indicative of the ASGM sector nationwide. A summary of the findings is as follows:

**Image 7: Women miners undergo advocacy training organized by planetGOLD Philippines.**



- While local government units often organize livelihood training programs for women, at the time the study was conducted, the initiatives had not led to viable and sustainable alternative livelihoods.
- Women in ASGM communities often face direct exposure to mercury while handling processing tasks in processing plants and mixing mercury in the mining site or even at home to extract gold from crushed ore.
- Although various local and national government agencies have established programs for women, there are no initiatives specifically designed to address the unique needs of women in ASGM communities and even in the informal economy.
- The main challenge faced by women in mining communities is the lack of adequate and sustainable income opportunities to sufficiently support their family's livelihoods.
- Though women prefer work in the ASGM sector because they provide slightly higher income than other forms of work in the informal sector such as farming and fishing, the lack of access to regular work in the mining sites makes it difficult for them to find sustainable work. Women working in the ASGM sector take on different work and tasks in their communities, whether paid or unpaid, such as working as a laundryperson, cook, farmer, fisher, etc.

- Women's unpaid care work, especially childcare, act as one of the biggest obstacles for women in the ASGM sector to meaningfully engage in paid work.

**Image 8: Sagada women miners perform gold sluicing from the mining operation's wastes**



The findings led planetGOLD Philippines to plan a gender mapping study, provide gender equality training, improve women's access to resources, consult women on mercury-free technologies, bridge the gap between women in mining communities and relevant stakeholders for long-term solutions, and establish a council for women workers in the informal economy on a municipal level. A combination of skills-building workshops, publications, social media awareness campaigns, videos, storybooks, songs, and newsletter articles were dedicated to bridging the gender gap. A selection of activities is presented below.

**Workshops:** A series of initiatives were undertaken to promote gender mainstreaming in the ASGM sector. A Gender Mainstreaming Workshop in Sagada in collaboration with Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) on 19 July 2022 led to the creation of a gender action plan. Gender mainstreaming was also discussed at the 3rd National Assembly of Small-Scale Miners in the Philippines from 28-30 July 2022. To enhance women's entrepreneurial skills in ASGM communities, a 2-day training was held on 16-17 March 2023. Additionally, an orientation on Cooperative Preregistration was conducted on 21 September 2022, guiding participants to form a consumer cooperative. The following are a selection of some of gender related activities that were conducted by the planetGOLD Philippines project.

**Publications:** In May 2020, the planetGOLD project published an article highlighting the plight of women in the ASGM community of Itogon, Benguet. The Covid-19 pandemic led to an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in March 2020, which severely impacted the livelihoods of miners, particularly women who were already marginalized. The article was part of broader efforts to raise awareness of gender inequality in ASGM and provided recommendations on supporting women in the sector. It also published an article on women's roles in the ASGM sector which was published by Rappler, a National News Agency in the Philippines. The article can be access through this [link](#).

**Council for Women Workers in the Informal Economy:** A [Executive Order](#) was signed by the Mayor of Paracale in 2024 as a result of the Roundtable Discussion among government agencies as part of the data collection activities for the Gender Study mentioned above. It seeks to provide support for women working in the informal economy which, in Paracale, largely involves women in the ASGM sector.

**Song:** The project produced a [song](#) highlighting the unique challenges of women working in the ASGM sector. It was launched on 7 March 2025 during the Gender Forum which the planetGOLD Philippines project team co-organized with the UNIDO Philippines and other partner organizations in the Philippines

**Gender Forum:** The planetGOLD Philippines project co-organized a Gender Forum which sought to celebrate women in the ASGM sector, their contributions and accomplishments, especially throughout the project life cycle. It was attended by more almost 100 guests from the government, schools, and, of course, the women miners themselves.

**Image 9: Facebook post on Gender Mainstreaming in ASGM in Daet**



**Social and Digital Media:** Facebook was used to create awareness of gender issues in ASGM in the Philippines. Every workshop was featured on the planetGOLD Philippines Facebook page. Periodic content on gender was also featured on the page. In 2023, a [Women's Month Campaign](#) was held and showcased on Facebook with the hashtags: #SHeroesOfASGM and #EmbraceEquity.

YouTube was also used to showcase videos on women and to celebrate the achievements of female ASGM

operators. One of the Gold Talk Radio programs was on [Women in ASGM](#). The first episode of the Power of Gold: Stories from the Ground documentary series dubbed: [Occupying the Mines: The Challenges and Opportunities of Women in Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining](#) highlighted the contributions of women to the ASGM.

**Publications:** Gender played a central role in the two storybooks that were published. [Mina Minera](#) (Mina the Miner) featured a female protagonist, while [Si Miko, Maya, at ang Ginintuang Lambak](#) included a main female character. Several of the Newsletter publications featured women and addressed gender issues in ASGM.

### Image 10: Sample Newsletter Feature of a Female Miner



Meet Esther Camiling, a miner from Sagada, Mountain Province who is a member of a local women's group in their village which ensures that rules and regulations in the Minahang Bayan are being followed by miners such as the non-use of mercury in gold extraction. Manang Esther has been an active partner of planetGOLD Philippines and in the evolution of our work in the region.

Read more about Manang Esther's story [HERE](#).

# 9 Findings, Experiences and Lessons Learned

## Highlights of Communication Interventions

The discussion has provided insights into the effective communication interventions implemented by the planetGOLD Philippines team. Key highlights include the Social Media Campaign on Facebook, Quarterly Newsletters, Documentary and Video Series, Photo Exhibitions, Educational Roadshows, Media Sensitization Workshops, Storybooks, and the resources available on the planetGOLD Knowledge Management Platform.

- Resources on the planetGOLD website** (Image: People in traditional attire)
- Partnerships forged with MGB** (Image: Group photo of people)
- Social Media Campaign via Facebook** (Image: Facebook post screenshot)
- Radio Shows: Gold Talk and Media Kapihan** (Image: Streaming show logo)
- Two Storybooks** (Image: 'MINA MINERA' storybook cover)
- Quarterly Newsletters** (Image: 'WOMEN' newsletter cover)
- Media sensitisation workshops** (Image: Workshop audience)
- Skills enhancement workshops for miners and government officials** (Image: Workshop participants)
- Documentaries and video series** (Image: YouTube video player)
- Educational Roadshows** (Image: Roadshow group photo)
- Photo Exhibitions** (Image: Photo exhibition display)

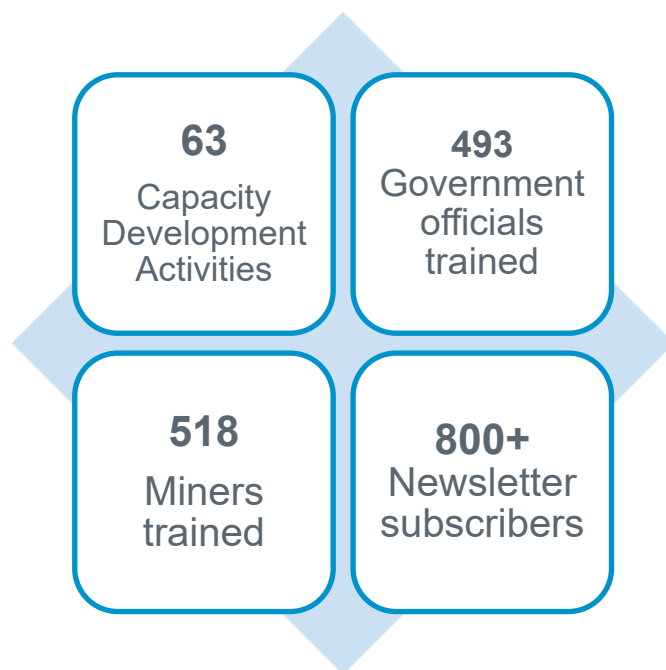
## Alignment with planetGOLD programme-wide communications strategy

The planetGOLD-wide communications strategy was aligned with Component 4 of the project. However, at its inception in 2019, no formal guidelines were established for what the strategy should look like. The strategy evolved into a formidable blueprint during the conduct of the contextual study, with findings informing the appropriate communications strategy to be employed. This further took shape when planetGOLD introduced its programme communications guidelines.

The combination of findings from the contextual study and the structure provided by the planetGOLD communications guidelines enabled a tailored approach to the context of the Philippines and facilitated the achievement of multiple objectives in Component 4.

## Changes Observed in Perceptions or Coverage of ASGM

The planetGOLD Philippines project has significantly shifted perceptions and coverage of artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). Initially, ASGM was often portrayed negatively, focusing on its environmental and health hazards. However, through the project's efforts, the narrative has evolved to highlight practical solutions and success stories.



Media such as the local and national government and media awareness raising workshops, the project's digital materials, print material, educational roadshows, the social media campaigns via Facebook and storybooks like *Mina Minera* and *Miko, Maya, at ang Ginintuang Lambak* have all played a crucial role in this transformation. These materials emphasize the roles of women in ASGM and promote mercury-free practices, helping to reshape public perception and media coverage towards a more balanced and solution-oriented view of ASGM.

## Specific Factors for Success

The communication interventions of the planetGOLD Philippines project led to numerous achievements. A diverse array of communication channels, including documentaries, videos, the Facebook page, storybooks, knowledge management platform, and the project webpage, successfully reached a wider audience, providing deep insights into the core issues of the project. These channels will continue to raise awareness about ASGM and the health and environmental impacts of mercury even beyond the project's duration.

The planetGOLD Philippines team also forged partnerships with ASGM associations and key stakeholders such as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). Furthermore, participation in events like Canada Day, PDAC, the OECD Forum, National Assemblies of NatCoa, Mining Philippines Forum and Exhibition, and the Minamata Content on Mercury COP 5 played a crucial role in achieving the objectives under Component 4. These activities ensured that information about the project was disseminated globally through the planetGOLD programme, fostering broader awareness and collaboration.

Some key success factors included using the local language during workshops to ensure strong participant

engagement. Tabletop exercises and small-group discussions were particularly effective, and the choice of event venues helped attract a wider group of miners and government officials.

Strategic partnerships formed by the planetGOLD Philippines team were essential for achieving the objectives of Component 4. These partnerships facilitated the collection of diverse perspectives on various issues and contributed to the development of well-informed solutions. Linked with this was the appointment of ASGM Champions as they help facilitate the implementation of the project.

Another critical success factor was engaging young people through the Roadshows. The knowledge gained by the youth was passed on to their miner parents, which helped the young people make more informed decisions about their future and the mining sector. These initiatives not only empowered the younger generation but also fostered intergenerational learning and collaboration, ensuring that the benefits of the project's efforts were felt across different age groups within the community. This approach contributed to a more sustainable and inclusive development of the ASGM sector.

Additionally, assessing ASGM operations from a triple bottom line approach—considering environmental, social, and economic factors—enabled the development of better solutions to address sector challenges. Overall, these strategic communication efforts contributed to a more informed public and engaged stakeholders, advancing the project's mission and creating a lasting impact on the ASGM sector.

## Barriers to Success

The objectives under Component 4 were largely achieved. However, the most significant barrier to success was the initial delay of the project, caused by the length of time it took to secure the Special Presidential Authority. This delay provided an opportunity to identify and address the factors that could help expedite the application process for future projects.

Another barrier was communicating in the local language at Sagada, one of the project sites. The field coordinator had to double up as a translator and this was the only way that the technical personnel were able to carry out their tasks. The team opined that having a field coordinator who can bridge this language gap is essential for effective communication and coordination.

## Recommendations for Future Interventions


As outlined in the sections above, the objectives under the communication and awareness-raising component were largely achieved by the planetGOLD Philippines team. Drawing from their experience, the team has identified several key recommendations for future projects:

### 1. Strengthen Media Engagement

Engaging with media remains a top recommendation. The media plays a critical role in shaping public perception of ASGM. Interviews and coverage across radio, television, print, and digital platforms are powerful tools for shifting negative narratives and promoting responsible small-scale mining. Future projects are encouraged to prioritize media partnerships and build a strong media network early on.

### 2. Prioritize Youth Engagement

The team strongly recommends continued and dedicated engagement with youth, citing the success of their educational roadshows. They emphasize the importance of allocating a specific budget for youth-focused activities. Based on their experience, educating young people about the dangers of mercury often has a ripple effect—encouraging families and communities to understand and support mercury-free practices.



### **3. Continue the ASGM Champion Spotlight Series**

Humanizing the ASGM sector through personal stories proved to be an effective strategy. The ASGM Champion Spotlight Series gave the public a new lens through which to understand artisanal miners—as individuals, families, and community leaders. For future efforts, the team suggests not only continuing this series but also involving high-profile champions such as legislators, public figures, or celebrities who can lend their voice and amplify the advocacy, much like other successful social campaigns.

## Annex: Documents Reviewed

1. Artisanal Gold Council. Welcome to the first edition of the planetGOLD Philippines newsletter!
2. planetGOLD Philippines. Recognizing and Celebrating Men and Women Champions in the ASGM Sector: planetGOLD Philippines Launches the Behind the Gold Rush Photo Exhibition Series.
3. planetGOLD Philippines. The Gold Talk on Camarines Norte Radyo Pilipinas 96.9FM.
4. planetGOLD Philippines. The Gold Talk on DZRH 107.3 FM Radyo Pilipinas Bontoc.
5. planetGOLD Philippines. Shaping a Positive ASGM Narrative for a Sustainable Future.
6. planetGOLD Philippines. planetGOLD Philippines: Youth for responsible gold. Minamata Convention on Mercury.
7. planetGOLD Philippines. Youth for Responsible Gold.
8. planetGOLD Philippines. Filipino.
9. planetGOLD Philippines. Basic Occupational Safety and Health (BOSH) Training.
10. planetGOLD Philippines. Capacity Development Series: Empowering Communities Towards a Transformative and Sustainable ASGM Sector.
11. planetGOLD Philippines. Resources.
12. planetGOLD Philippines. Empowerment through Engagement and Participation.
13. planetGOLD Philippines. Traceability booklet for Small-Scale Mining Contract Owners.
14. planetGOLD Philippines. (2019). Women and COVID-19 in the Artisanal Gold Mining Community: Gender Impacts in the Philippines.
15. planetGOLD Philippines (2021). The Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Sector in the Philippines: A Contextual Study of planetGOLD Philippines Project Sites.
16. planetGOLD Philippines (2023). Seminar on financial planning, recording, reporting and monitoring.
17. planetGOLD Philippines (2023). Strategic development planning workshop (SDPW) and business management training (BBMT).
18. planetGOLD Philippines. Proof of Gold trading and Due Diligence Training



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