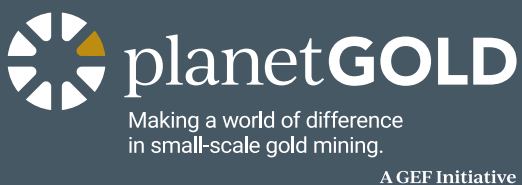


Global Project Assessment

PHASE 1 (2019-2025)



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APM	Annual Programme Meeting
ASGM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining
ASM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
COP	Conference of Party
CRAFT	Code of Risk-mitigation for ASM engaging in Formal Trade
EA	Executing Agency
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IA	Implementing Agency
LBMA	London Bullion Market Association
NAP	National Action Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PAG	Programme Advisory Group
PDAC	Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RJC	Responsible Jewellery Council
SRI	Socially Responsible Investors
SSM	Small-Scale Mining
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOCAP	Social Capital Markets
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WGC	World Gold Council

Executive Summary

The planetGOLD programme, supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and implemented by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Conservation International (CI), works in partnership with governments, the private sector, and artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) communities with the objective of eliminating mercury from the supply chain of gold produced by artisanal and small-scale miners. This report provides a review and assessment of the programme's Global Project, which was launched in February 2019 to foster collaboration across all country projects in the programme, communicate programme results and support knowledge sharing with a wide range of international stakeholders engaged in improving the ASGM sector. The Global Project also had a separate component aimed at raising the profile of ASGM in the international finance community. This report describes the activities, results and lessons learned from the execution of the first phase of the Global Project (2019-2025).



The Global Project included components to raise the profile and bankability of ASGM in the international finance community; improve knowledge management and address common knowledge gaps and challenges; and create common frameworks for programme communications. The expected outcomes and outputs for each of these components are summarized in Table 1.



Expected Outcome	Expected Outputs
<p>Component 1: New financial providers and investors offer their services to the ASGM sector using information and guidance developed/provided by the planetGOLD programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential financial institutions and investors, especially members of the Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) Community, are sensitized to invest in the ASGM sector.
<p>Component 2: Project-participating countries and the wider ASGM community increasingly share, access and apply knowledge on global experiences to assist the development and implementation in formalization, access to finance and technology transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge from global experience, as well as from GEF GOLD programme experiences in key ASGM topics (formalization, financing, market access and technology transfer) is collated and synthesized. • Information is disseminated and shared among relevant stakeholders. • Results among country-level projects of the programme are collected and analyzed to provide program-level results.
<p>Component 3: Support among the governments, stakeholders, mining communities or financial sector and international media for reduced mercury use in ASGM is increased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global branding of GEF GOLD programme identity is established. • Proactive PR/media strategy is executed, targeting general public, financial institutions and government agencies, to create more balance perception of impacts of ASGM. • Communication efforts by all GEF GOLD projects are supported and reinforced.

TABLE 1: Expected outcomes and outputs of the Global Project phase one

FINANCE AND INVESTOR OUTREACH

Given the central importance of finance to the programme, a specific component was included in the global project to bolster the efforts to increase access to finance. One aspect was to conduct education and outreach to the international investment community, with a special focus on the Socially Responsible Investment community, to help “demystify” ASGM and highlight its potential as an investable sector, and to learn how to communicate information about ASGM investment opportunities in language understandable to investors. Another aspect was to support country projects on educational activities directed at financial entities as well as miners in their countries, through focused peer-to-peer exchange, and development of toolkits and training materials, to help miners

and financiers speak a common financial language. Finally, given that due diligence underpins confident investment in responsible ASGM, the planetGOLD Criteria for Environmentally and Socially Responsible Operations were created to support responsible mining operations that conform with the Criteria to attract financing and ultimately sell their gold products to formal markets.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Under this component, the Global Project focused on amassing data from decades of national and international work aimed at improving various aspects of ASGM, collecting the materials into a searchable resource library, so that projects could build on existing knowledge and accelerate progress. Because of the large volume of information, the project then created curated collections, highlighting the most useful materials for country projects under each pillar of the programme. Where the project detected gaps in information, new knowledge products were commissioned on a range of topics, including responsible supply chains, ASGM finance models and the use of cyanide in ASGM. Equally important, the global project was tasked with ensuring that evidence generated by the country projects was captured, observing how different approaches to technology transfer, formalization, finance and markets played out under different geographic, social, economic and technical circumstances. This evidence can provide a further basis for the design of future project interventions in other countries who wish to reduce mercury use in the sector. All knowledge resources, as well as blogs, news and events, were made available on the planetGOLD programme website. The project also organized internal and external meetings, forums, and thematic webinars to share information among the experts in the country projects and with global practitioners.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Global Project led programme communications by providing a common coherent strategy that went beyond communicating the outputs of the programme, to focus on achieving a more balanced portrayal of ASGM to policy makers, investors and the public. The overall aim of the global communications component was to create a unified visual identity and coherent strategic narrative, something that had been missing in many previous interventions. It was important to present the positive brand and message of planetGOLD consistently throughout the program, as a means to advance a rebrand of the sector itself, as an antidote to the existing wholly negative biases of the public, especially governments and the finance sector. The programme aimed to present a more balanced view where media, governments, and lenders see how many miners in the sector are striving for ever more environmentally and socially responsible mining practices.

BENEFITS OF A PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH

The primary benefit of programmatic approach is that individual countries pursue shared goals using aligned strategies, enabling more rapid learning and impact. Using common methods for reporting results also allows progress to be more comparable across projects. Being part of a global programme lends the projects, and ASGM as an issue, more weight than individual projects might have.

On finance, the Global Project made the case for ASGM to the international finance community, outreach that would have been more difficult for the country projects to do themselves. Further, the Global Project produced a wealth of common resources and tools both for educating the financial sector about ASGM, and for guiding ASGM operators to speak the common language of global finance.

On knowledge management, by collecting, translating, disseminating, and socializing key information about the ASGM sector, the Global Project helped country projects tap into the past decades of global experience, creating exponential efficiency gains. The Global Project also synthesized materials on issues of global importance such as the best practices guide for cyanide management, which would have been inefficient for each country to produce individually. Global coordination also had myriad practical benefits, for example, by creating standard templates for reporting; communication templates, guides and press kits; and standard finance tools and training resources.

On communications, setting global standards for branding, messaging, and media engagement saved individual projects a great deal of time and expense. The networking among communications officers across the programme was particularly effective in terms of sharing expertise, peer learning and sharing of materials and methods. Finally, the Global Project's ability to publicize results of the country projects through global channels also increased their visibility.



SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This assessment of the planetGOLD programme's Global Project revealed a number of observations and lessons learned regarding overall programme coordination, communications and knowledge management.





- **Programme coordination:** Programme branding standards, reporting tools, templates and guidance specific to planetGOLD activities were highly beneficial but greater clarity on these standards earlier in the programme would have saved countries time and allowed them to meet expectations more comprehensively from the beginning. Encouraging regional exchanges and site visits between project teams supported adoption/replication of approaches across borders. Fostering an environment of trust in which country project staff could share openly about their tough challenges was critical to learning across the programme. Operating in multiple languages (providing interpretation during meetings, translating key documents and resources) was needed to promote more complete understanding of programme among all staff, to support meaningful knowledge exchange, and to create a sense of inclusion.
- **Communications:** Focusing on positive portrayals of responsible miners in the media allowed audiences such as government officials, financiers and other key decision makers to recognize how the sector can improve, given the right support. Video and other visual aids were found to be the most effective media for powerful storytelling. Actively engaging journalists for more nuanced coverage of ASGM, including hosting workshops and acting as a trusted source for background information, led to greater nuanced coverage in the international press.
- **Knowledge management:** Promoting collection and sharing of information about the ASGM sector as a whole, through the knowledge hub and direct information exchange, helped maintain a flow of information across the community of practice and encouraged other practitioners to consider planetGOLD as a helpful partner in their own work. The likelihood of sustaining the planetGOLD website beyond the life of the programme was increased by maintaining an ongoing connection to the Minamata Convention and by housing the website in UNEP. Tracking and exchanging knowledge on emerging issues encouraged integration of planetGOLD project activities with broader efforts to address environmental and social dimensions of ASGM. Involving miners and their stories in all knowledge exchange events rooted the discussions in the practical concerns of miners and the support they need to transition to more responsible practices.

- **Capturing lessons learned:** Clearly elaborating and tracking a small set of cross-programmatic indicators enabled better understanding of programme-wide impacts and benefits; online reporting made it easier for country projects to complete their regular reporting and allowed for aggregation of results. Nevertheless, the characterization of the indicators in each planetGOLD country required ongoing interpretation, and continual one on one support, indicating that socializing these metrics is an ongoing effort. Finally, beyond indicators, the planetGOLD Global Project stressed sharing the narrative around project implementation, capturing experiences, processes, progress and setbacks, enabling conditions, stakeholder relationships and detailed outcomes, so that the conditions affecting success and failure could be well-understood. However, at the end of the project life, several country projects had to spend time retroactively assembling critical information about project activities, outcomes, challenges and solutions, suggesting that more regular, ongoing reporting on lessons learned during execution could have helped avoid the end-of-project scramble.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This assessment of the planetGOLD Global Project suggested best practices and offers recommendations to strengthen future activities under planetGOLD as well as other ASGM-related programmes:

-  **Overall Programme Coordination:** To the extent possible, develop branding assets, standard reporting methods and tools, sample grievance mechanisms and communication strategies well ahead of most country project implementation, and coordinate their use with country projects as early as possible. Promote inclusive and supportive learning and sharing environments by providing multi-lingual meetings and materials as well as safe, private spaces for open dialogue. Provide exit strategy guidance and/or template early on to help projects plan for sustainability, long-term impact, and institutional integration from the outset. Continue to produce periodic cross-programmatic assessments and derive lessons learned from project activities.
-  **External Stakeholder Engagement:** Use the international reach of the Global Project to facilitate country projects' access to international stakeholders and create opportunities for engagement through events like Programme Advisory Group meetings and Global Forums, as well as through direct connections as warranted.
-  **Communications:** Promote positive perceptions of ASGM by using creative media (e.g., radio, podcasts, campaigns) to highlight it as a livelihood solution. Share the communications toolkit at project inception to ensure consistent, adaptable messaging, and engage media early to shape public perception. Develop engaging, multilingual content like the 360 Experience and exhibits to expand reach. Encourage solutions-focused journalism through initiatives like journalist workshops. Strengthen the communications network to share tools, build capacity, and foster collaboration.
-  **Knowledge Hub:** Use the planetGOLD website to share both planetGOLD and global ASGM sector resources, fostering a centralized, curated platform that supports the broader ASGM community. Include materials from external stakeholders, highlight sector news, and invite diverse voices to contribute content. Also, as the programme expands and new countries are added, efforts may be needed to make the website more accessible to speakers of languages other than English, French and Spanish. Regularly update the website to stay relevant and address emerging topics like biodiversity, climate change, and new technologies, and provide spaces for engagement and dialog among experts and other partners on these issues. Continue to develop the training library with

standard modules (e.g., financial literacy, supply chains) for adaptation by country projects. Consider ways to ensure the website's sustainability, for example by maintaining it under UNEP, preserving its long-term value and link to the Minamata Convention.



Reporting and Capturing Lessons Learned: Develop a dynamic web portal to automate indicator updates as countries input data. Provide standard methodologies, training, and multilingual guidance, while ensuring each country has dedicated staff for accurate application. Go beyond tracking outputs by documenting context, experiences, and lessons learned throughout the project. Use structured formats and allocate resources for thorough reporting. Refine tools to capture broader impacts, including biodiversity, climate, and gender-related outcomes and continue to share insights and results widely through the website, social media, and with academic institutions and other knowledge amplifiers to promote learning across the ASGM community.



Integration with NAP and RIA Processes: Provide guidance to countries on how to track mercury abatement and other outcomes from planetGOLD interventions, even after project closure, to demonstrate progress toward achieving goals and targets in countries' National Action Plans. This guidance can be used by countries when preparing their review of implementation of Article 7 (RIA).



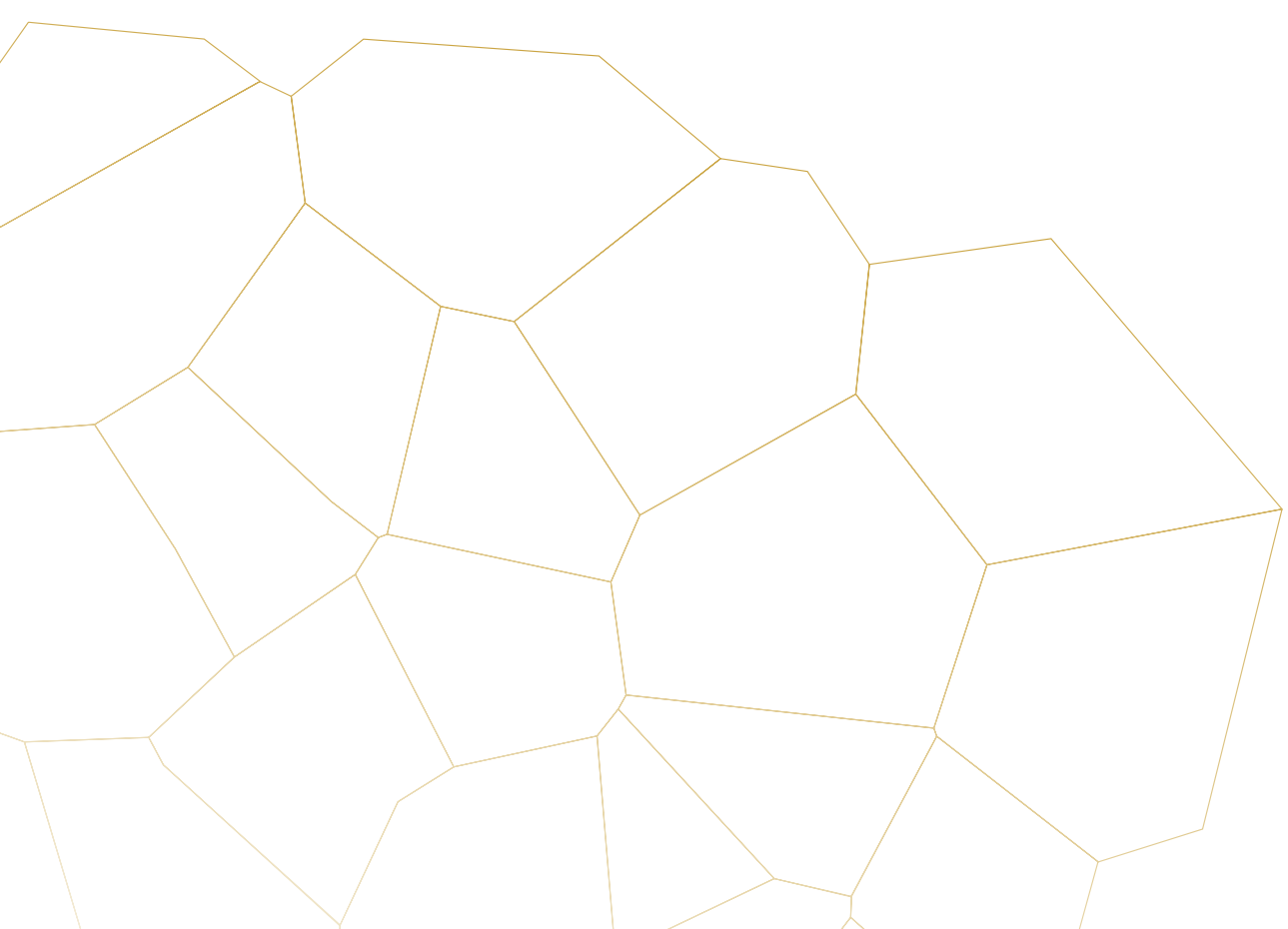
Knowledge Exchange: Encourage peer-to-peer learning through country pairings and regular regional or language-based meetings, especially during new project inception. Complement in-person meetings with online platforms to broaden reach and access. Design events to be multidisciplinary and interactive, covering emerging topics like biodiversity, human rights, and women's livelihoods, and using case studies to deepen learning. Continue to uplift miners' voices to ensure discussions reflect real-world experiences. Expand technical webinars to address emerging issues, using expert-led, visual, and engaging formats.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The planetGOLD Global Project's initiatives have advanced the objectives of improving access to financial resources, coordinating knowledge resources and sharing, channeling positive communications practices across the programme and beyond. The Global Project offered international support and coordination that amplified the effectiveness of country projects and contributed to their efforts to reduce ASGM mercury use globally.

Looking ahead to the second phase of the programme, work on the core pillars will continue, but additional activities on land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change will be incorporated. The Global Project will continue to provide opportunities for countries to share their experiences, results, and lessons learned on these topics, and will promote balanced communications about the changing face of the ASGM sector. The programme will also place greater emphasis on regional exchange through regular meetings and learning events.

In keeping with the knowledge sharing culture of the programme, the Global Project will continue to collect, evaluate and disseminate knowledge across the planetGOLD family, and with the broader range of international stakeholders engaged in advancing more responsible, mercury-free artisanal and small-scale gold mining around the globe.



Introduction

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) supplies about 15-20 percent of the world's gold. It is an important source of employment for 10-20 million miners in about 80 countries, most of whom have limited economic development. It also indirectly provides economic support for approximately 100 million women, men, and children through the secondary economy. Due to limited livelihood opportunities or a lack of awareness about the dangers, many of these small-scale mining operations use mercury, a highly toxic chemical, to extract their gold, making this sector the largest global source of anthropogenic mercury pollution in the world. Mercury exposure resulting from this 3,000-year-old method for processing gold leads to grievous environmental and health consequences, including health impacts to miners and their families and surrounding communities. Mercury pollution also has wide-ranging impacts, as emissions can travel long distances around the globe, entering water ecosystems and contaminating fish consumed by millions.

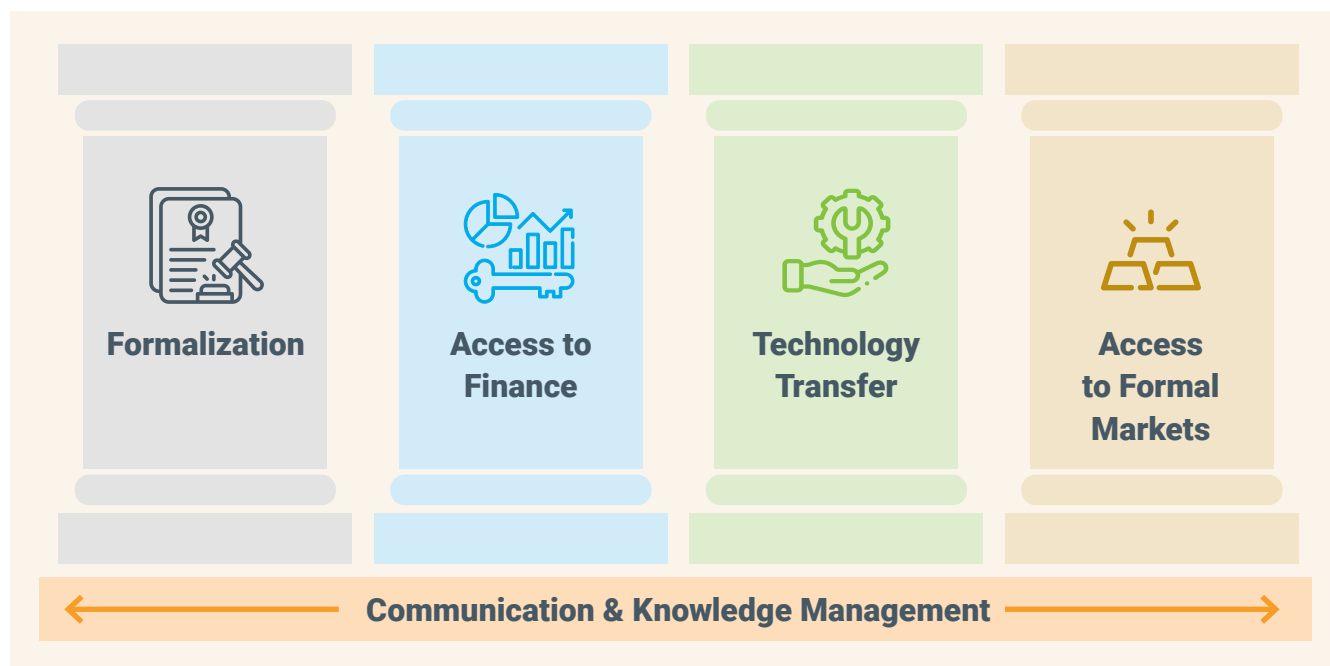


The Minamata Convention on Mercury, ratified by 152 countries, aims to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury exposures. To support countries in upholding their commitments under the Minamata Convention to address mercury pollution from ASGM, the planetGOLD programme was created as the primary mechanism available to assist parties to meet their obligations to reduce or eliminate ASGM mercury use, particularly through strategies identified in their National Action Plans (NAPs). Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and led by the United Nations Environment Programme, the programme is implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and Conservation International. The first phase of the planetGOLD programme began in 2018 and was executed by government agencies and other organizations in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Guyana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, Peru, and the Philippines. The programme also collaborated with an existing GEF-funded project in Ecuador that had similar goals and objectives as planetGOLD and included that project in programme activities.

The planetGOLD programme works in partnership with governments, the private sector, and artisanal and small-scale gold mining communities to significantly improve the production practices and work environment of artisanal and small-scale miners. By working to close the financing gap, supporting formalization, raising awareness, and connecting mining communities with mercury-free technology and formal markets,

the programme aims to demonstrate a pathway to cleaner and more efficient small-scale gold mining practices that benefit everyone, from mine to market.

FIGURE 1: planetGOLD Programme Pillar Areas



As seen in Figure 1, country projects participating in the planetGOLD programme each included four technical pillars:



Formalization – Facilitating efforts to integrate the ASGM sector into the formal economy, society, and regulatory system



Access to Finance – Piloting a range of models for access to investment and finance for small-scale miners and their communities



Technology Transfer – Introducing and facilitating access to mercury-free technologies and best practices in ASGM



Access to Formal Markets – Facilitating miners' access to formal gold supply chains in partnership with gold buyers and industrial users

The inclusion of these pillars was based on a theory of change that recognizes that mercury reduction entails adoption of technical and operational improvements. Such improvements require investment to purchase new equipment, as well as support training and other measures to promote more responsible production. The ability to demonstrate responsible production in turn may improve access to formal gold markets, creating more stability and potentially higher gold prices for miners. However, access

INTRODUCTION

to new technology and training, finance and formal markets all fundamentally depend on miners operating formally, with necessary legal recognition, land and mining rights and permits. All planetGOLD projects included activities to address each aspect of this theory of change.

All projects also included communications and knowledge management to improve understanding and perception of ASGM's potential while sharing knowledge to maximize impact.

Given the commonality in design among projects, a Global Project, executed by the lead agencies of the ASGM Area of UNEP's Global Mercury Partnership (i.e., Natural Resources Defense Council, UNEP and UNIDO), was included as part of the planetGOLD programme design, to foster co-learning and collaboration across projects in the programme. The Global Project also aimed to support communication, outreach and knowledge sharing with a wide range of international stakeholders engaged in improving the ASGM sector. This report describes the activities, results and lessons learned from the execution of the first phase of the Global Project (2019-2025).



Design of the Global Project

The Global Project included components to raise the profile and bankability of ASGM in the international finance community; improve knowledge management, and address common knowledge gaps and challenges; and create common frameworks for communications. The expected outcomes and outputs for each of these components are summarized in Table 1:

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Component 2: Project-participating countries and the wider ASGM community increasingly share, access and apply knowledge on global experiences to assist the development and implementation in formalization, access to finance and technology transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge from global experience, as well as from GEF GOLD programme experiences in key ASGM topics (formalization, financing, market access and technology transfer) is collated and synthesized. Information is disseminated and shared among relevant stakeholders. Results among country-level projects of the programme are collected and analyzed to provide program-level results.
Component 3: Support among the governments, stakeholders, mining communities or financial sector and international media for reduced mercury use in ASGM is increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global branding of GEF GOLD programme identity is established. Proactive PR/media strategy is executed, targeting general public, financial institutions and government agencies, to create more balance perception of impacts of ASGM. Communication efforts by all GEF GOLD projects are supported and reinforced.

TABLE 1: Expected outcomes and outputs of the Global Project phase one

Component 1: Finance and Investor Outreach

Given the central importance of finance to the programme, a specific component was included in the global project to bolster the efforts to increase access to finance. One aspect was to conduct education and outreach to the international investment community, with a special focus on the Socially Responsible Investment community, to help “demystify” ASGM and highlight its potential as an investable sector, and to learn how to communicate information about ASGM investment opportunities in language understandable to investors.



Another aspect was to support country projects on educational activities directed at financial entities as well as miners in their countries, through focused peer-to-peer exchange, and development of toolkits and training materials, to help miners and financiers speak a common financial language. Finally, given that due diligence underpins confident investment in responsible ASGM, the planetGOLD Criteria for Environmentally and Socially Responsible Operations were created to support responsible mining operations that conform with the Criteria to attract financing and ultimately sell their gold products to formal markets.

Component 2: Knowledge Management

Under this component, the Global Project focused on amassing data from decades of national and international work aimed at improving various aspects of ASGM, collecting the materials into a searchable resource library, so that projects could build on existing knowledge and accelerate progress. Because of the large volume of information, the project then created curated collections, highlighting the most useful materials for country projects under each pillar of the programme. Where the project detected gaps in information, new knowledge products were commissioned on a range of topics, including responsible supply chains, ASGM finance models and the use of cyanide in ASGM.



Equally important, the global project was tasked with ensuring that evidence generated by the country projects was captured, observing how different approaches to technology transfer, formalization, finance and markets played out under different geographic, social, economic and technical circumstances. This evidence would then provide a further basis for the design of future project interventions in other countries who wish to reduce mercury use in the sector. All knowledge resources, as well as blogs, news and events, were made available on the planetGOLD programme website, which will be sustained by UNEP beyond the end of the programme. The project also organized internal and external meetings, forums, and webinars to share information among the countries and with global practitioners.

Component 3: Communications

The Global Project led programme communications by providing a common coherent strategy that went beyond communicating the outputs of the programme, to focus on achieving a more balanced portrayal of ASGM to policy makers, investors and the public. The overall aim of the global communications component was to create a unified visual identity and coherent strategic narrative, something that had been missing in many previous interventions.



It was important to present the positive brand and message of planetGOLD consistently throughout the program, as a means to advance a rebrand of the sector itself, as an antidote to the existing wholly negative biases of the public, especially governments and the finance sector. The programme aimed to present a more balanced view where media, governments, and lenders see how many miners in the sector are striving for ever more environmentally and socially responsible mining practices.



planetGOLD Colombia/Juan Manuel Chavarria

Financial Outreach

Sensitizing the Financial Sector on ASGM

ASGM operations typically rely on informal financiers, who often offer unfavorable terms and/or purchase the gold produced below market value. Informal finance generally do not require or include incentives for responsible production as part of the finance conditions. However, national sources of formal commercial finance are often hard if not impossible to access for miners, due to negative risk perceptions harbored by financial institutions, high interest rates or collateral requirements. Finance is sometimes available in the form of microfinance, but often the loan amounts are too modest to meet the minimum capital investments for the purchase of mercury-free equipment.



Because of these challenges, each country project included a component to increase access to finance for miners. To complement the country project activities, the Global Project engaged the international investment community to explore the possibility of attracting the significant capital that would be required to truly revolutionize the sector. At the start of the project, most international investors were unaware of ASGM, and those that had heard of the sector held negative opinions about it. If there were any hope of improving access to finance for ASGM, the entire industry needed to be educated on the true risks and opportunities in partnering with ASGM. The Global Project aimed to learn what might attract the interest of international investors in the sector, to gauge their potential appetites, to educate them about opportunities in the sector and to address common biases against ASGM. The Global Project also assisted the country projects by leveraging its convening power and budget for knowledge creation and outreach to connect with and influence the global financial sector.

INVESTOR OUTREACH

A key strategy for the global project was to conduct extensive outreach to groups of investors whose investment objective may align with ASGM. Specifically, investors interested in the mining sector, as well as socially responsible investors (SRI) interested in making environmental and social impacts with their investments, were targeted. One common mode of outreach was to make presentations, participate in panels and sponsor booths at mining and SRI conferences. One of the most important venues where investors and prospective or ongoing mining operations meet and make deals is the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) annual meeting. Each year, the Global Project sponsored a planetGOLD booth to expose the programme to the world's

mining financiers and to educate and to learn from them face to face. The booth was staffed by experts and stocked with materials about the programme and about ASGM generally. For example, the project developed and distributed a [short guide](#) on the links between responsible ASGM and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how investor support of responsible miners can meet those goals.

At this and other similar events, the project team spoke with hundreds of investors, including large institutional investors, small capital funds, personal wealth managers, and more. They learned about their perceptions of ASGM, what kind of messaging would resonate to lenders, and what would they want to see from ASGM as proof of the opportunities and risks. Similarly, on three occasions, representatives of the project also attended the SOCAP (Social Capital Markets) conference, one of the largest gatherings of the socially responsible investment community in North America, holding a panel session about ASGM the first year of attendance and hosting multiple one-on-one educational discussions with SRI investors. The project attended PERUMIN, a gathering of mining investors in Peru, in 2023, with a focus on responsible mining opportunities in that country.

From these outreach efforts, the project observed several common issues that act as barriers to investment that need to be considered and overcome when trying to attract investment to the sector. First, ASGM investments must align with financiers' existing mandates as changing these mandates is difficult and change may result in loss of capital. Also, ASGM presents a steep learning curve for portfolio managers, who are normally unfamiliar with the sector. Significant barriers to investment include lack of clear ownership of mineral rights, short tenure lengths and uncertainty about mineral right extensions. The scale of operations within the ASGM sector often poses a challenge for investment. Most ASGM projects are too small to be suitable for large investment funds and need to be aggregated to meet the scale requirements. However, the effort required for due diligence remains high regardless of the project size. It is often necessary to involve an intermediary or partner investor to bridge the gap between small-scale operations and large investment requirements.



Representatives presenting materials in the planetGOLD booth at the 2020 PDAC meeting

FINANCE MECHANISM CASE STUDIES AND EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES

To encourage exchange of experiences and learning from past efforts, the Global Project commissioned a series of case studies documenting access to finance efforts across South America, Africa, and Asia in both planetGOLD and non-planetGOLD programmes. The case studies, a cross-programmatic analysis, and an issue brief [were published](#) on the planetGOLD online resource library.

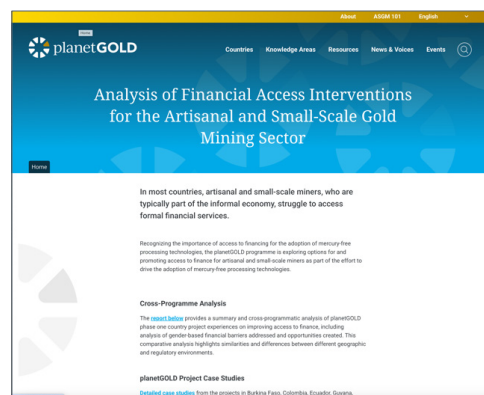
To further disseminate this information, the project conducted an ASGM investment webinar series, aimed at fostering improved dialogue between miners and bankers, in the hopes of promoting greater mutual understanding. The first session was held during the in-person 2024 planetGOLD Global Forum on ASGM, which brought together people from finance institutions and ASGM so that they could share their respective needs in establishing new lending relationships. The in-person meeting was followed by three webinars:

- The first provided a platform for miners to share their perspective on formal financing, including potential bottlenecks or reservations regarding the terms on offer by formal lenders, compared to informal financing currently accessed by many.
- The second focused local financial institutions, featuring representatives from banks and micro-finance companies sharing their experiences with opening services to the ASGM sector.
- The final session presented alternative financing such as microfinancing through Village Savings and Loans Groups (VSLAs) and Social Enterprises, and equipment leasing models.

In response to the desires of the webinar participants, the global project produced a [brochure](#) which gives lenders an overview of opportunities and risk mitigation relating to responsible ASGM. This explains not only ASGM itself but provides concrete products and strategies that lenders can offer ASGM. For instance, it explains the importance of starting small by opening bank accounts for miners (as many ASGM have never had a bank account). In some cases, banks created bespoke life insurance policies for miners and then started a few small loans to get acclimated to working with ASGM. Other tailored innovations are discussed, such as extending temporary grace periods for times when mines are flooded, and other practical suggestions.

INVESTOR TOOLKIT

Investors are accustomed to having access to significant information on business operations, including production information, yet artisanal and small-scale mining operations seldom keep sufficient records nor have the technical abilities to obtain or maintain critical data such as this. In response, the Global Project developed a set of tools that can be used to by investors to evaluate ASGM projects for potential investment and can be used by miners to organize information about their operations using language and metrics familiar to investors. The tools developed included:



Visit this webpage to explore the finance case studies, cross-programme analysis, and webinar recordings

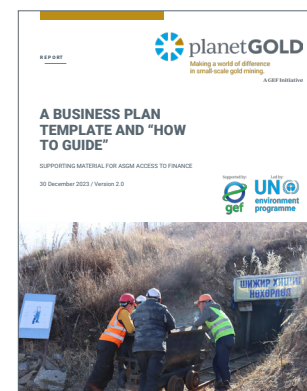
Financial Assessment Tool/Model: This Excel-based ASGM financial assessment tool/financial model can assist operations with budgeting and planning as well as help potential investors assess the potential profitability of investment.

Business Plan Template and “How To Guide”: This product was developed to fit the resources and capacities of ASGM groups. The business plan template shows miners how to use the technical report and other foundational data to demonstrate the economic viability of the mining operation itself. The resulting business plans are designed to provide all the relevant information for an investment decision with sections outlining management, market outlook, project risks, use of investment proceeds, deal terms and value creation.

Technical Report Writing Guide: Perhaps the most innovative aspect of the toolkit was a guide to create a technical report that mimics, to the extent possible, conventional technical material recognizable to mining investors. This “technical report” for ASGM was inspired by the Canadian mining industry’s NI 43-101 report, a Canadian securities regulatory instrument designed to ensure transparency, accuracy, and consistency in investor reports on prospective mineral projects. While a 43-101 requires information that most ASGM cannot reproduce due to limited resources, the project aimed to show that geological, production and other information already available for areas where ASGM operates could be used to demonstrate the economic viability of their operations. They distilled available geological and other information for an investment case (geological setting, mine life, head grade and mine production). For example, while a 43-101 report would use geologic mapping and drilling to show the potential profitability of a mineral property, a technical report could instead use available records of past and recent ore extraction, gold yields and/or gold sales over time. Furthermore, as many ASGM mining areas are or have been of interest to the formal mining sector, it is often possible to find publicly available industrial mineral exploration data for those areas. The technical report writing guide was adapted to reflect the limited budgets of ASGM operations, ensuring that the reports could be completed by recent geology graduates and local talent with relevant experience.

The technical report approach was piloted in six countries (Burkina Faso, Guyana, Kenya, Mongolia, Peru, and the Philippines):

- [Djarkadougou ASGM Project, Burkina Faso, West Africa](#)
- [Tunkhel and Mandal Artisanal Operations, Selenge Province, Mongolia](#)
- [Mahdia ASGM Operation, Potaro Mining District, Guyana](#)
- [Minahang Bayan Artisanal Operations, Barangay Casalugan, Municipality of Paracale, Philippines](#)



- [Victoria Lake ASGM Operation, Lake Victoria Region, Kenya](#)
- [Informe Tecnico Sobre La OMB Agustin Pachari Flores, Peru](#): (published in Spanish)

These were coupled with operation-specific business plans to create concrete examples of investor information packages for real ASGM operations. For educational purposes, the mining operations involved in these pilots received coaching and feedback on their reports, helping them highlight the investment opportunities and the positive economic impacts of investing in mercury-free mining processing systems. The reports were distributed to potential investors at several conferences (PDAC, SOCAP and PERUMIN) and were also provided to ASGM managers to share with local investors and lenders.

SUPPORT TO COUNTRY PROJECTS ON ENGAGING THE FINANCE SECTOR

Check-in Meetings: Bimonthly to monthly meetings were held with planetGOLD country financial experts to ensure that the financial tools and reports produced by the Global Project were aligned with ongoing needs and feedback from the field. Draft technical reports and business plan writing guides were shared with experts prior to meetings for review. The reports were discussed during the meetings, with the feedback incorporated into the final versions of the reports.

These sessions also served as a platform for sharing best practices, introducing new knowledge products produced by planetGOLD, and canvassing for ideas to better serve the ASGM sector under the planetGOLD mandate. This approach not only facilitated the introduction of new financial tools and educational resources but also ensured that they were continually refined to meet the evolving needs of the ASGM sector. These activities are also benefitting from new projects that have entered the programme under phase 2. For example, the planetGOLD Burkina Faso project has shared in detail with phase 2 country projects about its foundational work with Coris Bank International to establish a formal loan program for artisanal miners utilizing a risk-sharing model. They have provided introductions to the bank for other project teams in the region, which potentially gives these planetGOLD phase 2 countries a head-start in terms of securing new sources of ASGM financing.

Financier Course: One common observation from country projects was that financiers lacked basic knowledge and understanding of the ASGM sector, and this proved to be a formidable barrier to improving access to finance. To address this issue, a [short course](#) was designed for country projects to introduce financiers to the ASGM space. The in-class material is supported by a comprehensive teaching guide for instructors. The course was piloted remotely to audiences in Guyana and Kenya.



Financial capacity building among miners: While education of the financial sector about ASGM is important, it is perhaps even more critical to develop financial and business literacy among miners. The Global Project created an 8 module [basic financial literacy course](#) for miners, which was based on a review of materials created and delivered by some individual country projects. This course is meant to help families who rely on ASGM as an income generating activity to plan, save and invest their earnings, allowing the sector to better serve as a catalyst for rural development. Business skills are also essential for engaging with the formal economy and establishing the basic infrastructure necessary for investment. The learning resources are designed to be “open source,” meaning that they are made available freely for use by programs, organizations and institutions of all kinds working in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector.

Sensitization of SRIs to ASGM Issues and Opportunities



Socially Responsible Investors (SRIs) are of special interest to the Global Project because SRIs seek to satisfy broader objectives such as environmental and human rights protection, in addition to financial return objectives. To educate SRIs and to gauge their knowledge, interest and appetite for ASGM as an investment opportunity with social impact, the project reached out to a range of individual SRIs, including conducting one-on-one interviews and sending online questionnaires. The [resulting report](#) detailed the various outreach efforts, the response of the SRI community, and the perspectives of different investor types regarding ASGM. The analysis and recommendations presented are grounded in a review of business, investment and development, as well as more than 40 interviews with impact investors, commercial banks, mineral off-takers, development finance institutions, traditional investors in mining (including resource funds and private equity) and ASGM practitioners—as well as of the authors’ own experience and expertise. One of the main goals of the research was to understand if and how ASGM development and mercury reductions could help SRI meet their environmental and community impact goals, and how these impacts measure up when compared with others such as improvements to education, elimination of childhood hunger, and other impact categories with well-established metrics.

The report found that certain segments of the SRI community, particularly innovators and early adopter investors, expressed potential interest in the sector. The report also found that ASGM projects may be more attractive to investors if they can demonstrate significant, nonlinear impacts to improve health and livelihoods. SRIs expressed a willingness to work in higher risk jurisdictions if risk could be managed. Smaller initial investments may provide a pathway to build trust, capacity and a track record to enable larger follow-on financing.

Notably, the project originally anticipated that SRI governing charters would have restrictions that effectively prevented them from investing in mining, and that it would perhaps be possible to encourage changes to those charters that would make it possible for SRI to work with ASGM. In the end the research did not find explicit rules against investment in formal ASGM, and instead managers were interpreting the rules according to their prior assumptions about the negative human and environmental impacts ASGM sector. The main barriers were in the minds of the SRI leaders.

To further engagement with SRIs, alternative pathways to build awareness among the SRI community may provide new outreach opportunities to a wider audience through professional groups and investor networks. It may also be beneficial to create enabling environments to support ASGM leaders to tell their stories directly to the SRI community and articulate their needs and vision for their projects.

De-risking the ASGM Supply Chain

Recognizing that de-risking of ASGM is needed to attract investors and improve access to finance, an ancillary goal of the Global Project was to find ways to demonstrate compliance with responsible environmental and social practices in the ASM gold supply chain. This meant engaging with downstream buyers to understand their expectations regarding responsible sourcing of ASM gold and providing tools to help miners show their progress in conforming with the due diligence needs of the responsible gold buyers.



OUTREACH TO GOLD BUYERS

With a long-term goal to raise the consumer visibility of responsible ASM gold, the Global Project engaged in various venues with gold buyers (e.g., refineries and jewelers). For example, the planetGOLD programme launch, held in London in 2019, was well-attended by representatives from five refiners and eight jewelry brands. Both jewelers and refiners highlighted increasing consumer demand for responsible sourcing and traceability, underscoring the importance of thorough, on-the-ground due diligence in gold supply chains, where they hoped planetGOLD country projects could come into play. While existing sourcing criteria were recognized as useful tools for promoting responsible practices, concerns remained about their limitations in adequately addressing biodiversity and gender issues. Both refiners and jewelers participated throughout the project as Programme Advisory Group experts and/or engaged with selected country projects on supply chain issues.



The planetGOLD global coordinator with country project staff and partners attending the 2025 OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains

The Global Project also reached out to a wider audience of refineries and jewelers through attendance and presentations at key industry gatherings such as the OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains, the Cleaner Gold Network, and the [Initiatives in Art and Culture \(IAC\)](#) 13th Annual Gold and Diamond Conference. The Global Project also twice attended the Chicago Responsible Jewelry Conference with the goal of educating motivated jewelers and identifying possible actions that the jewelry industry can take to support responsible ASGM. To make the connection more concrete, in 2024 the Global Project collaborated with planetGOLD Colombia, who sent a female miner from one of their participating mines to speak about their experience creating a responsible gold supply chain from the mine to export, to a refinery, and finally to a luxury jewelry brand. The project also joined a jewelry-oriented podcast, called Gem Connection, on their episode [“ASGM,”](#) to speak about the importance of formalizing the ASGM sector with the purpose of reducing and eliminating mercury use, and delivered an educational online talk with Gemologist Institute of America.

As another example, the Global Project also supported UNEP’s participation in the Cannes Film Festival for its 2021 event. At the time, planetGOLD Programme Manager Ludovic Bernaudat (Senior Programme Manager, UNEP) participated in a [“mastermind session” side event](#) at the festival spotlighting ethical gold, where he presented about planetGOLD and its work to promote responsible, mercury-free artisanal and small-scale gold mining. The event organized by the Better World Endowment Fund also featured a panel with representatives from gold buyers, NGO’s, the OECD, and a regional minister from Ghana.

While the project engaged the jewelry sector on these fronts, rehabilitating the perception of small-scale miners within the jewelry industry will take ongoing attention and consistent messaging. To maintain interest and build relationships with by the jeweler industry, miners will need to reach a level of operational professional performance that will not pose brand risks as well provide a sufficient volume of gold to meet jewelers’ needs, which will take time and effort.

In the meantime, the project pursued collaboration with other gold supply actors and initiatives that seek to improve the ASM gold supply chain and channel gold to responsible formal buyers. For example, the project is involved with the [World Gold Council \(WGC\) and their partner Central Banks](#) that have formed an ASM Programme (called the London Principles) with the aim to create best practices for purchasing gold from small-scale miners under domestic buying programmes. A representative of the project also participates in the London Bullion Market Association’s (LBMA) ASM Task Force which was created to “promote new engagement and sourcing alternatives to Good Delivery List (GDL) refiners and ASM suppliers.”¹

1 <https://www.lbma.org.uk/publications/lbma-board-response-2022/lbma-board-response-to-asm-feasibility-study>

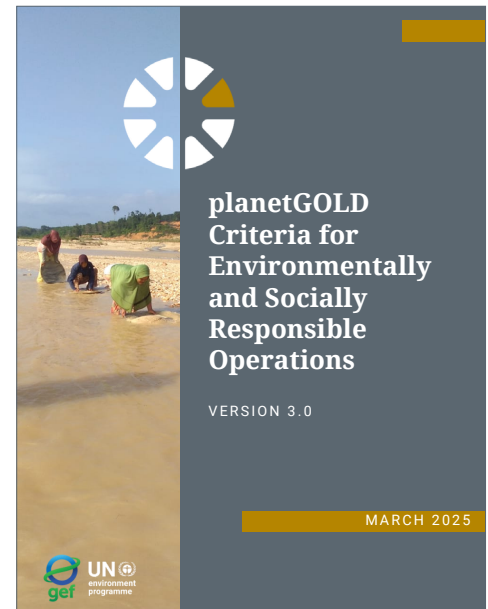
The planetGOLD programme itself promotes responsible ASM gold production that adheres to international standards, through the application of the planetGOLD criteria (see below).

PLANETGOLD ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CRITERIA FOR ASGM

The Global Project developed and promoted a set of environmental and social responsibility criteria for ASGM operations that receive programme support. The purpose of the [planetGOLD Environmentally and Socially Responsible Criteria](#) are to ensure that ASGM entities engaged with the planetGOLD programme make efforts to avoid, minimize, mitigate, and offset adverse impacts to people and environment, and thereby help operations attract financing and access to formal markets.




The planetGOLD Criteria are based on a review of existing industry responsible sourcing standards such as London Bullion Market Association’s (LBMA) Responsible Gold Guidance, and the Responsible Jewellery Council’s (RJC) Code. The Global Project paid special attention to requirements of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the GEF Environment and Social Safeguards, the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-affected and High-risk Areas (OECD Minerals Guidance), and the Code of Risk-mitigation for ASM engaging in Formal Trade (CRAFT)². CRAFT forms the foundation of the planetGOLD Criteria because it incorporates most elements contained within other key guidance and codes. Close alignment with the CRAFT guidelines means that they meet multiple globally recognized and established standards. Further the Global Project participated on CRAFT’s Advisory Committee to develop CRAFT 2.1 thereby ensuring planetGOLD country project partnering operations continue to observe and practice responsible and safe operations.

The planetGOLD Criteria incorporate Modules 1-4 of the CRAFT Code, which are aligned with the “Supply Chain Policy” provided in Annex II of the OECD Minerals Guidance. Module 1 requires the mining entity to adopt a management system, while Module 2 includes requirements and criteria to assess the “legitimacy” of the mining entity. Module 3 addresses serious human rights and other risks that OECD suggests “require immediately suspend or discontinue commercial engagement” with mining entities, if a reasonable risk is not mitigated.” Module 4 addresses other human rights, environmental and financial risks for which OECD recommends suspension or discontinued commercial



² [CRAFT 2.1, 2024](#)

engagement with mining entities “after failed attempts at mitigation.”³ In addition to the CRAFT modules, the planetGOLD Criteria add three additional requirements unique to the programme:

-  **Criterion A:** Eliminate mercury in the mining process, and appropriately manage mercury contaminated tailings, in keeping with the objectives of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, Annex C.
-  **Criterion B:** Respect and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, per requirements of the GEF Environment and Social Safeguards. Notably, mining entities must have conducted a process to obtain a robust Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) with local indigenous groups in addition to community consultations.
-  **Criterion C:** Minimize impact on biodiversity, reflecting additional environmental protection considerations required by the GEF, with a special emphasis on protecting biodiversity and critical habitats.

In support of Criterion B, the Global Project commissioned the report “[Agreements and Engagement with Rightsholders in Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining: Moving from Common Approaches toward Best Practice](#).” This is a review of the FPIC requirements by country, where they exist, and of tools NGOs have made to assist in compliance with FPIC. Using this information, a short guidance was developed to help countries see what engagement with communities looks like, with examples, considering steps involved in consultation, what is consent, and what project managers need to do to make sure their operations conform to FPIC.

The Criteria should be applied by all ASGM beneficiary operations of planetGOLD country projects. To support implementation, the Global Project developed a series of training webinars, in English, Spanish and French, aimed at helping miners and projects understand and apply the planetGOLD Criteria. These trainings also taught participants how to map supply chain actors, how to connect exporters and aggregators, and how responsible practices can improve market access, among other things. The project also piloted a mobile application into which operations can input their data regarding compliance with the Criteria and output aggregated summary reports on their compliance status and key aspects to improve.



³ OECD. 2016. OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas: Third Edition, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Knowledge Management

The knowledge management component of the Global Project had two main goals: (a) to create a continually updated source of: publications and synthesis documents, news and information on events, and sharing of new evidence emerging from the activities of country projects, and (b) to support a community of knowledge sharing and mutual support, creating direct interlinkages and open cooperation among country projects as well as with the global ASGM community of practice. The Global Project sought to foster an environment of trust in which projects could share openly about their tough challenges and tested solutions.



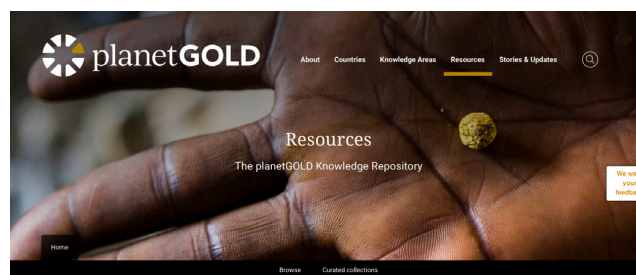
The Global Project emphasized capturing the knowledge generated by the country projects to add to the evidence base on interventions to improve ASGM, one of the main benefits of a programmatic approach. By documenting the experience of planetGOLD projects, the Global project aimed to support and accelerate progress among the newer projects that joined the programme. To do so, the Global Project worked with the country projects to develop cross programmatic data collection tools and reporting standards for key indicators, as well as common templates for documentation of activities. The project also collaborated with countries to produce cross-program assessment of the first phase of activities, including lessons learned and recommendations for future programming.

Collection and Curation of Existing Resources

There are decades of research and project implementation experiences to draw from when designing and implementing new ASGM projects. However, apart from elements of the current Delve platform (an ASM knowledge exchange platform hosted by the World Bank) and the former Communities and Small-scale Mining (CASM) initiative (an ASM-development initiative also led by the World Bank), there was no permanent knowledge hub for relevant information specifically on ASGM and mercury reduction housed in one place, prior to planetGOLD. To begin to create such a knowledge hub, the Global Project first researched and collated relevant information on the pillars of the programme (formalization, access to finance and markets, technical solutions and awareness raising) as well as other related topics, and organized this into a searchable resource library. The project continually adds to the library and promotes new resources as they are generated by the country projects, the Global Project, and the wider ASGM community.



To facilitate discovery of popular and/or most relevant products in the library, the project created curated collections on key topics. Curation adds value by grouping and tagging key resources to facilitate discovery, but also highlights how topics are interrelated, and, in some cases, how different regions can have similar issues. Given that ASGM is an evolving activity, where new issues constantly arise, curated collections allow the project to highlight and becoming a platform of discussion for emerging topics (i.e. biodiversity and ASGM, etc.). In addition to collections on the four pillars, curated collections currently located on the website include due diligence and responsible gold criteria, gender, geospatial data management in ASGM, biodiversity, health, occupational safety, environmental monitoring and relations with large-scale gold mining, among others.



Searchable resource library hosted on the programme website

Creation of Synthesis Reports

While there exists a wealth of resources on ASGM, the project found that some key issues were underrepresented in existing literature, or the issues lacked syntheses explaining the most salient points. The Global Project sought out to fill gaps in knowledge, by creating original research reports focused critical aspects of the programme pillars.



TECHNICAL REPORTS AND MATERIALS

- [*Best Management Practices for Cyanide Use in the Small-Scale Gold Mining Sector*](#): This publication reviews best practices for transporting, storing, using and disposing cyanide in a small-scale mining setting, where permissible by law. Prior to this publication, country projects noted that there was no specific guidance on cyanide in small-scale mining even though it is the most common gold extraction method in the large-scale mining sector, and it is already in use in many small-scale mining areas. The project also held a webinar providing an opportunity for the wider community to engage with experts on the topic.
- *Occupational Safety and Health*: Addressing occupational safety and health (OSH) risks in ASGM improves worker well-being, enhances productivity, and encourages responsible mining practices. The Global Project commissioned a series of materials to assist country projects, including a [quick guide on occupational health and safety in artisanal and small-scale gold mining](#) and a [literature review](#), as well as [case studies](#) and further resources on [OSH training materials](#).

- [*COVID-19 Awareness Raising Materials for Miners & Local Communities*](#): This page was launched during the height of the pandemic to centralize and share resources created by projects working with the planetGOLD programme. It was widely used and many countries benefitted from the early work of others.

SUPPLY CHAINS AND DUE DILIGENCE RELATED REPORTS

- [*Agreements and Engagement with Rightsholders in ASGM: Moving from Common Approaches toward Best Practice*](#): This document provides guidance for ASGM entities working with planetGOLD to consult with and seek free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) from any Indigenous or tribal community whose rights or lands may be impacted. Country project staff advocated for the creation of this guidance on FPIC to supplement the CRAFT code.
- [*Overcoming Practical Barriers for Integrating Responsible Artisanal and Small-Scale Mined Gold into International Supply Chains*](#): This report explores the impact of royalties and taxation on transnational gold trade and implications on formalization within neighbouring countries.
- [*Supply Chain Technology Solutions for planetGOLD Projects*](#): This study examines the role that can be played by supply chain technologies in facilitating that gold market transparency. The study looks at specific types of supply chain solutions, including due diligence, traceability and block-chain solutions, and analyzes their capacity for establishing and strengthening market links.



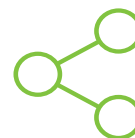
FINANCE REPORTS

- [*Improving Access to Formal Finance in Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining*](#): This issue brief provides a short primer on the issue of access to finance in ASGM, defining key concepts and issues, summarizing past experiences in providing financial services to the ASGM sector, and describing models that are currently being piloted. The report reviews existing barriers and lists recommendations for attracting more formal finance and investment. Originally published in 2020, the report was updated in July 2024 and is also available in French and Spanish. The release of the original report was accompanied by a [technical webinar](#).
- [*Access to Finance: Options for Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining*](#): This research report on global experience with finance in ASGM reviews past experiences with delivering financial and allied services and makes recommendations regarding best practices and potential ways forward in improving access to finance based on this experience. Also published in French and Spanish.
- [*Unlocking Finance for Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining: A Frontier Investment Sector*](#): This research report complemented the access to finance research by focusing specifically on the opportunity for private investors to engage with the ASGM sector. The paper concentrates on how to identify appropriate sources of finance given different types of operations and provides recommendations and preliminary tools for groups working with ASGM to assist in program design that will improve the likelihood of accessing investment. Also published in French and Spanish.

FORMALIZATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

- [*Taxes, Fees, Royalties and the Formalisation of ASGM Producers and Exporters*](#): This report examines the relationship between national fiscal regimes and the formality of the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector. Specifically, the study attempts to determine whether and to what extent a country's fiscal regime – the total of taxes, fees, and royalties – acts as significant factor pushing ASGM producers and exporters into informality. Also published in French and Spanish.
- [*Communicating about ASGM: Emerging trends, barriers, and recommendations*](#): This issue brief analyzes the state of play in ASGM communications (including barriers to effective communication) and emerging trends, along with recommendations aimed at communicators and decision-makers. The objective is to encourage learning and take-up of strategic, inclusive communications practices that can help build greater support for the sector and recognize the many instances where the sector is contributing to sustainable development — while inspiring others to do the same. Also published in French and Spanish.

Dissemination and Knowledge Sharing



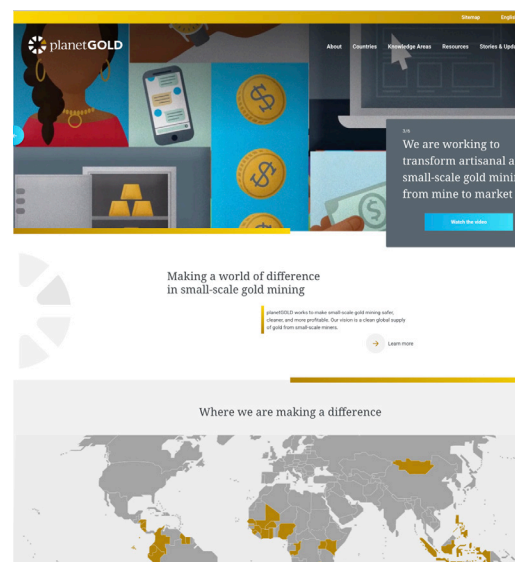
Knowledge products are only half of the story of knowledge management. Perhaps the most important aspect of knowledge is its social dimension: how it is shared, and the way people interact with it. The Global Project used several approaches to ensure that the knowledge collected was disseminated, shared and used to support programme activities and impact.

PROGRAMME WEBSITE

The [planetGOLD website](#) is the central hub for communicating programme information, and for posting knowledge products, publications, project information, event schedules and summaries, and links to partner organizations. It is meant to be the definitive, complete, and curated collection of information resources on ASGM, including planetGOLD and resources from the ASGM community globally. It was developed and is maintained by the UN Environment Programme, which will help to ensure that the website continues beyond the life of the programme.

The website includes background information and FAQs on ASGM aimed at the general public, highlights activities, events and communications across the programme, and houses the Resource Library and Curated Collections. The website includes a separate page for every country project, who use these pages for their country-specific knowledge sharing and communications. The planetGOLD website continues to grow, with additional resources and pages as new country projects join the programme. As of June 2025, the Resource Library has over 1,000 relevant publications from global literature and ASGM projects around the world. The site has 27 country webpages with information and updates from those projects, 60 additional freestanding webpages on different relevant issues, and 17 curated collections on key ASGM topics, which collectively highlight around 70 of the most relevant resources in the library.

From the launch of the website in 2019 the total number of unique web visitors to date is over 250,000. The country with the most website visitors was the U.S. (roughly 27,500 sessions). The top planetGOLD project countries from where website visitors connected included the Philippines (roughly 25,300 sessions), Peru (roughly 16,900 sessions), Mongolia (roughly 9,400 sessions), Colombia (roughly 8,400 sessions), Burkina Faso (roughly 8,300 sessions), and Kenya (roughly 8,100 sessions).



The programme website

PLANETGOLD GLOBAL FORUMS

The flagship event of the planetGOLD programme is the biennial Global Forum on ASGM. The purpose of the Forum is to facilitate knowledge exchange with the ASGM global community across a range of topics. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the [first Global Forum event](#) to be held virtually using specialized conferencing software. Over the course of three days, over 600 participants logged in to the virtual Global Forum and had access to 18 technical sessions in three languages. The online event was designed to allow participants to attend sessions simultaneously and toggle between them for the speakers that most interested them. Chat windows were used for efficient collection of questions and allowed for side conversations among participants. The success of the online Forum demonstrated the efficiency, inclusion and effectiveness of online events as a means of knowledge exchange.

The first in-person planetGOLD Global Forum on ASGM was held in Batangas, Philippines from 3 to 5 June 2024. It was attended by more than 170 participants ranging from country project staff, miners, government representatives, and sector experts. [The event](#) offered thirteen sessions ranging from finance, biodiversity, criminality and human rights issues in ASGM, women's livelihoods, formalization and technology and the need to communicate effectively on the complex topic of ASGM. The event also featured a photo contest highlighting ASGM best practices. The final day of the event featured interactive workshops where participants applied their learnings from the week to specific regional scenarios, to suggest appropriate intervention approaches. Participants provided feedback that these workshops were one of the most helpful aspects of the event, as they allowed deep interaction and discussion with others, and they recommended that future events should include more opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement, networking and knowledge exchange.

Best efforts were made to create a balanced and thorough program covering a wide variety of topics and to bring together numerous and diverse stakeholders from all over the world. One of the most unique and long overdue aspects of the Global Forum was the full integration of the miners and their stories into all events and discussions. There was always at least one miner on every panel, one panel was entirely ASGM speakers, and women miners also had a prominent role. In order to root participants' minds in practicality, each day began with a different panel of miners giving their personal perspectives on the day's theme.



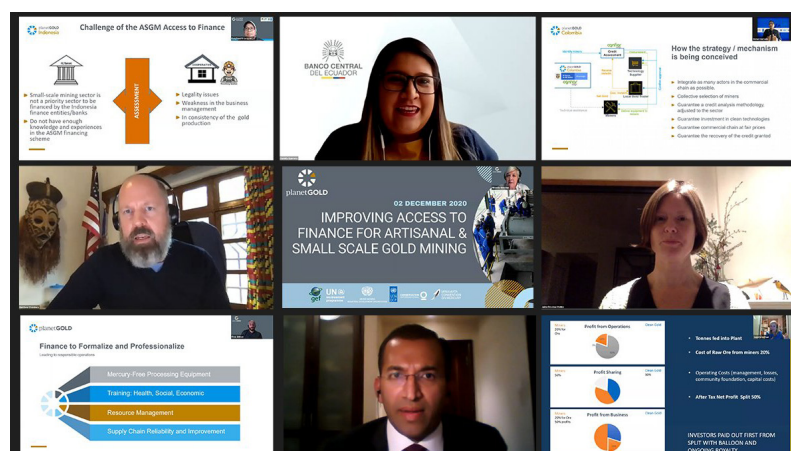
Participants at the 2024 Global Forum on ASGM in Batangas, Philippines

OTHER KNOWLEDGE SHARING EVENTS

Programme launch (2019) and planetGOLD in review (2021): The 2019 planetGOLD programme launch event introduced stakeholders to the planetGOLD programme and created a space for exchange of ideas with members of the financial community, gold buyers and users, artisanal and small-scale mining policy experts, and governments, regarding specific opportunities for collaboration, investment and creating responsible gold supply chains.

The intention was to keep these stakeholders engaged through subsequent Global Forums. However, due to the cancellation of the first in-person Global Forum due to COVID-19, an informational event was held to keep stakeholders informed, while planning for a virtual Global Forum was underway. The planetGOLD In Review 2021 event reviewed the accomplishments during the first two years of the programme and looked ahead toward the future, including an expansion of planetGOLD. Project managers for each country project detailed the progress they made in key programmatic areas and goals for the future—plus their reflections on coping with the COVID-19 pandemic and on being part of the global planetGOLD team.

Technical webinars: Between 2020-2021, as projects in the programme were launching, the Global Project held two major technical webinars to share previous global finance and technology experience with the country projects. To complement the publication of the issue brief *Improving Access to Finance for Artisanal & Small-Scale Gold Mining*, planetGOLD held a 2-hour [webinar](#) on access to finance that featured experts discussing past experiences in providing financial services to the sector, current models that are being piloted in the participating countries, and an overview of the existing barriers that hamper the attraction of formal finance and investment.



Speakers at the December 2020 webinar on access to finance

One of the more innovative events held by planetGOLD was a two-day [Virtual Technology Fair](#), attended by approximately 200 participants each day. Experts with mercury-free solutions were invited to submit applications to participate in the event. The Global Project team then worked closely with selected experts to create highly visual presentations showcasing their technology, to mimic the experience of in-person trade show.

Fostering Cross-Programme Knowledge Exchange



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE/COORDINATION AMONG COUNTRY PROJECTS

The Global Project's enabling resources and activities, along with its fostering of a community of support among projects, produced an atmosphere of mutual assistance where projects learned from and adopted products and successful strategies from each other, avoiding duplicated effort and preventing countries from feeling that they were working in isolation. It created a sense of camaraderie, solidarity and in some cases, friendly competition, among country project staff. Fostering this kind of support, from the Global Project and among country projects, facilitated the development of the capacity of the executing agency professionals located in these countries, improving their ability to lead the projects and provide associated technical activities.

The Global Project hosted a variety of regular fora for peer exchanges. The bimonthly project manager calls ensured that managers got to know each other personally and felt comfortable sharing successes and challenges. This regular contact strongly encouraged cross program cooperation, and projects frequently used the opportunity to learn from each other and exchange products and strategies that could be copied in their own activities. In addition, each year, the planetGOLD programme organizes an internal Annual Programme Meeting (APM) as an opportunity for country projects to present specific information about their project's progress to the implementing agencies and project steering committee. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first two meetings were held virtually. The first in-person APM was held in 2022 in Kisumu, Kenya. The meeting was attended by planetGOLD country teams, GEF Secretariat, implementing agencies, communication and topical experts, and local representatives. The meeting not only incorporated sessions on project activities but also in-depth discussions on specific country experience related to the pillars of the programme. The meeting included site visits to mercury-free production systems at hard rock and alluvial mines in Vihiga County and on the banks of the Yala River.



2022 Annual Programme Meeting in Kisumu, Kenya

The second in-person APM was held as a one-day event, back-to-back with the 2024 Global Forum. The APM focused on sharing key challenges to planetGOLD execution and documenting global environmental benefits and other cross-programme indicators,

such as mercury abatement. There was also discussion around planetGOLD country project stakeholder engagements, both successful and challenging, including effective strategies for policy engagement with governments and difficulties around co-finance commitments. The meeting ended with a debrief of the communications side meeting where officers shared field experiences, youth engagement, and communication strategies.

Because country projects execute common components, the Global Project, on an ad hoc basis, supported an internal exchange among the planetGOLD country project specialists with a particular area of expertise. For example, the project arranged a virtual meeting among project technical experts responsible for developing and promoting mercury-free ASGM technologies. Speakers were asked to present on the types of ores they encountered, technical capacities of ASGM organizations in their countries, proposed mercury-free technologies under consideration and challenges faced in implementation. The Global Project also organized virtual gatherings with country gender specialists to share gender-related activities such as developing gender action plans, working with local women networks, the assessment of social study gaps for artisanal miners, and designing grants for women, to name a few.

ENGAGEMENT WITH PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND ADVISORS

Programme Advisory Group: The Global Project constituted a Programme Advisory Group (PAG) comprising stakeholders and experts from downstream gold buyers (refineries, jewelers), donor agencies and governments, financial entities and ASGM practitioners and academics. The PAG plays a key role in guiding and encouraging the efforts of the programme, to ensure the direction of the work is relevant to practical concerns of external partners working with ASGM. During quarterly meetings, hosted by the Global Project, PAG members provided advice on relevant areas of GOLD Programme activities exchanged information regarding progress and results of their constituents' ongoing activities; and acted as a coordination mechanism by identifying where common efforts are being undertaken. During these meetings country projects were given the opportunity to share highlights of their programs and engage with the PAG members.

The Global Project worked closely with the PAG to keep the group abreast of progress in planetGOLD countries and integrate their feedback. On one occasion a PAG member collaborated directly in a project activity: Italpreziosi, an Italian refiner, partnered with planetGOLD Colombia to source from a beneficiary operation. As a result, in 2021 a supply chain was designed to flow mercury-free gold from the mining operation Mina La Gabriela to Grupo Altea (previously "Anexpo") and then on to Italpreziosi, finally reaching a luxury goods company.

PROGRAMME STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC) MEETINGS:

Approximately twice a year, the Global Project meets with the **Programme Steering Committee (PSC)**, which comprises the GEF Secretariat, UNEP as lead agency and other Implementing Agencies (Conservation International, UNDP, and UNIDO). These meetings cover the Global Project's high-level achievements and plans for the coming year, concerns or suggestions (for example an online reporting system for country projects to input their data), and administrative updates, such as the review and approval of the budget and workplan. These meetings are held either virtually or adjacent to an in-person gathering such as the Minamata Conference of Parties or the Global Forum.

PLANETGOLD HOME BASE

This **subsidiary webpage** was created as an internal reference page for programme participants, for locating key materials, forms, and other information participants in the planetGOLD programme family might need during project implementation. It enables private sharing of intermediate products and internal reporting, templates and guidance for planetGOLD activities, recordings of internal webinars and trainings, information on the planetGOLD Criteria, communications toolkits and guidelines, and other planetGOLD products aimed at supporting implementation, in contrast to public-facing material found on the main planetGOLD website.

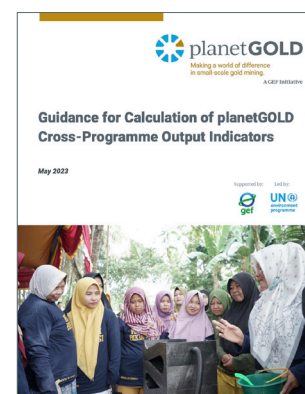
Mechanisms for Documenting Project Results



CROSS-PROGRAMMATIC INDICATORS

The Global Project guided the establishment and application of the common standards for collecting and reporting data on four cross-programmatic indicators that represent progress on the four pillars of the programme:

- **Mercury abatement:** Projects report on the amount of mercury reduced and/or eliminated from existing mercury-based operations. Projects also report on the amount of mercury use prevented during the life of the project through the establishment of new mercury-free processing capacity, as well as the amount of mercury use avoided through the use of that new capacity over its operating life.
- **Formalization:** Projects report on the number of miners/mining operations assisted with formalization processes, disaggregated by gender.
- **Access to Markets:** To represent improvements in market access, projects report on both the amount responsible gold produced that conform with the planetGOLD criteria, as well as the amount of responsibly produced gold that was sold to formal markets.



Guidance document developed for planetGOLD's cross-programmatic indicators

- **Access to Finance:** Projects report the amount of funds made available through the development of new financial mechanisms, the amount actually accessed by miners/mining operations, and the number of miners/mining operations receiving funds. These data are disaggregated by gender and by Indigenous status, where feasible.

The project supported reporting on these indicators by providing guidance and training on their calculation and developing online reporting tools. The Integrated Global Online Data Reporting System (iGOLD) was created as a single database application for all the country projects to use when reporting on these indicators. This system facilitates ongoing monitoring and the generation of quarterly and annual planetGOLD programme-wide progress reports, to help understand the programme's contribution to global efforts to reduce mercury pollution.

- **Quarterly Online Reporting:** Each project submit online quarterly summaries of key activities. Using these data, the Global Project produces quarterly summaries of key activities and progress across the programme, that is subsequently submitted to the lead implementing agency.
- **Annual Online Reporting and Annual Progress Report:** Country projects submit an annual report, which include narrative reporting on project achievements as well as quantitative, cumulative reporting on cross-programme indicators. This is used to create an annual program-wide progress report, summarizing program progress towards indicators, key activities across pillars, as well as activities of the Global Project.

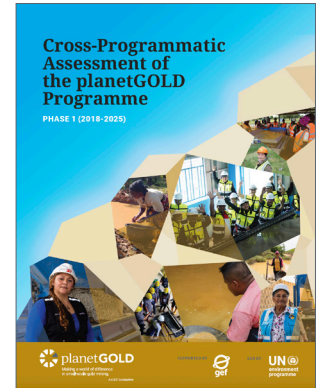
DOCUMENTATION AND CROSS-PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The Global Project consistently endeavoured to ensure that knowledge products and resources each country produced were shared on the programme website and with other programme participants as soon as they were published. This is especially important toward the end of each project's implementation period, to ensure that results and analysis produced were captured and disseminated, as part of the country's exit strategy. Such data are invaluable to understand the pathways to success and to shape the process of replication among future planetGOLD projects.

To help ensure comparable documentation of project activities, the Global Project prepared a series of templates (in English, French, and Spanish) to guide the description of project activities in a consistent manner: (1) technology transfer report templates prompt the user to gather all information about decision making, implementation of equipment, and training; (2) financial intervention report templates recommend common protocols to document financial access models piloted and to analyze the factors that affected their success or failure ; and (3) supply chain report templates prompt country

projects to report on activities and results from the implementation of interventions to support access to formal markets for ASGM. All these tools were shaped in cooperation with the county projects to facilitate capturing their progress.

To assist in the documentation of project activities, the Global Project commissioned a series of reports to document country experiences with formalization, financial access, supply chain mechanisms, and communications interventions. Technology transfer experiences were similarly documented in an information document prepared at the request of the Minamata Convention on Mercury Secretariat and submitted to the 5th Conference of the Parties. These reports, as well as additional data collection and final updates from the countries, were used to summarize and analyze country project results and prepare a [cross-programmatic assessment](#). The assessment examined internal and external factors for success and challenges and considered how and why these vary by country-specific circumstances. The assessment also included an analysis of the interactions among activities under the key programme pillars, noting how success or challenges in one pillar may have supported or limited success in other pillars. The report also reflected on how the Global Project activities contributed/supported the planetGOLD programme overall.



Explore the cross-programme assessment of phase 1 of the planetGOLD programme



Communications

The overall aim of the communications component of the Global Project was to create a unified visual identity, coherent strategic narrative, and cooperation among the country projects. It was important to present the planetGOLD messaging and brand consistently throughout the programme, to counter the wholly negative perceptions towards ASGM miners. Programme communications aimed to help media, governments, and lenders to have a more balanced perception of the sector and to understand that responsible miners are striving to adopt more environmentally and socially responsible mining practices. The Global Project goes beyond simply communicating the outputs of the programme; its strategic aim is to change minds.



Programme Brand and Identity

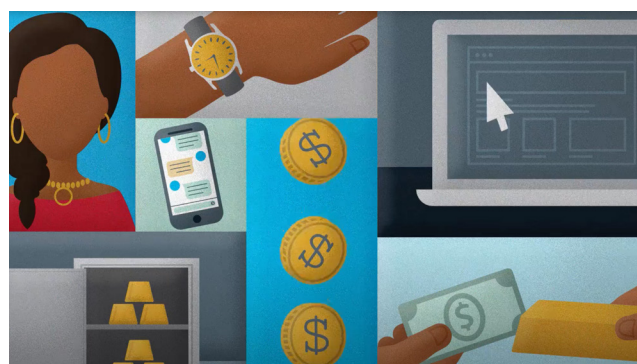
The first task of the Global Project’s communications team was to lead the collaborative development of the programme’s brand. Out of a suite of options, the project steering committee (PSC) chose the brand name planetGOLD, with the tagline “making a world of difference in small-scale gold mining.” The Global Project also developed the programme’s mission and vision statements, to best reflect the programme’s positive approach and desire to rehabilitate the reputation of ASGM, especially in the financial sector:



planetGOLD Mission: To make small-scale gold mining safer, cleaner, and more profitable

planetGOLD Vision: A clean global supply of gold from small-scale miners

Once the brand identity and visual style guidelines were established, the Global Project created a raft of templates for different types of communications outputs: fact sheets, banners, report issue briefs, presentations, email signatures, letterhead, iconography, graphics and more – essentially any tools that could help projects get their messages out with consistent branding maintained across the entire program. Furthermore, a shared account on the website “Canva” allowed all country teams to use pre-set digital templates, logos and fonts, and this was extensively used by all projects.



“Explainer” video created by the communication team to articulate programme narrative and goals

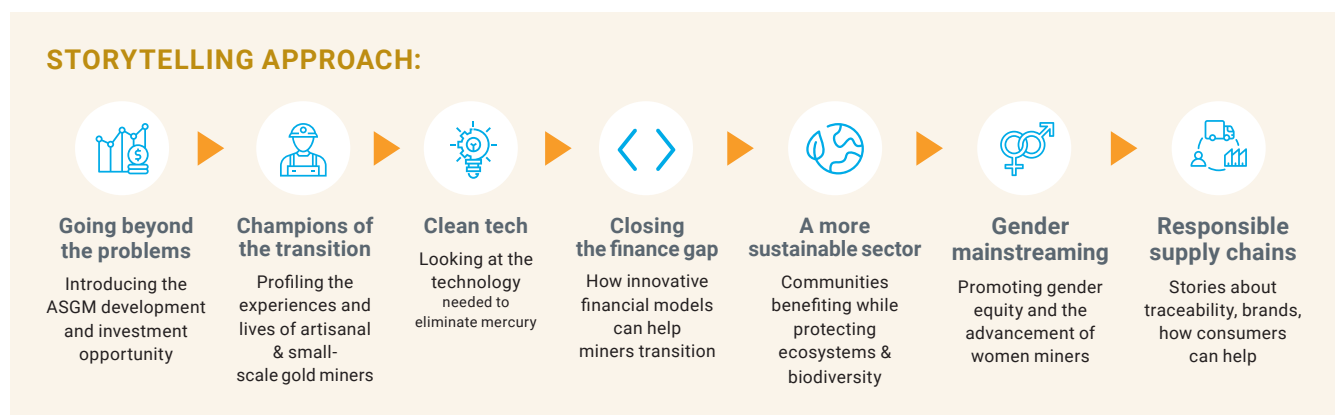
Creating a Coordinated Global Communications Strategy



The Global Project created a programme-wide communications strategy to set a common tone and guide communications across planetGOLD. The strategic communications plan reflects the programme’s core objective to improve perceptions of the ASGM sector and to help audiences recognize that with support, the sector can operate responsibly. The strategic plan outlines the way content production is executed at the global level and provides a blueprint for the communication strategies at the country level. The main strategic goals are to influence positive perceptions of miners among the public and in the financial sector, and to build a strong communications foundation that can support widespread knowledge uptake. Each country project in the programme was directed to develop its own national level communication plan modeled on the strategies and messages outlined in the global-level communication plan.

The strategy aims to reframe ASGM discussion around solutions, highlighting the social, environmental and economic benefits of improvements in the sector. In most countries people live in or close to major urban centres, and the media is their only source of information about remote and rural affairs such as ASGM. Therefore, it is critical to provide journalists and news media with storylines that provide an alternative to the typical facile depictions of the negative impacts and disorderly narratives around ASGM. Rather than leading with problems in the ASGM sector, the strategy emphasizes messaging around the opportunities that more responsibly managed ASGM holds for further supporting livelihoods, contributing to economic growth, and bringing in returns for investors. This approach immediately allows audiences to see a way forward, helping avoid reinforcing negative narratives or unintentionally creating more negative sentiment towards ASGM.

The strategy for content production is focused on building humanizing visual media in which miners tell their stories of how mining improves their lives and how they in turn improve the methods by which they mine. Each story focuses on one or more topical themes set out in the strategic communications plan.



Notable examples of country projects adopting the global strategic communication approach include the Philippines, where the communications team in the Philippines very clearly adopted the Global Project’s media outreach strategy, incorporating several effective media interventions in their workplan, including [“media kapihan” \(brown bag\) sessions](#) with journalists directly reflecting the programme’s narrative strategy. This project also collaborated closely with the Global Project in the 2024 [workshop for international journalists](#). [Colombia](#) and [Peru](#) both clearly adopted the same type of storytelling approach, integrating direct testimonials from miners in their communication products to serve as inspiration for other miners who could follow the same path, and to articulate the project’s direct results or winning strategies.

Communications Guidelines

Based on the branding and communications strategy, the Global Project created a series of guidelines to assist country projects to carry out consistent programme communications. These included:



STYLE GUIDELINES

[This guide](#) introduces the brand identity created for the planetGOLD programme. The use of these components helped maintain a consistent look and feel across all communication channels, and allowed synchronized coordination amongst the global teams. Elements of the brand are outlined, and examples are shown across a variety of materials. Links are listed for the logo libraries, color palettes, fonts, as well as presentation and collateral templates.



Programme style guide

MESSAGING GUIDELINES

Just as the branding and style guidance provides a common framework for graphic design, messaging guidelines were created to channel the content of communications in specific strategic directions. The focus was on strategy, not outputs. As a departure from the normal development communication modality of promoting the project’s work, the messaging guidelines ask the questions: “who do we want to speak to, and how will we persuade them”. While emphasizing that countries would adapt the global guidance as needed, using their own words and approach, the messaging guidelines set out a common language and points of persuasion for use when interacting with media, governments, and lenders. The goal was to humanize the miners and show how they can operate mercury free, minimize impacts, and pay their taxes and loan installments just like any legitimate business.

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

A communications toolkit was created to help country project staff readily access the branding guidance and to help communications leaders effectively design their strategies, customize resources, and implement plans in harmony with the global style and messaging guidelines. Among the accompanying media resources are an animated explainer video and slide presentation introducing the theory of change of the planetGOLD programme for use in inception and stakeholder introduction meetings.

Executing a Global Communications Strategy



STORIES AND ARTICLES

Each year, every country project was expected to publish at least one article to the planetGOLD website blog. These articles either shared news and updates about project activities, or they were published as “Voices” articles depicting reflections, observations, and analysis from members of the country project team. Several stories published on the website exemplify the programme’s approach of showcasing different miners, community members, or operation with stories of their lived experiences and the impacts of project initiatives in their lives. In some cases, guest authors from outside the planetGOLD programme were also invited to publish articles sharing new research or related initiatives for the ASGM sector. To date, approximately 370 articles have been published on the website.

As a complement to traditional blog style articles published on the website, the Global Project hosted and made available to country projects a platform for publishing media-rich photo stories, providing sophisticated but user-friendly tools to feature photo and video from the areas where projects work. These photo story publications are hosted at stories.planetgold.org.

INTERACTIVE 360 EXPERIENCES

People are more likely to understand responsible small-scale gold mining if they can see real examples of it. In-person visits to improve mine sites where responsible mining can be observed in real time are important, but these can also be logistically challenging, costly, and impractical in terms of reaching larger groups of people or the public at large. With the growing popularity of interactive digital tools, the Global Project utilized immersive digital technologies to help replicate the on-the-ground experience, using 360o still camera footage to create an interactive tour of various planetGOLD mine sites where mercury free technologies are showcased. Clicking on key equipment and features leads to explanations of processes and videos, and participants can pan around and explore the facilities.





The global communications team initially developed as a proof of concept an [interactive multimedia tour](#) of a mercury-free demonstration project the Guyana project installed. This was featured on the programme website and was also used in the Guyana project’s closing conference to introduce miners and other ASGM sector stakeholders to the technology they had installed at the remote Region 8 site. Later, the team produced a broader multimedia project called the “[360 Experience](#),” featuring 360-degree photos, video, and information depicting the global scope of countries working in the programme. This project was disseminated online and in events including the seventh GEF Assembly, the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the 2024 Global Forum on ASGM.

VIDEO PRODUCTION

The Global Project communications team focused on video content as a strategy to disseminate messages and content online to new and existing audiences, particularly on social media and YouTube where short-form video content has become dominant.

Dispatches From the Field was a regular video series from planetGOLD spotlighting unique stories coming out of countries in the planetGOLD programme as they work to demonstrate a pathway to cleaner and more efficient artisanal and small-scale gold mining practices that benefit everyone, from mine to market. Each episode dove into some of the obstacles and barriers that miners have faced, while featuring champions that are breaking through these challenges to advance responsible mining and make meaningful change on the ground. Ultimately, the series aimed to showcase and celebrate positive ripple effects the programme had on individuals and communities alike toward making mercury history in artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

DISPATCHES FROM THE FIELD

-  **17 episodes** to date
-  **242,500+ views** on YouTube
-  Also **distributed natively** on LinkedIn, Facebook and X
-  Series webpage on planetgold.org is **#5 most visited**

Along with the Dispatches from the Field episodes, the Global Project produced and disseminated standalone short-form videos featuring “Voices from the Field” testimonials from miners in project countries, videos on gender equity in ASGM for International Women’s Day, videos about more responsible ASGM for International Day for Biodiversity, and a series of [videos summarizing progress](#) in the programme.

BY THE NUMBERS: Video Distribution on YouTube

-  **905,650+ views** to date
-  **9,950+ subscribers**
-  **25,600+ hours** of watch time

EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

The Global Project published quarterly newsletters, with special editions for major announcements. These are key drivers of awareness of and engagement in events (like fora and webinars) and processes (like annual reporting and knowledge sharing), and for promoting achievements and innovations among the country projects. To date there have been 21 newsletters and announcements distributed to 1,661 subscribers.

MEDIA OUTREACH

Media coverage of ASGM tends to focus on the more dramatic and negative aspects such as illegality, environmental degradation and social harms. The Global Project aimed to expose, encourage, and support journalists in incorporating solutions and rural community development benefits in their coverage of ASGM issues to balance negative messages. The team pitched newsworthy stories and expert interviews, developed op-eds or guest blogs, and tried to get journalists to go “beyond the headlines” to explore the people that mine and how they fit into society. The Global Project created a [press kit](#) as a tool for reaching out to media, articulating the programme’s theory of change, answering frequently asked questions, and directing journalists to assets and resources they could incorporate in their reporting. The Global Project also provided online and in-person media training to the country project communications coordinators so that they could also manage their media relations in ways that can reframe the ASGM coverage.

Perhaps the most intensive media outreach event took place at a 2024 [“Beyond the Headlines” workshop](#) in the Philippines, in which a group of national and international journalists were invited to tour the mercury-free ore processing plant built by planetGOLD Philippines in Paracale. A total of 227 journalists from around the world applied to take part in exchange for publishing a solutions-based news article about the experience. Six participants were selected and were flown to Camarines Norte, Philippines, where a professional media trainer from the Solutions Journalism Network provided training, guidance at the mine site, and story workshopping afterward. At least 7 journalistic reports were published as a result of this activity, providing a more positive and nuanced perspective on ASGM. Another example of an international news story the Global Project contributed to includes a [2022 New York Times article](#) on responsibly mined ASGM gold in watches. Solutions journalism is a highly beneficial approach for ASGM communications projects since it advocates going beyond investigating problems and simplistic narratives to “complicate the narrative” about complex issues and asks journalists to not only explain problems but to cover the people and projects working to solve those problems.



Journalists workshop solution-oriented story ideas at “Beyond the Headlines” workshop

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

Global project hosted accounts on LinkedIn, Facebook, X and Bluesky where it shared updates from projects across the programme along with key knowledge products produced by planetGOLD and others working to advance mercury-free, responsible ASGM practices. Although each country project determined most effective social media dissemination strategy for them, they were supported with a wealth of material produced throughout the programme, and their social media posts were also shared to the Global accounts to increase their reach and to create a more interesting, useful, and comprehensive online picture of ASGM development worldwide.

The Global Project produces ‘ready-to-use content sets’ for distribution across partner networks, including branded social media graphic templates created on the online design platform ‘Canva’ for use across the programme. These make it much easier to produce standard content such as mercury and health messaging or promoting national mercury abatement achievements, by combining source information from the website resources and pre-set planetGOLD branding, color, font, and layout standards.

EVENT OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

The Global Project communications team provided support for the execution of outreach activities at events such as PDAC, SOCAP, Minamata COPs, Global Forums, and more, by developing and/or promoting relevant programme knowledge products and materials.

At the Minamata COP3 in November 2019, planetGOLD hosted an exhibit to introduce the newly launched programme. They also hosted a side event titled “planetGOLD—Solutions for the ASGM Sector,” which discussed some of the main issues associated with the ASGM sector, including formalization, finance, and alternative technologies to mercury. Through video, the event brought miners’ voices to the COP, to identify practical issues and barriers in reducing/eliminating mercury in ASGM. A panel of experts and the audience offered perspectives and possible available solutions.

For the 2024 GEF Assembly, the Global Project communications team created a pop-up exhibit booth promoting programme materials and the 360 Experience interactive mine tours to promote the programme’s knowledge products and messages among key gov officials and organizations in attendance. In October/November 2024 the Global Project hosted a new exhibit at the Minamata Convention on Mercury COP5 event, featuring the pop-up booth that the Global Project developed, including the 360 Experience, along with key programme reports and materials.



Attendees browsing the 360 Experience at the Minamata Convention on Mercury COP5 event | Photo: Minamata Convention on Mercury/Kiara Worth

Supporting Country Project Communications Teams



There are many ways in which the Global Project facilitated country projects' benefiting from cooperation with/learning from other country projects:

The **planetGOLD Communications Network** was established as a community of practice for communication specialists across all projects in the programme. Actively hosted and maintained by the Global Project, it provided a regular source of learning, experience sharing, and cooperation among projects in the programme. Through regular quarterly meetings where project communications officers shared with others about the strategies, activities and communication results in their projects, and through two in-person meetings (where country specialists often led sessions and group discussions) as well as online engagements via an online platform called Basecamp and a WhatsApp group, projects actively engaged in shared learning and cooperation. The Global Project also held workshops for country project teams on topics such as photography, videography, interview techniques and digital publishing on the web, among others, which helped country teams to create the best possible communications content and practices.



Benefits of a Programmatic Approach

OVERALL BENEFITS

The primary benefit of the programmatic approach used by planetGOLD was that individual countries did not work in isolation, but pursued shared goals using aligned strategies, enabling more rapid learning and impact. Country projects were able to share resources with and learn from each other in ways that further facilitated their progress beyond what might have been possible alone. This kind of concerted approach is especially appropriate for addressing a global issue such as mercury pollution.

The benefits of the programmatic approach were especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. All planetGOLD phase 1 countries were confronted with the pandemic just as they were starting up their projects, and regular project meetings became a place to ask each other how they solved common problems they were all facing. As project staff learned how useful it was to share setbacks as much as progress, this practice became generalized to all aspects of the project implementation.

Further, using aligned strategies and common methods for reporting results, allows progress to be more comparable across projects, which facilitates learning by practitioners and external stakeholders. Finally, being part of a global programme lends the projects, and ASGM as an issue, more weight and visibility than individual projects might have. This higher level of attention can help especially in terms of countering negative perceptions among financial institutions, media, governments, and communities. Associating with the planetGOLD programme lent legitimacy to the initiatives that the country projects promoted, because it was clear there was an international community backing up the project. This positioning potentially helped top government and financial entities see that ASGM can be viewed as a legitimate livelihood that deserves appropriate regulatory support and financing.



FINANCE

While individual country projects engaged national sources of commercial finance, formal finance is also part of a global system governed by common methods of evaluating risk and opportunity. The Global Project made the case for ASGM to the international finance community, helping to shift perceptions among key investors in the mining industry and other global finance leaders, and forming bridges to the investment industry that can be built upon further as more bankable, responsible investment opportunities emerge. Such outreach would have been difficult for the country projects to produce themselves. Further, the Global Project has produced a wealth of resources and tools for educating the financial sector and for guiding the production of technical reports, analyses and business plans on ASGM opportunities that speak the common language of global finance. The content of these materials was based on learnings from outreach to literally hundreds of actors in the international investment community.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

By collecting, synthesizing, translating, disseminating, and socializing key information about the ASGM sector, and by having platforms for regular knowledge exchange, the Global Project helped country projects tap into the past decades of global experience, creating exponential efficiency gains. The Global Project could also synthesize materials on issues of global importance such as the best practices for management of cyanide in ASGM, an activity which would be inefficient to do individually in each project. Having all planetGOLD related material on one website (rather than on individual project webpages) also creates efficiency and makes it easier for partners and allies find information about the programme. The Global Project's emphasis on capturing results of the country projects also increased the global visibility and thus potential impacts of country project results.



Global coordination also had practical benefits for smoother project implementation. For example, creating standard templates for reporting on technology transfer, finance and supply chain activities helped ensure that common sets of information were collected across all projects, holding projects to a common standard of documentation and facilitating cross programmatic analysis. Common methods for reporting on indicators made it easier for country projects to complete their regular reporting, and allowed for aggregation of results to better understand programme wide impacts and benefits. Financial management templates created for ASGM business managers can help them track and improve their businesses, and the templates for technical reports give them a firm grounding for opening conversations with the financial sector. Communication outreach templates, messaging guides and press kits have helped the countries get their messaging out in consistent and effective ways, while adapting to the local context. Standard trainings on financial literacy and improving access to supply chains provide projects with basic training materials from which they can build curricula tailored to local conditions. All templates, trainings and guides will remain on the planetGOLD website and continue to planetGOLD projects in the future.

COMMUNICATIONS

Through cooperation with the planetGOLD country projects, the Global Project fostered a unified visual identity, coherent strategic narrative, and synergetic cooperation among the country projects. It is notable that new projects entering the programme in phase two have remarked on the depth and usefulness of the resources available, particularly in terms of communications guidance and content. The communications aspect was unique in that it was resourced globally and nationally, and this enabled the programme to combine efficiencies of scale and local adaptation.

The programmatic approach also has practical benefits that support project implementation. Setting global standards for branding, messaging, and media engagement can save individual projects a great deal of time and expense. Creating a common communications strategy to which each country contributes ensures the overarching key messages, ideas, and narratives will last beyond any one project's lifetime. This contrasts with projects where messaging ends immediately after their closure. The communications strategy embraced by the programme changed the typical narrative around the way international aid projects are described, switching from a traditional donor-centered narrative to centering communication around the beneficiaries, the miners and their communities.

Through the programmatic approach, communication officers joining in the second phase were able to directly benefit from lessons learned in the first phase. This networking among communications officers across the programme was particularly effective in terms of sharing expertise, peer learning and sharing of materials and methods, which increased effectiveness and efficiency of communications. At the 2024 in-person

BENEFITS OF A PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH




planetGOLD Communication Network meeting, for instance, all remaining phase one country project communication officers gave presentations about their communication activities and accomplishments, generating robust discussion and fielding numerous questions posed by newer communication officers looking for advice. The Global Project also facilitated introductions among phase one and phase two communication officers, particularly those from the same region, enabling them to meet one-on-one and share tips and advice about effective communication strategies. As another example, communication officers from the Latin America region collaborated to create a [shared regional Facebook page](#) for disseminating updates and content, targeting miners in their shared region. In addition, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple communications officers asked planetGOLD Peru to share editable design files for community awareness raising and outreach materials they developed to promote OSH tips, such as stickers and pamphlets. The Guyana project reported translating and slightly modifying these materials for distribution to communities in their project areas.



Lessons Learned


This assessment of the planetGOLD programme's Global Project revealed a number of lessons learned and insights regarding for overall programme coordination, knowledge management and communications.


Overall Programme Coordination


-  **Create common programme assets to support implementation as early as possible in the programme life.** During the course of the Phase 1 programme execution, the planetGOLD Global Project developed programme branding standards, reporting tools, templates and guidance specific to planetGOLD activities, communications toolkits and guidelines, and other products aimed at supporting project implementation. These were created in consultation with project teams, taking into account practical considerations of project needs and capacities. However, countries in the first phase of the planetGOLD programme have expressed that greater clarity on Global Project requirements earlier in the programme would have saved time and allowed them to meet expectations more comprehensively from the beginning. For example, planetGOLD Guyana and Indonesia had already established their communications program and they were therefore initially out of sync with the rest of planetGOLD.
-  **Operate in multiple languages.** While many of the planetGOLD Phase 1 project team members, especially project managers, were multi-lingual, it became clear that providing interpretation during meetings, and translating key program documents and resources, was needed to promote more complete understanding of programme requirements among all staff and to support meaningful knowledge exchange. Allowing people to work in their native language also promoted a sense of respect and inclusion among programme participants.
-  **Foster regional connections.** planetGOLD countries, particularly in the Latin America region, self-organized exchanges and site visits between project teams, which substantially supported adoption/replication of approaches across borders. The commonalities among geological, technical, social and legal circumstances meant that approaches in one country translated well to other countries in the region.

 **Provide safe spaces for learning and discussing challenges.** The planetGOLD Global Project sought to foster an environment of trust in which project staff could share openly about their tough challenges as well as tested solutions, and to learn from each other's experiences. As an example, the planetGOLD communications network demonstrated the philosophy of sharing tools and experiences. Convening a communication officer community of practice via virtual meetings and in-person gatherings and using online tools to remain connected such as Basecamp and WhatsApp, enabled communication teams to build new relationships, implement regional or complementary communication strategies and activities, and, where appropriate, give other projects access to materials that could be replicated and repurposed in different country contexts.





Communications

 **Focus on positive portrayals of responsible miners in the media.** Information related to the potential for ASGM to take up cleaner, more responsible practices, allowed audiences such as government officials, financiers and other key decision makers to recognize how the sector can improve, given the right support.

 **Use video and other visual aids for powerful storytelling.** Video content has a unique ability to engage and persuade audiences in ways that other content may not be able to. Products like “Dispatches from the Field” helped convey the human side of ASGM and counter simplistic, one-sided narratives about miners. Other visually oriented products also helped convey the ASGM experience where in-person visits were logistically challenging, costly, and impractical in terms of reaching the public at large. The pop-up exhibit booth promoting the planetGOLD 360 Experience and the 360-degree mercury-free demonstration site tour created for Guyana are examples of such products.

 **Actively engage journalists for more nuanced coverage of ASGM.** The 2024 “Beyond the Headlines” journalist workshop which took place in the Philippines is an example of going beyond typical media engagement to provide a richer, complex picture of the sector, its challenges and its promise. By providing journalists with concrete examples of promising solutions in action, giving them access to ASGM miners and experts who could speak to the benefits of mercury-free mining, and providing opportunities for them to witness firsthand how ASGM can operate responsibly, the project promoted more nuanced perspectives that resulted in more balanced, solutions-oriented news coverage. At the country level, the most successful projects made proactive efforts to maintain contact and to build additional contacts in the media early, and to be a trusted source on the ASGM issue.

Knowledge Management

-  **Promote collection and sharing of information about the ASGM sector, not only about the programme.** The planetGOLD website aimed to create a complete and curated collection of information resources on ASGM, not only from planetGOLD but from the ASGM community globally. As a result, the resource library includes reference materials from a range of sources, the news page highlights important events of internal and external partners, new reports from partners are announced, and voices both inside and outside of the programme are routinely invited to submit blog posts. This open approach helped to maintain flow of information across the community of practice and encouraged other practitioners to consider planetGOLD as a helpful partner in their own work.
-  **Track and exchange knowledge on emerging issues.** The ASGM sector is constantly evolving, with growing recognition of the connection of ASGM to other issues such as biodiversity and climate change, and emerging technologies such as AI and data mining. By sharing knowledge around these emerging issues and contributing to and promoting tools like forest-smart mining standards, the project encouraged integration of planetGOLD project activities with broader efforts to address environmental and social dimensions of ASGM. Knowledge events like the Global Forum allowed the project to cover a wider range of issues (biodiversity, criminality and human rights issues in ASGM, women's livelihoods), underscoring the multidisciplinary nature of ASGM.
-  **Involve miners and their stories into all knowledge exchange events.** The Global Project made a point of including miners in knowledge exchanges helps to root the discussions in the practical needs of miners and the support they need to transition to more responsible practices. For the in-person Global Forum, for example, each day of the event started with a panel of miners, reflecting on the theme of the day (e.g., finance, formalization, etc.) to set the tone for the day's discussions. Further, every panel in the event included at least one miner, and some panels consistent wholly of miners.
-  **Plan for sustainability of the knowledge hub.** The planetGOLD website was developed and is maintained by the UN Environment Programme rather than by an external agency. While the exact modality for maintaining the planetGOLD website is still to be determined, maintaining an ongoing connection to the Minamata Convention is likely to help ensure that the website continues beyond the life of the programme.

▶▶ **Clearly elaborate and track cross-programmatic indicators.** The Global Project created standard methodologies for reporting on cross-programmatic indicators, which made it easier for country projects to complete their regular reporting and allowed for aggregation of results to better understand programme-wide impacts and benefits. This effort was supported through a series of trainings (which were recorded for future reference) and the development of guidance, with sample calculations, translated to three languages. Further, an online reporting system was developed to make reporting easier. Even so, the proper application of these methods in the circumstances in each planetGOLD country required ongoing thought and interpretation, and continual one-on-one support was needed, indicating that socializing these metrics is an ongoing effort.

▶▶ **Capture knowledge, lessons learned and experiences as well as indicators.** The planetGOLD Global Project stressed reporting the narrative around project implementation, capturing experiences, processes, progress and setbacks, enabling conditions, stakeholder relationships and detailed outcomes, so that the conditions affecting success and failure can be well-understood. To support documentation, the Global Project developed report templates to guide and standardize documentation, and commissioned expert assistance for many countries in creating their documentation across the project pillars. At the end of the project life, several country projects had to spend time retroactively assembling critical information about project activities, outcomes, challenges and solutions. More regular reporting on experiences and lessons learned, and not only indicators, could have helped avoid the end of project scramble.



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Recommendations

This assessment of the planetGOLD programme's Global Project suggests the following best practices as well as recommendations for improving future programmatic approaches to ASGM projects, for overall programme coordination, knowledge management and communications.



Overall Programme Coordination

▶ Create an internal reference page for programme participants, as a one-stop shop for key materials, forms, and other information programme participants might need during project implementation.

Having a private space allows for sharing of intermediate products and internal reporting, templates and guidance specific to planetGOLD activities, recordings of internal webinars and trainings, information on the planetGOLD Criteria, communications toolkits and guidelines, and other programme products aimed at supporting implementation, that are not of interest or appropriate to include among the public-facing material found on the main website.

▶ Create common templates, guidance and/or toolkits for common project management needs, such as generic grievance mechanism formats and guidance on Indigenous community engagement. Where possible, develop a library of management resources, such as example terms of reference for common expertise needed across the program, such as technical experts in mining engineering.

▶ Develop common resources in advance of country project implementation, as feasible. As feasible, future programmes should initiate the coordinating and standard setting ahead of country projects' inception, so that they can establish common branding, messaging, reporting, and indicators well ahead of time.

▶ Provide safe spaces for discussing challenges: To maximize learning, it is as important to critically examine failures as it is to understand the factors of success, but participants need to feel that they will not be criticized for openly discussing activities that did not have expected impact.



Provide sufficient resources for participation across project languages.

Simultaneous interpretation during meetings, translation of documents and training materials, multi-lingual captioning of video etc. should be standard practice to ensure that project staff can fully participate in programme-wide activities. Further the establishment of regular (e.g., bimonthly or quarterly) regional gathering spaces (in person and virtual), where people can speak their own language to others who may have similar concerns and issues, can greatly increase active participation and increase understanding. Ideally, among the Global Project team, there should be staff fluent in Spanish, English, and/or French as well as in the technical nuances of the programme pillars.

Provide guidance on the development of exit strategies for country projects that emphasize knowledge capture, sustainability of outcomes, mechanisms for ongoing collaboration among project stakeholders, and institutionalizing elements of programs (e.g., training) within agencies or entities that can carry them forward. The planetGOLD projects are ultimately meant to catalyze and leverage ongoing action among country-level and international partners, and projects should create roadmap early on, to emphasize the importance of structuring project activities throughout the life of the project (e.g., through clear partnerships with government, private sector and local NGO actors, embedding activities in relevant agencies' budgets) to ensure its legacy continues.

External Stakeholder Engagement

Provide avenues for access to international stakeholders: To complement in-country stakeholder engagement, global coordination should focus on fostering engagement and identifying potential collaboration with relevant international bodies to which country projects may have limited access (e.g., Intergovernmental Forum on Mining and Metals, London Bullion Market Association, Minamata Secretariat, OECD, World Bank, etc.). The Global Project should continue to create specific opportunities for engagement between country projects and these stakeholders, such as the Programme Advisory Group meetings and Global Forums, as well as facilitating direct contact and collaboration on areas of common work, where feasible.




Communications



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Uplift success stories and positive portrayals of responsible miners that reframe discussions of ASGM around solutions and livelihoods, incorporating key messages and information related to the potential for ASGM to take up cleaner, more responsible practices. Disseminate these stories and messages consistently via multiple communication channels, such as through creative social media campaigns, radio programs or ads, media op-eds, podcasts, awareness campaigns, brown bags with journalists, partner websites, and blog and photo story publications.
- 


Support media in incorporating a solutions-oriented lens when covering the ASGM sector. By providing journalists with concrete examples of promising solutions in action, access to experts and providing opportunities to visit sites, projects can promote a more nuanced and informed public discourse on the sector that impacts the perceptions of financiers, government officials and other decision makers. If possible, planetGOLD country projects should replicate the “Beyond the Headlines” workshop with regional/national journalists. Programmes may additionally consider implementing a hybrid model, combining virtual workshop sessions led by solutions journalism experts with subsequent field visits to ASGM sites that showcase mercury-free, responsible mining practices.
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Use video productions to drive the dissemination of storytelling content online and in events. Video content conveys the human side of ASGM and can effectively counter overly negative narratives about miners. Video is also increasingly how people discover and consume information. With attention spans continually decreasing, short-form videos, especially those under 2 minutes, are often most effective. Longer documentaries or video productions can be broken up into multiple short-form videos to inspire viewers to dig deeper. To reach new online audiences, publish video content on YouTube, which is now the world’s second-largest search engine, and if possible, budget funds to market and promote video content there and on social media platforms.
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Create specialized, visually oriented products and messages for activities and events that bring the ASGM experience to life. People are more likely to understand responsible small-scale gold mining if they are able to see real examples of it. With the growing popularity of interactive digital tools, programmes should make efforts to replicate the on-the-ground experience by utilizing immersive online technologies, virtual reality platforms, or visually oriented platforms such as rich photo stories similar to the pop-up exhibit booth promoting the planetGOLD 360 Experience and the 360-degree mercury-free demonstration site tour created for Guyana. To have the broadest audiences, communication products need to be available in different languages (French, Spanish, English at minimum).

-  **Develop programme branding and communication toolkits early and socialize at country project inception workshops.** To support a branded programme in acting as a cohesive entity with a shared identity, it is important to have all the building blocks together beforehand. At the outset of any new project, those responsible for executing and implementing the project should be supported in clearly understanding any branding guidelines established by the programme or the funder regarding the name of the project in external publications, proper use of logos, attributions required for funders and partner agencies, taglines, key messages, brand colors and fonts, etc. Projects coordinating brand assets should adapt guidelines and assets as the situation demands.
-  **Use collegial community-of-practice model to promote learning, experience sharing, sharing, and increased communications impact.** The planetGOLD communications network has been effective and engaging, showing in practice the value of sharing to maximize impact. Establishing a collegial working relationship with country project communication counterparts, rather than taking a top-down approach, co-creating messaging and focusing on common goals helps create and strengthen trust and collaboration, and a sense that the global entity is supportive and responsive to the needs of country teams.
-  **Encourage project teams to reach out early to media outlets and journalists.** The launch of programmes is a convenient time to begin establishing contact with key members of the media, and proactive efforts should be taken to maintain contact and to build additional contacts in the media early in a programme or project's life. Offer journalists opportunities to speak on background to help them understand the main issues of concern with ASGM as well as the project's objective. Over time, this will establish the project as a reliable, go-to source about ASGM issues and will provide opportunity to demonstrate the realities ASGM miners face as well as the processes and systems that need to change in order for them to transition to more responsible methods. Emphasize positive impressions of miners and provide consistent messaging from the start, especially with international media outlets.

Knowledge Hub

-  **Use the knowledge hub to promote collection and sharing of information about the ASGM sector, not only about the programme.** The planetGOLD website aims to be a complete and curated collection of information resources on ASGM, including planetGOLD and resources from the ASGM community globally. Having all planetGOLD programme-related material on one website creates efficiency, but those efficiencies are amplified by including information from other ASGM stakeholders and practitioners in the same place. As such, the programme should



continue and expand the practice of including reports, news, events and blogs from around the ASGM community of practice. Partnering with academics and other knowledge amplifiers to share information can also increase dissemination.



Continually update and curate resources to maintain relevance and include space for emerging topics (i.e. biodiversity and ASGM, etc.).

Continuing to share knowledge around these emerging issues and providing additional knowledge exchange opportunities (e.g., focused technical webinars) with biodiversity and climate change partners could also help keep programme participants up to date on these issues. Research on additional gender-related issues could also be expanded.



Expand the training library: Since most countries do similar trainings around core program pillars, creating and collecting standard trainings, e.g., on financial literacy and improving access to supply chains, can provide projects with basic training materials from which they can build curricula tailored to local conditions.



Consider the sustainability of the knowledge hub. The planetGOLD website was developed and is maintained by the UN Environment Programme rather than by an external agency, which will help to maintain the ongoing connection to the Minamata Convention and ensure that the website continues beyond the life of the programme. To facilitate this, estimates of current human and financial resources needed for website maintenance can be used as the basis for planning to secure these resources in the future. Also, as the programme expands and new countries are added, efforts may be needed to make the website more accessible to speakers of languages other than English, French and Spanish.

Reporting and Capturing Lessons Learned



Continue to streamline and automate the process of reporting and collating/analyzing cross programmatic indicators. A web portal that directly connects to a dynamic database could ingest and automatically update country and programme-wide indicator values as countries input their regular monitoring data.



Build capacity to track programmatic indicators. Despite efforts to streamline the collection of data and calculation of cross-programmatic indicators, the specific circumstances of each country require detailed understanding of the methods in order to understand how to apply them appropriately. It would be advisable to have a designated, qualified focal point in each country who can focus on developing their capacity for understanding the calculation methods and reporting modalities, and who can be the point person for project reporting to the Global Project.





Integrate planetGOLD activities and data collection with the NAP and its periodic review.

The planetGOLD programme is the primary mechanism available to assist parties to meet their obligations to reduce or eliminate ASGM mercury use, particularly through strategies identified in their National Action Plans (NAPs)⁴, including formalization, promoting of mercury-free technologies and provision of information, among others. Even after project closure, the activities undertaken by planetGOLD can be built upon and sustained by governments and other collaborating stakeholders as they continue to pursue NAP strategies over time. The Global Project can provide guidance to countries on how to better connect planetGOLD activities with the NAPs, for example through guidance on structured comparisons of a planetGOLD project's scope of work and results frameworks with a country's NAP's objectives and strategies, to identify areas to which the project can contribute. Further, the Global Project can suggest methodologies to track ongoing mercury abatement and other outcomes from planetGOLD interventions, during and after project closure, to demonstrate NAP progress. These suggested methodologies and resulting data can complement the NAP guidance and be used by countries when preparing their reviews of their implementation of Article 7 (RIAs).⁵



Focus on capturing knowledge, lessons learned and experiences as well as indicators.

Project reporting typically emphasizes comparing project outputs against targets. While this information is important for measuring impact and maintaining accountability, deep learning relies on understanding why targets were met, or not. Therefore, equal stress should be placed on reporting the narrative around project implementation. Sufficient time and budget should be allocated for this documentation, and the requirement to produce such documentation should be clearly indicated in projects' results frameworks, even though such investments may not appear to directly contribute to immediate project results. In fact, these investments ensure that the lessons learned, and knowledge gained, will allow the project to have influence beyond its limited geographic and temporal boundaries. To support documentation, global coordination can provide report templates to guide and standardize documentation at the country level as well as expert support in the writing and analysis. Further, the Global Project can continue to conduct periodic cross-programmatic assessments to capture lessons and best practices across the active planetGOLD programme. Further, these periodic assessments could also capture data from RIA processes for countries where planetGOLD projects have closed, in order to track ongoing impacts from and replication of planetGOLD interventions.

⁴ National Action Plans are required for Parties that declare "more than insignificant" ASGM in their territories.

⁵ Article 7 is the article of the Minamata Convention concerned with ASGM. Reviews are required for parties who have declared "more than insignificant" ASGM in their territories.

- ▶▶ **Capture results on an ongoing basis:** At the end of the project life, several country projects had to spend time retroactively assembling critical information about project activities, outcomes, challenges and solutions. Instead, the Global Project could assist projects to develop a regular schedule and format for reporting on lessons learned of implementation and results. The current reporting provides space for narrative inputs, but this could be further structured to encourage more specific documentation.
- ▶▶ **Further refine reporting /indicators tools for country projects** to capture other benefits, such as biodiversity and climate impacts of ASGM.

Knowledge Exchange

- ▶▶ **Emphasize ongoing peer to peer exchange,** as this is often the most effective and relevant type of learning. This could include pairing more experienced countries with similar challenges with those just starting out to help foster cross-learning and knowledge sharing, as well as providing regular opportunities for meetings organized by regions and language groups, who may have common challenges (and solutions). This is especially helpful for new country projects during their inception periods, where they can benefit substantially from the practical know-how of more experienced projects.
- ▶▶ **Take advantage of technology to augment and increase reach of knowledge exchange.** The success of the online Global Forum demonstrated the efficiency, inclusion, and effectiveness of online events as a means of knowledge exchange. The use of such technologies should be maximized to allow for greatest global participation.
- ▶▶ **Ensure that knowledge events like the Global Forum cover a wide range of events to increase contact among different experts and underscore the multidisciplinary nature of ASGM.** In addition to covering the four pillars, ensure ample time for discussion of biodiversity, criminality, human rights issues, women's livelihoods and other emerging issues in ASGM. Giving participants a chance to apply their knowledge to case studies and to discuss options for interventions helps cement learning during these events. Future global in-person events should include expanded opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and networking.
- ▶▶ **Expand topics of thematic technical webinars** to include emerging issues, working closely with selected experts to create highly visual presentations, making events more interactive and impactful.



▶▶ **Fully integrate miners and their stories into all knowledge exchange events.** Making the stories and perspectives of miners central to knowledge exchanges helps to root the discussions in the practical needs of miners and the support they need to transition to more responsible practices. Inclusion of miners respects their agency and their central role in the success or failure of any policy intervention.

▶▶ **Take advantage of previous country project experience to inform new countries.** Arrangements should be made for closing projects to present project results to all planetGOLD programme staff, respond to questions, and provide practical advice to newer projects in the programme, as part of each project's exit strategy. The Global Project could also consider providing resources for experts from completed planetGOLD projects to participate in key knowledge exchange events such as Global Forums, Annual Programme Meetings and selected regional exchange meetings.



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Conclusions

The planetGOLD Global Project's initiatives have advanced its objectives of improving access to financial resources, coordinating knowledge resources and sharing, channeling positive communications practices across the programme and beyond. The Global Project offered technical support and coordination that amplified the effectiveness of country projects and contributed to their efforts to reduce ASGM mercury use globally. The planetGOLD Phase 1 projects have reported finding the Global Project's communications resources, key knowledge products, and convening processes enormously helpful in ways that they had not experienced in prior standalone projects.



Through strategic outputs focused on sensitizing and engaging the financial community, the project played a pivotal role in introducing and advocating for responsible mining practices among the international investor community. The educational resources and financial tools developed have equipped ASGM operators with the skills and knowledge necessary to better attract and secure investment, moving forward a transition to mercury-free mining. Through its knowledge management activities, the project created a consolidated hub for evidence on ASGM interventions as well as platforms for sharing knowledge and fostered a learning environment of trust in which projects shared openly about their tough challenges and tested solutions. Beyond creating standards, webinars and guidance documents on key issues, the Global Project has initiated a community of sharing and mutual support grounded in an expanding body of knowledge. The project's communications efforts have promoted a new conversation around ASGM, encouraging media, governments and the public to recognize its value and development potential.

The knowledge and experiences amassed by the Global Project have created a strong foundation for future initiatives to build upon, ensuring continued progress towards environmental responsibility and economic empowerment in mining communities.

Looking Ahead

The second phase of the planetGOLD programme kicked off in 2023, adding 15 new countries to the program: Bolivia, Ghana, Honduras, Madagascar, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Suriname, Uganda, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Guinea, Mali, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone and Zambia. Since then four other countries (Costa Rica, Paraguay, Senegal and Zimbabwe) have joined the program. The second phase of the programme continues to promote existing core planetGOLD activities and strategies—working to close the financing gap, connecting mining communities with mercury-free technology and formal markets, and raising awareness— but these new projects will also incorporate additional interventions designed to mitigate land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change impacts. The second phase will focus on bringing new approaches to formalize the ASGM sector by piloting jurisdictional approaches that seek solutions for social, economic, and environmental objectives through participation of stakeholders, economic sectors and government, in specific areas defined by local and regional administrative boundaries.

The knowledge gained and documented in the first phase of the programme will be an invaluable resource for those countries just embarking on their work. As project teams make greater strides toward promoting more responsible artisanal and small-scale mining in their countries, the Global Project will continue to provide opportunities for them to share their experiences, results, and lessons learned both on what worked well and what challenges may lie ahead, and to communicate this experience widely. The programme will also place greater emphasis on regional exchange and learning through regular meetings and events. In keeping with the knowledge sharing culture of the programme, the Global Project will continue to collect, evaluate and disseminate this knowledge across the planetGOLD family, and with the broader range of international stakeholders engaged in advancing more responsible, mercury-free artisanal and small-scale gold mining around the globe.



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