

## Global Communication Strategy

### 1. Introduction

Established to assist countries in upholding their obligations under the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the GEF-supported planetGOLD programme led by UNEP works in partnership with governments, the private sector, and local communities to reduce and, where feasible, eliminate the use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM).

Strategic, inclusive communication plays a significant role in encouraging behavior change among miners, educating local communities about mercury, disseminating knowledge to advance ASGM formalization, and reinforcing public understanding of responsible, mercury-free ASGM. Despite the significant contributions artisanal and small-scale gold mining makes to the world's gold supply and to local economic development in some of the world's most deprived areas, environmental degradation, unsafe work practices, and other negative impacts associated with the sector still dominate how it is perceived.

This negative reputation blocks its potential: it weakens political support for suitable national policies and regulations, discourages investment, and limits miners' access to finance. It undermines the interest of fair and responsible buyers and even fosters hostility at times from other sectors and in public opinion. Against the backdrop of this negative perception of the ASGM sector, the planetGOLD programme recognizes the significant role that strategic, inclusive communications practices can play in helping build greater support for the ASGM sector—and in drawing attention to the benefits ASGM can bring to local communities when it receives adequate support and fair access to formal financing and markets.

Strengthening support for reforming the ASGM sector must involve changing perceptions around artisanal and small-scale miners, particularly at the national levels and among the finance sector. This planetGOLD global communication strategy is designed to help achieve this by re-framing the issue around the social, environmental and economic benefits of supporting miners, and by engaging the media to cover the sector through a more solution-oriented angle.

As planetGOLD's work unfolds, the programme will also capture lessons learned, best practices and will develop new knowledge around how solutions to support artisanal and small-scale miners can be brought to scale. This strategy aims to help achieve the goals of the programme's knowledge management and outreach component: helping project-participating countries and the wider ASGM community increasingly access and apply knowledge to deepen mercury reduction; and improving the understanding of governments, the private sector, mining communities and the general public of the ASGM sector.

Effective communications will be important for planetGOLD over the lifecycle of the programme as it seeks to rally a wide range of stakeholders and audiences around supporting artisanal and small-scale miners and as it works to inform the development of ASGM formalization efforts globally.

## Relationship to Other Child Project Strategies

This communications strategy details the communication approach and tactics to be taken over the coming years to help foster and grow support, while also shifting perceptions and engaging key groups critical to the programme's success. The strategy provides guidance to ensure consistent messaging and planetGOLD branding alignment across all project communications in the programme.

However, the particular activities detailed in this strategy focus on what will be implemented at the global level of the programme—recognizing that each child project will develop its own *complementary* national-level communications plans with distinct audiences, platforms and outreach tactics. Responsibility for managing the activities in this strategy document rests with the Global Project.

## 2. Strategic Approach

This strategy ultimately aims to help planetGOLD country level projects and the wider ASGM community increasingly access and apply knowledge to deepen mercury reduction; and improve the understanding of governments, the private sector, mining communities and the general public of the ASGM sector.

Achieving this will involve changing perceptions around artisanal and small-scale gold mining, particularly at the national and global level. This strategy will support this by re-framing the issue around the social, environmental and economic benefits of supporting artisanal and small-scale miners, and by systematically engaging the media to cover the issues through a solutions-orientated angle. At the same time, it will proactively pitch and place stories, opinion editorials and blogs in the media and on the platforms used by governments, the finance sector and the global gold industry. As the programme unfolds, brand partnerships and joint campaigns will also support this perception change.

Priority topics for communications and knowledge products will include innovations in formalization such as jurisdictional/landscape approaches to formalization, market access and technology transfer. Lessons learned and documentation of country efforts, and other ASGM related themes for consideration include biodiversity, land-use planning, occupational health and safety, mercury-free gold production and due diligence in gold supply chains.

This strategy will also proactively promote what the programme is learning and the knowledge that it produces to maximize uptake among key audiences, including the development community and private sector, particularly those working in ASGM. Finally, this strategy will also consolidate and strengthen stakeholder and donor support by regularly communicating updates, milestones and impacts. A storytelling approach with a strong focus on audio-visual content production will make the communications materials produced through this strategy appealing, impactful and enable the programme to reach a wider audience.

Underpinning the ultimate success of this strategy and the programme's ability to effectively communicate will be the strong foundations that were created during the first phase of the

planetGOLD programme (GEF ID: 9602). This communication strategy builds on these earlier efforts, which involved putting in place the needed management tools required to deliver communications results as well as establishing key tools such as a basic communications toolkit and developing a unified brand and programme narrative. These key tools can be found on the programme's internal [Home Base](#) webpage for programme participants.

The goals of this strategy are:

- **Influencing positive public perceptions** - Engage the media and brands to support a positive shift in perceptions in programme countries and among concerned citizens in western markets.
- **Changing finance sector perceptions** - Communicate effectively and increasingly widely across the finance sector at global and national levels to support a positive shift in perceptions around ASGM investment.
- **Supporting widespread knowledge uptake** - Generate widespread awareness and uptake of the solutions being explored by planetGOLD among stakeholders, development practitioners and those working on ASGM.

### 3. Messaging Strategy: Framing the programme narrative around the 'opportunity'

The planetGOLD programme aims to raise awareness on the **development potential** of the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector among its key audiences. For this reason, this strategy frames the external programme narrative around the 'opportunity' for development that exists, rather than starting the story with the problems that miners face.

The idea is to immediately engage audiences with what can be achieved through their support. This 'opportunity' framing does not seek to raise awareness among audiences on the use of mercury in ASGM, but rather to raise awareness on the 'opportunity' for reducing mercury use. This is an important distinction. This approach immediately allows audiences to see a way forward, avoiding unintentionally creating more negative sentiment towards ASGM as people become more aware of its use in artisanal and small-scale mining.

As planetGOLD has a range of diverse audiences, two linked programme narratives are used alongside key messages and calls to action for specific groups. There will be an overall programme narrative that frames support to artisanal and small-scale miners as a sustainable development opportunity—plus a specific programme narrative targeting the finance sector, articulating the business case.

## Overall Programme Narrative

**Refer to advancing responsible, mercury-free mining as a sustainable development solution**

### **Opportunity Statement:**

*A clean global supply of gold can only be achieved when artisanal and small-scale mining communities are part of the solution. Beyond the environmental benefits, transforming the artisanal gold mining sector has the potential to inject new capital into local economies and improve the lives of more than 100 million people who rely on this industry directly or indirectly for their livelihood.*

### **Problem and Solution:**

*Artisanal and small-scale miners are responsible for producing roughly 20 percent of the world's gold each year. Due to limited economic opportunities or a lack of awareness about the dangers, many of these artisanal and small-scale mining operations use toxic mercury to extract their gold. This 3,000-year-old method of gold extraction is leading to grievous environmental and health consequences. However, an opportunity exists to simultaneously upgrade the mining practices of these artisanal and small-scale miners—sustainably boosting their productivity while simultaneously improving the gold supply chain and eliminating the world's largest source of mercury pollution.*

### **How to Speak About What the Programme Does:**

*The planetGOLD programme works in partnership with governments, the private sector, and ASGM communities worldwide to significantly improve the production practices and work environment of artisanal and small-scale miners. By working to close the financing gap, supporting formalization, and connecting mining communities with mercury-free technology and formal markets, the programme is demonstrating a pathway to safe and cost-effective small-scale gold mining practices that benefit everyone, from mine to market.*

## Specific Finance Sector Narrative

**Refer to the opportunity to make an impact, mitigate risk and secure a long-term return on investment**

Because engaging the finance sector at both the international and national levels is critical to the programme's success, this strategy also frames a specific narrative that would allow the programme to speak with one voice specifically to this sector:

### **Opportunity Statement:**

*An opportunity exists for investors to capitalize on improved artisanal and small-scale gold mining practices which currently generate a combined \$38-46 billion<sup>1</sup> each year. In doing so, investors would align themselves with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, helping to alleviate poverty and environmental degradation in rural economies while improving human health and promoting decent jobs.*

### **Problem and Solution:**

*Artisanal and small-scale mining accounts for roughly 20 percent of global gold production*

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the 2024 average closing price of gold, assuming production of 500-600 tonnes per year

each year. Due to limited economic opportunities or a lack of awareness about the dangers, many of these artisanal and small-scale mining operations use toxic mercury to extract their gold. This 3,000-year-old method for extracting gold is leading to grievous environmental and health consequences.

With better access to modern machinery and training, the 10-20 million small-scale miners estimated to be operating around the globe could sustainably boost their productivity while simultaneously improving the gold supply chain and reducing the world's largest source of mercury pollution. Transforming the artisanal gold mining sector has the potential to inject new capital into local economies and improve the lives of more than 100 million people, who rely on this industry directly or indirectly for their livelihood. There is clearly a huge potential return on investment at this scale, not to mention the associated social and environmental benefits.

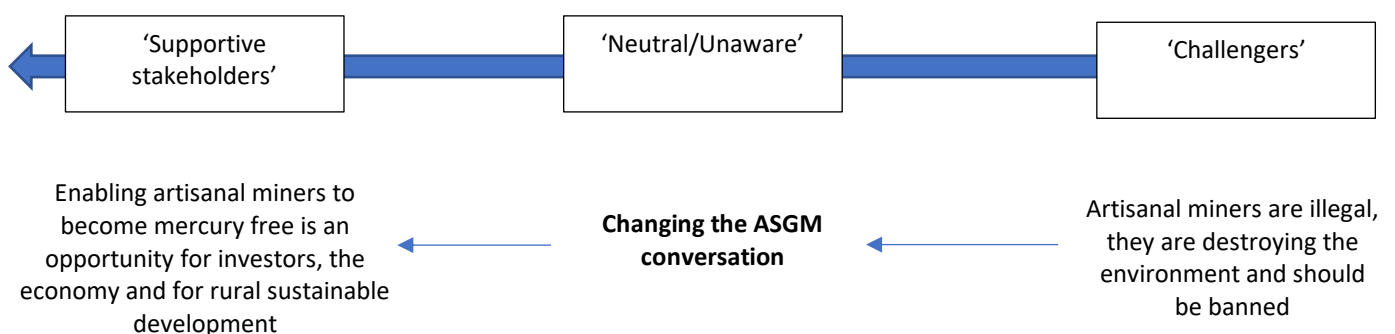
### **How to Speak About What the Programme Does:**

The planetGOLD programme works worldwide in partnership with governments, the private sector, and mining communities to reduce the barriers to transformative finance. We are calling on the investment community to join us in co-creating viable financing solutions that mitigate environmental and social risks in the gold supply chain. Together, we can secure a responsible and profitable future for artisanal and small-scale gold mining—one which benefits people and the planet.

## **4. Audiences and Messaging**

Awareness levels and sentiments concerning ASGM are varied and complex depending on particular audiences and their exposure to the issues at hand. In line with the programme's existing broader communications vision to 'change the conversation' around ASGM, targeted communication for each audience group and an analysis of their current perception is required. Achieving a good understanding of all actors across the supply chain is no easy feat. The range of players is very diverse: from mining communities, buyers, refiners, manufactures, retailers, consumers, finance institutions and regulators. Each will have specific needs, interests and preferences.

Various stakeholders, or potential audiences can be viewed as being on a continuum, with 'supportive stakeholders' to one side and 'challengers' on the other side. In the middle are stakeholders who are simply 'unaware' and/or neutral to the ASGM conversation and the opportunity narrative and with greater knowledge about the opportunity could be shifted to the 'supportive side.'



## **Supportive stakeholders**

Some stakeholders are very well versed in the development potential and the need to support ASGM miners with increased access to finance, technology, sustainable markets and a strong formalization process. These actors can be termed as ‘supportive stakeholders’ whose support needs to be maintained and leveraged.

## **Challengers**

Other stakeholders may not be as familiar with the overall opportunity that a formalized and mercury free ASGM sector could provide. At their most extreme, these stakeholders can be termed as ‘challengers’ to the proactive narrative that promotes the need to include and support ASGM miners in their transition toward responsible practices without the use of mercury. Stakeholders who challenge the ‘opportunity’ narrative around ASGM most likely view artisanal miners as illegal and undeserving of support. These stakeholders fail to recognize that with adequate access to finance, training and technology, ASGM miners can be part of the solution to eliminate mercury, as well as support livelihoods and rural economic development.

## **Neutral/Unaware Stakeholders**

Various stakeholders, or potential audiences can be viewed as being on a continuum, with ‘supportive stakeholders’ to one side and ‘challengers’ on the other side. In the middle are stakeholders who are simply ‘unaware’ and/or neutral to the ASGM conversation and the opportunity narrative and with greater knowledge about the opportunity could be shifted to the ‘supportive side’.

## **Overview of Key Audiences Targeted and Key Messages**

A one size fits all approach will not be possible for planetGOLD communications and messages will need to be tailored to suit different audiences. For example, the level of detail and data required to shift an investment audience will be far too complex and irrelevant for the concerned citizen. And, vice versa, an investment audience will lose interest quickly if presented with communications that do not make an interesting business case.

Likewise, this strategy recognizes that each child project will develop its own complementary national-level communications plans with distinct audiences and messages based on their local context, cultural differences, and messages that may already be used by parallel ASGM programs in the region. The table below considers national-level groups; however, this information will need to be refined and verified by each child project as these national project teams develop their own communication plans.

All three of the above stakeholder groups will be engaged by the programme’s communication strategy. In order to shift the conversation among the challengers and unaware stakeholder groups at both global and national levels, it is critical to provide tangible materials for the audiences to engage with. The supportive stakeholder segment will receive communications that provide them with knowledge that can assist with implementation of ASGM formalization related activities and empower them to change the conversation when communicating with neutral or challenger stakeholders. Tailored key

messaging for each audience group, delivered through designated channels and communication tools, will help to shift perceptions, change unproductive ASGM sentiments over time and empower stakeholders involved in the formalization process.

**Table 1: Key audiences targeted and key messages**

Targeted Audience Groups	Objective	Key Message	Calls to Action	Key Channels
<b>Supportive stakeholders at the global level: important to maintain engagement and support</b>				
<b>Programme stakeholders – members of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, Programme Advisory Group, and key individuals within the Implementing Agencies who facilitate knowledge sharing and communication outreach</b>	This group is 'supportive', and it will be important to communicate with them regularly in order to keep them engaged and supportive of planetGOLD's work.	Together we can help artisanal and small- scale miners move away from mercury, access markets and improve the environment and their lives by creating a strong formalization enabling environment through formalisation innovations such as JA/LA.	Sign-up to the planetGOLD newsletter, bookmark the website, follow us on social and share our pre-made social media content kits, news, and knowledge with your network.  Contact us to learn how you can help promote planetGOLD's mission at your organisation's events.	Annual report, website, social media content kits, newsletter, LinkedIn, YouTube, knowledge products, regular project meetings, calls and relevant external events.
<b>Global community working on ASGM / global development community</b>	This group is 'supportive', and it will be important to communicate with them regularly in order to keep them engaged and supportive of planetGOLD's work. Also, to make them aware of the resources and knowledge being produced so that their work is enhanced by this.	We are working to improve artisanal and small-scale miners' lives and the environment by integrating them into the formal economy through innovations in formalisation such as JA/LA. This means working with miners, government, the finance sector and the supply chain to pilot solutions, and collating progress and lessons learned on artisanal gold mining to scale those solutions that work.	Join us. Visit our website. Look through our online knowledge repository. Read our stories. Watch our videos. Follow us on LinkedIn and subscribe to our email list for regular updates and links to our latest articles, research and reports. Contact us to learn how we may partner/cooperate, and what planetGOLD can bring to your organization's priorities. If you would like to be profiled or contribute your research to our online knowledge hub contact us.	Annual report, LinkedIn, conferences and events, blogs, knowledge products, website, email newsletter and relevant external events.

**Neutral or challengers at the global level: These groups need to shift their perception to see the opportunity and support action for artisanal and small-scale miners**

<p><b>Social impact investors</b></p>	<p>This group is currently largely 'neutral' and potentially 'challengers' as they see risks in investing in the ASGM sector. The aim would be to raise their awareness about the benefits and opportunity of supporting the ASGM sector.</p>	<p>Artisanal gold mining is a core economic activity for rural mining communities around the world, supporting the livelihoods of an estimated 100 million people either directly or indirectly. ASGM thus has the potential to become a legitimate driver of sustainable development. Investment in the right machinery and training can eradicate the use of mercury in an entire mining community while boosting productivity and providing a model for investment at scale. planetGOLD is looking for innovative investors to co-create ground-breaking solutions in the artisanal gold mining sector. In doing so investors would align themselves with the UN's sustainable development goals, helping to alleviate poverty and environmental degradation in rural economies.</p>	<p>Find out more about how you can get involved and stay in touch on LinkedIn. Meet some of the mining communities that you could partner with on our interactive website and in our video stories.</p>	<p>Knowledge products aimed at finance sector, finance sector communications kit, LinkedIn, website, financial media (i.e. Bloomberg and FT), social impact investment events and conferences, video and web profiles on miners ready for investment, op-ed by peers, and presentations at relevant external events.</p>
<p><b>Mining sector investors and banks</b></p>	<p>This group is currently largely 'neutral' and 'challengers' as they see risks in investing in the ASGM sector. The aim would be to raise their awareness about the benefits and opportunity of supporting the ASGM sector.</p>	<p>An opportunity exists for investors to capitalize on improved artisanal and small-scale mining practices. In doing so investors would align themselves with the UN's sustainable development goals, helping to alleviate poverty and environmental degradation in rural economies.</p> <p>Investing in artisanal and small-scale miners to improve their practices and eliminate the use of toxic mercury is the right thing to do. Long-term this will help to 'clean up' the gold mining sector and improve overall perceptions of the mining industry.</p>	<p>Find out more about how you can get involved and stay in touch on LinkedIn. Meet some of the mining communities that you could partner with on our interactive website and in our video stories.</p> <p>Read case studies we've collected demonstrating the results of previous finance and investment partnerships with mining communities.</p>	<p>LinkedIn, mining and industry publications, in-person industry events &amp; conferences, investor knowledge products, finance sector communications kit, op-ed by peers, and presentations at relevant external events.</p>

<p><b>Global brands that buy gold</b></p>	<p>This group is currently largely 'neutral' and potentially 'challengers' as they see risks in investing in the ASGM sector. The aim would be to raise their awareness about the benefits and opportunity of supporting the ASGM sector.</p>	<p>Brands have an opportunity to ethically differentiate themselves as buyers and suppliers of socially conscious products.</p> <p>As global environmental awareness and concern grows among consumers, by supporting planetGOLD, the mining communities we work with (and other ASGM communities), brands can demonstrate to customers their commitment to environmentally and socially responsible sourcing. They'll also align themselves with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, positioning themselves as a force for change while being part of creating a cleaner, more responsible global supply chain for gold.</p>	<p>Find out more about how you can get involved and stay in touch on LinkedIn. Meet some of the mining communities that you could partner with on our interactive website and in our video stories.</p>	<p>Jewellery fairs and industry events, email newsletter, trade magazines, direct engagement with global sustainability directors from key brands, LinkedIn, op-eds by peers, and presentations at relevant external events.</p>
<p><b>Global media (for example: CNN, BBC, Aljazeera, El Pais, Time, the Economist, NYT, etc)</b></p>	<p>This group is currently largely 'challengers'. They will be sceptical of 'success stories' and news of impact. It would be important to acknowledge the challenges and help them to report on the potential solutions and how the sector is making the transition with planetGOLD's help.</p>	<p>While global demand for gold grows, roughly 100 million people worldwide depend on artisanal and small-scale gold mining as their only source of income or livelihood. Promising solutions exist to eliminate the use of mercury and improve social and environmental outcomes in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, which produces about 20% of the world's gold, A lack of finances, legal mechanisms and training often keep these solutions just beyond the reach of these miners, but the planetGOLD programme is working to change that.</p> <p>Miners need to be supported in the transition to a more responsible ASGM supply chain. Responsibly managed ASGM will result in the protection of ecosystem/biodiversity hotspots while at the same time providing opportunity for livelihood development.</p>	<p>Sign-up to our media list to learn more and receive exclusive, embargoed news and developments.</p> <p>Connect directly with our experts working on solutions in the ASGM sector, as well as [potentially] with the mining communities themselves, to learn more.</p> <p>Meet some of the mining communities that we're working with who are making the transition.</p>	<p>Story pitches, solutions journalism workshop and network, op-eds, expert interviews, international events and conferences, major announcements and milestones, partner social channels, planetGOLD website, video stories, campaigns with partners.</p>

		<p>As global environmental awareness and concern grows, this is an opportunity for everyone from consumers to jewellers to financiers to support a more sustainable fair- trade gold market—one that directly benefits both the global environment and the communities in developing countries that rely on gold mining for their livelihood. The planetGOLD programme is working with governments, the private sector, and artisanal and small-scale miners themselves to pilot solutions that will remove or prevent 517 tonnes of mercury from entering the environment.</p>		
<p><b>Concerned citizens</b></p>	<p>Depending on their level of exposure to the benefits of supporting artisanal and small-scale miners this group is likely to space the spectrum from supportive to challengers. Those that are neutral could swing either way.</p>	<p>Millions of people worldwide depend on the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector as their only source of income. An opportunity exists to create a more sustainable fair-trade gold market—one that directly benefits both the global environment and the communities in developing countries that rely on gold mining for their livelihood. In order to eliminate the use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining and solve other environmental and social challenges, miners need to be supported in the transition, with better access to financing, training, and international markets.</p>	<p>Learn more about our work and look out for brands that are offering gold mined without mercury.</p> <p>Meet some of the mining communities that we're working with who are making the transition. Follow us and the #planetGOLD / #MakeMercuryHistory conversation on social media. Visit our website. Read our stories. Watch our videos. Sign up for email updates.</p>	<p>Media, website, video stories, social media (ours and partner agencies'), PR campaign with partner.</p>

**NATIONAL LEVEL GROUPS: As each country has a specific context, the below messages are designed as a guide and need to be adapted for specific national realities.**

**This strategy recommends that each country team maps their key audiences and undertakes some research to understand their perceptions and to prioritize them in-line with the communications strategies and campaigns that they will be developing.**

<p><b>National government institutions</b></p>	<p>This group will span the challenger-supporter stakeholder spectrum depending on the institution, its relationship with the ASGM sector and the existing perception of ASGM in the country. Where challengers are encountered, messaging should focus on the wide-reaching opportunity presented by the adoption of JA/LA innovations to formalisation as they target win-win solutions for multiple stakeholders.</p>	<p>planetGOLD is working with local stakeholders to implement innovations in formalisation, such as JA/LA, that will create long-term win-win scenarios for rural development, the environment and mining communities.</p>	<p>Learn more about how you can get involved by speaking to the country project coordinator.</p>	<p>Invitations to events, working groups and committees.</p>
<p><b>The finance sector (in particular the banking sector)</b></p>	<p>This group is currently 'challengers' as they see risks in investing in the ASGM sector. The aim would be to raise their awareness about the benefits and opportunity of supporting the ASGM sector.</p> <p>Messaging to this group will also include how the project is working with government to create a formalization enabling environment.</p>	<p>planetGOLD is working to develop a series of models to improve formalisation and access to finance for artisanal miners. We are looking for partners in the banking sector who are interested in engaging a new market and making a positive impact.</p> <p>The landscape and attitudes are changing towards ASGM and participating in this project is an opportunity to be an early mover in the project.</p>	<p>Learn more about how you can get involved. Speak directly with our finance coordinator.</p>	<p>National investor forums, national business media, investor targeted collateral such as socially responsible investment guides and ESG toolkits, op-eds by peers.</p>
<p><b>Formal mining sector</b></p>	<p>This group is currently 'challengers' as they see risks in investing in the</p>	<p>Supporting artisanal and small-scale miners to improve their practices and reduce the toxic use of mercury is the right thing to</p>	<p>Learn more about how you can get involved.</p>	<p>Local industry publications, industry events, engaging with Chambers of Mines, direct engagement</p>

	ASGM sector. The aim would be to raise their awareness about the benefits and opportunity of supporting the ASGM sector.	do. Long-term this will help to 'clean up' the gold mining sector and improve overall perceptions of the mining industry.	Speak directly with our finance coordinator.	with company CSR managers, LinkedIn, op-eds by peers.
<b>Miners and their communities</b>	This group likely spans the continuum, with some keen to work with planetGOLD and others neutral or considering doing things differently a risk, so may potentially challenge the idea.	The planetGOLD programme is working with miners, and local communities to introduce new technology and financing opportunities which will help you upgrade your current mining practices and improve your productivity. Exposure to mercury leads to serious health implications for miners and surrounding communities who depend on freshwater and clean soil to thrive. By investing in safer and more efficient mining practices you will gain access to new mercury-free markets with increased profits.	Learn more about how you can benefit.	Radio programs, community forums, events and meetings, television, stories of other miners.
<b>Supply chain participants</b>	This group includes various actors (gold traders, mercury traders, processors etc.) that will each have differing positions depending on their context. Communicating the benefits of responsible mining to these stakeholders is important for achieving the systemic change the project intends to achieve.	The planetGOLD programme is working with miners, and local communities to introduce new technology and financing opportunities which will help make gold mining safer and more profitable.	Learn more about how you and the miners you work with can benefit.	Radio programs, community forums, events and meetings, television, stories of other miners.

<p><b>Concerned citizens, publics at large</b></p>	<p>This group varies according to the national context.</p>	<p>Every miner has a story. The planetGOLD programme is working closely with mining communities to improve their access to finance, technology and international markets, incorporating them into the formal economy which will eliminate mercury from the supply chain, give them a better price, and alleviate poverty. Miners need to be supported in this process. Your support for these communities and more responsible gold will help to transform the lives of thousands of people in this country.</p>	<p>Call on your local government and share these stories with them and on social media.</p> <p>Look out for mercury- free gold products from your country.</p>	<p>National media, national level campaigns, website, video stories, partnerships with brands.</p>
<p><b>National media</b></p>	<p>This group is currently largely 'challengers'. Professional journalists working for independent media will be sceptical of 'success stories' and news of impact. It would be important to acknowledge the challenges and help them to report on the potential solutions and how the sector is making the transition with planetGOLD's help.</p>	<p>The artisanal and small-scale gold mining industry is a critical livelihood for some of the most vulnerable people in this country who have few or no alternatives. While the sector is associated with significant problems, by highlighting promising solutions to the environmental and social challenges in the ASGM sector you can encourage fellow citizens, investors and the government to rally around artisanal and small-scale gold miners, helping to inspire a transition toward environmentally and socially responsible gold mining practices that are good for people and the planet.</p>	<p>Sign-up to our global media list to learn more and receive exclusive news and updates for members of the media.</p> <p>Connect directly with our experts working on solutions in the ASGM sector locally.</p> <p>Meet some of the mining communities that we're working with who are making the transition.</p>	<p>Story pitches, expert interviews, local events and conferences, national social media, media email list, op-eds, solutions journalism workshop in country or region, in-field reporting opportunities/ media training, press conferences, media networking events.</p>

## 5. Media Outreach Strategy

The media will be an important channel for reaching and influencing almost all of the audiences identified by this strategy. The media will be proactively engaged at both national and international levels, with a focus on the types of media that influence the key audiences, in particular the finance sector. The media will also be engaged in a number of ways, namely: 1) newsworthy stories will be identified and pitched to targeted media; 2) expert interviews will be offered, or opinion editorials or blogs written by representatives of the finance sector or another partner will be placed; and 3) journalists will be invited to develop a deeper understanding of the ASGM sector and encouraged to look at the solutions through a special workshop hosted by planetGOLD. While an initial media mapping was done, more work will be needed, particularly at national levels, to identify outlets, publications, broadcasts, and reporters to engage in order to change the conversation at the national level and among the finance sector and global gold industry.

### **Expert interviews, opinion editorials and blogs**

A key strength of the programme is the high level of expertise in ASGM, coupled with the unique knowledge materials that it produces. At the same time, the programme continually builds partnerships with people and organizations in the finance sector and global gold industry. This provides an opportunity for the programme to regularly develop and pitch insightful opinion editorials, expert interviews, or blogs to the growing number of content hungry media outlets (particularly those online and podcasts) that service the targeted audiences that the programme seeks to reach. Ideally, the programme would develop 3-4 of these per year. Key events that planetGOLD aims to participate in could provide newsworthy hooks to hang the programme's pitches from.

### **Promoting solution journalism approach in engagements with media**

The national and international media play a powerful role in highlighting problems caused by the use of mercury in artisanal gold mining. Despite extensive efforts in past decades to eradicate the use of mercury, artisanal gold mining continues to be the largest source of anthropogenic mercury emissions. Thanks to awareness generated by the media and civil society organisations, the widespread use of mercury in the ASGM sector and its adverse impacts to human and environmental health, as well as the human rights issues associated with ASGM, are well known. Yet, while the urgency to 'make mercury history' is becoming increasingly clear, the why and the how of doing so is not equally as well known.

In order to change the ASGM conversation, journalists must be empowered and equipped to engage on a deeper level. The underlying economic realities linked to the use of mercury need to be acknowledged and further unpacked. Meanwhile, solutions and opportunities that help artisanal miners reduce the use of mercury in gold mining operations should be examined, critiqued and promoted.

### **Workshop involving top-tier journalists**

In collaboration with an independent media training consultant, planetGOLD will aim to facilitate shared learning experiences between a group of six to ten selected national and international journalists who attend a 'Make Mercury History' solutions journalism workshop. Solutions journalism shifts the focus from the problems to reporting on responses to these problems. It is about exploring solutions and looking for evidence of why responses are working, and also not working.

Selected journalists, from top tier publications, will have the opportunity to debate ethics and test preconceived assumptions related to artisanal gold mining and the use of mercury. Journalists will be supported to build specific expertise, increase familiarity and a more nuanced understanding of key sustainability and development issues related to ASGM. Journalists' journey will continue into the field where the journalists will have the opportunity to engage with miners and local communities who are making the shift away from mercury.

Immersed in a mining community, the selected journalists will have the opportunity to interact with local stakeholders, participate in technical sustainability workshops and dialogue, meet local government and Indigenous leaders, and share skills as well as expertise with peers. To successfully complete the training, each journalist must develop and publish at least one story. These training workshops can either engage international journalists sponsored from disparate regions, bringing them to attend the workshop in-person in a planetGOLD country, or a workshop could be carried out with journalists from within a specific region, carried out remotely, or organized in a hybrid format. For an overview of a workshop the planetGOLD global project organized in 2024 in the Philippines for international journalists see this post-workshop ["Going Beyond the Headlines" toolkit](#).

## 6. Online Strategy

A dynamic and engaging online presence will be central to the success of planetGOLD's communications work over the next five years. At the heart of the online strategy lies a dynamic website that features content which speaks to the programme's wide range of audiences. It also includes a social media strategy. This is designed to focus limited human and financial resources on developing one engaging planetGOLD platform, while systematically disseminating 'ready-to-use content sets' across the varied and well-established platforms managed by partners and, developing and disseminating thematic stories bi-annually using an Exposure account. Finally, the online strategy also includes an email outreach element, mainly targeted at supporting internal communication, but also keeping programme stakeholders and partners engaged and awareness of the latest resources available, activities and other updates from across the programme.

### Website

The planetGOLD website [www.planetgold.org](http://www.planetgold.org) is the singular, central hub for information related to the programme. It contains information and knowledge products on the programme's key components including technical solutions, formalization, awareness raising, access to finance, and access to formal markets. Detailed content for the finance sector includes information about the business case related to ASGM.

The website is also the home of all published content and products from planetGOLD country projects. Each child project will have a country webpage to share information about the project as well as any news updates, announcements, resources and publications, [awareness raising](#) materials, events, and more. Country pages are available via an interactive map on the website homepage and via the Countries webpage.

Each child project must designate a website focal point person to be responsible for uploading, editing, and managing online content on planetgold.org. This individual should

be indicated to the Global Communications Manager, who will share web editing tutorial resources and troubleshooting support as needed. It is important to emphasize once more that the programme website [www.planetgold.org](http://www.planetgold.org) is the primary publication platform for all project materials and news; project funds are not permitted to be used on creation of another project website. Any requests for additional features or publication options on the programme website are welcome and may be shared with the Global Communications Manager.

### **Audio-Visual Content Production and Distribution**

Maintaining a regular and consistent stream of content to engage key audiences and take them on the journey as countries pilot solutions in the ASGM sector is critical to the strength of this strategy. As the programme unfolds so too will the story. This story begins with introducing the ‘opportunity’ of mercury-free ASGM, the journey continues to showcase efforts being made on the ground from the perspective of the miners, investors and the environment. As consumers and brands become more aware of the opportunity to support responsible ASGM, content will focus on the need to support miners in the transition toward mercury free mining.

Thematic content gathered from every country project across the programme will be used to produce highly engaging video and interactive content distributed online and via events. This content from child projects will highlight opportunities in each country for advancing more responsible, mercury-free mining, featuring stories about work the project is conducting and, importantly, featuring profiles that enable audiences to meet miners and follow their story through video chapters. A primary vehicle for distributing these stories and features is planetGOLD’s ongoing [Dispatches from the Field](#) episodic video series. This series has been effective in engaging a broad audience, driving traffic to the programme website, and increasing interest in and visibility for the programme. Audio visual content contributed by all country projects is also utilized for high-level events, international days of observation, and other uses on an ongoing basis.

### **Social Media**

In recent years, conventional thinking around social media engagement has turned away from ‘be on as many platforms as you can’ to ‘be where you need to be.’ This is because it is time consuming to develop and maintain social media platforms that are engaging. This strategy recognizes that each child project will develop its own social media approach as part of its national-level communications plan, considering what is most effective in reaching the project’s key audience groups. In some cases, this may involve creating new social media pages or accounts for the planetGOLD country project. In many cases, the child project may determine it is effective to publish posts about planetGOLD on accounts already established by the project’s executing agencies and partners, reaching their well-established and varied social media channels to reach a wider audience.

Regardless of the approach taken by the child project, it is imperative to review the social media guidance laid out in the [planetGOLD Communications Toolkit](#) regarding branding of newly created social media pages or guidelines on posting to executing agency accounts.

At the global level, the programme hosts accounts on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly Twitter), and [Bluesky](#). The programme also has an active, dedicated [YouTube channel](#), which has become one of the world’s largest social media platforms. Child projects are highly encouraged to tag the global planetGOLD accounts whenever sharing updates, and

to share post content such as sample text, images and links with the Global Communications Manager on a regular basis for native sharing from the global planetGOLD accounts.

In addition, the programme hosts a paid *Canva* account available to project communication specialists to create graphic content for social sharing. The account is pre-loaded with planetGOLD brand colors, fonts and logos as well as templates that country office staff can use by logging into the account and dropping in their own text and photos. They can then share these on their project social media accounts and/or on executing agencies' social accounts.

### **Tapping into Partners' Well-established Social Media Channels**

In addition to social media channels managed directly by the planetGOLD global project, this strategy also advises distributing ready-to-use content items to communications offices of key partner organizations including the GEF, UNEP, the Minamata Convention on Mercury Secretariat, and other Implementing Agencies as relevant. The planetGOLD programme has the opportunity to reach a wide audience by maximizing its visibility on the already established and far-reaching social media platforms of these partner organizations. At key moments throughout the year, 'ready-to-use content sets' will be prepared and offered to partners on an internal sharing platform such as Trello. Partners will be encouraged to post the content.

### **Email**

Programme stakeholders and the growing number of partners are kept up-to-date and engaged on planetGOLD activities and impact through regular email outreach. This will include a regular quarterly email newsletter e-update featuring major announcements and updates from the programme, at least one highlight from each country project (drawing on what the project has published in the quarter on the website, YouTube or social media), new or notable resources available in the online knowledge repository, and the latest events or other updates. Email blasts will also be used for major announcements such as the launch of a major knowledge product or new partnership.

A MailChimp account is used to manage email outreach to a growing database of contacts at the global programme level. Stakeholders and partners are encouraged to sign-up to receive updates via the website, at events and through social media. National child project teams are encouraged to contribute to and share the email updates through their networks also, and to produce their own email outreach if determined effective in reaching their key audiences.

## 7. Events Strategy

International events can provide a strategic platform for planetGOLD to generate new partnerships and exposure to further the programme's mission. Event communication and collateral provide a critical function in ensuring key messages are conveyed consistently. International events often provide an opportunity to stage a newsworthy announcement or generate editorial content which can be amplified through planetGOLD's digital channels and partner network. These are also opportunities for outreach and education, and to show thought leadership from planetGOLD programme staff, including through the programme's flagship Global Forum on ASGM events organized bi-annually.

Beyond this, the communications team will additionally support up to three strategic events each year with the development of editorial content and support for publicity opportunities. It is important that the programme attends a range of events where key investors, mining and industry stakeholders are present.

### National events

National projects are encouraged to participate in national and regional events related to the strategic themes of global policy and sustainability; investment; and industry. Projects are also encouraged to consider including multiple audience groups in outreach and event activities, such as members of both the finance sector and mining communities, to help facilitate a shared understanding of each group's needs and interests. National communication officers will be requested to prepare relevant communication collateral and editorial content for key national events which can be adapted for global audiences.

## 8. Management Arrangements

As the lead executing agency of the planetGOLD global project, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is responsible for implementing this communications strategy, along with the broader knowledge management and communications team for the Global Project and with production support from contracted communications partners. Under the overall supervision of the NRDC lead on planetGOLD, day-to-day responsibility for managing this strategy rests with the planetGOLD Global Project Communications Manager. Other roles and responsibilities are detailed in the table below.

Table 2: Overview of Management Arrangements

Organization/ individuals	Responsibility
GEF	As a member of the Programme Steering Committee, provide overall strategic guidance to the programme
UNEP	Provide overall strategic guidance, high-level approval, and timely feedback as needed. Maintain the planetGOLD website, mailing list and social media channels
NRDC	Manage communication's contractor Provide support to promote content and other activities under the strategy, especially in terms of media outreach

CI	<p>Lead the creation of materials on jurisdictional and landscape approaches on formalisation.</p> <p>Facilitate endorsements/spokesperson engagement in support of the project</p> <p>Provide support to promote content and other activities under the strategy, especially in terms of media outreach</p>
UNIDO	<p>Organize the bi-annual Global Forums</p> <p>Organize workshops</p> <p>Organize Annual Programme Meeting</p> <p>Provide support to promote content and other activities under the strategy, especially in terms of media outreach</p>
Global communications manager	<p>Oversees global communications</p> <p>Provides general comms strategic guidance through comms framework to country projects</p> <p>Assists country project comms managers to disseminate their products and results through global channels</p>
Country communications officers	<p>Develop and manage country level communications strategies and campaigns</p> <p>Adapt global messaging and content for national use and promote widely</p> <p>Input to the bi-yearly themes to help develop content and generate story leads</p> <p>Coordinate with Global Project Communications team on development of innovative communications products (video projects, etc)</p> <p>Share photos, videos and other communications products on an ongoing basis and in a timely manner with the Global Project Communications Manager for global promotion and dissemination</p> <p>Contribute to the planetGOLD website on an ongoing basis with new resources and other content, including at minimum one blog post per year</p> <p>Publish or at minimum contribute to at least one Exposure photo essay per year</p> <p>Participate in communications officers' network, share ideas, experiences and lessons learned across all available channels</p>
Programme stakeholders: Programme Advisory Group (PAG) members, UNEP Global Mercury Partnership members	<p>Promote 'ready-made' social media content developed and provided by planetGOLD across their networks.</p>

## 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The project will monitor communication as part of its monitoring and evaluation activities using the indicators in the table below.

Table 3: Monitoring Communications

Proposed parameter	Reporting responsibility
Number of stories and other communications products with original editorial content published in mainstream media, on the planetGOLD platform and shared on social media accounts associated with the project, that highlight mercury free and governance success in ASGM, supported by the global component	Global Communications Manager
Number of quarterly planetGOLD communications network meetings held to share relevant approaches and information with other country projects and inform global project about project communications activities, strategies, and story leads	Global Communications Manager
Number of global media and communication materials produced	Global Communications Manager
Global media and communication strategy documents expanded and disseminated	Global Communications Manager
Number of global media and communication materials produced that follow planetGOLD branding, style guide and messaging guide	Global Communications Manager
Number of ASGM success stories disseminated	Global Communications Manager
Number of programme newsletters and email announcements sent to the planetGOLD mailing list	Global Communications Manager
Percentage of planetGOLD user survey respondents who report increased understanding of the ASGM sector (Target: > 95%)	Global Communications Manager
Average number of unique monthly users of the online planetGOLD website	planetGOLD website lead
Number of blogs, news articles, events, photo essays, videos, resources published on planetgold.org or on other planetGOLD digital communication platforms	planetGOLD website lead
Percent of country projects that share assets with global programme on at least a monthly basis as relevant (photo files, video files, graphics, relevant documents)	planetGOLD website lead
The planetGOLD online platform is utilized, maintained, updated with all available information for all programme countries and other stakeholders (including news, events, blog posts, resources, curated thematic pages) fully functional and adapted to user demands and specifications	planetGOLD website lead

## 10. planetGOLD Digital and Media presence

Table 4: Overview of Digital and Media Presence Strategy

Communication focus area	Digital and media presence
<b>Objective(s)/ Outcomes</b>	<p>Improve the understanding of governments, the private sector, mining communities and the general public of the ASGM sector</p> <p>More stakeholders from governments, private sector, mining communities and the public access online ASGM knowledge products and communication materials</p>
<b>Activity</b>	Maintaining and growing the project's digital presence via the planetGOLD website, social media channels and compelling communications campaigns
<b>What</b>	<p>Integrated media and communication campaigns: Current global media and communications strategies and products targeting government, mining communities, the private sector and the public are continued and expanded. High profile individuals and brands will be enlisted to support project success communications.</p> <p>Website: Maintain and update the planetGOLD website with all available information (including news, events, blog posts, resources, country pages curated thematic pages). The website will be fully functional and adapted to user demands and specifications</p> <p>Core collateral: Produce compelling planetGOLD branded communications collateral.</p> <p>Social media: Maintain and continue to develop existing planetGOLD social media channels.</p> <p>Mailing list: Maintain and continue to develop existing planetGOLD mailing list as a key distribution channel.</p> <p>Communication efforts by all country projects will be supported and reinforced by this project component.</p> <p>Online events to share success stories among ASGM stakeholders will be held.</p>
<b>Who</b>	<p>The communications team will work with creative agencies, the EAs and project leads to develop core collateral.</p> <p>The planetGOLD website will continue to be maintained and developed by UNEP.</p>
<b>When</b>	A communications schedule will be created by the NRDC, with input from UNEP, in collaboration with Country communications officers during the early stages of the project. The schedule will be updated regularly in response to the global ASGM zeitgeist.
<b>Where (publishing)</b>	<p>Technical and non-technical Knowledge Products will be published on the planetGOLD website as will news updates, blogs, relevant event information etc. Core collateral will be distributed through planetGOLD's social media channels, the planetGOLD mailing list and via partner channels.</p> <p>Stories, opinion editorials and blogs will be pitched and published in global conventional media outlets.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>The project's communication team will liaise with the country projects to collect material to develop core collateral.</p> <p>The communication team will be responsible for increasing the reach and distribution of the project's communication efforts.</p> <p>The project's communications lead will ensure that planetGOLD communications have a consistent structure, design and brand elements.</p>