

# Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Webinar Follow-Up

## Questions and Answers

---

### Participant question

*A presenter said that the point at which ASGM producers in Colombia are most vulnerable to illicit penetration is at the point of having just become formal. Could you give some more information or examples on when and how this is the case?*

### Answer from our experts

The rationale comes down to a supply and demand issue. The amount of informal/illegal mining operations in Colombia continues to dwarf formal/legal ones. This being the case, there is a plethora of actors, spanning the entire range from relatives and family through to criminal operations, who are looking to legalize their gold production. This situation has become more acute with Colombia's unique registry initiative and greater interdiction efforts surrounding the commercialization of gold, which have made it harder to sell illegal gold. It also reflects the high levels of cultural and economic informality in the regions in which Colombian gold mining occurs. Given all this, as soon as a mine or group of mines become legal they immediately provide a potential mechanism for laundering illegal gold, and begin to receive the pressure from an eclectic mix of stakeholders to do so.

### Participant question

*Could you send a link and documentation to the case studies on collaborative community led processes in Cote d'Ivoire and CAR?*

### Answer from our experts

Below are links to information on collaborative, community-led processes in CDI and CAR:

- **Paper:** [https://land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Session-06-06-Managing-Conflict-and-Fostering-Cooperation-DeJong-784\\_paper.pdf](https://land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Session-06-06-Managing-Conflict-and-Fostering-Cooperation-DeJong-784_paper.pdf)
- **Blog:** <https://www.land-links.org/2017/11/building-peace-diamond-mining-areas-central-african-republic/>
- **PRADD II Final Report:** [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00TNVG.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00TNVG.pdf)

- **Paper:** [https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Session-06-06-Customary-Tenure-Adaptation-and-the-International-Economy-Freudenberger-903\\_paper.pdf](https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Session-06-06-Customary-Tenure-Adaptation-and-the-International-Economy-Freudenberger-903_paper.pdf)

### **Participant question**

*Can you clarify the difference between legalization a (government- imposed) and formalization (collaborative?)*

### **Answer from our experts**

Formalization is broader and more comprehensive than legalization. Formalization of the ASM sector aims to ensure responsible artisanal minerals production and trade through transparency, due diligence, and compliance with legal frameworks. This includes the active management of risks such as avoidance of labor and human rights abuses, financing of terrorism, money laundering, and public corruption. USAID programs foster ASM supply chains that are not only legal, but also environmentally and socially responsible.

### **Participant question**

*Please provide more information on the policy brief on gender in ASM that you are working on? When will it available? Will it summarize the experiences from all your projects, or focus on a particular experience and project?*

### **Answer from our experts**

USAID is developing a new Issue Brief on Gender Issues in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining. The issue brief will review the global literature on the subject, identify best practices, and develop recommendations on incorporating gender in ASM projects.

We expect that the issue brief will be finalized in March of 2020. Once it is finalized it will be available at <https://www.land-links.org/>

### **Participant question**

*This may require an additional hour of discussion, but the dynamic between large commercial mines and ASM, both conflict and cooperation was touched only briefly in the presentation. One of the critical concerns in a few MCC projects was the potential for electricity investments had to exacerbate conflict and social & environmental impacts.*

## Answer from our experts

The dynamic between ASM and large-scale mining (LSM) varies from country to country but is often tied closely to land and resource rights. A discussion of this issue can be found in the ASM & Land Tenure section of USAID's new [Issue Brief on Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining](#) as well as USAID's [Issue Brief on Property Rights and Artisanal Mining](#).

Additionally, [this](#) recent academic paper explores the complexities of ASM and LSM operating within a shared physical environment.

## Participant question

*How does the USAID Legal Gold program and the broader ASM approach works with initiatives such as Fairtrade or Fair-minded to support miners to adopt better mining practices and access formal markets?*

## Answer from our experts

For an overview of how USAID programs work to improve the governance of the ASM sector, please see the ASM Governance section within USAID's new [Issue Brief on Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining](#).

Among other approaches, USAID supports due diligence and traceability systems to improve the governance of the ASM sector. Due diligence guidance and traceability systems help governments, companies, and civil society identify and manage risks associated with ASM.

International due diligence standards establish strict criteria for responsible (or "conflict-free") minerals. Adherence to standards is monitored through traceability systems that trace minerals from mine site to final point of sale.

There are numerous due diligence and traceability systems that have been developed by international organizations, the private sector, and civil society organizations. The most widely used international due diligence framework is the OECD's *Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*. USAID is supporting traceability systems that adhere to international and national laws, while also adapting to the minerals and the contexts where ASM occurs. USAID is also testing sustainable models for scaling up due diligence and traceability initiatives.

## Participant question

*Recently in Uganda, NTV ran a report on use of mercury by Artisanal miners. Its posing serious health risks on them, animals and crops/soil. When CSOs are carrying out awareness raising activities, the miners often ask the question what is the alternative so we can stop using mercury. How can we deal with this problem? There is no support from government to Artisanal miners.*

## Answer from our experts

Mercury-dependent artisanal gold mining is the largest source of mercury pollution globally and accounts for 38 percent of total anthropogenic emissions of mercury ([UNEP, 2018](#); [Esdaile & Chalker, 2018](#)). USAID's Sector Environmental Guidelines on Mining emphasize prevention of mercury use rather than remediation. Preventing mercury use requires identifying viable alternatives and finding ways to finance mercury-free technologies and train miners on how to properly use the new technologies.

Uganda is a Party to the Minamata Convention and is in the process of developing an ASGM sector National Action Plan (NAP) with funding from the Global Environment Facility. According to the Global Mercury Partnership's NAP [webpage](#), UNEP is the implementing agency supporting the development of the NAP in Uganda. The NAP will address issues such as mercury alternatives, training and access to financing for these alternatives. Typically, the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Mines would be involved in the development of the ASGM NAP, along with UNEP.

Below are some U.S. Government resources that might help you get started:

- The US Environmental Protection Agency has an overview of technical alternatives to mercury for gold mining [here](#).
- USAID's [Sector Environment Guidelines on Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining](#).

### Other resources:

- UNEP's [Illustrated Guide to Mercury Free Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining](#)
- UNEP's [Reducing Mercury Use in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining: A Practical Guide](#)

Additionally, here are two other clearing houses of information that might be helpful:

- planetGOLD (formerly GEF GOLD) resource page for technical solutions can be found [here](#).
- UNEP Global Mercury Partnership's resource page can be found [here](#).