

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	11048
Project Name:	Global Opportunities for Long-Term Development of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Sector in Zimbabwe- GEF planetGOLD Zimbabwe
Countr(ies):	Zimbabwe
Implementing Agency:	UNEP

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Global Opportunities for Long-Term Development of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Sector in Zimbabwe- GEF planetGOLD Zimbabwe

Country

Zimbabwe

GEF ID

11048

Implementing Agency

UNEP

Executing Entity

IMPACT

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

9/4/2026

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2024 , 1st PIR

Objective

To improve the artisanal and small scale gold mining (ASGM) sector in Zimbabwe through increased formalization, access to finance and markets, introduction to mercury free technologies and management of knowledge

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Satisfactory

Development Objective

Satisfactory

Overall risk

Low Risk

Project Financing

5,475,000.00

Cumulative Disbursement

1,723,167.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

12/20/2023

Agency Approval

10/5/2024

Implementation Start 10/16/2024	First Disbursement 12/11/2024
Expected MTR 6/11/2027	Actual MTR
Expected Completion 9/30/2029	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Component 1: Promoting institutional strengthening and regulatory framework for improved ASGM practices and governance. During the reporting period, the Government of Zimbabwe introduced important policy measures that contribute to creating a more enabling environment for the formalization and sustainable development of the ASGM sector. In May 2026, the Minister of Mines and Mining Development announced the reservation of the small and medium-scale gold mining sector exclusively for Zimbabwean citizens and wholly Zimbabwean-owned entities, with the objective of promoting citizen participation, improving accountability, and strengthening the formalization of mining operations. The Government also declared gold a strategic mineral and reaffirmed that the country's mineral resources constitute a strategic national asset whose development should advance broad-based economic empowerment and sustainable development. These policy pronouncements are aligned with the project's objective of supporting a conducive legal and policy framework for ASGM formalization. By recognizing the strategic importance of the gold sector and emphasizing improved accountability, environmental compliance, and sustainable mining practices, the measures create opportunities to advance formalization, strengthen oversight of the sector, and promote greater integration of ASGM into responsible and transparent gold supply chains. The project will continue to engage with Government and stakeholders to support the operationalization of these policy directions and ensure that their implementation contributes to an inclusive, responsible, and sustainable ASGM sector in Zimbabwe.

To increase the number of formalized miners in the ASGM sector, progress has been made to pilot a formalization model leveraging support from large-scale mining (LSM). A multi-stakeholder working session was convened on 15 April 2026 to advance the development of scalable pilot formalization models for Zimbabwe's ASGM sector through strategic partnerships with LSM companies. The workshop brought together 49 participants (38 men and 11 women), including representatives from ASGM organizations and mining associations (45%), LSM companies (30%), and government and regulatory institutions (25%). The diverse participation strengthened dialogue between key sector stakeholders on practical approaches to formalization and responsible mining. The workshop aimed to identify existing collaboration mechanisms that can facilitate formalization and responsible mining practices, while exploring opportunities to pilot these approaches within selected project districts. Participants designed three partnership models, i.e. Tribute Agreement, which enables ASGM operators to access and work within designated areas of LSM concessions; the Collaboration Agreement, which provides technical and processing support to independently licensed ASGM operators; and the Contractor Agreement, under which ASGM enterprises provide specialized mining services to LSM companies. As a key outcome of the workshop, participants agreed that the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development would evaluate the proposed partnership models and recommend the most appropriate model for piloting. Views on formalization gathered from 206 people (98 men; 108women) working in the ASGM to understand their views with respect to formalization and establish a value proposition for both the sector and government, as well as identify issues that affect formalization of the sector. These views were gathered during

site profiling; the ASGM Strategy and data gathering and design of the pilot ASGM Formalization Models with support of Large-Scale Mines.

In addition, an in-depth research and engagement in targeted ASGM areas termed Site Profiling was completed covering 70 artisanal and small-scale gold mining sites in the 11 project districts reaching a total of 689 (518 men; 171 women) capturing artisanal and small-scale gold miners' perspectives on formalization, including perceived benefits. Consultations on the mines and minerals bill reached 26 stakeholders (17 men; 9 women) through a workshop held to unpack and analyze the provisions of the Mines and Minerals Bill as they relate to the ASGM sector, assess the Bill's alignment with the realities, challenges, and aspirations of ASGM stakeholders, especially artisanal and small-scale miners and to identify opportunities for advocacy and refinement of the Bill to ensure it supports formalization, environmental protection, gender inclusivity, and economic sustainability within the ASGM sector. The views from the ASGM actors from the above activities culminated in the development of 1 Policy Brief to contribute to a national regulatory and legal framework for ASGM that is conducive to formalization of miners.

The planetGOLD Zimbabwe project released a policy brief titled Strengthening the Mines and Minerals Bill: Advancing Reforms for the Benefit of Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Miners, calling for explicit inclusion/definition of artisanal miners in the new Mines and Minerals Bill and for transitional formalization mechanisms. The brief is being used as a basis for advocacy with lawmakers and government agencies. Zimbabwe's Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Strategy was reviewed, and a final draft is ready for Cabinet approval. The project facilitated stakeholder engagement through a Dialogue on the ASGM Strategy 33 (19 male and 14 females) to build consensus and collective ownership toward its finalization and adoption and to ensure it aligns with the need to reduce the use of mercury and other priorities of artisanal and small-scale gold miners, including women and other special interest groups.

In 2025, the project convened a high-level Working Session led by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender, Small and Medium Enterprises Development on Gender and Child Labour attended by 24 sector stakeholders (9 men, 15 women) including miners, representatives of government agencies and the media to develop the planetGOLD Zimbabwe project's Gender and Child Labour Awareness Campaign Strategy. Using the Gender and Child Labour Awareness Campaign Strategy, the project carried out community-based campaigns during international commemorative events addressing four critical and interconnected thematic areas: the health impacts of mercury on women and children, child labour in artisanal mining operations, violence against women in the ASGM sector, and the promotion of gender equality across mining communities. Through the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, International Women's Day, World Environment Day and World Health Day commemorations, the project has reached out to a total of 242 (165 female:77 male) people with messages promoting an ASGM sector that is safe, healthy, child labour free, and equitable for all, where women's rights are upheld, children are protected, and mining communities thrive in dignity.

Component 2: Access to Finance- Targeted ASGM organizations have access to finance to foster the legally compliant mercury-free gold supply chain in Zimbabwe. The project gathered detailed information on miners' operational requirements, investment needs, and business opportunities, the assessments will support the Government of Zimbabwe, including the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development and Fidelity Gold Refinery, in strengthening existing financing arrangements and increasing the amount of capital disbursed to ASGM operators through more targeted, risk-informed, and fit-for-purpose financial products. Technical assessments at eight selected mine sites reaching 286 participants (158 men and 128 women identified significant investment gaps that constrain productivity, gold recovery, and the adoption of mercury-free technologies in the ASGM sector. The assessments revealed financing needs in four key areas: (i) mechanization of underground operations, including installation of headgear, automated hoists, and underground rail systems; (ii) upgrading mineral processing infrastructure to improve gold liberation and recovery rates; (iii) investment in mercury reduction and pollution prevention technologies, including retorts, closed-loop water systems, and

alternative recovery technologies; and (iv) establishment of on-site tailings reprocessing facilities to maximize value addition and recovery.

This evidence generation exercise represents an important first step towards informing the design of innovative and improved financing mechanisms for the ASGM sector. The findings also provide a basis for engaging financial institutions and development partners on tailored financing solutions that can accelerate formalization, productivity, and the uptake of mercury-free technologies. The project commissioned an ASGM Supply Chains study to generate evidence-based recommendations for strengthening Zimbabwe's ASGM supply chains by improving access to finance, reducing barriers to formalization, and identifying opportunities for multi-sectoral collaboration.

The ASGM supply chains research inception meeting, held on 27 April 2026 and followed by a technical review meeting on 5 May 2026, brought together Project Steering Committee members from the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Environmental Management Agency, Fidelity Gold Refinery, planetGOLD Zimbabwe, and the research consultancy team. During the inception discussions, participants reviewed and refined the proposed methodology, stakeholder engagement approach, data collection tools, risk framework, and research objectives, with particular focus on data quality, engagement of ASGM miners, financing mechanisms, gender inclusion, and supply chain transparency. The project engaged the Zimbabwe School of Mines to provide technical support for the Mining Academy. The following modules are under development 1. Financial Management and Access to Finance, including business and financial skills; 2. Feasibility Studies and Geological Skills; 3. Environmental Compliance and Responsible Mining; 4. Mining as a Business, including planning, operations, and supply chain management; 5. Conflict Resolution and Community Engagement; 6. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Principles; 7. Investor Engagement Strategies; 8. Cross-cutting themes on gender equality, inclusion, technology adoption, and livelihood diversification shall be integrated across all modules. 9. Mercury free gold processing (Training on the impacts of mercury to humans and the environment and methods of minimizing these impacts as well as alternatives that can be used to reduce the use of mercury in the ASGM sector)

Component 3; Reduced mercury use in ASGM enabled by the increased uptake of mercury-free technologies & techniques by ASGM miners. A Baseline Report on current mercury-free technologies was produced by the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development through the National Metallurgical Laboratory. The Baseline on Mercury-Free Technologies Report formulates a strategic framework for the successful adoption of Mercury-Free Technologies (MFTs) within Zimbabwe's Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector through a comprehensive situational assessing the technical viability, economic feasibility (including capital and operational costs), and operational practicality of these technologies for adoption across the entire ASGM value chain, from ore extraction to processing and final gold recovery. The report identifies critical barriers and knowledge gaps that currently hinder the widespread uptake of mercury free gold processing technologies pinpointing the specific technical, economic, social, regulatory, and educational obstacles faced by miners, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Selection of potential sites for setting up mercury-free demonstration sites is complete. Using detailed site selection criteria, 22 ASGM sites across 11 districts were identified as potential locations for mercury-free demonstration sites. These were narrowed down to 8 sites following technical meetings with the National Metallurgical Laboratory as follows; Kaltranic 28 Mine (G Zone Mining and Milling), Kadoma (Trafalga 4X Mine), Bubi (Waterwich Mine), Zvishavane (Rozi 25 Mine), Mazowe (Kuzivakwashe Mining Syndicate), Gwanda (Will South Mine), Filabusi (Maholokohlo Mine), and Bindura RM Museveni Mine). Ore samples were collected from these sites by the following standard procedures developed by the National Metallurgical Laboratory. Samples were properly labelled, documented, securely stored, and transported. Metallurgical laboratory test work is underway. Due to capacity constraints at the National Metallurgical Laboratory, alternative laboratories were identified, with some private local laboratories and South African facilities considered most suitable pending due diligence. Potential mercury-free technologies have been shortlisted to inform upcoming bench and pilot testing.

The Ministry of Mines and Mining Development and Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife through the Environment Management Agency provided technical support for feasibility studies at the eight mine sites earmarked for pilot MFT demonstration sites to confirm sufficient gold supply, as well as a technical assessment to determine the technology needs. Eight feasibility and technical assessment reports were produced to evaluate gold production levels and supply consistency, document existing processing flows and operational constraints, and identify opportunities for process optimization and the adoption of mercury-free technologies. The assessments also examined the environmental impacts of current mining and processing practices, evaluated tailings management systems and mercury contamination risks, and identified practical measures to improve overall environmental performance across the participating sites. Under the planetGOLD Zimbabwe project, the Ministry of Health and Child Care, the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, the Environment Management Agency, and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Small and Medium Enterprises Development collaboratively developed training and sensitization materials on Safety, Health, and Environment (SHE) for the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector. The materials cover key topics including ASGM waste management (liquid, solid, and air pollution), occupational safety and health, environmental rehabilitation, and the impacts of mining activities on children. These materials will support the delivery of SHE sensitization and training programmes aimed at promoting safer, healthier, and more environmentally responsible mining practices.

Component 4: Knowledge and information produced through the project leads to better management of the ASGM sector in Zimbabwe. During the reporting period, the project generated and disseminated a range of knowledge products to support evidence-based decision-making, influence policy, and promote responsible ASGM practices in Zimbabwe. A policy brief, Strengthening the Mines and Minerals Bill: Advancing Reforms for the Benefit of Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Miners, was produced to advocate for explicit recognition of artisanal miners and transitional formalization measures and is being used to inform engagement with policymakers and government institutions. To improve stakeholder awareness, the project developed a project factsheet, mercury sensitization brochure, and user-friendly infographics on the health and environmental impacts of mercury exposure. These materials target policymakers, miners, mining communities, and the public, promoting mercury-free technologies, formalization, and responsible mining. To date, 500 factsheets and 1000 mercury brochures have been distributed through workshops, community outreach, media engagements, and national events, with gender-responsive targeting of women and men. The project strengthened knowledge sharing through digital platforms, publishing six blogs and one feature article on the global planetGOLD platform, while 70 media articles were published by national and independent media houses during the reporting period. Social media engagement continued to grow, with 783 Facebook followers and 87 followers on X. Knowledge exchange was further strengthened through the inaugural Annual Stakeholders Conference, which convened 120 (40 female; 80 male) participant from government, mining associations, the private sector, civil society, and development partners to review progress and identify practical pathways towards a formalized, mercury-free, and responsible ASGM sector. Collectively, these knowledge products and engagement platforms are contributing to increased awareness, informed policy dialogue, and the uptake of good practices across Zimbabwe's ASGM sector.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

The timing of legislative and policy review and approval processes has affected the implementation schedule of some project activities. Activities related to sensitizing institutional actors and miners on Zimbabwe's formalization and legal framework for the ASGM sector are dependent on the finalization of the Mines and Minerals Bill, while the dissemination of the ASGM Strategy is contingent upon the completion of the relevant approval processes. As a result, certain policy and stakeholder engagement activities have progressed more slowly than initially anticipated and will be implemented once the necessary processes have been concluded. Rising fuel costs during the reporting period increased the cost of field operations and stakeholder engagements

in the mining districts. This created budgetary pressures and affected the pace and scheduling of some activities, requiring the project team to optimize travel arrangements and prioritize critical interventions to maintain implementation progress.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

On 27–28 October 2025, the project hosted its inaugural Annual Stakeholders Conference under the theme, “Building Together for a Sustainable ASGM Sector.” The conference brought together 120 participants (40 women and 80 men), including representatives from government ministries and agencies, artisanal and small-scale miners, civil society organizations, development partners, academia, and private sector stakeholders. The conference provided a platform to review project progress, share lessons learned, strengthen partnerships, and collectively identify priorities for the next phase of implementation.

On 28 October 2025, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) convened and endorsed the project Workplan and Budget for the subsequent year, providing strategic direction for implementation.

During the reporting period, seven PSC Co-Chairs meetings were held to review project progress and provide strategic input, feedback, and guidance on the execution of activities. In addition, four thematic Working Sessions were convened under the leadership of the PSC Co-Chairs to provide technical oversight and support project implementation.

The Working Sessions served several important functions, including facilitating consensus among stakeholders on implementation approaches, providing technical guidance on policy development and mercury-free technologies, reviewing progress against project milestones, and identifying corrective actions and opportunities for improvement. The sessions also strengthened coordination among PSC members and the Executing Agency and enhanced stakeholders' understanding of ASGM challenges and solutions, thereby contributing to stronger governance of the sector.

Importantly, the Working Sessions extended participation beyond PSC members by inviting relevant stakeholders from across the ASGM ecosystem, including technical experts, development partners, industry representatives, and other sector actors. This broader engagement created opportunities for a wider range of stakeholders to contribute their expertise and perspectives to project design and implementation, fostering greater ownership, collaboration, and inclusivity in the delivery of project interventions.

D. Gender Equality

The project continued to integrate gender considerations across its interventions to ensure that women and men benefit equitably from project activities and that the specific needs and experiences of women in ASGM are reflected in activity design and implementation.

The Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development played an active role in the project, contributing to the development of the Gender and Child Labour Awareness Campaign Strategy and the Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) sensitization materials. The Ministry also ensured that project messaging and communication materials were gender-responsive and accessible to women miners across all Knowledge Products developed e.g. the Policy Brief on the Mines and Minerals Bill carried recommendations to strengthen women's access to mining claims and financing.

Gender considerations were incorporated into policy and governance processes by establishing gender-disaggregated participation targets for consultations on the Mines and Minerals Bill and the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) Strategy. More than 30% of the stakeholders from whom views on formalization were gathered were women, contributing to efforts to ensure that Zimbabwe's formalization framework is responsive to the different needs, constraints, and experiences of women and men in the ASGM sector.

The project also developed gender-sensitive and inclusive awareness materials, including branded cloth wrappers, mercury awareness flyers containing gender-specific messaging, and the promotion of women-friendly personal protective equipment (PPE) and work suits to encourage women's participation in safer mining practices.

Partnerships with women's groups and networks, including the Zimbabwe Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Women Association (ZSSWMA), the Zimbabwe Association of Women in Mining Associations (ZAWIMA), and other women in mining organizations, were strengthened to encourage and support the participation of women in project activities and decision-making processes.

In addition, the project collected critical baseline information on gender and child labour issues through initial site profiling exercises conducted across eleven project districts. The findings will inform the design and implementation of targeted interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and addressing child labour concerns within the ASGM sector.

E. Knowledge Management

The project produced knowledge and communication products to support improved management of Zimbabwe's ASGM sector and promote safer, mercury-free mining practices. These included the Policy Brief on strengthening the Mines and Minerals Bill, the Gender and Child Labour Awareness Campaign Strategy, Safety, Health and Environment sensitization materials, mercury awareness flyers, branded campaign materials, and technical reports on mercury-free technologies, site profiling, feasibility assessments, and ASGM supply chains. These products informed stakeholder engagement, supported policy dialogue, and provided practical guidance for government institutions, miners, women's groups, and other sector stakeholders.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	

Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Shurugwi District	-19.671300	29.998750	881,163

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kadoma District	-18.336330	29.913880	889,452

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Chegututu District	-18.134120	30.145820	894,238

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Shamva District	-17.305680	31.556490	881,342

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Mazowe District	-17.506510	30.972280	886,383

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Bindura District	-17.306749	31.331560	895,062

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Bubi District	-19.528020	28.659060	894,741

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Gwanda District	-20.941630	29.007480	890,515

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Esigodini District	-20.291840	28.93760	891,699

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Filabusi District	-20.537270	29.282370	891,514

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Zvishavane District	-20.31076	30.06029	881,404

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Project site

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	11048_PIR_UNEP_2026-GEF-CW