GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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General Project Information

Project Title
Global Opportunities for the Long-Term Development of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Sector in Costa Rica - planetGOLD Costa Rica

Region	GEF Project ID
Costa Rica	11585
Country(ies)	Type of Project
Costa Rica	MSP
GEF Agency(ies):	GEF Agency ID
UNEP	N/A
Executing Partner	Executing Partner Type
Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM)	CSO
GEF Focal Area (s)	Submission Date
Chemicals and Waste	3/27/2024

Project Sector (CCM Only)
Mixed & Others

Taxonomy
Focal Areas, Chemicals and Waste, Mercury, Artisanal and Scale Gold Mining, Influencing models, Demonstrate innovative approache, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Information Dissemination, Consultation, Participation, Communications, Education, Behavior change, Strategic Communications, Public Campaigns, Awareness Raising, Local Communities, Beneficiaries, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Academia, Non-Governmental Organization, Trade Unions and Workers Unions, Private Sector, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Capital providers, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Women groups, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender results areas, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Participation and leadership, Access to benefits and services, Capacity Development, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Learning, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Theory of change, Knowledge Generation, Professional Development, Seminar, Course, Training, Workshop, Knowledge Exchange, Field Visit, Conference, Innovation

Type of Trust Fund	Project Duration (Months)
GET	60
GEF Project Grant: (a)	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)
4,500,000.00	0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)
427,500.00	0.00

Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	Total Co-financing
4,927,500.00	12,692,985.00
PPG Amount: (e)	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)
150,000.00	14,250.00
PPG total amount: (e+f)	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)
164,250.00	5,091,750.00
Project Tags	
CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No	

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B "project description".(max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

planetGOLD Costa Rica aims to transform the country's Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector by mitigating its environmental and social impacts. With over 2,000 miners reliant on ASGM, particularly in economically challenged rural areas, the project marks the first consolidated effort to reduce the negative environmental and social impacts caused by the intensive use of mercury, strengthening formalization, miners' access to finance and establishing responsible supply chains, hastening the introduction of mercury-free technologies and the generation of knowledge, improving capacity and information at the local level. To achieve this, the project will support an enabling policy and regulatory environment to accelerate formalization and the introduction of mercury-free technologies (including financial solutions and business models), while leveraging existing resources from the planetGOLD Programme to build incentives, awareness, capacity and facilitate the replication and scale-up of successful interventions. Innovative elements involve linking ASGM with biodiversity conservation, with the goal of reducing of 6.4 tons of mercury and increasing landscapes under improved practices in specific areas (64,602 hectares), benefiting 6,600 people (3,300 women). The targeted potential areas of the intervention are: Abangares, Miramar and Tilarán (Guanacaste), Crucitas (Alajuela) and Osa and Golfito (Puntarenas). This, as well as an Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) approach, is to be assessed and confirmed during the PPG (Project Preparatory Grant) phase, signifying a crucial step for Costa Rica's ASGM sector, and a realignment for a cleaner, safer and more profitable future.

Indicative Project Overview

Project Objective

To reduce the negative environmental and social impacts caused by the intensive use of mercury in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector in Costa Rica

Project Components

Component 1 – Formalization of the ASGM sector

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)

800,000.00	2,256,500.00

Outcome:

Costa Rica's artisanal and small-scale gold miners improve their formalization progress through access to information, knowledge and tools.

Output:

Output 1.1: A sex-disaggregated mining census complementing NAP results is elaborated.

Output 1.2: Regulations, procedures and instruments for ASGM formalization are strengthened.

Output 1.3: ASG miners and government officials are capacitated on formalization, human rights and gender equality.

Output 1.4: The integrated landscape management and multi-stakeholder approach are piloted in at least one selected ASGM area.

Component 2 – Access to Finance and Responsible Supply Chains

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
1,000,000.00	2,820,600.00

Outcome:

Increased financial and global market access is available for ASGM miners and organizations in Costa Rica.

Output:

Output 2.1: A financial mechanism is available and accessible to the ASGM sector.

Output 2.2: A supply chain-based system to track artisanal gold production and trade ensuring transparency and accountability is piloted in selected mining areas.

Output 2.3: ASGM organizations are capacitated finance, business management and due diligence.

Component 3 – Mercury-free Technologies

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
1,620,000.00	4,570,000.00

Outcome:

Mercury free processing methods and improved practices are widely used by artisanal and small-scale gold miners in Costa Rica.

Output:

Output 3.1: ASG miners and government officials are capacitated on mercury-free alternatives, environmental aspects, occupational safety and health.

Output 3.2: Pilot projects on improved processes and mercury-free technologies are implemented addressing gender-differentiated needs.

Output 3.3: An inventory of contaminated tailings completed and guidelines for waste and tailings management disseminated.

Component 4 – Knowledge Sharing, Communication and Local Capacity Building

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
550,000.00	1,551,400.00

Outcome:

Negative impacts are reduced by ASGM sector stakeholders through strengthening of communications and knowledge management.

Output:

Output 4.1: National capacity and awareness raising programmes on mercury use in ASGM and potential opportunities of a responsible ASGM sector are disseminated.

Output 4.2: Knowledge, lessons learned, and information developed through the project are available nationally and globally through the planetGOLD programme.

Output 4.3: Knowledge and information products related to biodiversity protection and gender equality in ASGM are generated and disseminated.

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
325,000.00	916,000.00

Outcome:

The project achieves results on time through effective monitoring and evaluation

Output:

The project is monitored and evaluated

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
Component 1 – Formalization of the ASGM sector	800,000.00	2,256,500.00
Component 2 – Access to Finance and Responsible Supply Chains	1,000,000.00	2,820,600.00
Component 3 – Mercury-free Technologies	1,620,000.00	4,570,000.00
Component 4 – Knowledge Sharing, Communication and Local Capacity Building	550,000.00	1,551,400.00
M&E	325,000.00	916,000.00
Subtotal	**4,295,000.00**	**12,114,500.00**
Project Management Cost	205,000.00	578,485.00
Total Project Cost ($)	**4,500,000.00**	**12,692,985.00**

Please provide justification

Not applicable

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

The artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) plays a crucial role, particularly in developing countries, as a source of livelihoods, supporting approximately 15 million people globally, out of which 5 million are estimated to be women and children[1]. The informal and often marginalized sector helps to alleviate poverty and provides employment opportunities in regions where alternative options are limited. In this way, ASGM is fundamental for rural

economies, fostering local entrepreneurship and community development, while serving national economies as a significant source of foreign exchange earnings.

Despite this socio-economic significance, ASGM poses significant social and environmental challenges. Its detrimental ecological effects include the widespread use of mercury leading to pollution and risks for both ecosystems and local communities; deforestation and habitat destruction disrupting biodiversity and contributing to ecosystem loss; improper waste management and the use of other chemicals, such as cyanide, contaminating water sources and harming downstream communities; and soil erosion and sedimentation degrading landscapes, impacting water quality and increasing the risk of landslides.

As a potent neurotoxin, the use of mercury in ASGM is particularly concerning. The sector consumes as much as 37% of the world's total annually[2], used to extract gold from ore to form amalgams. During gold processing, the substance contaminates air, water and soil, leading to destructive health consequences for both miners and nearby communities. The release of mercury into water bodies bioaccumulates in fish, threatening food safety. In addition, it can travel long distances in the atmosphere, diffusing globally and contributing to widespread environmental contamination.

The artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector in Costa Rica

Costa Rica has more than 300 mineral deposits, including copper, manganese, gold, magnetite and bauxite[3]. While metallic mining has not been actively promoted, ASGM operates in three main areas of the country with different degrees of formality based on the historic trajectory and local circumstances: Abangares, Miramar, and Tilarán (Guanacaste Province), Crucitas (Alajuela Province) and Osa and Golfito (Puntarenas Province).

The main area where artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) takes place is in the community of Abangares where mining is active since 1884. In the 20th century, mining also took place in the Osa Peninsula until it decreased with the establishment and expansion of the Corcovado National Park in 1975. Nowadays, ASGM takes place sporadically in areas surrounding Osa and Golfito, mostly in the form of alluvial mining. Other regions were explored during the 1990s such as northern Liberia, northern San Carlos and Sarapiquí[4]. The concession of a mining exploration license in Crucitas caused systematic and organized opposition of the population due to the potential impacts of the operations. This situation led to the cancellation of the contract granted to a foreign company and to the abandonment of the area and subsequent encroachment by illegal ASGM activities.

In 2010, through Law 8904 *Mining Code Reform and its reforms law to declare Costa Rica a country free of Open Pit Metal Mining*, a partial reform was made to the Mining Code, which came into force in 2011. This reform banned open pit mining in the country and declared all areas of Abangares, Osa and Golfito as mining reserve zones. In these areas, permits for exploration, mining and processing could only be granted to workers duly organized in cooperatives dedicated to artisanal and small-scale mining. Despite having provisions specific to ASGM, the legal framework presents inconsistencies which prevent its full effectiveness and translates into different degrees of formality and legality across the territory.

The ASGM sector comprises miners (known locally as *oreros* or *coligalleros*), processors and actors along the gold supply chain including traders, intermediaries and transporters, among others. There is no census to determine the exact number of people engaged in ASGM, though according to interviews with cooperative leaders, as many as 2,000 miners work at Abangares alone[5]. As ASGM is a family activity, it has been estimated that an equivalent number of women are likely involved in mining operations and associated services. In Abangares, nine mining cooperatives are established or in the process of establishment[6], supported by a national-level association of miners (ANAMI). Despite having a low number of members reaching only 20% of the total number of miners in the area[7], these associations have power and influence in local decision-making[8]. Since activities in Crucitas, Osa and Golfito are illegal due to the banning of open pit mining, and/or the lack of permits and environmental studies, there is no information on the number of people involved. In addition to cooperatives, a number of independent miners operate in all ASGM areas, covering a territory of approximately 106,836 hectares in total[9].

Sex disaggregated data on ASGM activities is generally missing. In the extraction and processing stages, most of the participants are adult men but there have also been cases of adolescent participation, especially within family structures where mining is a generational activity. Women have a greater participation in the processing stage (in many cases, combined with domestic work and care of the elderly) and the commercialization of gold. The gender differentiated roles could have implications in terms of higher exposure to mercury contamination, which is particularly damaging for pregnant women. Generally, in Costa Rica, women experience broad inequalities in the labor market, reflected in lower participation, and higher rates of unemployment (15.2% female unemployment compared to 8.7 male unemployment[10]) and underemployment[11]. Women also spend a greater amount of time in unpaid domestic and care work compared to men (35 and 13 hours are spent on household duties respectively)[12]. An unquantified population of irregular migrants has also been detected, although additional assessments are needed to estimate their participation in ASGM more accurately.

Economies where ASGM operates, particularly Abangares, have traditionally revolved around the sector; however, other activities such as trade, agriculture and husbandry are common. Over time, complementary services have emerged around the gold supply chain, such as the sale of machinery and equipment, leasing of mercury processing systems—known locally as *rastras*—transportation, and a series of services required for the mining operations, for example, financial and administrative services, food and others[13].

Costa Rica's gold sector has surged in the last decade, related to the increase in the price of gold and the economic situation of ASGM areas, where the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were specially felt. The price of gold has increased steadily from 1,123 USD/troy ounce in 2010 to 2,034 USD/troy ounce in 2024[14]. Gold exports reflected this trend rising from approximately USD 18 million per year in 2015, 2016 and 2020 to atypical exports of gold equivalent to USD 30 million in 2017, 2018 and 2019[15]. The discrepancies and drastic changes on the amount of gold exported could indicate either a lack of traceability in the supply chain or a percentage of gold that enters the country illegally and is then re-exported as Costa Rican gold[16]. But—this illustrates a larger problem: the gold marketing chain is complex, as currently only companies with a concession for mining and processing can export gold legally. It is estimated that 20% of the people involved in ASGM in Abangares commercialize gold through the Unión Cantonal de Asociaciones de Desarrollo de Abangares (UNCADA), the only entity authorized by the State to commercialize gold as of the year 2020. The remaining percentage of miners sell part or all of the gold to black market buyers and traders who sell it via Nicaragua or other neighboring countries. Mercury follows similar routes being illegally imported from Mexico and Nicaragua.

Although ASGM provides substantial economic benefits, it has several negative environmental and social impacts:

- First, the widespread use of mercury to process gold. In 2020, an annual production of 2.8 tons of gold per year was estimated in Abangares, releasing between 5 to 69 tons of mercury per year, with an annual average of 34.4 tons[17]. The Hg:Au ratio was estimated to be 12.3:1[18]. In many cases, the burning of the amalgam is done in close proximity to houses, increasing exposure for family members, inhabitants and neighbors. Some efforts were made, especially during the NAP (National Action Plan on ASGM), to educate miners and stakeholders on the dangers of mercury, including better practices and technologies. However, there still needs to be more knowledge and capacity, including within government institutions, as well as incentives for miners to formalize and adopt these technologies. A guide for miners was prepared by MINAE including good practices for extraction, processing and tailings management. But mercury use is still prevalent with significant negative impacts on biodiversity, ecosystems, miners and local populations. Mercury traders and those that own mercury processing systems are likely to be reticent to engage in project activities and constitute a risk for project success. Power dynamics, roles and influences at the local level will be assessed and if possible, they will be engaged, during the preparatory phase, and related contingency measures will be included in the project.

- Second, tailings are stored in pits dug directly in the processing ground without insulating material, creating risks of groundwater pollution. Very often, these tailings are sold to external service providers for further processing with cyanide, despite no prior mercury removal. This is considered one of the worst practices

according to the Minamata Convention because it leads to the generation of mercury-cyanide complexes that are highly mobile in the environment and bioavailable. Tailing ponds in Abangares were mapped and georeferenced during the NAP. However, further information on dynamics and practices is needed on a wider scale and related guides and materials for proper tailings management are necessary (e.g., planetGOLD's Best Management Practices for Cyanide Use in the Small-scale Gold Mining Sector).

- Beyond the chemicals and waste impacts, the ASGM sector in the country also contributes to environmental degradation through fragmentation, deforestation, the destruction of landscapes and water contamination. This is particularly relevant considering ASGM activities operate nearby and inside areas of high biodiversity that are highly sensitive such as the Protected Area of the Abangares River Basin and the Corvocado National Park. Land use changes, unsustainable mining and pollution have been identified as key drivers of biodiversity loss in Costa Rica and need to be addressed comprehensively[19]. Furthermore, ASGM can lead to inadequate management of natural resources and land disputes which can affect social cohesion. The populations most affected by these conflicts are those in vulnerable situations, such as women, migrants and the elderly[20].

Key System Drivers

Current trends in Costa Rica's ASGM sector are driven by five factors:

1. **Political**: current legal and regulatory frameworks are either insufficient or weak to allow the formalization of ASGM, which in turn perpetuates mercury use and other negative consequences. In addition, despite the country's increasing environmental commitments, the state has insufficient capacity to ensure compliance. Less than half of municipalities have regulatory plans, with most of them outdated, partial or without environmental assessments[21]. The lack of spatial plans in ASGM municipalities fail to address the legality and management of ASGM operations and their impacts over land, water and the population, is an indirect driver of biodiversity loss and exacerbates vulnerability to climate-related natural hazards. Concretely Crucitas has been characterized by cross-border movements of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan miners operating on both sides of the border driven by discoveries of gold deposits and law enforcement operations. Informality also presents a reputational risk for the sector as a whole and can discourage the engagement of financial and private sector entities. The porosity of borders will also affect smuggling of both mercury and gold.
2. **Economic**: economic growth has been on a downward trend since 1990 and inequality levels are increasing. The average annual GDP growth went from 5.4% between 1992-1999 to 4.3% between 2000 and 2009, 3.8% between 2010 and 2019, -4.1% in 2020 and 5.4% in 2021[22]. Over the last ten years, the Gini coefficient of the personal per capita income distribution shows fluctuations but has tended to increase from a value of 0.507 in 2010 to 0.519 in 2020[23]. The economic forecast is likely to impact ASGM activities as poverty and lack of employment opportunities are a key driver of ASGM activities. In addition, the low barriers to entry, perceived quick gains and high incomes encourage greater participation in the sector[24]. For instance, the average annual income of a miner in Abangares at 27.4 M CRC (USD 44,526)[25] which is much higher than the average income of a crop farm workers which is estimated at 6.9 M CRC (USD 13,524)[26]. Economic growth could slow down in the coming years pushing people to ASGM and limiting liquidity and willingness to invest in cleaner technologies. As the demand for gold is expected to grow in line with global and regional level markets, more people will be driven into ASGM and mercury use. Fluctuations of the price of gold will also influence the activities in the sector as proven by the past increase of the price of gold and related growth of ASGM activities. Also, more stringent requirements on due diligence and traceability could increase the demand for responsibly mined gold positively affecting those operations that comply with international standards. However, these requirements could in turn negatively impact those operations that are on the way to formalization by disengaging due to perceived reputational risks. Another economic factor that must be taken into account is the economic viability of alternative methods and the potential for financial incentives to formalize and reduce mercury use. There is a need for funding which is especially notable in the case of the transition to mercury-free processing systems, as high-performance gravimetric equipment is usually more expensive than the basic tools used for mercury amalgamation.

3. **Technology and capacity**: underpinning current practices, and therefore the related environmental and health impacts, is the lack of information, expertise, resources and incentives available for adopting mercury-free technologies. Most ASGM operations use mercury processing systems (*rastras*), releasing significant levels of mercury into the environment. The simplicity and effectiveness of mercury amalgamation is attractive for miners for a number of reasons. Mercury is readily available and relatively inexpensive, the equipment required is minimal (e.g., containers and rudimentary tools) and the process is relatively simple involving mixing crushed gold ore with liquid mercury. Moreover, there has been a trend of miners expanding into cyanidation without first obtaining the proper conditions and skills to operate these systems, creating additional environmental challenges. The availability and affordability of alternative technologies are crucial to reduce mercury use and the related capacity and expertise to operate and maintain these. Active engagement by national academic, research and training institutions in developing local solutions for mercury-free processing systems can drive adoption rates.
4. **Climate change and natural disasters**: Costa Rica is highly vulnerable to extreme climate events and natural hazards, with 78% of its population living in risk-prone areas[27]. In most regions where ASGM takes place, such as Abangares, excess precipitation and high rates of erosion are limiting the available uses of land for agriculture. Climate change impacts will affect availability of land and distribution of water, impacting ASGM operations, the use of mercury and increasing the risk of social conflicts over natural resources. Additionally, extreme weather events can affect infrastructure, safety of miners and economic conditions of people, especially individuals living in poverty. Natural hazards to be considered include floods, earthquakes, landslides, cyclones and fires.
5. **Social and cultural factors**: Costa Rica is in the midst of a demographic transition characterized by lower-than-expected fertility rates (1.4 births per women in 2020[28]) with variations between regions. Low fertility rates and increased life expectancy at birth result in an aging population, with important implications for economic growth, care work, and public pension and health systems[29]. For instance, an aging population can lead to a shrinking workforce, affecting productivity and economic growth. In rural areas, younger generations, especially women, might be burdened with caregiving responsibilities affecting education and labour opportunities. The informal nature of ASGM means that the population does not have access to social security and pensions. This could lead to economic dependence on the sector in the future and generate greater insecurity and poverty. In addition, informality affects social inequality and challenges poverty reduction, especially in highly vulnerable groups such as migrants or women. The social vulnerability of the ASGM workforce is explained by lack of access to financial resources, lack of health insurance and low levels of education and technical skills. These might translate into inability to adopt mercury-free technologies and face existing and future risks. ASGM stakeholders often rely on informal financial support from external actors who usually have vested interests in maintaining the status quo and may therefore resist formalization of the sector.

Baseline situation and existing initiatives

Costa Rica has participated in GEF and non-GEF funded projects and initiatives. The country successfully developed its National Action Plan (NAP) on ASGM between 2020 and 2023. Now additional resources are required for its implementation.

The main governmental institutions responsible for managing ASGM are the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) through the General Directorate of Mines (DGM), which grants mining concessions, the National Environmental Technical Secretariat (SETENA), in charge of approving environmental assessments and permits, and the Directorate for Environmental Quality Management (DIGECA), which is the competent authority for the management of chemicals, including the Minamata Convention. Costa Rica's Ministry of Health monitors environmental issues and acts against those that might endanger people's health, including waste and pollution. The National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) has developed management plans for the existing protected areas of the country. This institution is a key partner in the project as ASGM activities are taking place near the Abangares Protected Zone and Corcovado National Park.

At the local level, the most relevant stakeholders are the authorities of the municipalities where ASGM takes place (Abangares, Tilarán, Montes de Oro, Golfito), ASGM cooperatives and independent miners. The National Institute for Cooperative Development (INFOCOOP), the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS), the National Directorate of Communal Development (DINADECO) and the National Learning Institute (INA) have provided technical assistance and capacity building to mining cooperatives in the past, while on finance, relevant national entities that provide services include the National Bank of Costa Rica (BNCR) and the People's and Community Development Bank. At both the national and local levels, each entity differs on governance arrangements and institutional capacity and resources for the successful management of mining communities.

The Mining Code[30] is the main legal framework of mining activities in the country having special provisions on ASGM. A series of proposals to amend the Mining Code to promote ASGM formalization, and avoid discrepancies and contradictions, have been presented since 2019 to the Executive and legal bodies for discussion. In addition, a comprehensive review and analysis of the regulations applicable to ASGM in Costa Rica was conducted in 2021 as part of the NAP. Inability to effectively apply the legal framework and the resulting informality and illegality of operations have hampered the implementation of other applicable legal provisions, such as registration, commercialization and use of mercury and cyanide, sanitary permits and municipal licenses, authorizations for the export of materials (gold), among others. With regards to monitoring, control and enforcement measures, current efforts are weak and require additional expertise. There is a lack of effective coordination of stakeholders in the implementation of ASM-related programs and the application of policies and regulations, which has increased distrust in the authorities and hinders access to reliable information on the activity. In response in Abangares, a Municipal Mining Commission was created to deal with matters related to ASGM.

During the NAP, consultations with mining communities highlighted priorities and needs in terms of capacity building, which included mercury-free technologies, the improvement of processing techniques and building on-site experience, amongst others.

Previous planetGOLD projects did not link ASGM impacts with biodiversity targets, as well as the benefits ASGM communities could gain if connected with other countries and regions. Despite being an activity shared by families in most cases, actions implemented so far also do not promote the active participation of women nor do they recognize the role they play in the sector. Additional efforts on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment are required.

As part of its NAP, Costa Rica has generated information on ASGM through several assessments on the environment, mining, as well as the legal and technical aspects of the sector. A more detailed baseline study will be undertaken during the PPG (Project Preparatory Grant), taking account of past lessons learned from the planetGOLD Programme, and efforts will be made to establish regional cooperation and a network for information exchange and experience sharing with other projects, such as Honduras (GEF ID 10614) and Nicaragua (GEF ID 10847). This will complement a gender analysis and action plan to be undertaken during the design phase of the project and dedicated gender-related activities and outputs will be integrated into the results framework. In addition, an environmental and social assessment and related plan to mitigate and avoid risks and impacts of the project will be developed during the PPG phase as per UNEP guidelines.

Uncertain futures

Under a ''business as usual'' scenario, unsustainable and irresponsible artisanal and small-scale gold mining activities will continue to occur in the Guanacaste, Puntarenas and Alajuela provinces which have not adequately addressed mercury use, resulting in the continued loss and degradation of biodiversity and habitats, with negative consequences for human health. Contradictory policies and a lack of sufficient resources to strengthen and implement regulatory frameworks will fail to enhance formalization, professionalization and address the environmental and social aspects of ASGM. Non-strategic projects will fill urgent gaps but not be sufficient to address the long-term needs of ASGM and serve the people who depend on the sector for their livelihoods. Continued demand for gold and limited economic opportunities will drive people into ASGM but inefficient

technologies and inadequate capacity will continue, reducing financial gains. Private sector investments will remain limited due to the informality and perceived high reputational risks of these operations. Without full understanding-of and access-to technologies and practices to reduce and eliminate mercury use as well as economic incentives to adopt them, ASGM organizations and independent miners will continue existing practices, contributing to environmental degradation, while harming social cohesion.

The rate and nature of this decline will be affected by the systems drivers identified earlier. Poor urban planning coupled with a rising population could weaken ecosystems, while better management could improve resilience. At the same time, aging populations are more vulnerable to health and physical hazards. Climate change is almost certain to increase the frequency of extreme weather events in the region but improving resilience will likely reduce accidents and spills emerging from ASGM, the absence of which could be fatal. According to projections for 2080[31], a significant reduction of rainfall is expected in the Pacific, risking drought and an increase in precipitation in the Caribbean slope, increasing the likelihood of floods. Abangares is already facing water scarcity. Such stresses over land and water could be exacerbated by internal factors such as an upsurge in mining operations or external factors including extreme weather.

Any intervention needs to ensure that alternative gold processing systems are profitable, adaptable to the local context, as well as miners' needs, and meet the urgent need expressed by mining communities to enhance formalization, access to finance and markets. In addition, legal and institutional frameworks require strengthening for better environmental management, and to link environmental sustainability and economic and social development[32].

Objective and barriers

With targeted GEF support, the project's objective is *to reduce the negative environmental and social impacts caused by the intensive use of mercury in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector in Costa Rica*.

This objective is likely to be robust to uncertain futures, since it will contribute to higher profitability of operations and improved environmental and social outcomes. Strong and solid regulatory frameworks, access to financial resources and markets, and testing of cleaner technologies will provide a stable foundation for the sector to develop in the future. The intervention seeks to generate behavioral change, capacities and knowledge, taking into account economic, social, environmental and health considerations. Parallel efforts to build integrated landscape management approaches and multi-stakeholder alliances with a long-term planning vision will set the basis for durable results. In addition, linkages with biodiversity protection, climate change adaptation and gender mainstreaming may contribute to sustainability and resilience of the intervention as communities will be better equipped to adapt to changing conditions.

The following barriers have been identified that prevent meaningful reductions in mercury use in ASGM:
B1 - Weak formalization enabling environment addressing mercury trade and use and informality of ASGM.
B2 - Lack of incentives to undertake formalization process and adopt mercury-free technologies.
B3 and B4 - Lack of investment, financial resources, and access to markets to undertake changes in extraction and processing techniques.
B5 – Poor uptake of mercury-free technologies due to limited availability, accessibility and awareness on these technologies and mercury use.
B6 - Lack of knowledge and capacity to transition towards a cleaner, safer and more responsible ASGM sector.
B7 and 8 – Lack of land use planning tools and poor coordination of stakeholders at national and local levels.
B9 – Limited understanding of linkages of ASGM and mercury use with biodiversity protection and gender equality.

Key stakeholders were consulted at the national and regional levels during PIF development. Notably, officials at different levels of MINAE (DGM, DIGECA, SETENA, Water Directorate), the Ministry of Health (at the national and local levels), the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the National Institute for Cooperative Development (INFOCOOP), the Agency of Promotion of Exports (Procomer) and the municipalities of several ASGM areas (Osa,

and Montes de Oro) were consulted on actions to be conducted during the project, as well as their existing and planned initiatives and related needs. The Abangares Cantonal Union of Development Associations (UNCADA) was also contacted to share information about the project, including the timeline, to gather feedback. Academic institutions such as the Association of Geologists and the University of Costa Rica were further engaged, especially in relation to component 4. Regionally, consultations with the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) and the Swiss Better Gold Initiative (SBGI) took place to build on the previous work already conducted and knowledge generated. Project development has also been informed by planetGOLD. Linkages with SINAC, gender-related entities and financial institutions will be further explored during the PPG phase. Finally, as one of the lessons from the NAP, community associations, cooperatives and communal leaders will be engaged, and focal points will be designated to ensure effective communication and participation of the local population.

[1] UNEP (2018). Global Mercury Assessment. Available from: https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/global-mercury-assessment-2018
[2] UNEP (2018). Global Mercury Assessment. Available from: https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/global-mercury-assessment-2018
[3] OECD (2023). Environment at a Glance: Costa Rica. Available from: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/6e4ee127-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/1f798474-en&_csp_=c40565503648b2cfcded78b70a3894d1&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=chapter#:~:text=Costa%20Rica%20has%20abundant%20water,290%20km2%20of%20coastlines.
[4] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[5] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[6] Cooperatives in Abangares include: CoopeOro R.L.; Coope Bonanza R.L.; Coope Abangares R.L.; Coope Oro Verde R.L.; Coope Oro Sólido R.L, Coope Oro Rosa R.L, Coope Beta R.L, Coope Guaitilar and Uniocoop.
[7] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[8] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[9] Abangares-Tilarán (64,602 hectares), Osa-Golfito (42,232.4 hectares) and Crucitas (1.6 hectares). Source: DGM.
[10] World Bank (2022). Unemployment, Male and Female (% of labor force). Available from: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/
[11] Common Country Assessment (2022).
[12] INEC (2017). National Time Use Survey.
[13] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[14] 1 troy ounce is equivalent to 28.3 grams. Source: LBMA. Available from: https://www.lbma.org.uk/prices-and-data/precious-metal-prices#/
[15] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[16] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[17] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[18] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[19] Convention on Biological Diversity. Available from: https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/?country=cr
[20] Common Country Assessment (2022).
[21] OECD (2023). OECD Environmental Performance Reviews: Costa Rica 2023. Available from: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/ec94fd4e-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/ec94fd4e-en
[22] Common Country Assessment (2022).
[23] National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica. Available from: https://inec.cr/
[24] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[25] NAP on ASGM in Costa Rica (2023).
[26] Economic Research Institute (2024). Crop Farm Worker Salary. Costa Rica. Available from: https://www.erieri.com/salary/job/crop-farm-worker/
[27] World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal. Available from: https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/costa-rica
[28] UNFPA (2023). Country programme document for Costa Rica. Available from: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/board-documents/DP.FPA_.CPD_.CRI_.6%20-%20Costa%20Rica%20CPD%20-%20DRAFT%20final%20-%207Nov22.pdf
[29] Common Country Assessment (2022).
[30] The Mining Code (CM) (Law 6797) is the legal framework that regulates mining activity in Costa Rica defining the specific conditions for legal small-scale mining for family subsistence and artisanal and small-scale mining.
[31] National Institute of Meteorology (IMN)
[32] MIDEPLAN (2014).

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

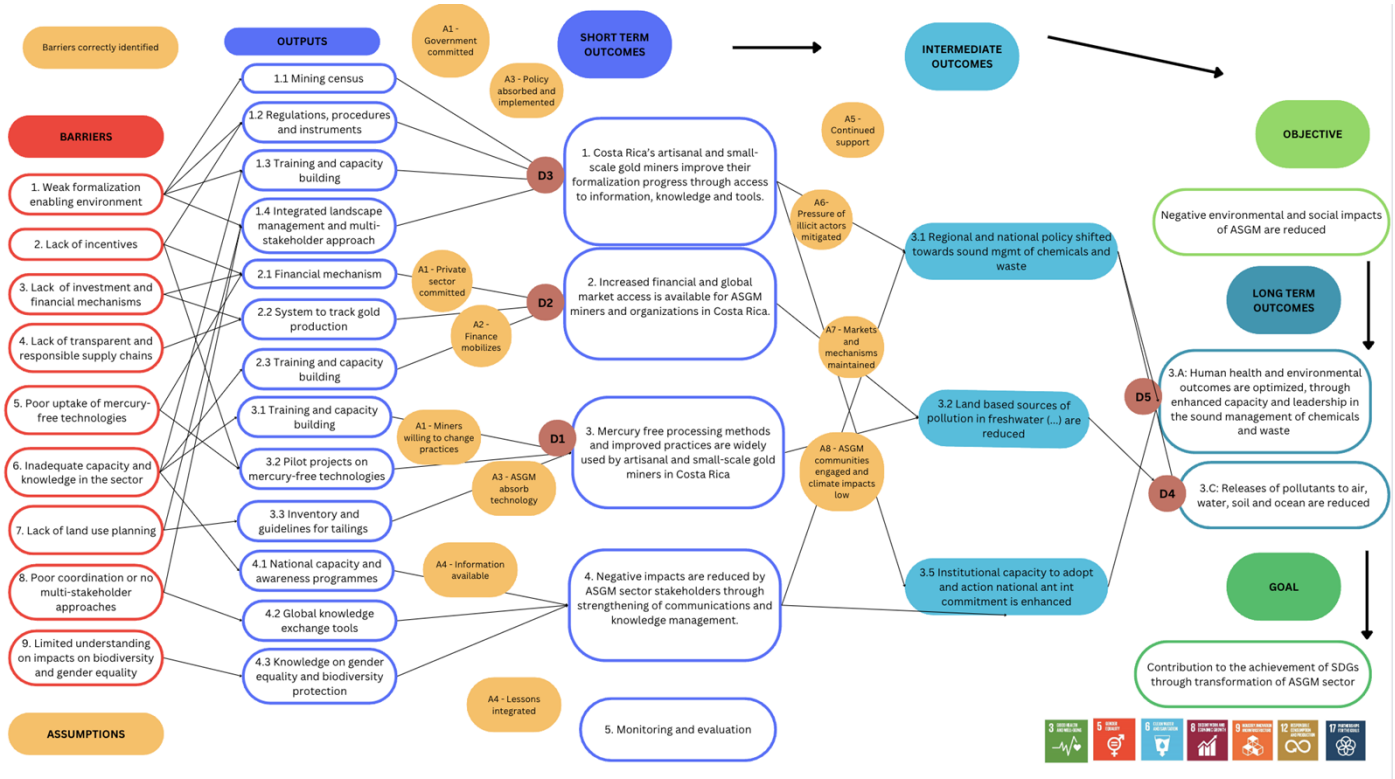
The Theory of Change (ToC) for planetGOLD Costa Rica is depicted in Figure 1. It is built on the premise that if an enabling policy and regulatory environment is in place, appropriate solutions (including technologies, access to markets and financial mechanisms) will be introduced for ASGM extraction, processing and tailings management, and

efforts will be made to harness knowledge gained for awareness raising, capacity building, replication and scaling. This will transform Costa Rica's ASGM sector, reducing the use of mercury, improving the management of targeted areas and benefitting men and women from ASGM populations and surrounding areas.

Assumptions include that there is ability of government officials and ASGM communities to absorb policy and technology; willingness to invest resources from interested parties, especially ASGM communities; and that there is continued political support and engagement of key stakeholders including government, the private sector and mining organizations and individuals.

This will be elaborated to match the specific context of ASGM areas identified during further development. The four interlinked pathways: (1) increased formalization of artisanal and small-scale gold miners through access to information, knowledge and tools; (2) increase in finance options for miners and access to transparent and responsible supply chains; (3) increased uptake of mercury-free technologies and improved practices by miners; and (4) knowledge sharing and communication strategies targeted at all stakeholders to support and increase formalization and mercury reduction, each address a specific barrier to achieving the project objective and define a project Component comprising sets of project activities and outputs that will deliver immediate project outcomes. The project will also contribute to wider development objectives and socio-economic and cultural co-benefits such as increased incomes, better jobs, improved health, and reduced land-based sources of pollution. This is reflected in contributions to Sustainable Development Goals 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 17. Local environmental and socio-economic co-benefits will be assessed during PPG and incorporated into the results framework.

FIGURE 1: PRELIMINARY THEORY OF CHANGE FOR PLANETGOLD COSTA RICA



Note: Drivers (D1, D2, D3, D4 and D5 and UNEP Medium-term outcomes 3.1, 3.2 and 3.5 are explained under section ''Assumptions and Impact Drivers''.

Specific mining sites have not been formally selected. During the PPG phase, detailed assessments, site visits and consultations in the ASGM areas will be conducted. Special attention will be paid to vulnerable groups such as women, children and other vulnerable populations, as well as to the possibility of enhancing biodiversity protection in areas

that are particularly biodiverse. A gender expert will be part of the PMU and will ensure gender is mainstreamed across all components, including stakeholder engagement. Additional information on gender equality and women empowerment can be found in Appendix 2. It should be noted that indigenous territories are not located nearby ASGM areas. Lessons learned from the programme will be considered by providing case studies and best practices that can then be adopted to suit the local environment.

This project contributes directly to UNEP's Pollution and Health Programme which focuses on tackling pollutants that pose significant risks to the environment and health, including mercury and cyanide. It contributes directly to component 3 of the programme on ''strengthening core capacities for chemicals management and pollution prevention and control and establish the policy foundation for an enabling environment'', with outcomes and direct outcomes have integrated in the ToC.

Project Components

Component 1 Formalization of the ASGM Sector will address barriers (1) and (2) by strengthening Costa Rica's ASGM formalization tools and the capacity and knowledge of relevant stakeholders, while piloting integrated approaches. It's starting point will be to identify and compile ongoing regional, national and local formalization efforts, lessons learned and existing barriers in collaboration with key stakeholders (DGM, DIGECA, SETENA, Municipalities, SINAC, ASGM cooperatives and independent men and women miners). Entry points to create ownership, buy in and win-win scenarios on ASGM formalization will be determined in the design phase, based on strategies developed during Costa Rica's NAP on ASGM. One expected activity is the elaboration of a mining census in areas not covered by the NAP, identifying sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive information. Responsibility will lie with the DGM of MINAE jointly with the Ministry of Health and local governments, with potential partnerships being the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) and the Statistics Department of the University of Costa Rica (UCR).

The component will assess the applicability of current legal frameworks and determine actions to strengthen their implementation in relation to the formalization of gold mining and trading, and in particular, gender equality and women empowerment ensuring the policies and plans developed are gender-responsive. It will explore solutions to transboundary issues such as cross-border informality, illicit mercury trade and fiscal regimes, jointly with Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, the project will design and deliver a capacity building programme targeting government authorities and ASGM organizations on formalization, human rights and gender equality, as well as on other cross-cutting topics such as biodiversity protection and climate change adaptation. The institution(s) responsible for delivering the capacity building programme will be identified during the preparatory phase. Relevant allies on gender mainstreaming include regional organizations for women miners and relevant national counterparts, such as the National Institute of Women (INAMU), amongst others. Furthermore, the project will explore the applicability of integrated landscape management and multi-stakeholder approaches in the municipality of Abangares. This is currently being piloted in other active planetGOLD child projects from Phase 2. Local stakeholders such as Abangares authorities and personnel of the Municipal Mining Permanent Commission will drive this process, while women's participation will be ensured. Through this, the project will explore potential synergies with climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation, especially through the integrated landscape management approach. The expected outcome (1.1) of this pathway is increased formalization in the ASGM sector through multisectoral, integrated approaches and capacity building of actors engaged in ASGM formalization.

Component 2 Access to Finance and Responsible Supply Chains will address barriers (3) and (4) by increasing the availability of financial mechanisms and private sector interest in ASGM, enhancing transparency and traceability of ASGM supply chains, and building capacity and knowledge. This component is expected to include a range of project activities such as supporting responsible value chains for ASM gold, as well as exploring financial and other incentives to encourage behavioral change. This involves identifying and developing financial mechanisms in collaboration with both public and private financial institutions, including social impact investors, though what materializes will likely depend on the level required funds and opportunities available. Women miners will be specifically focused on in these efforts. During the PPG phase, the project team will consult the BNCR and the People's and Community Development

Bank (BP) and other private institutions on options to enhance financial access. In addition, the project will develop a system to track gold production and improve the traceability and transparency of gold supply chains. This will come through engaging gold traders, mainly Unión Cantonal de Asociaciones de Desarrollo de Abangares (UNCADA) and the Promoter of Foreign Trade (Procomer), to adopt solutions that clarify where their gold has come from, while highlighting the associated business benefits of due diligence to ensure that miners, suppliers, as well as international gold buyers and refiners, mainly based in the US and Switzerland, buy into these efforts. Training and capacity building, both for ASGM organizations, miners and local financial institutions, will complement this through the introduction and implementation of planetGOLD Criteria, standard procedures for business and operations management, business management and records, as well as on the opportunities and needs of ASGM communities. Relevant institutions for involvement include INAMU, INFOCOOP and DINADECO. The expected outcome (2.1) of this pathway is the availability of financing options for miners through improved business models and the attainment of better gold prices, facilitated by transparent and responsible supply chains.

Component 3 Mercury-Free Technologies will address barriers (2) and (5) by generating capacity and introducing technologies and practices to improve mining extraction, processing and tailings management. This will be achieved through a range of project activities built on initial assessments with community stakeholders to better understand current practices, drivers for the continued use of mercury in ASGM communities, as well as the costs and benefits of adopting mercury-free technologies. A gender-sensitive needs assessment will be conducted, and mercury-free equipment tailored to local circumstances will be procured, taking account of the lessons learned on this Component from other planet GOLD child projects. At least five pilot projects are expected to take place during the project's lifetime, targeting a critical mass of miners in Abangares where there is a high concentration of processing activities. Fundamental here, is that field tests are executed in a way that the economic benefits of the technological change are demonstrated in practice, which will encourage a transition towards mercury-free technologies. The implementation and results of the different tests should be monitored and supervised by experts in the field, such as government officials or private consultants, and involve a wide range of representatives of mining organizations. The project team will define ownership and the management of technologies to ensure they remain in use after the projects close. Moreover, a continuous capacity building programme will be established to deliver capacity building on topics such as mercury-free technologies, cost management for maintenance and repair, occupational, health and safety standards, wastewater management, tailings management, and land reclamation, via hands-on practical field training. Onward peer-to-peer learning amongst miners will increase technology uptake. Existing structures, such as training centers and universities with capacity to deliver the training, will be assessed during the PPG. Furthermore, the intervention will reduce instances of mercury-contaminated tailings being treated with cyanide through the development of a tailings inventory, as well as guidelines and manuals on tailings management. Key partners under this component include the DGM, SETENA, DIGECA of MINAE, local authorities and mining cooperatives and individuals. The expected outcome of this pathway is (output 3.1) reduced mercury use in ASGM through increasing the uptake of mercury-free technologies. In recognition of the potential impacts of these changes on specific stakeholders (e.g., mercury providers, processing system owners), the project will seek to minimize disruptions through developing mitigation strategies such as supporting alternative livelihoods.

Component 4 Knowledge Sharing, Communication and Local Capacity Building will address barrier (6) by improving knowledge, communication and local capacity building, drawing upon key project results and lessons learned from components 1-3, as well as the planetGOLD programme. During the PPG, the project team will conduct a capacity assessment and identify knowledge gaps in Costa Rica. Similarly, it will identify major technical institutions for partnerships, such as the Central American School of Geology, School of Civil Engineering, School of Chemistry, School of Health Technologies, Center for Research and Studies in Sustainable Development (CIEDES) and National Learning Institute (INA), National Technical University (UTN), amongst others. Materials and training modules developed by other planetGOLD child projects in the region and partner organizations such as the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) and the Swiss Better Gold Initiative (SBGI), will be compiled and tailored to the Costa Rican context. Hands-on trainings and pilots will be prioritized as a way to generate effective engagement and interest. In addition, Component 4 will develop gender-sensitive communication, knowledge management and learning strategies to scale up project results and maximize impacts at the local level. Media campaigns and communication tools (meetings, events, local radio and television, WhatsApp and social media) will be used to inform the general public, ASGM communities and

schools on the dangers of mercury, including potential solutions, providing information on the sector's progress to formalize, limit mercury use, support gender equality and good environmental practices. Under these activities, the project also intends to collaborate with the Ministry of Health and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to complement existing efforts on protecting human health. The Component also includes activities related to the development and dissemination of knowledge products (e.g., guidelines, manuals), utilization of the planetGOLD website, as well as knowledge exchange (e.g., participation in planet GOLD Annual Programme Meetings (APM) and Global Forums). Key learnings[1] from the NAP and Phase 1 planetGOLD countries have been compiled and will be socialized with counterparts and integrated into the project design during PPG. To address the gaps identified by the programme, specific knowledge and information on biodiversity protection, gender equality and ASGM will be generated and disseminated, for which close collaboration with SINAC and INAMU, amongst others, will be necessary. Component 4 has one immediate outcome: (4.1) knowledge sharing, and communication strategies targeted at all ASGM stakeholders to support and increase formalization and mercury reduction efforts.

Taken together, these pathways and outcomes are interlinked, work together or are dependent on the progress and results of others. For instance, enhanced financial access under Outcome 2.1 will allow the adoption of mercury-free technologies under Outcome 3.1, and the construction of responsible supply chains and increase of financial inclusion under Outcome 2.1 will be facilitated by a successful implementation of formalization measures (Outcome 1.1) and the elimination of mercury use (Outcome 3.1).

But—while necessary, the proposed components are not sufficient to fully address the problem of mercury use and impact of irresponsible ASGM practices on the environment and human health, unless targeted efforts to reduce mercury use and improve practices are actioned in congruence with similar efforts in the region and Costa Rica to address pollution, biodiversity loss and poverty reduction. For this reason, close coordination is critical with various projects and stakeholders in the Central America region (refer to section on coordination and cooperation with existing initiatives and projects). Recognizing this, the project will collect a large and diverse group of stakeholders, gender and age-balanced, who play important roles in Costa Rican ASGM, including institutional authorities, academic and private sector groups involved in the gold supply chain and financing, and ASGM cooperatives and independent miners. It will also build on existing collaborations and regional initiatives, prioritizing work with institutions and projects (GEF and non-GEF) that are working with local communities to reduce mercury use in ASGM and ensure scientific and socio-economic information is mainstreamed into project components. The proposed activities are effectively designed to endure under changing conditions and continue to support responsible ASGM and related livelihoods.

Assumptions and impact drivers

The achievement of project outcomes, progress toward the project's objective and its longer-term impacts depend on several wider assumptions. Those that directly relate to the achievement of the project's immediate outcomes include:

A1 – Government agencies, and the private sector are willing to engage and support ASGM operations, and the ASM gold supply chain. In addition, it is assumed that ASGM communities will be receptive to opportunities offered by formalization and are willing to invest time and money to adopt mercury-free technologies and discard current practices.
A2 – The private sector is willing (or can be encouraged) to invest in activities that address mercury usage, as well as other environmental and social issues, and continues to be supportive.
A3 – Government agencies and ASGM organizations are able to absorb policy and technology in a correct and inclusive manner.
A4 – Information is made available by relevant stakeholders and lessons learned are generated and integrated throughout project design and implementation.

There are also several impact drivers that facilitate progress along the causal chain:

D1- The ASGM industry is keen to increase economic benefits by improving currently inefficient recovery processes.
D2- Obligations under international and regional frameworks (US Dodd Frank, EU Mineral Regulations) encourage more responsible ASGM supply chains to maintain and increase gold exports.
D3- There is increased awareness among government decision-and policy makers about the value of ASGM in poverty reduction, the opportunities offered by formalization and the need to manage ASGM responsibly to ensure ecosystems and human health is protected.

If project outcome-level assumptions and impact drivers are met, delivery of the four Components will result in further gains along causal pathways to achieving improved practices and technologies, as well as a reduction in mercury use and negative impacts. The project will monitor progress against these assumptions and drivers and adapt activities if they are not being realized.

These Components and Outcomes combine to drive several medium-term outcomes in line with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS)[2] and Programme of Work (PoW)[3]. Components 1 and 4 will support a shift of national policy towards the sound management of chemicals and waste (direct outcome 3.1 of the pollution pillar) and the enhancement the institutional capacity in Costa Rica to adopt and act on national and international commitments (direct outcome 3.5 of the pollution pillar). At the same time, Components 2 and 3 will build financial, technological and capacity-related conditions needed to reduce land-based sources of pollution in freshwater and oceans, through a reduction and elimination of mercury use in the ASGM sector (direct outcome 3.2 of the pollution pillar). These outcomes, supported by interventions and resources outside the project, will lead to reduced mercury usage, the improved management of landscapes and enhanced, improved jobs, supporting miners and communities. Achievements of longer-term outcomes, which are beyond the immediate scope of the project, are subject to further assumptions (A6-7) and drivers (D4-5).

A5- There is sufficient and continued commitment (political support, staff, resources, etc.) by national government institutions responsible for ASGM policy, legislation and management for actions to implement improved technologies and practices.
A6- Perverse incentives and pressure from illicit actors can be eliminated and/or mitigated and do not continue to promote irresponsible ASGM.
A7- National and international markets for responsible gold can be developed and maintained to provide long-term secure sources of income for mining communities, particularly benefiting women.
A8- ASGM communities continued to see the value of and commit resources for transition to mercury-free alternatives and improved management of operations. Future climate change impacts do not affect structure and dynamics of ASGM areas.

D4- Global demand increases for responsible gold or gold extracted and processed that meets relevant standards.
D5- Regional initiatives and forums occur that promote regional visions, capacity and investment for the management of mineral resources and ASM, in line with international legal obligations (e.g., SDGs, CBD).

Innovation and scaling towards wider transformation

The methodology of the intervention is based on the planet GOLD programme which has already been tested in 9 countries. However, this project incorporates innovative technologies to improve processes to reduce and eliminate mercury usage, as these have not been deployed and disseminated in Costa Rica previously. Various solutions that have been shown to reduce and eliminate the use of mercury will be tested under Component 3. These may include improved crushing and milling techniques, gravity concentration tools, as well as flotation and chemical leaching technology. Resource efficient improvements will also be considered, alongside the development (through pilots and case studies), promotion and adoption of innovative financial mechanisms, business models and provenance tools for controlling, monitoring and tracking gold along the supply chain, based on Costa Rica's needs and circumstances. For example, financing schemes may include debt finance (local savings and credit schemes, commercial banks, cooperative banks, national development banks) or equity finance (private equity investors, impact investors).

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing (RS) tools will be utilized to monitor ASGM activities and define related policy.

In addition to technological innovation, there is potential for innovation related to de-risking investments in ASGM operations. Capacity building is embedded across all four components, including gender mainstreaming, biodiversity protection and other cross-cutting aspects which will be targeted through dedicated training, modules and materials. By the end of the project, ASGM-related institutions, organizations and stakeholders should have sufficient capacity to ensure continuity in project results. A ''training of trainers'' approach and methodologies that prioritize learning-by-doing, combined with effective knowledge management (Component 4) – i.e. promoting sharing of project-generated information, lessons learned and good practices including linkages with the website of project partners (MINAE) – will ensure that capacity and knowledge generated by the project will be sustained in the longer-term. Project results, lessons and good practices will be disseminated and scaled up through both national, regional and global level partners and initiatives—and in parallel, the project will continually seek to benefit from lessons learned from similar other projects. In particular, the project will ensure gender experts are engaged and gender dimensions are reported and monitored on the Gender Action Plan to be developed and budgeted during the PPG phase.

At the regional level, potential opportunities for scaling up and the wider dissemination of results include measures to implement National Action Plans, and linkages through other GEF-financed initiatives, including planetGOLD projects in Honduras and Nicaragua and the Mercury Trade in LAC project (ID11047), all of which support measures to reduce and eliminate mercury use in ASGM, aware that organizations, technologies and practices in neighboring countries are similar. The existence of several closely connected GEF-funded projects provides an opportunity for scaling up through linkages and networking, laying the potential to achieve greater economies of scale.

Implementation arrangements

UNEP will operate as the Implementing Agency (IA) for the project, while the Executing Agency (EA) will be the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM), through a local team in-country. ARM is a Colombian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established in 2004 to support the ASM into a socially and environmentally responsible activity that improves the quality of life of artisanal miners and their environment. They have active projects in seven countries in the region and are an active member of the planetGOLD Programme Advisory Group (PAG).

A Project Steering Committee (PSC), chaired by MINAE, will serve as the national coordination mechanism, with relevant institutions and stakeholders, building on the results of the NAP[4]. The implementation and coordination arrangements will be further developed during the PPG phase. A strong inter-institutional coordination and communication will ensure consistent messaging and alignment of actions towards the ASGM sector.

[1] At the time of the development of the PIF, the Mid-Term Review of the planetGOLD Burkina Faso, Colombia, Guyana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, Peru, Philippines) and the Terminal Evaluation of Guyana, Indonesia and NAP Costa Rica had been consulted.
[2] UNEP (2021). For people and planet: the UNEP strategy for 2022-2025. Available from: https://www.unep.org/resources/people-and-planet-unep-strategy-2022-2025
[3] UNEP (2021). Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023 (POW). Available from: https://www.unep.org/resources/unep-programme-work-and-budget-2022-2023-pow-annex-1-people-and-planet
[4] The project will build on the Steering Committee (SC) established for the NAP consisting of: Office of the Vice-Ministry of Energy of MINAE; Directorate of Environmental Quality Management (DIGECA) of MINAE; Directorate of Geology and Mines (DGM) of MINAE; National Environmental Technical Secretariat (SETENA) of MINAE; and the Ministry of Health.

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing

The planetGOLD Costa Rica project will seek cooperation with the Government of Costa Rica, other planetGOLD child projects, and different ongoing and planned initiatives related to formalization, financial inclusion, capacity building, environmental protection and gender equality of ASGM and surrounding populations in all targeted areas. Joint activities will be planned at the national and local levels, including capacity training, field missions and communication campaigns. Relevant institutions of the Government of Costa Rica will provide in-kind support to the project during its implementation. The project technical team will provide technical expertise and guidance to government counterparts.

The project will build on the results of the ''Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) in Costa Rica'' (GEF ID 5881) as well as the ''National Action Plan (NAP) on ASGM in Costa Rica'' (GEF ID 10423), supporting the implementation of the latter.

During project design and implementation, it will closely interact with the planetGOLD Global project (GED ID 10606) and the Global Mercury Partnership (GMP) both led by UNEP on coordination, knowledge management and outreach. Information will be exchanged both upstream and downstream to utilize lessons learned, ensure the project is correctly branded and feeds into common results systems. Information, knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices with other planetGOLD child projects is foreseen, particularly with Honduras (GEF ID 10614) and Nicaragua (GEF ID 10847). It will also actively participate in the regular regional exchanges of the Latin America regional group already established by the planetGOLD programme.

The intervention will also seek to build on the project ''Conserving Biodiversity through Sustainable Management in Production Landscapes in Costa Rica'' (GEF ID 9416) implemented by UNDP specifically for the Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) component and with the project ''Accelerate Minamata Convention compliance through improved understanding and control of mercury trade in Latin America'' (GEF ID 11047) implemented by UNEP on the information and activities related to mercury flows at the national and regional levels.

Finally, coordination will be sought with stakeholders that have a strong trajectory and track record of interventions in the ASGM sector in the region, such as the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) and the Swiss Better Gold Initiative (SBGI), among others.

During the project preparatory phase, consultations with the UNEP Focal Point for Costa Rica, the UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO) and the UN Country Team (UNCT) will take place to identify additional initiatives with which to cooperate during the implementation. In particular, collaboration will be sought with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

Core Indicators

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
64602	0	0	0

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
64,602.00			

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 9 Chemicals of global concern and their waste reduced

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
6.40	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 9.1 Solid and liquid Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) removed or disposed (POPs type)

POPs type	Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.2 Quantity of mercury reduced (metric tons)

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
6.40			

Indicator 9.3 Hydrochloroflurocarbons (HCFC) Reduced/Phased out (metric tons)

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.4 Number of countries with legislation and policy implemented to control chemicals and waste (Use this sub-indicator in addition to one of the sub-indicators 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
1			

Indicator 9.5 Number of low-chemical/non-chemical systems implemented, particularly in food production, manufacturing and cities (Use this sub-indicator in addition to one of the sub-indicators 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.6 POPs/Mercury containing materials and products directly avoided

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.7 Highly Hazardous Pesticides eliminated

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.8 Avoided residual plastic waste

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	3,300			
Male	3,300			
Total	**6,600**	**0**	0	**0**

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

GEF Core Indicator 4: During the preparatory phase, the project team will assess the feasibility of piloting the integrated landscape management (ILM) approach in the Abangares-Tilarán mining district. It is assumed that the project intervention will benefit not only ASGM sites but the entire landscape surrounding the extraction and processing operations. Therefore, at PIF stage, the expected hectares under improved management are 64,602 hectares. The figure is based on the mining district surface area provided by the DGM. Information on specific project sites will be gathered and the exact surface area under improved management will be determined and confirmed during PPG. Enhanced biodiversity protection will result from improved management of the landscape.

GEF Core Indicator 9: The latest mercury estimates in the ASGM sector in Costa Rica come from the NAP (UNEP, 2023). The baseline in 2020 stated that 2.8 tons of gold and 34.4 tons of mercury were produced and used annually (corresponding to 200 sites estimated only in Abangares). This amount is high for the small size of the ASGM sector compared to other countries. However, it is consistent with the prevalence of whole ore amalgamation and inefficient technologies, and practices that use a substantial amount of mercury. Using mercury use and gold production estimates, the project will target at least 20 sites in the Abangares area, aiming to reduce 2.6 tons (2,583 kilos) of mercury per year. Mercury-free processing systems will likely start operating from year 3. Based on other planetGOLD child projects, the project forecasts a potential reduction of mercury use by 50% during year 3 and 100% in years 4 and 5. Therefore, the total mercury reduction expected for the project is 6.4 tons (6,458 kilos), accounting for 18% of the reduction targets determined in the country's NAP. Mercury reduction estimates will be confirmed during the PPG phase once specific sites have been selected and assessed based on the methodology developed by the planetGOLD programme. Since ASGM operations are highly concentrated in the Abangares area and the amount of mercury used is substantial, the related mercury reduction/elimination is expected to be ambitious.

Core Indicator 11: Direct beneficiaries include miners, processors, actors along the gold supply chain and government officials and policy makers. Based on interviews conducted during the NAP, those engaged in ASGM in Abangares are estimated to be 2,000 individuals (approximately 8% of the population). At PIF stage, the targeted number of beneficiaries that will benefit through reduced exposure to harmful chemicals and improved health was estimated using the mining population and the average family size in Costa Rica (3.2 people per household), resulting in a total of 6,400 individuals (50% women). In addition, it is expected that at least 200 government officials will benefit from project assistance (100 men and 100 women). Many more will benefit from the project through reduced transboundary pollution.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	Risks: Costa Rica is highly vulnerable to extreme climate events and natural vulnerabilities, and the majority of the population reside in areas at high risk of multiple hazards, including floods and landslides, cyclones, storm surge and sea rise level. Extreme climate events could impact project implementation, especially on-site activities. Mitigation measures: Climate change risks will be considered when assessing and selecting the areas of the intervention and mitigation measures will be proposed. In addition, during the implementation phase, training on managing climate impacts will be included in the capacity-building aspects of the project. Coordination with the Municipal and Community Emergency Committees will be sought.
Environmental and Social	Moderate	Risks: Social and cultural factors could prevent the uptake of mercury-free technologies and gender mainstreaming objectives into the project design and hinder the implementation and achievement of outcomes. Pilot technologies could create risks for workers. In addition, loss of jobs of intermediaries, mercury providers and owners of mercury processing systems could take place due to the introduction of new technologies. Mitigation measures: A detailed assessment and consultations with

		relevant stakeholders and a gender analysis and action plan during the PPG phase will ensure these risks remain low. The project addresses environmental and social issues related to the ASGM sector. Stakeholders, particularly mining communities, will be engaged in the design of mercury-free technologies and contextual factors will be considered. Mercury providers will be particularly considered in the SEP to understand conflicting interests and propose courses of action. The project will engage women and men in project design and will prepare a gender analysis and action plan to ensure women participate in ASGM activities. An accountability and grievance mechanism has been established at the level of the global planetGOLD programme, in line with UNEP's and GEF's policies. Information about this mechanism will be shared with the project stakeholders during the design and implementation phases.
Political and Governance	Low	Risks: Costa Rica has a long tradition of democratic political stability. In addition, the current government is in the second year of a four-year term and is overall supported by the population. Political support may be insufficient to drive strong engagement of relevant actors and changes in government and personnel could negatively impact project implementation. Illegal ASGM activities could pose reputational risks to the project and in relation to the implementation of certain activities. Mitigation measures: The project will closely monitor the political situation at the country and local levels for an early identification of potential sources of conflict that may affect the project's implementation phase. Political buy-in will be maintained through strategic and periodic awareness raising and communication to key decision-makers and through messages to targeted audiences at national and local levels. The engagement of government personnel will include actions that facilitate continuity during implementation. During PPG, illegality dynamics will be assessed in the potential areas for the intervention and mitigation measures will be designed accordingly.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Low	Risks: Low commitment and engagement in the project, poor political support, staffing, co-financing, and/or changed priorities due to the adverse economic conditions from partners and government institutions responsible for ASGM. Bureaucratic and logistical challenges could delay project design and implementation. Mitigation measures: The project has been designed to respond to and support the priorities of MINAE and the Municipalities where ASGM activities take place. The project will leverage existing mechanisms to ensure participation remains strong. In addition, cooperation is already ongoing with the main counterparts to ensure goals and approaches are aligned to the national policies and plans. The project will build in previous experiences and lessons learned during the NAP.

Technological	Moderate	Risks: Several technological risks are inherent to the introduction of mercury free technologies including technical feasibility, maintenance and reliability, cost and affordability and acceptance and adoption by artisanal and small-scale gold miners. Mitigation measures: A gender-sensitive assessment of existing technologies and practices as well as the several factors that determine appropriate mercury-free technologies will be conducted to ensure compatibility with the ASGM sector in Costa Rica. Effective communication, stakeholder engagement and participatory approaches will be ensured at all stages of the project and effectiveness of mercury-free alternatives will be demonstrated in order to gain acceptance. Sustainability of the introduced technological interventions will also be considered at project design and implementation.
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	Risks: Factors such as the operational efficiency, gold recovery rates and market prices will impact the financial viability of the intervention and the related business models. Another relevant risk is that financial institutions are not willing to engage with the ASGM sector due to perceived high risks or lack of knowledge of the sector. Mitigation measures: Different business models will be piloted and tested, and lessons learned from Phase 1 child projects will be collected during the inception phase. In order to ensure the participation and engagement of financial institutions, a series of activities will be implemented including risk assessment and due diligence of ASGM operations. The design of a financial mechanism will aim to share risks and/or incentivize lenders to participate.
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Low	Risks: Project partners and national counterparts do not sustain the project activities including co-financing commitments. Asymmetries between municipalities in terms of management capacities, resources and availability impact project design and implementation. Mitigation measures: National counterparts have experience dealing with GEF funded projects and have already worked with UNEP in the field of chemicals and waste. The monitoring, knowledge generation and dissemination of the project will ensure sustainability and durability of outcomes. Additionally, effective and timely stakeholder engagement will ensure ownership and commitment of partners, especially at the local level.
Fiduciary	Low	Risks: Project funds are not adequately managed and co-financing does not materialize on time. Mitigation measures: UNEP and GEF policies and procedures will be carefully followed and monitored during the entire lifespan of the project. In addition, financial audits will be carried out on a regular basis to avoid any potential misuse of project funding. Information on co-financing expectations will be shared with partners and regular follow-up and coordination will take place.

Stakeholder	Low	Risks: Low participation, detachment and lack of trust. Particular risk aversion of gold refiners, buyers and financial institutions. Mitigation measures: The risk of stakeholder disengagement will be prevented through the elaboration and implementation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan during design and implementation phase taking into account needs and priorities, in line with UNEP's and GEF's guidance. Frequent communication with all identified stakeholders will be done from an early stage. The Plan will build on the work done by the NAP on ASGM. Gold refiners, buyers and financial institutions will be engaged from an early stage to encourage their support and financing of responsible ASGM operations.

Other		Not applicable

Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	The overarching risk to this project is moderate. Close monitoring of the identified risks and effective implementation of mitigation measures will ensure that the risks do not adversely impact the success and durability of the project.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project is fully aligned with the **GEF-8 Programming Directions**[1]. Within the GEF Chemicals and Waste Focal Area, the intervention will directly contribute to Objective 1: Creation, strengthening and supporting the enabling environment and policy coherence to transform the manufacture, use and sound management of chemicals and to eliminate waste and chemical pollution; Objective 2: Prevention of future build-up of hazardous chemicals and waste in the environment; and Objective 3: Elimination of hazardous chemicals and waste.

The project has the potential to contribute to the **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) (2023-2027)**[2] as follows: Strategic Priority 1: An Inclusive Costa Rica; Strategic Priority 2: Governance Focused on People and their Rights, Strategic Priority 3: A Shared Prosperity and Strategic Priority 4: Strong in the Face of Adversity. During the design phase, the project will consult the UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO) and the UN Country Team to ensure coordination and cooperation.
In addition, the project will contribute to **UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) (2022-2025)**[3] and its **Programme of Work (PoW) (2022-2023),** namely to Outcome 3A: Human health and environmental outcomes are optimized through enhanced capacity and leadership in the sound management of chemicals and waste; and Outcome C3: Releases of pollutants to air, water, soil, and the ocean are reduced[4]. Concretely, it will directly contribute to the following outputs:

3.1. Regional and national integrated policy has shifted towards the sound management of chemicals and waste.
3.2. Land-based sources of pollution in freshwater and oceans, including marine litter and nutrients, are reduced.

3.5. Institutional capacity to adopt and act on national and international commitments is enhanced.

It also links to the following Programme Coordination Project (PCP): ''Pollution and Health'' and ''Circularity in Sectors'' and supports UNEA 5/12 on Environmental Aspects of Minerals and Metals[5].

Costa Rica ratified the Minamata Convention in January 2017. As part of country obligations under the **Minamata Convention on Mercury**, the project will support the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on ASGM (2023)[6] contributing to the mercury emissions and releases target.

A number of international agreements link to the main challenges present in the ASGM sector, including the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, among others. Links with cross-cutting topics such as biodiversity protection, gender equality and women empowerment will be made, especially in light of the recently adopted **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** (contribution to target 7 on reducing pollution to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity).

In relation to **national policies and strategies**, the project will build on the challenges and actions identified in the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2019-2022[7] and its strategic areas: (a) territorial development; (b) economy for stability and growth; (c) education for sustainable development and coexistence; (d) infrastructure, mobility and territorial planning; (e) innovation, competitiveness and productivity; (f) health and social security; and (g) human security.
The project has potential to contribute to the National Biodiversity Strategy 2016-2025[8] and the National Adaptation Plan 2022-2026[9], and at the local level to the Management Plan of the Abangares Protected Area 2020-2029[10].

No policy coherence issues that might contradict the expected outcomes of planetGOLD Costa Rica have been identified at the concept stage. However, the current legal framework governing ASGM activities has not been effectively implemented due to the barriers mentioned above. The recommendations made as part of the NAP should be taken into account and the series of proposed amendments and the draft legislation put forward by the DGM are expected to be approved and implemented during the proposed project.

[1] GEF (2022). GEF-8 Programming Directions. Available here: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022-01/GEF_R.08_17_GEF-8_Programming_Directions.pdf
[2] United Nations (2022). United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) (2023-2027). Available here: https://costarica.un.org/es/203982-marco-de-cooperaci%C3%B3n-de-las-naciones-unidas-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible-2023-2027
[3] UNEP (2021). For people and planet: the UNEP strategy for 2022-2025. Available here: https://www.unep.org/resources/people-and-planet-unep-strategy-2022-2025
[4] Concrete indicators include: ''(i) Number of Governments that wit UNEP support, are developing or implementing policies, strategies, legislation or action plans that promote sound chemicals and waste management and/or the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and the existing framework on chemicals and waste''; ''(ii) Number of policy, regulatory, financial and technical measures developed with UNEP support to reduce pollution in air, water, soil and the ocean''; and ''(iv) Reductions in releases of pollutants to the environment achieved with UNEP support''.
[5] United Nations Environment Assembly (2022). Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2 March 2022. 5/12 Environmental aspects of minerals and metals management. Available from: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39748/K2200695%20-%20UNEP-EA.5-Res.12%20-%20Advance.pdf
[6] MINAE (2023). National Action Plan (NAP) on ASGM. Available from: https://minamataconvention.org/sites/default/files/documents/national_action_plan/Costa_Rica-Plan_Nacional_Accion-MAPE.pdf
[7] Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy. National Development and Public Investment Plan (2019-2022). Available from: https://www.mideplan.go.cr/
[8] MINAE, National Commission for Biodiversity Management, SINAC (2016). National Biodiversity Strategy 2016-2025. Available from: https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/cr/cr-nbsap-v2-es.pdf
[9] MINAE (2022). National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change (2022-2026). Available from: https://unfccc.int/documents/470512
[10] SINAC (2019). Management Plan of Abangares Protected Areas (2020-2029). Available from: https://www.sinac.go.cr/ES/planmanejo/Plan%20Manejo%20ACAT/ZP%20Cuenca%20R%C3%ADo%20Abangares%20(2020)/Plan%20General%20de%20Manejo%20ZP%20R%C3%ADo%20Abangares%20(2020).pdf

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PIF development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

- Regular meetings and exchanges with personnel from the General Directorate of Mines (DGM) and the General Directorate of Environmental Quality (DIGECA) (Minamata Focal Point of Costa Rica) of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) from June 2023 to April 2024.
- Meeting with the Global Director of the Swiss Better Gold Initiative (SBGI) in January 2024.
- Meeting with personnel from the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) in February 2024.
- Joint consultation with personnel from the General Directorate of Mines (DGM), General Directorate of Environmental Quality (DIGECA), the National Technical Environmental Secretariat (SETENA), and the Water Directorate of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE); the Municipalities of Osa and Montes de Oro, and the National Institute for Cooperative Development (INFOCOOP) in February 2024.
- Joint consultation with personnel from the General Directorate of Mines (DGM), General Directorate of Environmental Quality (DIGECA), Unión Cantonal de Asociaciones de Desarrollo de Abangares (Abangares Cantonal Union of Development Associations), the Association of Geologists, the University of Costa Rica, the Occupational Health Council of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Agency of Promotion of Exports (Procomer), the Ministry of Health (both at national and local levels) in February 2024.
- Email exchanges with the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) in February 2024.
- Call with personnel from the World Gold Council (WGC) in February 2024.
- Consultation with UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) in February 2024.
- Bilateral meeting with personnel from the National Community Development Directorate (DINADECO) in March 2024.
- Bilateral meeting with personnel from the Municipality of Abangares and the University of Costa Rica (UCR) in March 2024.

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant($)	Agency Fee($)	Total GEF Financing ($)
UNEP	GET	Costa Rica	Chemicals and Waste	Mercury	Grant	4,500,000.00	427,500.00	4,927,500.00
Total GEF Resources ($)						**4,500,000.00**	**427,500.00**	**4,927,500.00**

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount ($)

150000

PPG Agency Fee ($)

14250

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	PPG($)	Agency Fee($)	Total PPG Funding($)
UNEP	GET	Costa Rica	Chemicals and Waste	Mercury	Grant	150,000.00	14,250.00	164,250.00
Total PPG Amount ($)						**150,000.00**	**14,250.00**	**164,250.00**

Please provide justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total($)
Total GEF Resources					**0.00**

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Co-financing($)
CW-2	GET	4,500,000.00	12692985
Total Project Cost		**4,500,000.00**	**12,692,985.00**

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) – General Directorate of Mines	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	10000000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) – General Directorate of Environmental Quality	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	321600
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) – National Technical Secretary	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	28243
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Health	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	56000

Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Health – Directorate of Health Abangares	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	47348
Recipient Country Government	Municipality of Abangares	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Recipient Country Government	Municipality of Montes de Oro	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	10000
Beneficiaries	Abangares Cantonal Union of Development Associations (UNCADA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	29794
Civil Society Organization	Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1100000
Others	National Technical University (UTN)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Others	Swiss Better Gold Initiative (SBGI)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100000
Total Co-financing				**12,692,985.00**

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Not applicable

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Global Environment Facility (GEF) Coordinator, GEF Coordination Office, Corporate Services Division, UNEP	3/12/2024	Ms. Victoria Luque Panadero	+(254 20) 762	victoria.luque@un.org
Project Coordinator	Portfolio Manager, GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Economy and Industry Division	3/12/2024	Mr. Kevin Helps	+(254 20) 762 50	kevin.helps@un.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Ms. Enid Chaverri-Tapia	Director of International Cooperation	Ministry of Environment and Energy	2/27/2024

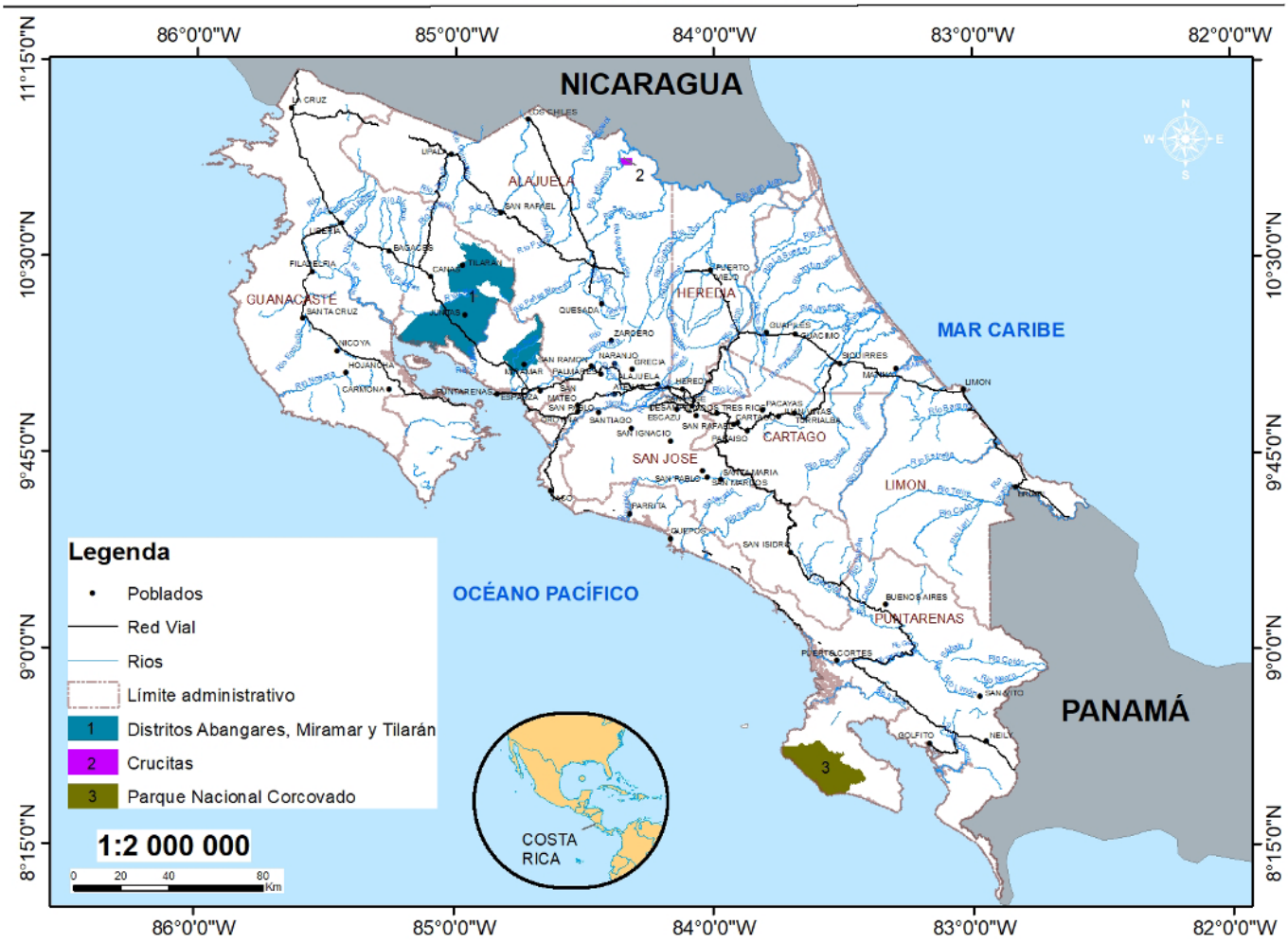
ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

The three potential areas considered for this intervention are: (1) Abangares, Guanacaste Province (10.24253, -84.99081), Miramar, Puntarenas Province (10.11241, -84.7294) and Tilarán, Guanacaste Province (10.45878, -8497213); (2) Crucitas, Alajuela Province (10.89656, -84.32548); and (3) Corcovado National Park, Puntarenas Province (8.5424, -83.57094).

Additionally, some activities targeting policy makers and other stakeholder will be conducted in the capital city, San José (9.66667, -84).

The exact project sites will be assessed and confirmed with the government counterparts and mining communities during the project preparatory phase taking into account the GEF and UNEP's Environmental and Social Safeguards Frameworks.



ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title
planetGOLD Costa Rica - PIF - Annex D - Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF)

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0	No Contribution 0

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing Models	Transform policy and regulatory environments Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making Convene multi-stakeholder alliances Demonstrate innovative approaches Deeply innovative financial instruments		
Stakeholders	Private sector	Capital providers Financial intermediaries and market facilitators SMEs Individual/Entrepreneurs	
	Beneficiaries Local Communities Civil Society	Community-based Organizations Non-governmental Organization Academia Trade Unions and Workers Unions	
	Type of Engagement	Information Dissemination Partnership Consultation Participation Awareness Raising Education Public Campaigns Behavior Change	
	Communication		
Capacity, Knowledge and Research	Capacity Development Knowledge Generation and Exchange Learning		
	Knowledge and Learning	Theory of Change Adaptive Management Indicators to Measure Change Knowledge Management Innovation Capacity Development Learning	

Gender Equality	Gender mainstreaming Gender results areas	Beneficiaries Women groups Sex-disaggregated indicators Gender-sensitive indicators Access and control over natural resources Participation and leadership Access to benefits and services Capacity Development Awareness raising Knowledge generation	
Focal Area/Theme	Biodiversity Land Degradation Chemicals and Waste	Protected Areas and Landscapes Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management Mercury Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste Waste Management Best Available Technology/Best Environmental Practices	Terrestrial Protected Areas Community Based Natural Resource Management Extractive Industries (oil, gas, mining) Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach Hazardous Waste Management