

# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

|                      |                                                                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Project ID:          | 10618                                                                        |
| Project Name:        | Global Opportunities for the Long-term Development of ASGM (GOLD+) in Uganda |
| Countr(ies):         | Uganda                                                                       |
| Implementing Agency: | UNEP                                                                         |

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## I. Overview

### A. Description

Project name

Global Opportunities for the Long-term Development of ASGM (GOLD+) in Uganda

Country

Uganda

GEF ID

10618

Implementing Agency

UNEP

Executing Entity

IMPACT

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

9/8/2025

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2025 , 2nd PIR

Objective

To reduce the use of mercury in the ASGM sector in Uganda through a holistic, multisectoral, integrated formalization approach, and increase access to traceable gold supply chains and finance for adoption of sustainable mercury free technologies

### B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Satisfactory

Development Objective

Satisfactory

Overall risk

Low Risk

Project Financing

5,995,000.00

Cumulative Disbursement

2,082,423.00

### C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

4/14/2022

Agency Approval

5/10/2022

|                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Implementation Start<br>7/29/2022 | First Disbursement<br>8/30/2022 |
| Expected MTR<br>2/28/2025         | Actual MTR                      |
| Expected Completion<br>6/30/2027  | Actual Completion               |

## II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

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

#### Component 1: Government and other national stakeholders increased their capacity to formalise the ASGM sector

In an effort to formalize the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector, a series of key initiatives were rolled out. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), with support from the planetGOLD project, launched the National Environment (Management of Hazardous Chemicals and Products Containing Hazardous Chemicals) Regulations, 2024 on July 17, 2024. This significant event brought together 157 stakeholders from various government ministries, miners' groups, and private and civil society sectors to establish a framework for managing hazardous chemicals.

Following this, the project supported a Gender Impact Assessment for new ASM Regulations, with workshops held in July 2024. These sessions included 55 government officers and were crucial for ensuring that the new rules would guide the implementation of the Mining and Minerals Act, 2022 in a way that considers gender equality.

In September 2024, six mining cooperatives in the Karamoja region were officially registered. This formalization, which brought together 180 miners (80 women and 100 men), provided a pathway for these groups to operate legally and more safely. These cooperatives received their certificates during the project's Annual Stakeholders' Workshop in October 2024.

To further promote sustainable practices, a training on jurisdictional and landscape approaches was held in Busia District in March 2025. This training, attended by 30 participants including district officials and miners, focused on helping miners reduce their use of mercury and transition to more environmentally friendly methods.

#### Component 2: Miners in Uganda accessed financial products to invest in mercury free technologies

During the reporting period, the project focused on building financial literacy capacities of the beneficiary miners. In August 2024, 120 miners (45 women and 75 men) from the Karamoja region, who were working to establish cooperatives, attended a financial literacy training. The project engaged Artisanal Gold Council to pilot a finance course for 20 (10 women and 10 men) miners from all 11 project sites, introducing them to new financial models. The project's efforts continued in March 2025 with specialized financial literacy training for the Kitumbi-Kayonza Women Miners Cooperative Society Ltd. This training was designed to empower the cooperative's 53 (31 women and 22 men) members and leaders to manage their finances more effectively, helping the organization become financially strong and sustainable.

In a significant step toward practical support, the Uganda Microfinance Support Centre assessed five gold miners' cooperatives in December 2024. This assessment was a crucial step to determine the cooperatives' eligibility for financing to help them invest in their mining operations and move toward more sustainable practices. The focus on financial capacity continued into 2025.

### **Component 3: Artisanal miners in Uganda adopted mercury-free processing technologies**

The project has focused on developing strategies and gathering data to transition miners to mercury-free practices. The project team reviewed a draft gender-sensitive strategy for securing buy-in from miners/operators for mercury-free equipment as well as a Technical Assistance Plan for miners at pilot sites. Research field visits to six project target mine sites were done to capture current data on mercury usage at these sites. During these field visits, 265 (103 female and 162 male) miners were interacted with. Additionally, site profiling was completed in the Amudat, Nakabaat, Buhweju, Kisoro, and Moroto districts to understand gold processing methods and mercury usage. The data collected will inform a new strategy for identifying and acquiring mercury-free processing equipment.

Field assessment and sensitization meetings were held in Kassanda, Namayingo & Busia in November and December 2024. These meetings reached 165 miners (108 male and 57 female). The team also undertook retort use demonstrations at 10 of these sites to show miners how to eliminate open air burning of amalgam containing mercury.

In early 2025, the project conducted a laboratory assessment for a small-scale miner's processing site laboratory to identify the items needed to optimize operations in the laboratory and support equipping since the laboratory is to be used together with other artisanal and small-scale miners in Kitumbi-Kayonza site, Kassanda district.

### **Component 4: Information and knowledge shared led to improvement in the management of the ASGM sector in Uganda**

The project held its second annual meeting in Kampala on October 4, 2024, bringing together a diverse group of 150 stakeholders (70 women and 80 men) including government officials, civil society organizations, development partners like NEMA and UNEP, and Members of Parliament. The theme for the year, 'From mines to markets: Strengthening artisanal and small-scale gold mining through cooperative networks,' emphasized the importance of collaboration for a more responsible artisanal gold mining sector.

To further raise awareness and engage the public, the project conducted five radio talk shows across the project target areas featuring key figures from the Directorate of Geological Survey and Mines (DGSM), NEMA, planetGOLD project, local government, and artisanal gold miners, all discussing the project's initiatives. In March 2025, the project organized a training workshop for 22 (8 women, 14 men) participants from the Police Mineral Protection Unit focusing on mercury use, its effects, reasons for its use, sources, available alternatives, and the legal frameworks in place to curb its use.

Regarding the financial progress during the reporting period, the project has reported expenditure of about 83% (1,738,017 out of the transferred 2,082,423).

### **B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities**

While the transition away from mercury use among artisanal miners is gradual, the project continues to make steady progress in promoting safer practices, even as it navigates the strict enforcement provisions of Uganda's Mining and Minerals Act. The continued importation of mercury presents challenges, but it also underscores the importance of the project's awareness-raising and capacity-building efforts, which are helping

shift mindsets and behaviors on the ground. Furthermore, the government's policy prohibiting the export of unprocessed minerals—enforced has had a notable impact on achieving the project's financial inclusion and co-financing targets. While the policy aims to stimulate domestic value addition and industrial growth, it has inadvertently limited market access for project-certified gold. Despite these challenges, the project continues to adapt and innovate, working closely with the government, Central Bank, and partners to identify alternative pathways for market access and sustainable development within Uganda's evolving regulatory landscape.

### **C. Stakeholder Engagement**

The planetGOLD Uganda project actively engaged with various stakeholders throughout the reporting period, guided by a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan that prioritized inclusivity, knowledge sharing, and transparency.

The project conducted a total of 25 field visits across seven target districts. These included five regional consultations led by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development on the new Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) Regulations, as well as Gender Impact Assessments of mercury-free gold processing techniques in six districts by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. At the national level, ten workshops were held, including the Annual Stakeholder's Meeting and a Project Steering Committee meeting, fostering broad participation and strategic discussions. The planetGOLD Uganda team also represented the project at the June 2024 planetGOLD Global Forum on ASGM in the Philippines, bringing back global insights. Further strengthening local engagement, two multi-stakeholder groups were established in early 2025 to ensure continuous collaboration on jurisdictional and landscape approaches in the pilot districts of Busia and Namayingo.

The project's efforts resulted in significant participation: over 220 individuals attended national workshops, and more than 700 participants joined field meetings. These participants represented a wide array of groups, including government agencies, civil society organizations, academia, miners, mining communities, and the private sector from all 11 target districts. To disseminate information and raise awareness, the project utilized various communication tools, including five radio talkshows, two TV shows, and awareness campaigns across social media platforms and newspapers.

While full support from government bodies and financial institutions for informal ASGM businesses is still evolving, the project's consistent engagement is fostering trust and opening up constructive dialogue. Formalization of artisanal miners is inherently a gradual process, requiring time, capacity-building, and sustained collaboration—but the project has made important strides in initiating this journey. Although mercury use remains prevalent, the widespread awareness campaigns have significantly increased understanding of its risks. This growing awareness opens a valuable opportunity for the project to introduce and scale up mercury-free gold processing technologies, further advancing its goals for safer and more sustainable mining practices.

### **D. Gender Equality**

The project has made significant strides in implementing gender-responsive measures, aligning with its Gender Action Plan (GAP). 'The Gender Impact Assessment of the gold ASM sector in Uganda' trainings conducted by the project for Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and other ministries, departments and agencies have directly supported the GAP's objective of promoting gender equality and inclusion. Their involvement in the project implementation has strengthened inter-ministerial coordination. This has also expanded the reach and sustainability of gender-responsive practices in efforts targeting mining communities. Gender modules integrated into training sessions align with the GAP's emphasis on gender-sensitive sensitization and capacity building.

Women's participation in project activities has been actively promoted through gender-balanced representation in the Project Steering Committee and tailored engagement strategies like appropriate timing, women-only sessions in form of Focused Group Discussions during gender monitoring exercises and data collection to ensure inclusivity. This has led to increased representation and active participation of women in project activities, decision-making forums, and training sessions.

During the reporting period, a gender monitoring exercise was conducted, providing baseline and follow-up data on gender integration. Monitoring tools and indicators were aligned with the GAP and overall project objective. Gender Impact Assessment for mercury-free adoption, a risk identification approach, has been conducted in all the major project districts of Busia, Buhweju, Namayingo and Kassanda.

Training and sensitization sessions on responsible ASGM practices and mercury-free technologies have been made accessible to women through working with women-only cooperative groups and women miners.

Gender-sensitive financial inclusion scoping study has identified barriers for women, with recommendations to improve access to financing mechanisms and results have been useful in advocating for funding sources for miners especially women who have limited access. A financial literacy training conducted for miners had 50% representation of women participants.

#### E. Knowledge Management

Knowledge products continue to be focused on awareness raising. In August 2024, the knowledge product 'Access to finance-ASGM Finance Course' (see uploaded document) was piloted and the content of that knowledge product is being used by the project mining cooperatives. Additionally, two knowledge products, a result of desk reviews, were finalised during the reporting period namely, *A Baseline Analysis of Legal and Regulatory Frameworks Affecting Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners in Uganda* and *The Current Landscape and Context for Accessing Finance for the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Gold Mining Sector in Uganda*.

The main learning during the period has been that illustrations are a better tool to carry out training in the communities and as such, a toolkit for training of mining communities and miners handling a broad range of issues is undergoing graphic design and will be rolled out in Q3 2025 across the 11 target mine sites of the project.

### III: Minor Amendments

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CONTEXT                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Result Framework                              |                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Components and Cost                           | Budget revision: Certain personal and consultant lines were re-aligned to account for changes in project implementation. No budget lines relating to activities were affected. |
| Institutional And Implementation Arrangements |                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Financial Management                          |                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Implementation Schedule                       |                                                                                                                                                                                |

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

#### IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Sama          | 0.0712   | 32.2177   | 226,412    |

Location Description:

Mine sites are in trading centres close to residential areas. Close to the UG-KE border point. In Eastern Uganda.

Activity Description:

Small-scale gold mining operations on rock ore using a combination of gravity separation with sometimes mercury amalgamation and other times direct smelting and concrete tanks' cyanidation to recover gold

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Tira          | 0.5132   | 34.0775   | 226,137    |

Location Description:

Mine sites are in trading centres close to residential areas. Close to the UG-KE border point. In Eastern Uganda.

Activity Description:

Small-scale gold mining operations on rock ore using a combination of gravity separation with sometimes mercury amalgamation and other times direct smelting and concrete tanks' cyanidation to recover gold

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Buhere        | 0.1666   | 33.8166   |            |

Location Description:

Mine site is close to Lake Victoria and this is the main water source for mining activities. In Eastern Uganda.

Activity Description:

Artisanal mining operations with use of gravity separation/amalgamation and cyanidation occasionally

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Kabaga Hills  | 0.4204   | 32.5616   | 11,356,954 |

Location Description:

Hilly mining area in a trading centre in Central Uganda that has become bustling in recent years

Activity Description:

Small-scale gold mining operations on rock ore using a combination of gravity separation with sometimes mercury amalgamation and other times direct smelting and concrete tanks' cyanidation to recover gold

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Nakabat       | 2.6667   | 34.7500   |            |

Location Description:

Hilly mining area with seasonal river and streams in Karamoja region

Activity Description:

Artisanal mining operations handling alluvial gold. Very limited use of mercury often in dry seasons when water for panning is scarce.

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Kapiyosa      | 1.46573  | 34.8020   |            |

Location Description:

Rocky mining area in Karamoja region

Activity Description:

Artisanal mining operations with use of gravity separation/amalgamation and cyanidation occasionally

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|

|           |         |          |  |
|-----------|---------|----------|--|
| Cheptakol | 1.44919 | 34.78881 |  |
|-----------|---------|----------|--|

Location Description:

Rocky mining area in Karamoja region

Activity Description:

Artisanal mining operations with use of gravity separation/amalgamation and cyanidation occasionally

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Kayonza       | -0.92447 | 29.64198  | 8,657,797  |

Location Description:

Hilly mining area in busy semi-urban area in Central Uganda

Activity Description:

Small-scale gold mining operations on rock ore using a combination of gravity separation with sometimes mercury amalgamation and concrete tanks' cyanidation as well as micro-leaching in 3ton max plastic tanks to recover gold

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Katenga       | -0.58333 | 32.2      | 231,937    |

Location Description:

Hilly mining area in Western Uganda

Activity Description:

Small-scale mining operations on rock ore. Method of gold recovery mostly heap leaching.

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Nyabiremura   | -1.110797 | 29.669110 |            |

Location Description:

Mountainous mining area close to forest reserve in Southwestern Uganda

Activity Description:

Artisanal mining operations on alluvial gold. No mercury use

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Rushaga       | -1.127500 | 29.69226  |            |

Location Description:

Mountainous mining area close to forest reserve in Southwestern Uganda

Activity Description:

Artisanal mining operations on alluvial gold. No mercury use

## V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

| Document Category | Title                                        |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| M and E Document  | 10618-PIR-UNEP-2025-GEF-CW_planetGOLD Uganda |