



Planet GOLD ZIMBABWE PROJECT

The planet GOLD project is a five-year project that is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and executed by IMPACT in partnership with the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development and the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife. The planet GOLD program aims to reduce the use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, which is the largest source of anthropogenic emission source of mercury pollution in the world, while improving the health and lives of local mining communities.

The planet GOLD programme works to make small-scale gold mining safer, cleaner, and more profitable from mine to market—by closing the financing gap, supporting formalization, and connecting miners with mercury-free technology and formal markets.

The use of mercury in Zimbabwe’s artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector poses a significant health and environmental threat to those working in the sector, as well as to communities surrounding gold mining processing areas. Processing artisanal gold with mercury can lead to contamination of waterways, airways, and food sources, and can travel long distances, increasing the geographical scope of its harmful effects. Despite these harmful effects, miners continue to use mercury either due to a lack of awareness of the harmful effects, but also the lack of knowledge or means to obtain mercury-free technologies. The informal nature of most ASGM operations makes it difficult to obtain these means, as informality prevents access to formal financing, which could support investment into mercury-free processing equipment.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) comprises of IMPACT team and stakeholder ministries and parastatals comprising of Environmental Management Agency, Fidelity Gold Refiners, Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association, Zimbabwe Miners Federation, ZimStat and Ministry of Health and Child Care.

On November 14, 2024, the planetGOLD Zimbabwe project held its inception workshop, marking the official launch of the initiative aimed at transforming the country’s artisanal gold mining sector.

On 12 February 2025 the planetGOLD Zimbabwe Project Steering Committee held a first quarter 2025 working Session. The project manager highlighted that working sessions would be held quarterly for the first year of the project as requested by the PSC to facilitate consensus, provide technical guidance, monitor and evaluate progress, and strengthen collaboration and capacity building.



On 31 March 2025, In honour of International Women’s Day, the planetGOLD Zimbabwe project held a dynamic event-A working session on Gender and Child Labour issues in Zimbabwe’s Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) on. This Working Session aimed to reflect on ongoing efforts to address gender and child labour issues, as well as the handling of mercury, within the formalization and awareness-raising processes in Zimbabwe’s Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector, under the planetGOLD Zimbabwe project. The session focused on the critical roles of women, the pervasive issue of child labour, and the environmental and health risks associated with mercury use in the ASGM sector, while highlighting the importance of raising awareness through targeted media campaigns that address these interconnected challenges.

On 4 June 2025, the project steering committee held an ASGM Strategy Dialogue. This conference reflected on the development of Zimbabwe’s Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Strategy which seeks to transform the local ASGM sector into a sustainable formal sector which is alive to the gender needs and supports women and other special interest groups in mining. There was engagement of stakeholders in a collaborative dialogue on the draft National Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) Strategy for Zimbabwe, with the goal of building consensus and momentum towards its finalization and adoption.



Figure 1: Some Members of the planetGOLD Zimbabwe project steering committee