



# Swiss Better Gold Initiative

## Promoting gold responsibly extracted from artisanal and small-scale mines

A public-private partnership between SECO and the Swiss Better Gold Association is building value chains from mine to market to reduce poverty and improve social and environmental conditions in artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

### Rationale

While artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) accounts for only 10-20% of global gold production, it employs 90% of the gold mining workforce. The environmental and social issues in the ASM gold sector, such as uncontrolled use of mercury, deforestation, water pollution, child labour, etc., are many and complex. Workers are exposed to the risk of accidents, injuries and health problems. Gold and extractive industries can also cause and fuel conflict in politically unstable regions.

### Objectives and activities

The Swiss Better Gold Initiative was launched in 2013 with the aim of reducing poverty and improving social and environmental conditions in artisanal and small-scale mining. The initiative operates in Peru, Colombia and Bolivia. In its third phase, from 2021 to 2025, and in line with the ambition to achieve greater development impact, the initiative aims to reach more countries through complementary activities. It will also place greater emphasis on knowledge dissemination and focus more on cross-cutting issues such as climate change and gender. The initiative complements other instruments at the national and international level to support formalization and regulation of ASM. Also in this phase, SECO is paving the way for entrusting the private sector with full responsibility of the initiative in the future.

Activities are organised around 3 outcomes:

Outcome 1)

#### **ASM are part of and benefit from responsible value-chains from mine to market**

The Swiss Better Gold Initiative supports ASM mining operations by improving their technical, organisational, social and environmental practices. It also provides them with general management support related to formalisation and market accreditation as responsible ASM producers. The Swiss Better Gold Association (SBGA) channels the demand for Swiss Better Gold among industry stakeholders who are members of the association, thus closing the value chain cycle from mine to market. SBGA members (jewellers, financial institutions, watchmakers, refiners) are committed to purchasing Swiss Better Gold production. An impact premium generated by these value chains is reinvested in social and environmental community projects through the Swiss Better Gold Fund and further contributes to creating positive social and environmental impact

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#### **SECO country/region**

Peru, Colombia, Bolivia,  
Global

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#### **Implementing partner**

Projekt-Consult GmbH

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#### **Duration**

2021-2025

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#### **Total budget**

CHF 17,200,000

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#### **SECO contribution**

CHF 6,000,000

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#### **Swiss Better Gold Association contribution**

CHF 11,200,000

of the program. As part of this outcome, the initiative supports voluntary sustainable standards relevant to the small-scale gold mining sector.

Outcome 2)

### **Improved framework conditions for responsible ASM**

The Swiss Better Gold Initiative provides technical support to policymakers to simplify the formalisation framework, a key issue for scaling up the supply of responsibly sourced ASM gold as a prerequisite for mining operations to become responsible producers. Issues to be addressed include the development and implementation of formalisation frameworks themselves, traceability of the gold production, climate change mitigation and adaptation, implementation of relevant environmental obligations (Minamata Convention), access to basic banking services for miners, and streamlining of red tape in commercialisation and export procedures.

Outcome 3)

### **Coordinated and well disseminated good practices for responsible gold**

The Swiss Better Gold Initiative promotes the responsible sourcing of ASM gold by disseminating knowledge, sharing best practices and increasing transparency in the gold sector in Switzerland and abroad. Through partnerships and collaboration with identified development cooperation programmes, the Initiative contributes to the development of a common agenda for action in support of responsible ASM gold. It uses its broad network at national, regional and international level and develops further partnerships. It plays a facilitating role in sub-national sectoral roundtables in implementing countries. In Switzerland, the dialogue between different stakeholders interested in ASM gold contributes to the institutionalised multi-stakeholder dialogue.

### **Organisational set-up**

The Swiss Better Gold Initiative is a public-private partnership between SECO and the Swiss Better Gold Association. Both partners are part of a Global Steering Committee and three National Steering Committees, thereby supervising and ensuring the implementation of the program. As a result of the proof of concept previously established, this new phase will also be synonym of a gradual process of handing-over the responsibility to uphold achieved results from the public to the private partner represented by the Swiss Better Gold Association. The Initiative is being implemented by Projekt-Consult GmbH, with a team covering global aspects as well as three country coordinators and three in-country implementation partners.

### **Results so far**

Since the start of the initiative, more than 16 tons of responsibly produced ASM gold has been exported to Switzerland. The value chains have proven to be stable and reliable and are based on a relationship of trust between all actors. The Swiss Better Gold Initiative is highly recognised in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, where the ASM gold sector is increasingly on the political agenda. The initiative directly benefits 6,000 miners (61,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries including the surrounding communities) and, thanks to the initiative, a growing number of ASM are becoming part of responsible supply chains. The SBG has leveraged a total of USD 14 million in impact premiums from the private sector, which are reinvested in social and environmental (including climate change) projects in mining communities.

### **Further information and contact details**

Website Swiss Better Gold Initiative for ASM: [www.ororesponsable.org](http://www.ororesponsable.org)

Website SBGA: [www.swissbettergold.ch](http://www.swissbettergold.ch)

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Integration in value chains



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