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## Fairmined Standard leads artisanal and small-scale mining towards compliance with the Minamata Convention on mercury

The Fairmined Standard sets out an agenda for change that enables artisanal and small-scale (ASM) miners to phase out the use of mercury in their operations and thus meet Minamata Convention requirements. The Standard encourages ASM miners to manage these substances responsibly and use technologies to mitigate their impact on health and the environment.

The Fairmined Standard includes 16 environmental requirements for managing toxic substances, which adhere to Minamata's guidelines, particularly to the priority actions set out in Annex C of the treaty. Miners interested in becoming Fairmined certified are asked to progressively do away with the following practices:

- full ore amalgamation,
- burning and processing of amalgam outdoors,
- burning amalgam in residential areas, and
- cyanide leaching of sediments, ores or tailings that contain mercury which has not been recovered.

*"Though artisanal gold mining uses mercury, the sector employs about 20 million people worldwide, many of whom live in poverty. It further provides employment opportunities to about 100 million people who depend on the sector. Artisanal miners are aware of mercury's harmful effects because they harm us and our families first,"* says Manuel Reinoso, artisanal miner and vice-president of the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM), developers of the Fairmined Standard. Reinoso and ARM have been involved in the treaty's negotiations since 2011.

ARM will join a workshop organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to discuss how regional cooperation can support national ASM action plans. The workshop will take place in Lima, Peru on 17 and 18 March 2015. The event will aim to support national action plans that enable the ASM sector to comply with the Minamata Convention.

*"It's essential that national action plans that aim to implement the Minamata Convention do not prohibit the use of mercury in the short-term. Instead, the plans need to foster the gradual elimination of mercury use based on a realistic assessment of the context in which the ASM sector operates in each region or country,"* says Diana Siller, coordinator of ARM's ARM-IADB FOMIN Project. *"In order to achieve this gradual decrease we will need to introduce cleaner technologies and adopting these will require investment. For this reason, it's vital that miners have access to credit to achieve an effective transition,"* she added.

*"The Fairmined Standard can give miners a strong incentive to transition away from the use of toxic mercury, and the use of such standards is one strategy governments can use to achieve their National Action Plan objectives,"* says Susan Keane, co-leader of the ASGM Area under UNEP's Global Mercury Partnership.

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### **About the Alliance for Responsible Mining**

The Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) is an independent, global-scale, pioneering initiative established in 2004 to enhance equity and well-being in Artisanal and Small-scale Mining (ASM) communities. ARM is committed to social justice and environmental responsibility as the values driving the transformation of ASM.

ARM's mission is to set standards for responsible ASM and to support and enable producers to deliver Fairmined certified metals and minerals through economically just supply chains to the markets, in order to contribute towards the transformation of ASM into a socially and environmentally responsible activity, and to the improvement of the quality of life of marginalized artisanal miners, their families and communities.

ARM has developed the Fairmined Standard for Gold and Associated Precious Metals to support sustainable development of Artisanal and Small-scale Mining (ASM) communities. The standard includes requirements for Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Organizations (ASMOs) to perform responsible artisanal and small-scale mining: formal and legal mining operations, environmental protection, labor conditions, traceability of Fairmined minerals, and socio-economic development through the Fairmined Premium. It also outlines market models and requirements for market actors (Fairmined Operators).

There are currently 4 Fairmined certified Mining organizations in Colombia, Peru and Mongolia and 25 organizations working towards Fairmined certification with ARM in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Senegal and Burkina Faso.

### **About artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM)**

In the world about 100 million people depend on artisanal and small scale mining (ASM) to maintain their livelihoods. Many live in difficult conditions in terms of health, safety and social and economic. However, with support and training, these miners and small entrepreneurs can change these conditions and improve the quality of life for their families and communities.