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The 15 de Agosto Cooperative shares its progress towards responsible mining

When the Bolivian mining cooperative 15 de Agosto obtained Fairmined Certification in September 2015, each and every member of the Cooperative were rewarded for their commitment to health and safety and good environmental management in their operations.

Fairmined Certification boosted the process that brought significant change in the mining activities of the cooperative: among others an 88% percent reduction in mercury use, good waste management, proper management of water and soil and safe and dignified labor conditions. On their journey towards Fairmined Certification, the cooperative has received support and technical advice from the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) and Cumbre del Sajama.

The following testimony by Teresa Blanco from the auditing entity IMOSwiss AG shows impressive the progress that the cooperative has made:

"As an auditor, and as a Bolivian citizen, I was pleasantly surprised to note the high degree of commitment and efficiency of the miners of the 15 de Agosto Cooperative. These qualities have enabled them to be the mining organization that got a positive answer from IMO regarding their certification in the shortest amount time of all the organizations that has been certified until now. I have to say that I cannot help feeling proud to be Bolivian!"

Also noteworthy is the cooperative's commitment to the neighboring community *El Totoral* that is composed of 150 people primarily dedicated to mining and agriculture. Thanks to the contributions made by the cooperative, this community has a small school and a community center. With the Fairmined Premium that the cooperative expects to receive from their future Fairmined Gold exportations, they hope to build a health center in the community as well.

This week, our Regional Workshop for the Latin-American Network for Responsible Mining is taking place in La Paz, Bolivia. This year's workshop is being carried out in collaboration with Cumbre del Sajama and makes part of the project "Strengthening incentives for formalization and improved environmental and social performance in artisanal and small-scale mining" that is primarily financed by the Inter-American Development Bank and the Multilateral Investment Fund (IDB-MIF)

During the workshop, the participants who are mainly miners from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, have the opportunity to exchange experiences and learn from each other. The workshop includes training sessions and a visit to the 15 de Agosto Cooperative where they will demonstrate their gravimetric concentration methods and their health and safety management system.



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Notes to editors:

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[About the Alliance for Responsible Mining \(ARM\)](#)

The Alliance for Responsible Mining is an independent, global-scale, pioneering initiative established in 2004 to enhance equity and wellbeing in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) communities. ARM works to transform ASM into a socially and environmentally responsible activity that improves the quality of life of artisanal miners, their families and communities.

Through the [Fairmined Standard for Gold](#) and ARM's support, artisanal miners are able to produce Fairmined certified metals and gain access to responsible supply chains. ARM supports miners in making a real change in the way they run their businesses and support their local communities. The Fairmined Standard and Certification System is in the center of ARM's efforts, to which everything else is related and supported. It is a rigorous, third party certification system that ensures that ASM miners formalize while meeting world-leading standards for responsible practices. The Fairmined Standard includes a set of requirements to guarantee legality of operations, environmental protection, fair labor conditions, social development and to assure the gold is traceable and conflict free. There are now 10 certified Fairmined organizations in the world: 6 in Colombia, 2 in Peru, 1 in Bolivia y 1 in Mongolia.

For more information on the Fairmined and the certified organizations go to www.fairmined.org