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On the road to Fairmined

Miners show promising results at ARM's workshop in Senegal

In early April, the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) brought together miners, local partners and government agencies from Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali to exchange experiences and learn more about the requirements and benefits of Fairmined Certification. It was the first *regional* workshop under ARM's project in West Africa that pilots Fairmined Certification and promotes solutions for drastic mercury emission reduction.

The workshop was a testimony to the miners' commitment and the support of local organizations in their road to a more formal, safe and sustainable sector. However, it was also a testimony to the great challenges miners face in the three countries where they struggle with little or no access to drinking water, low technical knowledge and inefficient techniques, hazardous working conditions, child labor and gender inequality.

"When such meetings between miners from different countries occur, it creates great incentives for transforming the way they see their activity. It is an opportunity to create stronger links amongst the West African Mining communities and to share technical and organizational experiences." Said Yves Bertrán, project Coordinator in Africa in the Alliance for Responsible Mining. *"It is just as important for our local partners to exchange experiences on their programs and approaches to boost capacities and foster new didactic initiatives for the people in day to day contact with the miners."*

The workshop was partly carried out by ARM's local partners SADEV, Réseau Afrique Jeunesse, AFDC and Fédération Nationale des Orpailleurs du Mali (FNOM). It included sessions on health and safety, System of Production, mapping techniques and the use of monitoring tools. It also focused extensively on the traceability aspects in the certification process.

The miners involved in the project have already taken the first steps on their journey towards formalization and Fairmined Certification – they have organized themselves in cooperatives and "Economic Interests Groups" (GIE's) - the preferred organizational form in Senegal - and they all have their mining permits in order.

The official title of the project is "Fair gold supply chains and reduction of mercury use in artisanal and small-scale mining in West Africa". It is led by UNIDO and jointly funded by Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM), an organization created by the French government to promote environmental protection in developing countries, and GEF (Global Environmental Facility). The Alliance for Responsible Mining is responsible for implementing the project on the ground along with the Artisanal Gold Council.



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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.