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With thanks to :
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The Fairmined label: promoting social and environmental responsibility in artisanal and small-scale mining

Objectives:

At the international level, artisanal and small-scale mining organizations (ASMOs) have a major social, environmental and economic impact. The way gold is extracted is especially important nowadays, at a time when economic activity is changing, with companies trying to improve their practices by focusing not only on financial gain but also on improving communities' living conditions and reducing environmental impacts.

In order to strengthen this process, an alternative model has been developed: Fairmined, Fair Mining Standard, a certification system that ensures the gradual adoption by the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector of better social and environmental practices and greater access to the formal market.

ARM's goal, through this certification, is to promote a more responsible ASM sector, with the profits generated benefiting all parties concerned (miners, mining communities, markets), while reducing environmental impacts.

Methodology:



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Summary

The Fairmined Standard was created in order to make artisanal and small-scale mines part of a fair trade approach that is more respectful of artisanal miners' rights and of the environment. The Standard promotes formalization of the sector and strengthening of miners' organizations, as well as improvements in their working conditions and environmental management, contributing to the well-being of families and communities by providing access to markets that ensure fair and ethical pricing. Organizations are paid a premium for social investment in the community and for ongoing improvement of mining practices (safety, environmental compliance, etc.).

The Fairmined Standard was drawn up in conjunction with 130 stakeholders from Latin America, Africa, North America and Asia via public consultation from 2012 to 2014. Its objective is to support the sustainable development of Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Organizations (ASMOs).

The Standard includes requirements for responsible mining organizations such as formal and legal mining operations, environmental protection, decent working conditions, safety, traceability of Fairmined minerals, and socioeconomic development via the Fairmined Premium. It also specifies the requirements to be met by the other members of the responsible supply chain.

Results of ARM's work to date:

- 150 ASMOs supported, including small companies, cooperatives and miners' associations;
- 14,400 direct beneficiaries in Central and Latin America (Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Honduras), Africa (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique) and Asia (Mongolia);
- 9 miners' organizations certified Fairmined in 2020 (4 in Peru, 3 in Colombia and 2 in Mongolia);
- USD 5.7 million in Fairmined Premiums generated since 2014 for the benefit of artisanal miners and their organizations to improve both social and environmental investments.

Main achievements:

- Reduced environmental impact: up to 70% reduction in the use of mercury, with its elimination by some mining organizations, thanks to awareness-raising initiatives, technical support, the Fairmined Premium, and the implementation of gravimetric concentration methods;
- Improved working conditions for artisanal miners through formalization of the sector and the use of adequate safety equipment;
- Establishment of clear rules and regulations on working conditions, promoting collective rights and non-discrimination;
- Creation of spaces for dialogue, not only between employers and workers, but also with the local and national authorities to encourage advocacy in favor of artisanal miners.

Thanks to ARM's support, ASMOs have implemented many good practices:

- Adoption of simple and relatively inexpensive technologies to reduce the amount of mercury used and increase the recovery of gold (retorts and furnaces);
- Creation and implementation of appropriate means to ensure the traceability of gold and the establishment of internal control systems (from extraction to export);
- Designation of one person in each ASMO responsible for marketing and export procedures so as to ensure better tracking;
- More efficient office organization to ensure better archiving and managements of administrative (work contracts, etc.) and accounting documents;
- Technical recommendations for ensuring that polluted wastewater is no longer discharged into watercourses but properly recycled;
- ARM assistance to some ASMOs in drawing up their Mining Plans to enable extraction to be organized more efficiently according to the estimated ore reserves and tools available.

To find out more :

www.responsiblemines.org and www.fairmined.org



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