

Catalysing Responsible Growth: The Multistakeholder Partnership for Sustainable and Responsible Small-Scale Gold Mining (MSPI)

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) plays a crucial role in the global mineral economy, particularly in gold production, providing livelihoods to over 40 million people globally. In Africa, ASM is both an economic lifeline and a complex challenge. In Côte d'Ivoire, the sector remains largely informal and under-regulated, often linked to environmental degradation, illicit trade, and social risks.

To address these challenges, a landmark initiative—the Multistakeholder Partnership for Sustainable and Responsible Small-Scale Mining (MSPI)—was launched in 2024 by the World Bank, Government of Côte d'Ivoire, and the World Gold Council (WGC). MSPI seeks to formalize and transform ASM, especially gold mining, into a safer, more regulated, and development-focused sector.

MSPI Objectives

The initiative targets scalable and inclusive reforms in the Ivorian ASM sector through six core pillars:

1. **Formalization of ASM**
 - Simplifying licensing procedures
 - Establishing legal channels for miners
2. **Environmental Sustainability**
 - Promoting mercury-free technologies
 - Supporting land rehabilitation and waste management
3. **Social Inclusion & Human Rights**
 - Combating child labor and promoting gender equality
 - Providing education and healthcare in mining communities
4. **Transparent Gold Supply Chains**
 - Enabling traceability from mine to market
 - Aligning with OECD Due Diligence Guidelines
5. **Capacity Building**
 - Training for miners, cooperatives, and regulators
 - Promoting safety, innovation, and financial literacy
6. **Public-Private Partnerships**
 - Encouraging infrastructure investment
 - Promoting responsible sourcing by the private sector

Stakeholder Roles

The MSPI unites global, national, and local actors to drive change:

- **World Bank:** Provides technical expertise, funding, and policy design aligned with poverty reduction and sustainable development goals.
- **Government of Côte d'Ivoire:** Through its Ministry of Mines, Petroleum and Energy, it oversees:
 - Regulatory reforms and land allocation
 - Environmental and labor standard enforcement
 - Infrastructure development for ASM zones

- **World Gold Council (WGC): Acts as a bridge to the global gold industry by:**
 - Promoting responsible sourcing and traceability
 - Helping miners access formal markets
 - Aligning with Responsible Gold Mining Principles (RGMPs)
- **Civil Society & Community Groups:**
 - Women’s groups, NGOs, and cooperatives help ensure accountability, uphold miners’ rights, and foster community trust and monitoring.

Program Structure

MSPI is a phased, multi-year initiative focused on national and regional transformation. Its main features include:

- **Pilot Mining Zones (PMZs):**
- Selected areas will serve as models, including:
 - Legalized mining cooperatives
 - Training centers and mercury-free processing
 - On-site monitoring and health/education services
- **Digital Traceability Platform:**

A tech-based system will track gold from extraction to export, ensuring:

- Real-time trade transparency
- Compliance with anti-money laundering laws
- **Gender & Youth Inclusion:**
- Programs will empower women and youth through:
 - Leadership development
 - Financial inclusion
 - Cooperative governance roles
- **Knowledge-Sharing Hub:**

A national platform will:

- Share best practices
- Host workshops
- Publish research and case studies

Expected Impact

If implemented successfully, the MSPI is expected to:

- Grant legal recognition to thousands of miners
- Cut mercury use and restore the environment
- Improve working conditions and reduce injuries
- Increase formal, traceable gold exports and state revenue
- Enhance community development through education, healthcare, and services
- Boost investor confidence in Côte d’Ivoire’s mining sector
- Serve as a replicable model for other African nations

Global Relevance

The MSPI’s goals align with international frameworks, including:

- UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):
- Especially SDG 8 (Decent Work), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption), and SDG 15 (Life on Land)
- OECD Guidelines for responsible mineral supply chains
- Minamata Convention on Mercury, advocating for mercury reduction in ASM
- African Mining Vision, emphasizing inclusive and sustainable resource development

The MSPI’s collaborative, structured, and holistic approach makes it a strong candidate for replication in other resource-rich nations like Ghana, Burkina Faso, the DRC, and Tanzania.

Conclusion

The MSPI is a transformative, multi-stakeholder response to the pressing challenges in Côte d’Ivoire’s ASM sector. By fostering collaboration among governments, communities, industry, and civil society, it paves the way for an ASM sector that is legal, transparent, safe, and development-oriented. If scaled effectively, the MSPI could redefine artisanal mining, positioning it as a pillar of sustainable growth and inclusive development across the globe.

Sources:

- World Bank: “The Multistakeholder Partnership Initiative for Sustainable and Responsible Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining”.
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- African Review: “Côte d’Ivoire launches bold partnership to reform artisanal gold mining”.
- Devdiscourse: “Côte d’Ivoire Launches Major Reform to Legalize and Transform Gold Mining”.
- Ecofin Agency: “Côte d’Ivoire Moves to Legalize and Trace Small-Scale Gold Mining

