

Investing in Integrity: The Rise of Ethically Sourced Gold with Fairever

Ms Desirée Binternagel
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As managing director of the gold trading company Fairever, Desirée Binternagel is committed to improving the living conditions of miners and the sustainable development of mining regions. Fairever is certified by Fairtrade and Fairmined as a supplier of fair gold and silver, a member of the German initiative Forum for Responsible Gold and the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM), as well as winner of the German Sustainability Award 2024.



Ms Desirée Binternagel

1. Why should ethical sourcing in the gold industry matter to consumers and investors today?

“Every bar of gold carries two price tags: the spot price you see on a trading screen and the hidden social-environmental cost paid by mining communities. When consumers or investors choose ethically sourced gold, they are protecting human rights, reducing mercury pollution, and insulating portfolios from the growing regulatory and reputational risks around irresponsible extraction. In other words, buying clean gold isn’t charity—it’s sound risk management and a vote for a fairer supply chain.”

2. What role does Fairmined and Fairtrade certification play in ensuring traceability and social impact?

“Both labels give an end-to-end chain of custody that is independently audited. They also attach a social premium that flows straight back to the cooperative, funding everything from safety equipment to schoolbooks. In practice, that means I can show you exactly which hillside your gold came from and how every extra dollar you paid was invested by the miners themselves.”

3. How does Fairever ensure transparency and accountability from mine to market?

“We work only with Fairmined- or Fairtrade-certified cooperatives, segregate their ore by single batch refining, and log every purchase and sale on the appropriate platforms by Fairmined and Fairtrade. Independent audits ensure that each transaction follows the standards set by the non-profit organisations.”

4. How are jewellers and investors responding to certified ethical gold? Are you seeing a rise in demand?

“Absolutely. European and North-American jewellers are shifting more wedding-ring and bespoke collections to certified gold, even at a small premium, because their customers ask for it in store. On the capital-markets side we see ESG-focused funds insisting on OECD-aligned provenance for any physical bullion they hold. Demand is now running ahead of certified supply, which is why it is so urgent to look into responsible sourcing options from ASM mining.”

5. What measurable social or environmental benefits have you witnessed in responsible ASM communities?

“Where a mine adopts certification, the first visible change is the elimination of mercury in processing, which protects workers and rivers downstream. Income rises about 15-plus percent because of the premium and better market access, and communities often invest that money in clean water or schooling. You can feel the pride when miners say, ‘My children will not have to leave the valley to find safe work.’”

6. Can you share a specific success story of certification transforming a community?

“In Íquira, Colombia, the cooperative used its Fairmined premiums to go mercury-free, build a small health clinic, and train a mine rescue brigade. That progress won global recognition when Íquira gold was chosen for the Cannes Palme d’Or and the Nobel Peace Prize medals—a powerful signal that small-scale miners can compete on quality and ethics.”

7. What are the biggest challenges in scaling up ethical gold sourcing today?

“Three obstacles loom largest. First, price: certified ethical gold carries a visible premium—every extra dollar funds safer mining practices and community projects—but many buyers still fixate on the spot price alone. Second, awareness: outside a small circle of specialists, few people realise that child labour, mercury pollution and conflict finance are woven into conventional supply. Without that understanding, the premium feels optional rather than necessary. Third, the ‘recycled-gold myth’: brands sometimes claim that re-melting old jewellery is a complete sustainability answer, so they feel no urgency to support responsible new production. Recycled feedstock is valuable, but it doesn’t touch the 100 million people whose livelihoods depend on artisanal and small-scale mining today. Overcoming those three misconceptions—price sensitivity, ignorance of the problems, and the easy recycled-gold excuse—is the real work of scaling ethical sourcing.”

8. How can socially responsible investors or impact-driven funds participate in Fairever’s mission?

“Socially responsible investors can join our mission simply by buying Fairtrade-certified gold bars through our online shop. Each bar comes with full chain-of-custody documentation and a Fairtrade premium that flows straight back to the miners’ cooperative, so your capital supports safer, fairer production from day one. For larger allocations we can arrange bulk orders or secure storage, but the easiest first step is a click in the webshop.”

9. What advice would you give jewellery brands transitioning to ethically sourced gold?

“Begin by blending in just a small percentage of Fairtrade-certified gold—say 5 - 10 %—into your existing supply chain. You don’t have to launch a stand-alone ‘ethical’ collection or overhaul your entire sourcing model on day one; every incremental gram already channels a premium back to mining communities and signals intent to your stakeholders. Once the metal is alloyed, it works exactly like any other gold, so there’s no operational hurdle in the workshop. Track how that first tranche performs, share the story with staff and customers, and then ratchet the share upward over time. Ethical sourcing is a step-by-step journey, not a purity test, and progress beats perfection.”

10. What’s next for Fairever in expanding its reach, partnerships, or product lines?

“We’re about to launch a ‘Dual-Impact Gold’ line that couples recycled gold from audited, RJC-certified recyclers with Fairmined Gold Credits and Responsible Gold Credits. The metal you hold is recycled, so it slots straight into existing casting workflows with no costly segregation; meanwhile the credits channel a fixed premium to artisanal and small-scale miners for every gram we sell. In other words, you source what’s readily available, keep traceability costs low, and still drive real improvements at the mine site—safer working conditions, mercury-free processing and community projects. This two-in-one model lets us scale quickly across Europe and India without waiting for large volumes of fully traceable primary gold, and it gives brands an easy on-ramp to measurable impact from day one.”

For more details visit: www.fairever.gold