

# ASGM and Mercury

## The Path Forward

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# What is needed to reduce Hg in ASGM?

- Restrict supply and availability of Hg
  - Provide a price signal to miners to conserve
- Formalize/ integrate miners
  - Enables programs to legally reach miners with information/ technologies
  - Gives miners access to means to increase productivity and profitability while decreasing mercury use and releases
- Develop successful models of transition to low / non-mercury techniques
- Financial and technical support for scaling up

# Next Steps

- Reduce availability and increase price of mercury as soon as possible
- Provide information and training on alternative methods for miners
- Expand awareness-raising and pilot projects in key countries, as directed by UNEP GC Decision 25/5
  - Projects must be started **soon** in order for results to inform negotiations
- **UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is one vehicle for carrying out projects**

# ASGM Partnership

- Overall goal: **50% reduction in mercury use and emissions by 2017**
- Identified four priority areas for pilot/demonstration projects in 2008 business plan
- More substantial financial support **critically needed** to further work in each of these areas

# 1. Support government efforts in setting national objectives/ reduction targets for mercury use in ASGM

- Projects already initiated in three regions
  - Two “regional strategic plan” projects funded by SAICM QSP
    - South-East Asia (focused on Cambodia and the Philippines)
    - South America (focused on Peru and Bolivia)
  - West Africa regional mercury project, led by the US and UNIDO, with funds from Finnish government
- These efforts will identify **strategic, high impact** projects that will need support

2. Eliminate the worst practices:
- whole-ore mercury amalgamation
  - mercury/ cyanidation combination
- Reduce Hg use and emissions



Copper plate amalgamation – the worst case scenario  
*M. Veiga, Venezuela, 2003*

### 3. Promote awareness and adoption of cleaner ASGM practices and technologies



Panning directly in river increases siltation, and destroys river banks  
*UNIDO, Madagascar, 2008*



Simple and cheap retort easy to procure locally  
*UNIDO-GMP, Laos, 2003*

## 4. Explore innovative market-based approaches

- Establish gold brand with price premium for adhering to good social and environmental practices
  - E.g., Oro Verde
- Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) and Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO) currently developing Fair-Mined/ Fair Traded “Standard Zero” for ASM gold, silver and platinum

# Immediate Partnership Priorities

- Documentation of existing efforts on legalization and formalization,
- Global knowledge base on ASGM,
- Technical manual of existing technologies and practices,
- Feedback on mercury requirements for ARM-FLO gold standard.

# UNEP Global Mercury Partnership ASGM Area

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<http://www.chem.unep.ch/MERCURY/Sector-Specific-Information/Artisanal-small-scale-mining.htm>