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# ARTISANAL GOLD MINING

Promoting responsible mining, alternative livelihoods, and environmental rehabilitation.

## OVERVIEW

Artisanal Gold Mining promotes responsible mining, alternative livelihoods, and environmental rehabilitation in the departments of Antioquia and Choco. It legalizes and formalizes illegal and informal gold mines, discourages mercury use in mining, creates legal economic opportunities and reforests land degraded by mining. Artisanal Gold Mining runs from September 2015 – March 2021.

Illegal and informal mining in Colombia causes deforestation; the mercury used in gold mining contaminates air and water; and unregulated mining costs the Government of Colombia (GOC) millions of dollars in lost tax revenue. Illegal gold mining also plays an important role in Colombia's criminal economy and has replaced drug trafficking as the primary income source for illicit actors. Once land has been degraded by mining, it ceases to be part of the economy because it no longer provides alternative livelihood options nor environmental value. Artisanal Gold Mining combats illicit economy influence by legalizing mines, and helps regain productive use of mine lands through land remediation and restoration projects.

## COMPONENTS

### LEGALIZING AND FORMALIZING MINES

Artisanal Gold Mining strengthens GOC capacities to enforce gold mining legislation and encourages mining associations and Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities to participate in mining formalization programs. Mining legalization and formalization reduces the negative environmental impacts and criminal activities associated with illegal gold mining.

### REDUCING MERCURY CONTAMINATION

Artisanal Gold Mining provides technical assistance and innovation to miners to eliminate mercury from their production processes.

### DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

Artisanal Gold Mining creates alternative livelihood opportunities for communities in which responsible gold mining is not economically or environmentally feasible. Alternative livelihoods supported by the activity include honey production in Antioquia and annatto natural colorant production in Choco.

### REHABILITATING DEGRADED LANDS

Artisanal Gold Mining works with community members, government actors and the private sector to rehabilitate abandoned and degraded mining sites through rehabilitation and reforestation projects.

## RESULTS

- Legalized more than 140 small-scale gold mines in Antioquia and Chocó;
- Facilitated the production and sale of over USD \$136 million worth of legal gold;
- Increased royalty, tax and social security contributions by over USD \$10 million;
- Prevented 50 tons of mercury from being dumped into the environment, generating an estimated USD 140 million in savings to the general health system;
- Rehabilitated 17,000 Ha of degraded mining lands in Antioquia and Chocó, equivalent to about 18 percent of all land deforested by illicit gold mining in Colombia since 2016;
- Diversified 1,050 families' incomes through alternative livelihoods; and
- Produced and marketed over 100 tons of honey as an alternative to illegal gold mining.