

Conflict-free gold project moves forward in DRC

The Just Gold project, a system to trace legal and conflict-free artisanal gold, which began in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2015, reached a milestone - moving it from the pilot stage - having proven a successful chain of custody from mine site to exporter.



“After almost two years of testing the Just Gold project with an aim to develop a chain of custody and due diligence system for artisanal gold in DRC, we are excited to share news of our success,” said Joanne Lebert, partnership Africa Canada’s executive director.

“The Just Gold project can now move from a period of testing to implementation and ensuring we have a long-term, sustainable and viable solution for traceable, legal and conflict-free exports of artisanal gold from Congo,” said Lebert.

The Just Gold project creates incentives for artisanal gold miners to channel their product to legal exporters - and eventually responsible consumers - by offering fair and transparent pricing and by providing capacity-building, such as technical assistance to miners in return for legal sales. Miners are taught better exploitation techniques and offered Just Gold project equipment, in return for which any gold produced must be tracked and sold through legal channels.

Legal, traceable supply chain

“Proving that artisanal gold in eastern Congo can be conflict-free, legal and traceable is a major step in responsible sourcing efforts in the Great Lakes region. The government of Democratic Republic of Congo is taking major strides in complying with regional standards and demonstrating how the implementation the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains can contribute to progressive improvements in the sector, supporting artisanal gold men and women miners to enter international markets,” said Lebert.

Partnership Africa Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Democratic Republic of Congo's Minister of Mines Martin Kabwelulu on September 2016, outlining support for the organisation's activities to strengthen natural resource governance.

Current activities in DRC include the Just Gold project, capacity building to implement both the International Conference on the Great Lakes (ICGLR) Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM) and the OECD Due Diligence Guidance applicable to high-value minerals, as well as support to civil society for monitoring and reporting on supply chain integrity.

Recognising women in the sector

Partnership Africa Canada has also undertaken research and analysis of the artisanal gold supply chain to understand women's roles in the sector. Through sensitisation and outreach, the Just Gold project improves awareness of women's rights, and their right to access, control and benefit of resources. The project also supports and fosters women's leadership opportunities through skills-building and training.

Partnership Africa Canada's work in DRC developed from its engagement as a technical partner to the ICGLR, providing capacity-building to implement the six tools developed by the ICGLR's Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources.

Funding for the Just Gold project and Partnership Africa Canada's work in the Great Lakes region is provided by Global Affairs Canada. Additional funding for the Just Gold project is provided by USAID through the Capacity Building for Responsible Minerals Trade (CBRMT) project and International Organisation for Migration.

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