

Summary of the Swiss Better Gold meeting with NGO representatives

Date and time: 20 November 2025

Purpose:

The meeting was convened by the SBG with the following objectives:

- Inform about the latest SBG developments
- Openly discuss challenges and opportunities in terms of ESG, impact, traceability, transparency and other ASGM related topics
- Receive input from the NGOs on priorities to focus and recommendations

Organisational & logistical details:

- In-person at the SBG offices
- Agenda circulated prior to the meeting
- Organised under Chatham House rule
- Short resumé of the key outcomes on SBG website

Swiss Better Gold participants:

Olivier Demierre, President
Diana Culillas, CEO
Pauline Evequoz, Board member
Jose Camino, Board member
Léo Daguet, Board member

NGO participants:

Terre des hommes
SWISSAID
Save the Children
The Centre for Child Rights and Business
UN Representative Human Rights Council

Discussed topics:

1. Opening:

- **Why ASGM** – given the proportion of ASM workers in the extractive sector and underlying major issues, the SBG trusts it is essential to support these miners through a pragmatic approach and technical assistance.
- **How** – Active since 2023, the SBG demonstrated that continuous improvement is the most adapted way to engage and contribute to long-term change of ASGM.

2. Updates from the SBG Association:

- **Governance** – With the view to widen the perspectives and legitimacy of SBG decision making process, the SBG General Assembly meeting of June 2025 has elected to its Board of Directors two civil society representatives from the Wyss Academy for Nature and RESOLVE.
- **Role of associations' members in the ecosystem** – The Association has two complementary membership categories: supply and support. Each has its own way to contribute to the ecosystem. Membership conditions can be found [here](#).
- **Commitment for transparency and traceability** – The SBG is committed to continuing its field work to grant full traceability for its accredited material. Since 2024, the SBG discloses the names of all its accredited sources (step 2) in its annual Impact Report. As of 2025 (to be published in March 2026), the SBG will

also disclose export relationships between Step 1 and Step 2 mines and SBG refiners.

- Working in a fragile ASM sector and difficult country contexts, the SBG also faced the challenge of mining accidents and other complex situations on the ground. Last November, the Association decided to make the crisis and accident reporting procedure public, so to make it transparent how the Association deals and reports such cases (procedure can be found [here](#)).

3. Programme updates:

- **SBG approach** – The scope of SBG intervention goes from artisanal panners to medium scale operations. Since 2025 the SBG initiated field work with processing plants (résumé to be found [here](#)).
- **Sourcing strategy, monitoring & verification approach** – The programme relies on two complementary processes. The first which is the ongoing monitoring activities on the ground, delivered to the mines by SBG technical assistance teams in Colombia and Peru. These complement the due diligence performed by refiners and end buyers.
- Accreditations are based on the recommendations of these monitoring results and taken by the SBG Accreditation Committee.
- The second layer is the independent verifications, conducted within 24 months of accreditation by independent experts. Currently, Rejas Alva (part of Nexia Group) is appointed for verifications in Peru. In Colombia, there is an ongoing tender process to appoint a new verifier. Verification mandates are given for two years and then a new selection / appointment process is launched).
- **Capital markets taskforce** – Driven initially by the demand for responsible sourcing from the watch and jewellery industry, the SBG understands that its further growth within the financial sector is conditioned by the existence of a fluid secondary market for impact gold (fluidity of premium). To tackle this challenge, the SBG is creating a specific task force which will contribute to the creation of such a platform in the future.

4. Swiss Better Gold Fund:

- **Set up and objectives** – Financed by the premium paid by members, the fund has a three-fold set up to: co-finance social & environmental projects on the ground, enable SBG's technical assistance work and cover association & verification costs.
- **Projects supported** – In 2024, the SBG invested a total of more than USD 1 million into environmental & social projects, benefitting not only the mine but the community, whereas technical assistance projects are more focused on the mines (examples of completed projects can be found [here](#)):
- **External evaluation & recommendations** – Conducted by Focus Rights in 2024, the evaluation focused on relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Key recommendations are:
 - **Better defined evaluation / selection criteria / follow-up indicators** would enhance the transparency of the evaluation process and also provide the mines with more guidelines on what projects are eligible and under what conditions.
 - **Strengthen the project proposal through capacity-building of miners:** It is important to strengthen the mines' capacities to identify and implement projects.
 - **Train / reinforce SBG Implementation officers** on project management and stakeholder engagement for mines.

5. Challenges & opportunities:

- **Effects of global gold prices on ASM** – Current gold prices attract increasing number of informal or illegal actors and make the work of motivating miners to adopt responsible practices increasingly difficult.
- **Security situation** – More regions are affected by this new gold rush and field activity becomes more challenging (exposure to physical risks).
- **H&S at work** – OHS continues to be one of the major focus areas of SBG work on the ground and will also be prioritised while engaging with processing plants and their artisanal suppliers.
- **Extensions in new regions / countries** – Various exploratory missions were conducted in the past 12 months and so far, the most advanced pilot extension is Mongolia. The SBG has signed MOUs with the Central Banks of Mongolia and of Ecuador, to enable its work on the ground and build dedicated supply chains. There are no advances in Ghana, where the new export route set up through the GoldBod does not currently allow for segregated flows.

6. Collaboration with SECO:

- **Transition** – Since July 1st the SBG Association took over the lead for the continuation of the programme. All the funding for the technical assistance on the ground generated by the members' impact premium and in that regard the programme became self-sustainable thanks to the commitment of the private sector.
- **Role of SBG in the new SECO programme on ASM:** To build on the achievements of previous phases, SECO launched a new ASGM programme for the period 2025–2029. This programme focuses on improving the enabling environment for responsible small-scale mining in key producer countries. It seeks to reduce poverty, foster decent work, and mitigate environmental harm through formalisation and better access to markets. The programme comprises three components:
 - **A Challenge Fund** to promote responsible supply chains and incentivise investment from the private sector and voluntary sustainability standards in responsible sourcing from mine to market.
 - **A Policy Dialogue Component** to strengthen the regulatory and institutional frameworks for formalisation and mercury reduction at national and subnational levels.
 - **A Knowledge and Cooperation Component** implemented in collaboration with the SBG Association, to leverage the association's experience, facilitate knowledge transfer, and align public and private approaches to responsible ASGM.

7. Overview of SBG external engagements:

- **LBMA ASM taskforce** – The SBG continues collaboration with the LBMA on greater ASGM inclusion and achieving greater results through adoption of continuous improvement. The SBG has also done a lot of work testing and implementing the LBMA ASM toolkit, which is now fully integrated in the SBG approach with processing plants (intermediary refineries)
- **Central Banks** – The SBG sees also the potential for collaboration with the Central Banks (examples of Mongolia and Ecuador) and recently has joined the Global Coalition for Action on ASGM.
- **Swiss Sustainable Finance** – Since 2024, the SBG is Network Partnership Member of the Swiss Sustainable Finance Platform, where the SBG contributes on the discussions and place of impact investment within capital markets.
- **NGOs & media** – The SBG is relaunching the concept of NGO round tables and is willing to anchor these as a regular annual activity with this important

stakeholder group. Individual, in-depth contact and workstream have materialised in joint field missions with both NGOs and media representatives, a practice that allows a greater understanding of challenges of the ASGM sector, greater transparency on how the SBG programme functions and what are the exact impacts of its work on the ground. These joint field missions will also be repeated in the coming months.

8. Follow-Up questions & other observations:

- The meeting was structured and conducted in a way that participants could ask their questions at any time of the discussion.
- One of the NGOs volunteered to support the SBG to review ASM action plans for processing plants, which is welcomed and accepted with gratitude by the SBG.
- The SBG was asked what the stand of the Association on the Multinationales Responsables initiative is. The SBG answered that the Association does not take any political stands. However, participants admit that for a programme like the SBG, the initiative will have no impact on its activities, as the SBG is already implementing its 27 criteria which cover several ESG parameters.
- On the question of how impact is evaluated and reported, the SBG pointed to its Achievement section of the SBG website ([here](#)) and added that the next Impact Report will also include the reviewed and enlarged list of KPI (to be published in March 2026).
- Finally, participants pointed out that many of the challenges reported by the SBG reflect the need for greater educational work across different stakeholders' groups including academia and international organisations (UN Forum on Human Rights, universities, etc.).

9. Closing notes:

- Participants agreed to continue this format of Round Table meetings on an annual basis.
- SBG thanked participants for this frank and clear exchange conducive to greater collaboration in future.