

Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region

Supporting the ICGLR and its Member States to Improve Governance of their Mineral Resources

The Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region project aims to improve mineral governance in the region while advancing security, stability, and development. The project builds the capacity of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and its Member States to address artisanal mineral flows and harness their potential as drivers for economic and social development, as well as stability and security. This four-year, €7.1 million (\$7.5 million USD) project is funded by the European Union (EU).

How does the mismanagement of artisanal minerals contribute to instability in Africa's Great Lakes region?

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is an important livelihood for over five million people in the region. While much spotlight has been on Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) minerals sector and its ties to conflict financing, the linkages to cross-border smuggling, and informal supply chains of other ICGLR countries have increasingly come into focus in recent years.

Artisanal mining remains largely informal and is prone to widespread corruption and violence. Artisanal mining communities are more susceptible to being exploited by armed groups and other illicit actors. At mines where armed forces are present there are instances of human rights abuses, dangerous working conditions, child labour, and gender-based violence. While women take on a variety of roles in gold mining, they often face discrimination that limits their opportunities to fully benefit from the sector.



Photos of artisanal gold mining communities and traceable, conflict-free artisanal gold from Democratic Republic of Congo. Sven Torfinn: 3-6; Zuzia Danielski: 2, 7.

Of the four recognized conflict minerals—tin, tungsten, tantalum (3Ts) and gold—gold is considered the most significant in terms of conflict financing and revenue lost by ICGLR Member States because of contraband exports. In 2015, research estimated that the smuggling of ASM gold deprives governments of the region of tax revenue up to \$22 million USD per year.¹ As an alternative to paper currency, gold is often favoured for money laundering and illicit trade. It is a high-value, easy-to-transport mineral, making it vulnerable to smuggling and an ideal target for armed groups.



Funded by
the European Union

While traceability and due diligence mechanisms have been implemented for the 3Ts, it appears that smuggling of gold from DRC and other high-risk contexts is thriving. Many buyers of artisanal gold in transit points and trading centers don't seem to question where it comes from, whether it's been traded and exported legally, whether it's funding armed groups, or contributing to human rights violations.²

A key part of the EU's new 2023 strategy for the Great Lakes region is addressing these root causes of insecurity. The project is aligned with the EU's commitment to contribute to the management and sustainable governance of natural resource supply chains, "encouraging the passage from trafficking to a legitimate commerce-based economy."³

How will the Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region project improve mineral governance?

1 Control artisanal mineral resources, including environmental and social impacts with a particular attention to women and youth



The importance of the artisanal mining sector to economic and social development is still untapped—with it mostly seen as a driver of conflict and insecurity. The project will update the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR) to reflect stakeholder needs and investment in value addition within the region, as well as support its implementation. Sensitization on the ICGLR's Formalization Guidance will be carried out and support will be provided to implement it, with a particular attention to the impact on women and youth. Analysis of value-addition in the region will generate guidelines for Member States.

2 Apply strategies and best practice models to artisanal gold export regimes



The project will identify and provide training on best practice models to reform artisanal gold export regimes, to align with the ICGLR's ASM gold strategy. Additionally, the project will support the ICGLR to develop a strategy addressing willing and non-compliant aggregators of artisanal 3T and gold minerals. The project will provide support to the ICGLR for continued engagement with international markets, including importing countries and trading hubs.

3 Adopt improved Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM) systems and procedures



The project will support more efficient and cost-effective RCM systems and procedures that meet market expectations. For the RCM to be recognized by the international market, a benchmarking exercise in collaboration with market actors will be undertaken. A data compatibility review and training will support data analysis and reporting, and the project will ensure data security and data sharing protocols are in place. The project will support the ICGLR to identify in-region chain of custody or auditing service providers and address market alignment gaps.

1 IMPACT, *Contraband Gold in the Great Lakes Region: In-region Cross-border Gold Flows versus Out-Region Smuggling*, May 2015, p. ii, <https://impacttransform.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2015-May-Contraband-Gold-in-the-Great-Lakes-Region-In-Region-Cross-Border-Gold-Flows-Versus-Out-Region-Smuggling.pdf>.

2 IMPACT, *A Golden Web: How India Became One of the World's Largest Gold Smuggling Hubs*, November 2019, https://impacttransform.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IMPACT_A-Golden-Web_EN-Nov-2019_web.pdf.

3 European Union, "A renewed EU Great Lakes Strategy: Supporting the transformation of the root causes of instability into shared opportunities – Council Conclusions," 6631/23, February 23, 2023, pp. 10, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6631-2023-INIT/en/pdf>.

International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR): The ICGLR is an inter-governmental organization of 12 Member States: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia. It was created in response to the recognition that political instability and conflicts in these countries have a considerable regional dimension and require a concerted effort to promote sustainable peace and development. The headquarters of the ICGLR are in Bujumbura, Burundi.

Protocol on the Fight against Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources: In 2006, the ICGLR Heads of State signed the Pact on Security, Stability, and Development in the Great Lakes region, which included the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources. Consultations on how to implement the Protocol focused on four high-value minerals: tin, tungsten, tantalum (3Ts), and gold. This led to the RINR and its six tools.

Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR): The Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR) was adopted through the Lusaka Declaration by Heads of State in December 2010. The RINR outlines the six tools to implement the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources. Through the Lusaka Declaration, the Heads of State of the ICGLR's 12 Member States have committed to the implementation of the six tools.

Six Tools: Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM), harmonization of national legislations, a regional database on mineral flows, Formalization of the artisanal mining sector, Promotion of the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and a Whistleblowing mechanism.

Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM): The RCM is a compulsory regional standard for certification of the 3Ts and gold sourced from or transiting across an ICGLR Member State. It is fully compliant with the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas. The first certificate was issued by Rwanda in 2013, followed by DRC in 2014. Currently, five Member States are implementing the RCM: Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

ICGLR Technical Unit on Natural Resources: To support the implementation of the six tools of the RINR, a dedicated staff were established within the ICGLR Executive Secretariat, based in Burundi.

Peace and Security: A Key Focus for the European Union

The EU is committed to promoting peace, democracy, and sustainable development in the Great Lakes region by addressing the root causes of insecurity. The EU seeks collaborative engagement with the ICGLR and its Member States, as part of a shared vision to unlock the region's potential for development. As part of its regional strategy, the EU is supporting the region to transform its systems of natural resources management—to contribute to stability and development.

European Union and African Union - Joint Vision for 2030: In February 2020, leaders met for the 6th joint EU-AU Summit. They agreed on a renewed and enhanced cooperation for peace and security—including tackling the root causes of conflicts and addressing the entire conflict cycle through an integrated approach.

A renewed EU Great Lakes Strategy: Approved in February 2023, the new strategy builds on the priorities, results, and lessons learned from implementing the 2013 EU Strategic Framework for the Great Lakes Region. The new strategy adopts a regional integrated approach and is action-oriented, focusing where the EU can bring added-value. It sets out promoting peace, democracy, and sustainable development in the region as a key objective, by addressing the root causes of insecurity.

EU Conflict Minerals Regulation: All EU-based importers of 3Ts and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas must identify and mitigate risks in their supply chain by implementing the OECD Due Diligence Guidance. The regulation came into force on January 1, 2021.

EU Raw Minerals Act: The March 2023 regulation ensures the EU has access to a sustainable supply of critical raw materials by streamlining permits and access to finance for critical raw material projects in the EU and third countries.

Global Gateway: In October 2023, in line with the EU Raw Minerals Act, the EU signed a strategic partnership agreement with DRC and Zambia to support sustainable raw materials value chains. The agreement supports the development of the Lobito Corridor a main railway to global markets for critical minerals such as cobalt.

Theory of Change

Mineral resource governance in the Great Lakes region of Africa is improved, contributing to the consolidation of peace and security in the region.

Gradual transition of a tool conceived to rein in illegal activities to a forward-looking instrument supporting the development of peaceful relations among Member States through economic cooperation.

The link between the gold sector and the financing of rebel and terrorist groups will be reduced.

Transparency of mining activities will increase and greater confidence among Member States and within the international community will be secured.

Capacity of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and its Member States to govern mineral resources in the region is strengthened, contributing to the consolidation of peace and security in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

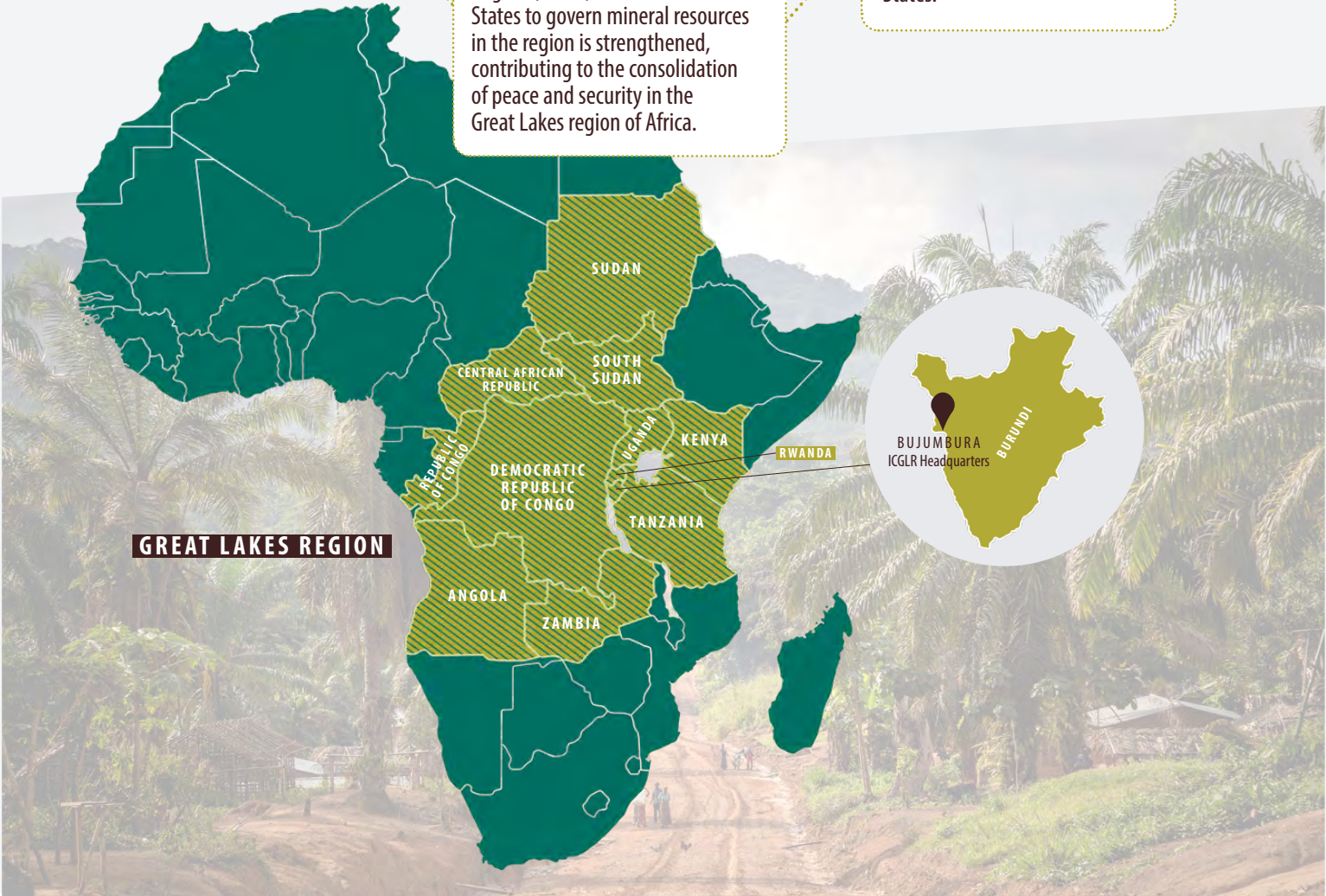
The Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR) is updated.



The implementation of the RINR is strengthened, combined with a reinforced focus on gold export regimes.



The digitization of regional certificates simplifies the introduction of Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM) procedures and better harnesses data in Member States.



GREAT LAKES REGION

BUJUMBURA
ICGLR Headquarters

BURUNDI

Logic Model Summary

Our ultimate impact: Mineral resource governance in the Great Lakes region of Africa is improved, contributing to the consolidation of peace and security in the region.



CONTROL OF ARTISANAL MINERAL RESOURCES

OUTCOMES

- Updated RINR
- Enhanced capacity of Technical Unit to support Member States to monitor, evaluate and mitigate the environmental and social impacts of ASM
- Enhanced capacity of Technical Unit to support Member States to develop harmonized ASM strategies that contribute to economic development and national economies

ACTIVITIES

- Validation and endorsement of revised RINR
- Model law updated and validated
- Strategy for ratification of revised RINR by Member States
- Implementation Guidance for revised RINR
- Sensitization on Formalization Guidance and its implementation
- Analysis and training on in-region value addition
- Evidence-based knowledge sharing meetings
- Monitoring tools to evaluate progress and impact
- Consultations, workshops, meetings



BEST PRACTICES FOR ARTISANAL GOLD EXPORTS

- Enhanced capacity of Technical Unit to support Member States to acquire knowledge on strategies and best practice models to reform gold export regimes
- Enhanced capacity of Technical Unit to support Member States' adoption of strategies and best practice models linked to the reform of gold export regimes

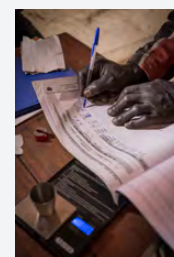
- Identification of best practices for gold export
- Training on best practices for controlling gold flows
- Engagement with upstream private sector actors on implementation of ASM gold strategy
- Engagement with international trading hubs
- Guide for supply chain actors on their role in implementing the RCM and RINR
- Consultations, workshops, and meetings



REGIONAL CERTIFICATION MECHANISM PROCEDURES

- Enhanced capacity of Technical Unit to support Member States' adoption of simplified, more efficient, and cost-effective RCM systems and procedures that meet market expectations
- Enhanced capacity of Technical Unit to effectively support in-region traceability, due diligence, monitoring and data sharing systems and practices

- Data compatibility review
- RCM benchmarking and plan of action
- Capacity building to enhance ICGLR Regional Database
- Data security and sharing protocols
- Training on data analysis and reporting
- Assessment on supporting RCM conformant artisanal gold chain of custody systems
- Alignment assessments
- Engagement with international market actors
- Consultations, workshops, and meetings



Timeline Summary



**Control of
artisanal mineral
resources**

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
RINR revised			
	Model law developed and support for implementation		
	Implementation Guidance for revised RINR		
	Sensitization and tools to support Formalization Guidance		
	Value addition analysis, guidelines, and tools		



**Best practices for
artisanal gold
exports**

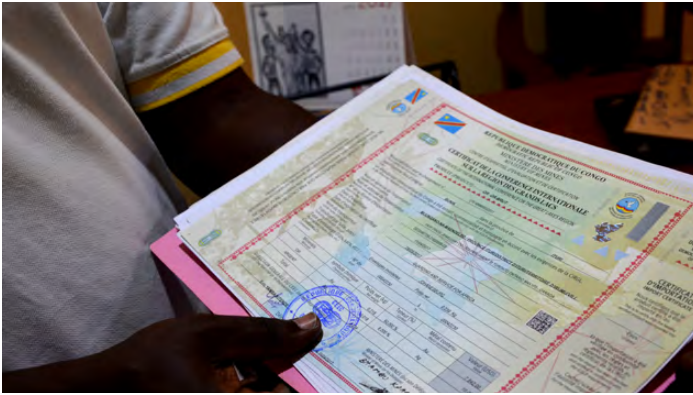
Strategy and tools developed for trading hubs			
	Engagement with international trading hubs		
	Identification of best practices		
		Strategy to engage upstream supply chain	
		Engagement with upstream aggregators	
		Engagement with enforcement bodies and international market	



**Regional
Certification
Mechanism
procedures**

Data compatibility analysis			
	Data security and sharing protocols		
	RCM benchmarking		
	Identification of in-region providers, alignment, and training		
	Engagement with international market actors		





Long History of Collaboration Between ICGLR and IMPACT

As a technical partner to the ICGLR, IMPACT (previously Partnership Africa Canada), has long collaborated with the ICGLR since its inception. A formal Memorandum of Understanding outlining cooperation was signed in 2011 and renewed in 2014.

After the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region was signed by Heads of State in 2006, IMPACT began advising the ICGLR on the development of a regional protocol to address the illicit exploitation of resources. In 2010, as Heads of State and Government signed the Lusaka Declaration, IMPACT began technical support to the ICGLR to implement the six tools part of the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources.

The following year, IMPACT released the report, *Taming the Resource Curse: Implementing the ICGLR Certification Mechanism for Conflict-prone Minerals*⁴ to outline how regional certification for 3Ts and gold can succeed, based on lessons learned from other certification mechanisms including the Kimberley Process. In 2011, IMPACT worked with the ICGLR to move certification for conflict-prone minerals forward by drafting the RCM standards.

Between 2015-2021, IMPACT provided technical support on implementing the RCM to the ICGLR Secretariat, Member States, private sector actors, and local civil society. Through sensitization workshops, field-level trainings on mine site inspections, data management, and export procedures, stakeholders learned how to implement the RCM. As Member States have been in different stages of implementing the RCM, IMPACT supported development of a workplan and national legislation to adopt the RCM into domestic legal frameworks.

In addition, IMPACT worked with the ICGLR to develop and operationalize a prototype of the Regional Database on Mineral Flows. The Regional Database stores publicly accessible information used to monitor and track the flow of 3Ts and gold sourced from or transiting across an ICGLR Member State.

How will the project provide capacity building to ICGLR and Member States?

The project has adopted the approach of building the capacity of the ICGLR Technical Unit on Natural Resources, who in turn will support the Member States—rather than implementation and activities within the Member States themselves. By developing a strong curriculum of resources including implementation guidance, training materials, and best practice papers or running train-the-trainer workshops, the ICGLR staff will be able to more effectively support Member States to adopt policies and procedures to improve natural resource governance.

What are the project's key values?

- **ICGLR Ownership:** The project is co-designed and led by the ICGLR, with IMPACT working to support the ICGLR staff.
- **Evidence-based:** The project is committed to monitoring & evaluation for learning and accountability.
- **Incentive-based:** The project develops strategies to incentivize stakeholders, including Member States, to participate and follow through in data collection commitments.
- **Visibility:** The project creates opportunities to share knowledge and evidence-based storytelling to draw in support for the ICGLR.

How will the project support coordination regionally?

This project builds on the first phase of the regional Project on Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region, funded by the European Union which ended in 2022. The project's focus on improved mineral governance is one component of the larger EU project on the consolidation of peace and security in Africa's Great Lakes region. IMPACT has a coordinating role within the project, ensuring full collaboration among the ICGLR, technical partners of both components, and stakeholders for project success.

⁴ IMPACT, *Taming the Resource Curse: Implementing the ICGLR Certification Mechanism for Conflict-prone Minerals*, March 2011, <https://impacttransform.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2011-Mar-Taming-the-Resource-Curse-Implementing-the-ICGLR-Certification-Mechanism.pdf>.



IMPACT transforms how natural resources are managed in areas where security and human rights are at risk. We investigate and develop approaches for natural resources to improve security, development, and equality. We are an independent non-profit, collaborating with local partners for lasting change. IMPACT is headquartered in Canada and has offices in Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as projects in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mali, and Zimbabwe.

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