

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 by building 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).

This project, officially referred to as the *Regional action to contribute to the improvement of mineral resources governance in the Great Lakes region*, builds on its first phase, funded by the European Union which ended in 2022. The project's focus on improved mineral governance is one component of the larger European Union program aimed to consolidate peace and security in Africa's Great Lakes region.

"We want to sell products and not raw materials for minerals to benefit our communities. For that, we need to manage and control illegal exploitation. This can only be done by supporting Member States to organize and formalize the ASM sector, and to process minerals for necessary value addition and job creation."

Maj. Gen. Martin Gama Abucha, Minister of Mining, Republic of South Sudan



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the European Union**

2024 Overview

In its first year, the project supported the ICGLR and its Member States to take concrete steps toward formalizing the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector, establishing a regional framework to strengthen value addition and cross-border trade, while enhancing traceability systems. The project facilitated the adoption of regional guidelines, supported reforms to gold export regimes, and engaged with key stakeholders in international markets. Technical progress was made on the ICGLR Regional Database and third-party audit mechanisms, laying the groundwork for more effective control of ASM gold flows and alignment with international due diligence standards.



Regional Forum on Value Addition and Cross-Border Trade in ICGLR Member States in Juba, South Sudan, November 2024

April 2025

Key Results in 2024



Strengthening Control Over the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) Sector

Regional ASM Formalization Guide: The updated guide will provide clear direction on how Member States can better support the ASM sector, preventing its exploitation for conflict financing in the Great Lakes region.

Value Addition Guidelines: These guidelines offer actionable steps to remove barriers to joint mineral value addition and enhance cross-border cooperation.

High-Level Regional Meeting on Value Addition and Cross-Border Trade: In November, at a high-level regional meeting on value addition and cross-border trade held in South Sudan, all 12 ICGLR Member States adopted the Value Addition Guidelines and committed to strengthening cross-border cooperation.



Enhancing the Reliability of the ICGLR Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM)

International Market Engagement: Efforts to align in-region standards with international market requirements progressed through engagement with international market actors and OECD-aligned industry schemes. The ICGLR and the Responsible Minerals Initiative (RMI) have initiated steps toward cross-recognition of the ICGLR's third-party audit program and RMI's Responsible Assurance Process. As part of this process, ICGLR will begin shadowing RMI audits in early 2025 to enhance alignment and facilitate cross-learning.

Regional Database Working Group: Four technical meetings accelerated the full operationalization of the ICGLR Regional Database on Mineral Flows, with full representation from all Member States.

Data Security Standards: Research on best practices led to recommendations for strengthening data security within the ICGLR Regional Database on Mineral Flows.

Data Sharing Protocols: Based on research and best practices, two draft protocols for data sharing within the ICGLR Regional Database were developed.

Traceability: In-region digital traceability service providers were identified, assessed for alignment with the ICGLR regional standards and pre-accredited by the ICGLR.

Third-Party Audits: Prerequisites for independent third-party audits were developed and implemented, leading to the pre-accreditation, accreditation, and training of 27 Regional Third-Party Auditors. To date, 11 audit firms have been accredited. The next round of audits is set to begin in the first quarter of 2025.



Reforming Gold Export Regimes to Curb Artisanal Gold Smuggling in the Region

Engagement with Importing Countries and Trading Hubs: Indian gold buyers and state actors were introduced to the ICGLR's Regional Initiative on Natural Resources (RINR). They expressed support for the ICGLR's Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Strategy and committed to recognizing the ICGLR Regional Certification Mechanism as a tool for controlling artisanal gold flows.

“ICGLR Member States continue to regularly examine the situation in each Member State concerning the prevention of illegal exploitation of natural resources, and lobby for enactment and enforcement of legislation that helps break the link between conflict and the illegal exploitation and trade in minerals with a view to putting an end to the abuse of local communities and supporting regional development.”

Amb. João Samuel Caholo, Executive Secretary of the ICGLR

Project Strategies



Improve the control of artisanal mineral resources by updating the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR), which outlines the six tools to address the illegal exploitation of resources. It was originally adopted in 2010 by Heads of State through the Lusaka Declaration. The project will support the implementation of the RINR to transition from a tool conceived to rein in illegal activities, to a forward-looking instrument, reflecting stakeholder needs, supporting economic and social development.



Apply best practices to artisanal gold exports to align with the ICGLR's artisanal and small-scale (ASM) gold strategy. The project will provide training on best practice models to reform ASM gold export regimes and support engagement with actors across the supply chain—within Member States and internationally.



Adopt improved Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM) systems and better harness data in Member States. The RCM is a compulsory regional standard for certification of the 3Ts and gold sourced from or transiting across an ICGLR Member State, currently implemented by five Member States. The project will support more efficient RCM systems that meet market expectations.

Third Party Auditor Training - Mine Site Visit, March 2024



As our region faces evolving challenges in the mineral sector, we must adapt our strategies while strengthening our collaborative frameworks. The complexity of cross-border mineral flows and emerging technological demands require an even more coordinated approach.”

Mrs. Scholastica Mwau, Regional Internal Auditor, ICGLR

Implementing Partners

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 project strengthens the capacity of the ICGLR's Technical Unit on Natural Resources, which in turn supports the Member States.

www.icglr.org

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 a technical partner to the ICGLR and has provided support since the 2006 signing by Heads of State of the Pact on Security, Stability, and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

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