



Kick-starting a process of sector reform: Action Dialogue for ASM in Ghana

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IIED's first national dialogue for artisanal and small scale gold mining (ASM) took place in Ghana on 18th-22nd January 2016. Over 60 national stakeholders gathered for the four-day **dialogue leading to**:

- **Consensus** on a new agenda for change
- **Leadership**, enthusiasm and confidence in now having the tools for real change
- **Unprecedented collaboration** across multiple stakeholders and sectors
- **A learning and leadership group** to drive next steps and link with national and international initiatives

What we heard from the participants after the dialogue:

"I have been working with ASM for 26 years but going into the field this week I have learnt new things from my miners, one of which is the need for financial assistance – one of the bases of the dialogue. I promise from here that I will work on this. I mentioned this to the miners and they were very happy. From next week, we will start this action and this dialogue will be fruitful." (District Officer, Minerals Commission)

"The programme has really been a success... As a company we have learned a lot. Things we thought we were doing right, we realise now there is still room for improvement." (Small-scale mine manager)

"This dialogue has been an eye opener, I have never visited a hard rock mining site and this allowed me to interact with the women at that level... Moving forward, I want to make sure these women are brought on board and that their issues are taken seriously" (Female artisanal and small scale miner)

"We shouldn't be seduced by knowing about the challenges and the problems of the industry, but we should take responsibility and give momentum to implementing the outcomes of this dialogue on the ground. Together we can achieve the extraordinary" (Leader of national ASM association)

The four-day process – with 2 days visiting local ASM field sites and communities and 2 days in a dialogue workshop – highlighted a range of challenges and solutions. These confirmed, refined and furthered the issues identified through the pre-dialogue, participatory research. The main output of the process is a draft **roadmap** to support more sustainable, efficient and equitable ASM within a more inclusive mining sector including:

- **Formalisation processes** with streamlined sector institutions, rules, information flows and incentives to attract investment and lead to sector transformation
- **Improved knowledge and research** on ASM status and options to support formalisation processes
- **Engagement and communications** to improve stakeholder awareness, trust and collaboration to realise ASM's potentials

Solutions that were identified as key to the Ghana context included focusing on women as active players throughout the chain and establishing virtuous circles with other land uses and large scale mining.

Over the coming months, IIED will work with the Ghanaian Learning and Leadership Group (LLG) established through the process to:

- Support the group in **producing synergies between organisations with relevant mandates**
- Agree and begin work to **implement the priority, short term solutions** identified in the roadmap
- Identify opportunities for **global lesson exchange** across ASM, mining and the natural resources
- **Fundraise to continue momentum and deliver on expectations** beyond the current funding period (which ends April 2016)

Sharing the initial dialogue outcomes

Consensus on a new agenda for change. The way in which IIED simplified a complex agenda allowed stakeholders to more readily engage with the priorities and solutions. A focus on developing a roadmap for change that prioritised three key issues (information, investment and licensing – see further below) and a number of cross-cutting themes (institutional collaboration, empowerment and capacity building, and communications) was supported by participants and developed in working groups. This process built on the pre-dialogue, participatory research but further incorporated participant knowledge and reflections. The result was a practical and solutions focused discussion that the IIED team will formulate into a strategy with stakeholders who will play a leading role in driving it forward.

Leadership, enthusiasm and confidence in now having the tools for real change. One of the most powerful and influential stakeholders identified during the pre-dialogue research was the Ghana Mineral's Commission. Securing the support and commitment of GMC's leadership through the process was a significant indicator of its success and its potential for real change. The idea and make up of a Ghanaian 'Learning and Leadership Group' (LLG) was endorsed by participants as a strong mechanism for driving next steps, ongoing learning and both collaborative and individual leadership on change.

Better engagement across the sector. Field engagement showed the real value of listening to miners and especially women. It took the focus away from potential backward-looking, abstract reflection on the research towards thinking about the future of local people's lives and landscapes. It was clear during the national engagement that the right players were in the room and comprised the 'future sector'. Our engagement approach put all on an equal footing and focused on joint solutions and joint leadership, not conflict. Across the 4 days there was a perceptible shift from defensive positioning focused on the problems to dialogue and consensus on development potential.

Outlining the roadmap for change

The workshop focused on developing a solutions- and action-focused roadmap to prioritise action and attract international stakeholders and national attention for change in the sector. The roadmap aims to support a virtuous circle, which transforms the ASM sector from poverty driven, insecure, indebted and unsupported to a sector driven by business and its capacities with secure rights, jobs and resources (including for women) and greater investment by government and business.

During the dialogue, three priorities were collaboratively identified.

1. Increasing *information* on geological assets and ASM practices – so that ASM miners are directed to suitable areas, and the sustainability of their use of them is monitored
2. Greatly increasing *investment* in the sector, improving access to finance – so that miners can shift from perpetual indebtedness to capitalisation based on the value of the resource
3. *Streamlining licensing* procedures and sector regulation – so that licensing is accessible and provides 'bankable documents' for raising finance and marketing support

Following the dialogue, the IIED team begun drafting the roadmap, which will then be further shaped and actioned by the LLG. This roadmap identifies immediate actions as well as ongoing support needed to improved knowledge, research, engagement and communications.

- Immediate actions to implement solutions identified for improved **formalisation processes with a national ASM business case and action plan** for e-licensing, updating standards, assessing geological assets, mobilising large-scale mining companies for action, organising and empowering artisanal and small scale miners and mobilising (rural) financing institutions for ASM
- Support to the LLG to gather **research and knowledge on key areas** such as ASM data and business practices, ASM economics at the national and mine levels, ASM (dis)incentives and fiscal choices, directions issues (notably gender) and synergies and clashes between ASM and agriculture and ASM and LSM
- Support to the LLG to undertake **engagement and communications** based on a through stakeholder analysis, improved voice for ASM and ongoing dialogue across the stakeholders