



PRESS RELEASE

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New Fairtrade, Valcambi, FairCapital and Fairphone partnership set to promote safe and responsible practices in Peru's artisanal and small-scale gold mines

Fairtrade, Valcambi, FairCapital and Fairphone are partnering on a new programme funded by the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM) that will support artisanal and small-scale miners in South Peru to formalise their activities and further adopt responsible practices, enabling them to operate more safely, safeguard the environment and improve their productivity.

The Responsible Peruvian Gold programme will work with four artisanal and small-scale mining organisations (ASMOs) in the Puno region of Peru, supporting the miners to acquire the technical and financial skills needed to meet the mining standards required to sell their gold to international markets on Fairtrade terms. The three-year ERPM-funded programme – worth £490,000 – also aims to ensure decent and safe working conditions for miners.

This work will be delivered by a consortium led by UK-based trade justice movement [Fairtrade Foundation](#), in partnership with: market-leading Swiss gold refiner [Valcambi](#), who are Fairtrade certified; pioneering lender [FairCapital](#), who offer financial services to Fairtrade supply chains; and Peru's national network of Fairtrade producers, [CNCJ-PERU](#). In addition, Fairtrade partner [Fairphone](#) will support in promoting responsible ASM gold in different sectors.

A total of 10 mine operators within the four ASMOs will be supported to become Fairtrade certified as a collective. This will enable them to market their gold under the Fairtrade gold standard – one of the most globally recognised ethical standards for supporting responsible extraction with artisanal and small-scale gold mines.

In Peru's Puno region, around 300,000 people depend directly or indirectly on the extraction of gold from ASMOs for their livelihood. Yet the gold mining sector in this region is largely informal and characterised by a lack of responsible practices including exposure to health and safety risks, such as those related to mercury use, and low productivity.

In the context of COVID-19, the existing challenges faced by small-scale miners have been deepened, especially in relation to market access, price, and the health and safety adjustments required. The Responsible Peruvian Gold programme will guide mine sites through a process of supply-chain formalisation, compliance with the Fairtrade standard and enhanced recovery rates of gold. It will do so by strengthening their internal management and traceability systems, supporting the uptake of responsible mining practices and creating links between mines and formal lines of finance for investing into more effective and cleaner technology.

Louisa Cox, Director of Impact at the Fairtrade Foundation, said: "Fairtrade Foundation is pleased to be partnering with Valcambi, FairCapital, Fairphone and CNCJ-PERU to help small-scale and artisanal miners operate formally and as a part of a robust and stable supply chain.

“This project will help meet the increased demand for ethically sourced gold. What’s more, we estimate that sales of Fairtrade gold by the end of the programme will generate an extra \$400,000 in Fairtrade Premium annually for the mining organisations. This is an additional sum of money that miners can invest collectively in mine-level, social or community projects of their choosing, and which we expect will, in particular, have a positive impact on women in the mining communities.”

Michael Mesaric, CEO of Valcambi, said: “Valcambi is delighted to be part of this programme that fosters responsible mining practices and will provide miners access to international markets under Fairtrade terms.

“Since 2014, we have been in a fruitful collaboration with Fairtrade establishing successful supply chains with Peruvian Fairtrade certified mines, and we look forward to further expanding our impact on the ground helping more miners to benefit from direct exports, thereby improving their incomes and livelihoods.”

Dr. Christoph Gosdenoz, Partner at FairCapital SA, said: “It is FairCapital’s mission to provide small-scale producers from the Fairtrade ecosystem access to financing. We are convinced that the responsible Peruvian gold project is an excellent opportunity for artisanal and small-scale miners who have limited resources to address increasing market demand for their certified production. Because their diverse financial, operational and environmental challenges can best be addressed in a collaborative approach, we are happy to count with the support of our experienced project partners.”

Luis Suárez, Executive Secretary of CNCJ-PERU, said the network’s participation in the programme would empower small miners, strengthen their business management capabilities and support their entry into the Fairtrade system. By sharing experience and knowledge with miners, the programme would also help “to make them visible – not only for formalization, but also for building a different future,” he said.

Mr Suárez added: “The CNCJ-PERU is interested in influencing and developing activities within the framework of respect for nature and the environment, the reduction and elimination of mercury, and the rational use of resources. We see great potential for synergy with partners committed to this common goal.”

Tirza Voss, Sustainable Materials & Mining Manager of Fairphone said: “As the first and – to date – the only electronics company to have integrated Fairtrade certified gold into its smartphone, we are excited to continue our partnership with the Fairtrade Foundation and consortium members of the Responsible Peruvian Gold project. In order to inspire the industry to follow our example, we will build upon our pilot model and develop a scalable route to market for Fairtrade gold to the electronics end user market. Ultimately we want to support and promote responsible mining practices and sustainable development of the mining communities at the heart of our supply chains.”

The consortium members will draw on their long-standing experience of working in Peru. Fairtrade will advise on ethical standards and promote certified gold to end-buyers, both in the jewellery and technology sectors; Valcambi will provide its expertise in supply chain due-diligence and in facilitating the export of gold on Fairtrade terms; FairCapital will provide technical assistance on investment and financial planning; CNCJ-PERU will provide in-country support and work directly with the mines.

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Notes to editors

The **European Partnership for Responsible Minerals** aims to increase the proportion of responsibly produced minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas, and to support socially responsible extraction of minerals that supports the development of local communities. For more information, visit: <https://europeanpartnership-responsibleminerals.eu/cms/view/53241072/eprm-projects/53244039>

Fairtrade is a global movement for change that works directly with businesses, consumers and campaigners to make trade deliver for farmers and workers. The international Fairtrade system (which the Fairtrade Foundation is a part of) represents the world's largest and most recognised fair trade system.

Valcambi is a world leader in the refining of precious metals with more than 55 years' experience. Based in Switzerland, the company operates one of the world's largest integrated precious metals plants, with an annual refining capacity of up to 2,000 metric tons. At the forefront of promoting responsibly mined and sourced precious metals, with a special focus on artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), Valcambi supports miners in their efforts to adopt responsible labour, technical and environmental practices, and sources and refines gold from Fairtrade, Fairmined certified and SBGA criteria mines.

Fairphone is a social enterprise that is building a movement for fairer electronics. It works to make a positive impact across the value chain in mining, design, manufacturing and life cycle, while expanding the market for products that put ethical values first.

FairCapital is a mission-driven facilitator, providing financing and consulting services to cooperative producers and other actors along the Fairtrade value chain. It works to enable high impact enterprises and support responsible investors to contribute to sustainable growth in the southern hemisphere and ultimately reduce poverty worldwide.

Coordinadora Nacional de Comercio Justo de Perú (CNCJ-PERU), is Peru's national network representing Fairtrade producers.