



Claims Guide

August 2025



SWISS BETTER GOLD CLAIMS GUIDE¹

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¹ The Swiss Better Gold claims guide references the ISEAL Code of Good Practice.

1. Introduction: Swiss Better Gold Association – Initiative

The Swiss Better Gold Association is a non-profit industry association whose members represent key players of the gold industry, aiming at the support of artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) -and medium-scale mining when eligible- to develop responsible gold supply chains from these producers to its members.

In 2013, the Association entered a public-private partnership with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) through which the Swiss Better Gold Initiative was created. The programme seeks to provide technical assistance to mining producers and enhance social and environmental practices, in order to support their accreditation as Swiss Better Gold suppliers.

For the purpose of this guide, claims include all types of communications (statements) made by Swiss Better Gold stakeholders that seek to inform about, promote or communicate the stakeholder's engagement with Swiss Better Gold, impacts generated through the collaboration with Swiss Better Gold, compliance with Swiss Better Gold sourcing criteria, or any other relationship with Swiss Better Gold. Claims may be made on media channels, such as social media, in stakeholder's communications, such as sustainability reports, or in any other form/design used by stakeholders.

2. Swiss Better Gold: Visual identity, communication, trademark registration

The Swiss Better Gold Association has registered the following trademark "SBG Swiss Better Gold":



The SBG Swiss Better Gold trademark is the common denominator between different actors and endeavours for the creation of responsible gold supply chains from mine to market, allowing clear and efficient communication and messaging.

The Swiss Better Gold denomination is used on its own or associated with other terms, such as *"Association"*, *"Initiative"*, *"programme"*, *"escalator approach"*, *"sourcing strategy"*, etc. Ex. Swiss Better Gold Association; Swiss Better Gold Initiative as well as Swiss Better Gold escalator approach; Swiss Better Gold sourcing strategy; Swiss Better Gold Fund.

It is possible to use the abbreviation “SBG” for Swiss Better Gold. Ex. SBG Association, SBG Initiative as well as SBG escalator approach, SBG sourcing strategy.

However, the first use of the abbreviation in a document must always be clear. Ex. Swiss Better Gold (SBG).

3. Use of the trademark

The registered trademark is a combination of words and a figurative sign:



This trademark designates the activities undertaken by the Swiss Better Gold Association and the Swiss Better Gold Initiative and is used as the main reference.

Furthermore, for the sake of clarity and identification of each stakeholder of the Swiss Better Gold system, the following additional options can be considered in each specific case:

As the visual identity and designation of the Association:



As the visual identity and designation of the Initiative for communications in English:



As the visual identity and designation of the Initiative for communications in Spanish:



4. Who can make Swiss Better Gold claims?

Swiss Better Gold claims can be made by:




- Swiss Better Gold Association members;
- Swiss Better Gold suppliers;
- Swiss Better Gold implementing partners;
- Swiss Better Gold institutional partners;
- International traders partnering with Swiss Better Gold;
- Processing plants (intermediary refineries) partnering with Swiss Better Gold.

The Swiss Better Gold Association does not require its members to make provenance or origin claims, nor product-related claims (i.e. “off” or “on” product). For more information, please refer to page 10.

All stakeholders must strictly adhere to the present claims guide and need to seek a written permission from the Swiss Better Gold Association Secretariat to make any claims, which differ from provided examples (info@sbga.ch).

5. Claims for members

Members of the Swiss Better Gold Association can make claims that are aligned with the table below:

Your membership (associated with logo below): 	We (or organisation) are a member of the Swiss Better Gold Association.
	We (or organisation) are member of the Swiss Better Gold Association since XX XXXX.
	We (or organisation) are represented on the Swiss Better Gold Association Board of Directors.
Your commitments (associated with logo below):  	Through our membership and sourcing practices, we (or organisation) support the Swiss Better Gold Initiative launched by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swiss Better Gold Association and share its key goal, which aims at the improvement of social and environmental conditions in ASGM.
	We (or organisation) are committed to support Swiss Better Gold and responsible mining producers.

	We (or organisation) support Swiss Better Gold and community-focused sustainable development of ASGM producers.
	Through our participation in Swiss Better Gold, we (or organisation) are committed to the improvement of the social and environmental practices in the ASGM sector.
	We support and endorse Swiss Better Gold in contributing to better social and environmental practices of ASGM producers.
	We (or organisation) source gold extracted by producers supported by Swiss Better Gold.
	Between XX XXXX to XX XXXX, we (or organisation) have contributed to Swiss Better Gold by sourcing XX kg of gold, generating XX US\$ of impact premium*.

* Please refer to the section on provenance claims on page 10.

6. Claims for partner mines




Swiss Better Gold suppliers accredited in Step 2 and, thus, complying with all Swiss Better Gold sourcing criteria, can make claims aligned with examples below.

The distribution of SBG documents is permitted within the staff of the mine. However, for obvious confidentiality reasons, the distribution and publication of SBG documents, such as the “SBG Certificate of accreditation”, contracts, Letters of interest (LOIs), SBG working documents (Continuous Improvement Plans) or others alike is strictly prohibited on public channels, especially on the internet.

Your supplier status (associated with logo below): 	We (or producer) participate in Swiss Better Gold.
	We (or producer) are a Swiss Better Gold supplier since XX XXXX.
	We (or producer) are a fully accredited supplier of Swiss Better Gold.
	The gold from our operation is produced complying with the Swiss Better Gold sourcing criteria.
	We (or producer) have been independently verified meeting the environmental and social operating practices defined in the Swiss Better Gold sourcing strategy.

Your commitments (associated with logos below):   	Through our participation in Swiss Better Gold, we (or producer) are committed to improving the practices at our mining operation.
	Through our participation in Swiss Better Gold and the use of the impact premium, we (or producer) support community-focused sustainable development.
	We (or producer) supply Swiss Better Gold.
	Between XX XXXX to XX XXXX, we (or producer) have supplied XX kg of Swiss Better Gold.

Swiss Better Gold partner mines, also Step 1 producers, can generally make claims related to their participation in the programme and commitment to reach responsible mining practices, as per examples in the table below:

Your supplier status (associated with logo below): 	We (or producer) participate in Swiss Better Gold.
Your commitments (associated with logos below):  	Through our participation in Swiss Better Gold, we (or producer) are committed to improving the practices at our mining operation and reach accreditation by the programme.

7. Claims for implementing partners

Swiss Better Gold implementing partners can make claims aligned with those in the table below:

Your relation & contribution to Swiss Better Gold (associated with logos below):	We (or organisation) implement the Swiss Better Gold Initiative, a pioneer programme that partners with Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) in supporting responsible ASGM.
	We (or organisation) are the implementing partner of Swiss Better Gold since XX XXXX.

SBG SWISSBETTERGOLD INITIATIVE SBG SWISSBETTERGOLD INICIATIVA SUIZA ORO RESPONSABLE SBG SWISSBETTERGOLD	Through our work within Swiss Better Gold, we (or organisation) contribute to improving social and environmental mining practices.
	As the implementing partner of Swiss Better Gold and through our work on the ground, we (or organisation) support the creation of responsible supply chains.
	Swiss Better Gold provides direct support to ASGM producers and supports them to comply with the Swiss Better Gold sourcing criteria.
	Swiss Better Gold provides direct support to ASGM producers and supports them to climb the Swiss Better Gold Continuous Improvement Escalator.
	By supporting improvement practices at ASGM operations, Swiss Better Gold aims to positively impact social, environmental, and economic development of the ASGM sector.
	We (or organisation) support Swiss Better Gold in enabling better social and environmental practices in mining operations.
	Swiss Better Gold is delighted to invite you to XX workshop specifically designed for ASGM producers.

8. Claims for institutional partners




Currently, the Swiss Better Gold Association's main partner in the Swiss Better Gold Initiative is the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Therefore, key claims aligned with SECO's role are like those in the table below:

Your partner status & support of Swiss Better Gold (associated with logos below): SBG SWISSBETTERGOLD INITIATIVE SBG SWISSBETTERGOLD INICIATIVA SUIZA ORO RESPONSABLE	The Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swiss Better Gold Association have combined forces in a pioneer public-private alliance, known as the Swiss Better Gold Initiative, aiming at the reduction of poverty and improvement of social and environmental conditions in ASGM.
	Since 2013, the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) is the public partner of the Swiss Better Gold Association.
	The Swiss Better Gold Initiative is a unique public-private partnership between the Swiss Better Gold Association

	and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), which aims at supporting ASGM producers on their journey towards better social and environmental practices.
	Through creation of the Swiss Better Gold Initiative, the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swiss Better Gold Association invest in activities to reduce poverty and improve social and environmental conditions in ASGM.
	Through their public-private partnership named Swiss Better Gold Initiative, the Swiss Better Gold Association and SECO support ASGM producers to improve their technical, organisational, social and environmental practices, promote responsibly produced ASM gold, raise awareness and maintain an open dialogue with civil society on ASGM-related challenges.

9. Claims for international traders

Where necessary, Swiss Better Gold works with international traders to facilitate the supply chain. The international traders are a crucial element of the gold supply chain and thus an important partner for Swiss Better Gold. Partner traders can make claims aligned with those in the table below:

Your relation with Swiss Better Gold (associated with logos below):   	We (or organisation) are committed to supporting responsibly produced and traceable gold and thus have decided to become part of the Swiss Better Gold supply chain.
	We (or organisation) are part of the Swiss Better Gold supply chain, facilitating the export of responsibly produced and traceable gold.
	Through our participation in Swiss Better Gold, we (or organisation) are committed to the improvement of the social and environmental practices in the ASGM sector.
	By participating in the Swiss Better Gold programme, we strive to make our contribution to greater ASGM inclusiveness in global supply chains.

	By being part of the Swiss Better Gold programme, we work toward fostering greater ASGM inclusiveness in global supply chains.
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10. Claims for processing plants / intermediary refiners

In certain contexts, Swiss Better Gold works with processing plants (intermediary refiners) to facilitate the supply chain between ASGM producers and buyers. In these contexts, processing plants are a crucial element of the ASGM supply chain and thus an important partner for Swiss Better Gold. Partner plants can make claims aligned with those in the table below:

Your relation with Swiss Better Gold (associated with logos below):   	We (or organisation) are committed to supporting responsibly produced and traceable gold and thus have decided to become part of the Swiss Better Gold supply chain.
	We (or organisation) are part of the Swiss Better Gold supply chain, facilitating the export of responsibly produced ASM gold.
	Through our participation in Swiss Better Gold, we (or organisation) are committed to the inclusion of ASGM producers in international supply chains and support improvements of the social and environmental practices in the ASGM sector.

11. Provenance claims for supply members

Supply members of the Association should be aware that corporate provenance claims are likely to come under scrutiny from regulators, investors, customers, and civil society organisations.

The Swiss Better Gold Association allows its members to make provenance claims about their gold sources participating in the Swiss Better Gold programme. For avoidance of doubt, please note that provenance claims are voluntary.

Corporate provenance claims may include claims on gold being sourced directly from a mining producer participating in Swiss Better Gold that follows a

segregated processing route through a refinery, or a “mass balance” sourcing strategy that blends gold from multiple producers or even includes gold from producers outside of the Swiss Better Gold system. In each case, these claims shall accurately reflect the quantities (in kilograms, grams or % of the total size of the batch) along with the origin of the gold and the degree of certainty about its chain of custody. Claims shall be factual and shall not leave room for misleading interpretation of the members’ commitments, the origin, and the amount of Swiss Better Gold in their custody.

Ex. We (or organisation) source gold from the Swiss Better Gold accredited producer XX in Colombia;

Ex. We (or organisation) source X% of our gold from Swiss Better Gold accredited producers.

Members that choose to make such corporate provenance claims will be required to maintain evidence that these claims are substantiated by a documented management system and based on guarantees provided by their Swiss Better Gold refining partners (segregated production flows, transfer documents, contractual agreements, etc.).

The Swiss Better Gold Association may also accept provenance claims assured by another recognised certification system. For example, a member of the Swiss Better Gold Association may also be an RJC member and have a voluntary provenance claim audited and certified by the RJC as part of its audit scope (CoP 14 on Provenance Claims and CoC). In such cases, the Swiss Better Gold Association would accept the RJC CoC certificate of that member as evidence of the claim’s validity. In any case, these claims must be approved by the Swiss Better Gold Association Secretariat (info@sbga.ch).

12. Monitoring of claims

The Swiss Better Gold Association Secretariat is responsible for monitoring the claims made by different actors in the Swiss Better Gold system and claims made by externals.

The Secretariat conducts a regular review of the claims made by Association members, Swiss Better Gold suppliers and implementing or other programme partners. These consist of a review of websites, social media channels and other publicly available sources and channels.

A misuse is identified by the Swiss Better Gold team (Swiss Better Gold Association Secretariat, Swiss Better Gold implementing partner on the ground), a Swiss Better Gold Association member, or any other person/organisation.

If not identified by the Secretariat, a misuse can be directly communicated to the Secretariat via email or via the Swiss Better Gold grievance form (found under <https://swissbettergold.ch/about-us>).

13. Misuse of claims

A misuse of Swiss Better Gold claims is defined as a breach with the Swiss Better Gold claims guide. It can be *minor* or *major*.

A minor misuse refers to:

- Claims, which slightly differ from the claims outlined in the claims guide and which haven't been consulted with the Secretariat.
- Overclaims, as in exaggerations.
- Claims including an affirmation of "best practices", or an unjustified use of the words 'sustainable'/'sustainability'.
Words such as "best practice" or "sustainable"/"sustainability" should always be accompanied by a further qualification, e.g. "continuous improvement to promote better practices", "seeks to contribute to environmental sustainability", "on our journey to sustainability".
- Claims that assure the Swiss Better Gold supplier status of a producer that has not passed through a monitoring and/or verification process.
- False statements about a Swiss Better Gold Association member's status (supply or support member).
- publication or distribution of SBG documents, such as the "SBG Certificate of accreditation", contracts, Letters of interest (LOIs), SBG working documents (Continuous Improvement Plans) or others alike on public channels.

A major misuse refers to:

- Misleading or deceptive statements about a Swiss Better Gold supply chain, e.g. false provenance claims.
- Claims that put in danger the reputation of Swiss Better Gold.

In the case of any misuse, the claimant is notified and asked to adjust or remove the claim. In the case of a major misuse, the claimant may be asked to publicly rectify the claim.

In the unlikely event that false claims remain or are repeated after multiple notifications, the Swiss Better Gold Association Board of Directors will be involved to define corrective actions, potentially including termination of membership or participation in the Swiss Better Gold programme, publicly denouncing the false claim, barring continued/future collaboration, and/or initiate legal action.