

**S B G** SWISSBETTERGOLD

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Swiss Better Gold

**Claims Guide**

February 2024



**SWISS BETTER GOLD CLAIMS GUIDE<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The Swiss Better Gold claims guide references the ISEAL Codes 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) as well as the development of responsible gold supply chains from the ASGM producers to its members<sup>2</sup>.

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 Initiative seeks to provide technical assistance to ASGM producers and enhance social and environmental practices, in order to support their accreditation as **Swiss Better Gold** suppliers.

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

The Swiss Better Gold Association has registered the following trademark “**SBG Swiss Better Gold**”:

**SBG** SWISSBETTERGOLD

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

The **Swiss Better Gold** denomination will be 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**.

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).

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<sup>2</sup> In cases where there is considerable social and/or environmental impact to be achieved through the generation of the Swiss Better Gold premium, Swiss Better Gold might also work with medium-scale producers.

### 3. Use of the trademark

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

**SBG** SWISSBETTERGOLD

**This trademark designates the activities undertaken by the Swiss Better Gold Association and the Swiss Better Gold Initiative and shall be 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 are to be considered in each specific case:

As the visual identity and designation of the Association:

**SBG** SWISSBETTERGOLD  
ASSOCIATION

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

**SBG** SWISSBETTERGOLD  
INITIATIVE

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

**SBG** SWISSBETTERGOLD  
INICIATIVA SUIZA ORO RESPONSABLE

### 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.

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 8.

All stakeholders shall 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](mailto:info@sbga.ch)).

## 5. Claims for members




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

<p><b>Your membership (associated with logo below):</b></p> 	<p>We (or organisation) are a proud member of the <b>Swiss Better Gold Association</b>.</p>
	<p>We (or organisation) are member of the <b>Swiss Better Gold Association</b> since XX.XX.</p>
	<p>We (or organisation) are proud to be represented on the <b>Swiss Better Gold Association</b> Board of Directors.</p>
<p><b>Your commitments (associated with logo below):</b></p> 	<p>Through our membership and sourcing practices, we (or organisation) are proud to support the <b>Swiss Better Gold Initiative</b> launched by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the <b>Swiss Better Gold Association</b> and share its key goal, which aims at the improvement of social and environmental conditions in ASGM.</p>
	<p>We (or organisation) are committed to support <b>Swiss Better Gold</b> and responsible ASGM producers.</p>
	<p>We (or organisation) support <b>Swiss Better Gold</b> and community-focused sustainable development of ASGM producers.</p>
	<p>Through our participation in <b>Swiss Better Gold</b>, we (or organisation) are committed to the improvement of the social and environmental practices in the ASGM sector.</p>
	<p>We support and endorse <b>Swiss Better Gold</b> in contributing to better social and environmental practices of ASGM producers.</p>
	<p>We (or organisation) source gold produced by producers supported by <b>Swiss Better Gold</b>.</p>
	<p>Between XX.XX to XX.XX, we (or organisation) have contributed to <b>Swiss Better Gold</b> by sourcing XX kg of gold, generating USD XX of impact premium*.</p>

\* Please refer to the section on provenance claims on page 8.

## 6. Claims for suppliers

**Swiss Better Gold** suppliers can make voluntary claims aligned with those in the table below:

<p><b>Your supplier status (associated with logo below):</b></p> 	<p>We (or producer) are proud to participate in <b>Swiss Better Gold</b>.</p>
	<p>We (or producer) are a proud <b>Swiss Better Gold</b> supplier since XX.XX.</p>
	<p>We (or producer) are an accredited/verified supplier of <b>Swiss Better Gold</b>.</p>
	<p>The gold from our operation is produced complying with the <b>Swiss Better Gold</b> sourcing criteria.</p>
	<p>We (or producer) have been independently verified as meeting the environmental and social operating practices defined in the <b>Swiss Better Gold</b> sourcing strategy.</p>
<p><b>Your commitments with the Initiative (associated with logos below):</b></p>  	<p>Through our participation in the <b>Swiss Better Gold Initiative</b>, we (or producer) are committed to improving the practices at our mining operation.</p>
	<p>Through our participation in the <b>Swiss Better Gold Initiative</b> and payment of the impact premium, we (or producer) support community-focused sustainable development.</p>
	<p>We (or producer) are committed to supply gold produced in conformity with the <b>Swiss Better Gold</b> sourcing criteria.</p>
	<p>We (or producer) supply <b>Swiss Better Gold</b>.</p>
	<p>Between XX.XX to XX.XX, we (or producer) have supplied XX kg of <b>Swiss Better Gold</b>.</p>

## 7. Claims for implementing partners

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

**Your relation & contribution to Swiss Better Gold (associated with logos below):**



We (or organisation) are proud to implement the **Swiss Better Gold Initiative**, a pioneer public-private alliance between the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the **Swiss Better Gold Association**.

We (or organisation) are the implementing partner of the **Swiss Better Gold Initiative** since XX.XX.

Through our work within the **Swiss Better Gold Initiative**, we (or organisation) contribute to improving social and environmental mining practices.

As the implementing partner of the **Swiss Better Gold Initiative** and through our work on the ground, we support the creation of responsible supply chains.

The **Swiss Better Gold Initiative** provides direct support to ASGM producers and supports them to comply with the **Swiss Better Gold** sourcing criteria.

The **Swiss Better Gold Initiative** provides direct support to ASGM producers and supports them to ascend the **Swiss Better Gold** Continuous Improvement Escalator.

By supporting improvement practices at ASGM operations, the **Swiss Better Gold Initiative** aims to positively impact social, environmental, and economic development of the ASGM sector.

We support **Swiss Better Gold** in enabling better social and environmental practices in ASGM operations.

The **Swiss Better Gold Initiative** 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 partner claims aligned with SECO's' role are like those in the table below:

**Your partner status & support of Swiss Better Gold**

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

(associated with logos below):



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. 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 ASGM sources participating in the Swiss Better Gold system. For avoidance of doubt, please note that provenance claims are voluntary.**

Corporate provenance claims may include claims on gold being sourced directly from an ASGM producer participating in the Swiss Better Gold Initiative that follows a segregated processing route through a refinery, or a 'mass balance' sourcing strategy that blends gold from multiple ASGM 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 XXX in Colombia;

Ex. We (or organisation) source X% of our gold from Swiss Better Gold accredited ASGM 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, 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 CoP 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](mailto:info@sbga.ch)).

## 10. 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.

The Secretariat conducts a regular review of the claims made by Association members, Swiss Better Gold suppliers and implementing partners. These consist of a revision of the websites and social media 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>).

## 11. 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 an operation 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) .

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.