

STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM MEETING JUNE 13, 2025



Informing the
members of the
Stakeholder
Platform within
the EMSAGS
Project

Foreword

We are pleased to present this report on the first Stakeholder Platform Meeting for 2025 under the EMSAGS Project. The Stakeholder Platform remains an important forum for information sharing and dialogue for the EMSAGS Project on its project objectives and activities. .

Our previous Stakeholder Platform Meeting was held in October 2024, marking the conclusion of that year's cycle. On June 13, 2025, we convened once again to collectively review progress, share insights, and discuss ongoing activities within the project. Moving forward, these meetings will be held biannually to ensure continuous engagement, transparency, and alignment among all partners.

This report summarizes the presentations, key discussions, outcomes, and action points that resulted from the meeting. It reflects the shared commitment of all stakeholders to support the objectives of the EMSAGS Project and contribute to lasting positive impacts.

We sincerely thank all participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions.

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1. Stakeholder meeting June 2025

‘Improving Environmental Management in the Mining Sector of Suriname with Emphasis on Artisanal and Small- Scale Goldmining’ (EMSAGS) – Project







Date: Friday 13 June 2025

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 13:00 p.m.

Location: Conference room, Oxygen Resort, Bombaystraat 21A, Paramaribo

1.1. Participants¹

The SP meeting was attended by representatives of:

-  Relevant Ministries and institutes,
-  Private sector,
-  Small and large-scale mining companies,
-  NGOs,
-  Indigenous and Tribal people platforms and
-  The Anton de Kom University.

2. Agenda

AGENDA	
8:30– 9:00 a.m.	Registratie en ontbijt
9:00 – 9:05 a.m.	Welkom - MC
9:05 – 9:15 a.m.	Opening – Ministerie van Natuurlijke Hulpbronnen
9:15 – 10:00 a.m.	Presentatie EMSAGS Project Status update 2025 Door: Sandra Bihari, Project Coordinator EMSAGS Project
10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	Presentatie EMSAGS Stakeholder engagement & Communicatie Door : Carmen Elliott- Banai, Engagement Specialist
10:15 – 11:00 a.m.	Presentatie Rapid Biodiversity Assessment Compagniekreek Door: AdeKUS: Nationale Zoölogische Collectie Suriname/ Centrum voor Milieu Onderzoek (NCZS/CMO) en Nationaal Herbarium Suriname (BBS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwendolyn Landburg • Eliza Zschuschen • Anielkoemar Gangadin
11:00– 11:15 a.m.	Break
11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Gender Assessment Snesi Kondre Door: Avanaïsa Turney
11:30 – 12:15 p.m.	Presentatie: Agroforestry project Compagniekreek en Brownsweg, Brokopondo Door: Anwar Helstone, Hoofd Afd. Agrarische Productie, CELOS
12:15	Afsluiting
12:30	Lunch

¹ See annex 1 for full list of attendants

3. Welcome

The MC, Mrs. Annete Tjon Sie Fat, opened the meeting and warmly welcomed everyone. She reviewed the agenda with the attendees. Additionally, she noted that there would be a question-and-answer session following each presentation.

4. Opening

The Director of Mining of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Mrs. Preciosa Simons, officially opened the meeting. In her remarks, she emphasized the importance of this gathering. She addressed the growing concerns within society regarding mercury pollution, its impact on ecosystems, and the health implications. Mrs. Simons noted that Suriname is not the only country facing this challenge; neighboring countries such as Guyana, Brazil, and others are experiencing similar issues.

She stressed that Suriname is not standing idle. The Government of Suriname is actively implementing the EMSAGS Project as part of its efforts to honor the commitments made under the Minamata Convention, which aims at phasing out the use of mercury in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector. As a nation, we are moving towards more sustainable environmental management within this sector. Projects as the EMSAGS Project and the GEF GOLD+ Project support Suriname's goals in reducing mercury use and promoting sustainable practices. Mrs. Simons concluded by wishing all participants a productive and successful meeting.

5. Presentation on Status update EMSAGS Project

The first presentation provided a status update on the EMSAGS project, presented by Ms. Bihari, the Project Coordinator, and Carmen Elliott, the Engagement Specialist. They outlined the project's progress, highlighting key developments and milestones achieved thus far.

Mrs. Bihari provided a brief overview of the role of the Stakeholder Platform (SP), emphasizing that the platform serves as a supportive body to the EMSAGS Project and the Project Board (PB), particularly on technical matters related to the implementation of project activities.

In her presentation, Mrs. Bihari highlighted several key areas of focus:

- ❖ **Capacity Strengthening of government institutions:**

She explained the importance of strengthening institutional capacity and referenced the *Capacity Scorecard Assessment* that was conducted. This assessment measured how well the involved institutions and organizations are equipped to manage the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector.

- ❖ **Support for policy development:**

The project provides technical support to the government in developing mining policies aimed at reducing the environmental impacts of small-scale gold mining, particularly in the interior regions of Suriname.

- ❖ **Mining Training and Extension Centres (MTECs):**

Mrs. Bihari elaborated on the purpose and function of the MTECs. The MTEC in Brokopondo is operational and it is used for providing training to local communities, organizing information sessions for youth, and delivering basic social services in education and health. The building which will serve as MTEC in Snesi Kondre is currently undergoing extensive renovation. It is expected that the MTEC will be operational later this year.

❖ **Environmentally Responsible Mining (ERM) Demonstration Sites:**

She stated that the first demonstration site became operational in April 2024 at Compagniekreek, an collaborative effort between EMSAGS – WWF Guianas and ARM. Due to safety concerns and the risk of flooding that could damage the equipment, the site is dismantled. As per project objectives, the PMU is working towards establishment of second site in Brokopondo. Discussions are currently ongoing between the EMSAGS Project, Rosebel Gold Mines (RGM), and Kamp Mining regarding this new demonstration site in Brokopondo. For the demo-site at Snesi Kondre a MOU is being prepared for a joint partnership with Newmont Suriname.

❖ **Regional knowledge exchange:**

Mrs. Bihari emphasized the importance of continued regional collaboration. The first regional conference, “*Golden Opportunities: Cooperation for Reducing Mercury in Gold Mining,*” was held in Guyana in 2022, in collaboration with WWF Guianas. In 2024, GUY- SUR interagency capacity exchange took place in Guyana, focusing on “*Monitoring of Mining and Deforestation,*” with particular attention to near real-time monitoring tools and techniques. This year, July 11, 2025, EMSAGS and WWF Guianas will host the regional conference titled “*Golden Solutions: Towards a Shared Vision for Mercury-Free Gold Mining in the Guianas,*” in Paramaribo. Later this year, a field visit to French Guiana is planned, where participants will have the opportunity to visit a model site to observe how mercury-free mining is implemented and how the site is set up and operated.

Mrs. Carmen provided an overview of the production of communication tools within the EMSAGS Project. She explained that, as part of the *Communication and Knowledge Management* activities, various educational and communication materials were developed to raise awareness among decision-makers, the general public, and key stakeholders about the negative impacts of “business as usual” practices compared to more environmentally responsible approaches in the ASGM sector.

The developed materials include:

- ❖ A booklet titled “*Mercury Use and Gold Mining*”
- ❖ An animated video: “*Towards a Mercury-Free Suriname*”
- ❖ Two educational posters illustrating how mercury get into the environment and the effects of mercury on the human body
- ❖ Five video productions and eight radio programs in five languages: Dutch, Aukanisi, Saramaccan, Sranan Tongo, and Portuguese
- ❖ A web application featuring quizzes, puzzles, photos, and educational videos. The videos are available in versions with Dutch or English subtitles, as well as a version without subtitles for use within the app.

In February of this year, the materials were officially launched, followed by a distribution campaign in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (MinOWC). The Ministry was responsible for distributing the materials to schools across Suriname. In addition, key project stakeholders received a package containing the booklet, a memory stick with video and audio content, and the two educational posters.

Ms. Elliott concluded by noting that the general public can access the videos via the NMA YouTube channel, and both the video and radio programs are being broadcast on various TV and radio stations nationwide. To conclude her presentation, Mrs. Elliott showcased one of the educational videos developed under the project, giving participants a firsthand view of the communication materials being used to raise awareness.

5.1. Questions/ comments and answers

No.	Questions / Comments	Answers
1.	P. Dompig – Conservation International (CI): Are there specific moments where engagement takes place with local communities?	C. Elliott – EMSAGS PMU: Yes, there are multiple moments of community engagement. In working with Indigenous Peoples and Tribal Peoples (IPTPs), we adhere to the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Engagement takes place through information sessions, consultation meetings, and validation sessions. Additionally, during various studies under the project—such as the Rapid Biodiversity Assessment, the Forest and Forest Carbon Assessment, and the Soil Rehabilitation Project carried out by TAUW BV—community engagement is an integral part of the process.
2.	M. Stekkel – Suriname Business Forum (SBF): How are women in the area involved in the project?	C. Elliott – EMSAGS PMU: Before engaging with women in the target communities, a gender analysis was conducted in Brownsweeg, Compagniekreek, and Krabudoin. Based on the results, tailored activities were implemented. Women identified several key needs, including poor access to healthcare and a desire for more information on sexual and reproductive health. They also expressed interest in income-generating activities and expanding agricultural production. As the project does not have in-house expertise in sexual and reproductive health, a partnership was formed with Stichting Lobi. Together, an information session was held at MTEC Brokopondo, followed by a clinic outreach one month later, where MTEC was temporarily transformed into a clinic offering various health services for women. Women also benefited from <i>Angisa</i> tying workshops facilitated by experts and received agricultural training focused on modern techniques to improve productivity and increase income. Furthermore, both women and men participated in financial management training,

		<p>covering budgeting and cost price calculation to support sustainable livelihood development.</p> <p>S. Bihari – EMSAGS PMU: Before the implementation of the project, a general gender mainstreaming strategy and action plan was developed. In early 2023, a gender analysis was carried out in the Brokopondo district. During this process, the women identified several preferred activities, such as alternative livelihoods and access to specific social services, which were mentioned by Carmen. The project includes the implementation of these activities. The women also indicated how they would like to be involved in the process. This approach aligns with the UNDP and GEF guidelines for conducting such assessments and implementing these types of activities.</p>
3.	<p>B. Drakenstein- UNDP: First and foremost, I would like to extend my compliments to the Project Management Unit of the EMSAGS project, the MNR, the NMA, and all stakeholders for the progress achieved during the past period.</p> <p>Comment 1: This specifically relates to the challenges regarding data. I have been informed that this week the MNR has signed an agreement on water, which also includes the sharing of water-related information. This may also be a valuable approach for the mining sector.</p> <p>Comment 2: This is regarding data gaps and backlogs e.g. at GMD. We have had experiences with the Meteorological Service and WLA, where students were engaged to input data. This approach has proven effective in addressing data gaps by involving students or interns. It could be developed into a national program under the UNY framework (Youth Empowerment, Engagement & Knowledge Project) with support from UNDP. Alternatively, it could be implemented in collaboration with a local youth organization to address these challenges.</p> <p>Question: With regard to the videos, while there is accompanying text, has consideration been given to making this educational and</p>	<p>S. Bihari – EMSAGS PMU: With regard to data sharing, I would like to highlight that within this project we have engaged with the relevant institutions, such as GMD, OGS, and SBB, at various stages to discuss data exchange at the technical level. Bilateral discussions have been held to explore how data sharing can be improved and elevated to a higher level. The NMA is also actively working on this matter.</p> <p>C. Elliott – EMSAGS PMU: No, we have not yet taken persons with disabilities into consideration. We will take this advice into account and assess to</p>

	communication material accessible for persons with disabilities, such as those with visual impairments?	what extent we can incorporate it. As there are different types of disabilities, we will carefully explore how we can make our educational and communication materials accessible to this target group.
4.	<p>Marie – Jose Artist – VIDS: I have not attended all the meetings, but I felt it was important to participate in this one, particularly considering the current phase of the project, as it provides a clearer overview of the progress made during the past period.</p> <p>I would like to reflect on the educational and communication materials, particularly the videos. I noticed that there is a stronger focus on the use of tribal languages. While I fully understand that the project areas are predominantly located within tribal communities, I would like to point out that Indigenous peoples are also significantly affected by mining activities. It would be beneficial if the materials could also be made available in Indigenous languages, so that the educational and communication materials are equally accessible to this group. To what extent is it possible to translate the materials, at least into Wayana and Trio, to ensure that the information reaches them effectively?</p> <p>Additionally, I would like to emphasize that there are existing agreements between the traditional authorities of the Indigenous and Tribal peoples regarding how to manage small-scale gold mining activities, particularly around rivers and creeks where these communities live. While there may be agreements in place with the ASGM sector, there appears to be a lack of follow-up on these commitments. It may be worthwhile to support the Indigenous and Tribal communities in strengthening their internal agreements and ensuring these are upheld.</p> <p>I will consult with KAMPOS on this matter regarding the possibility of a presentation at the next SP meeting.</p>	<p>S. Bihari – EMSAGS PMU: With regard to translating the materials, we will take this into consideration. Indeed, the languages of the Tribal communities within our project areas have been used, as they represent our primary stakeholder group. In the coming period, we will look into how we can approach this. I have listened carefully to your input and would like to emphasize that this platform serves as a forum for all stakeholders to engage in information sharing. For the SP meeting at the broader platform level, invitations are extended to both KAMPOS and VIDS. A presentation by KAMPOS or VIDS during the next meeting would be valuable in enhancing our understanding of how the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ITPs) wish to be engaged and what are the specific guidelines projects like EMSAGS need to adhere to.</p>
5.	<p>I. Hoepel – SBB: Ms. Bihari and Ms. Elliott, thank you for your presentation. My question relates to capacity building. The Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control</p>	<p>S. Bihari – EMSAGS PMU: These are issues that were discussed during the Capacity Scorecard sessions—specifically, how the trainings have contributed to capacity building of the employees</p>

	<p>(SBB) has also contributed to institutional capacity strengthening within the EMSAGS project through a range of training activities. Has there been any noticeable difference before and after the capacity-building efforts? Are the institutions applying the knowledge gained, particularly in monitoring the ASGM sector? An important point raised by Ms. Bihari during her presentation concerns the issue of political influence, which was also highlighted by the institutions themselves during the scorecard session. It may be worthwhile to explore how this can be addressed, especially in the context of data sharing. Certain data are not being shared, and perhaps this should be discussed at a higher level to enable effective inter-institutional data sharing</p>	<p>of the participating organizations, the challenges faced by institutions, and the root causes of those challenges. The institutions also demonstrated an awareness of the underlying issues. Monitoring remains a persistent challenge due to limited financial resources and a lack of technical expertise within institutions such as GMD, OGS, and others.</p> <p>During the assessment, we did not go into detail about how certain tools, methods, or knowledge are being applied in practice. However, institutions such as GMD, OGS, and BIS expressed the need for continued support.</p> <p>With regard to data sharing, there is consensus on technical level among the institutions that data exchange is essential to support effective policy implementation. For example, if SBB requires data from GMD to avoid overlaps between forestry and mining activities, then data sharing must indeed take place. Platforms such as GONINI portal are already facilitating this to some extent.</p> <p>However, when it comes to data sharing at a higher level, this requires interdepartmental discussions and agreements. It is important to note that this goes beyond individual projects; the support we provide is limited to the project framework. For sustainable and systemic solutions, a broader institutional commitment is needed. The National Environment Authority (NMA), for instance, is currently working on formalizing data sharing through the development of protocols and agreements to establish a more structured approach.</p>
6.	<p>J. Rasdan – CI-S: Thank you, Ms. Bihari and Ms. Elliott. I appreciate the efforts made with the educational and communication materials. However, while we are working on these efforts, it is important to note that the number of school dropouts continues to increase.</p> <p>Is it possible for the final-year students of the MULO schools in Brokopondo—starting with Brownsweeg—to visit MTEC Brokopondo to receive information about the mining sector? Organizing awareness sessions where young people can access information about further</p>	<p>S. Bihari – EMSAGS PMU: Mr. Rasdan suggested utilizing MTEC Brokopondo as a monitoring post. This option has also been offered to GMD, allowing them to use the facilities for establishing an office. The government can make use of the facilities available there.</p> <p>This is, in fact, one of the core purposes of the MTEC building, as outlined in the project document (ProDoc). The intention is for institutions such as GMD and OGS to use the facility to provide information and services to the ASGM sector. This includes supporting processes</p>

	<p>education and training opportunities could be very valuable.</p> <p>It is equally important to involve the parents, so they understand the importance of encouraging their children to stay in school. Many young people are leaving school and entering the gold mining sector. Currently, small-scale gold mining is taking place alongside the road at kilometer 12, and the traditional authorities, including RR members and the District Commissioner's Office (BO), are considering how to address this issue.</p> <p>Would it be possible to establish a reporting office at MTEC Brokopondo, where a formal procedure can be set up for submitting complaints and addressing concerns related to mining activities? If we look at how gold mining is being carried out and how gold prices continue to rise, we may risk losing our forests within the next five years if this continues uncontrolled.</p>	<p>toward formalization by offering guidance to small-scale miners on how to obtain permits and acquire concessions.</p> <p>All of these possibilities have been discussed with the relevant government authorities.</p> <p>I would also like to respond to Mr. Rasdan's remarks regarding school dropouts. It is indeed true that many young people are entering the informal gold mining sector, including working within the RGM concession, which poses serious risks to their safety.</p> <p>In this context, last year we implemented a youth awareness project in collaboration with RGM. As part of this project, two videos were produced by the youth themselves in their own languages. The aim was to reach both school dropouts and those still attending school.</p> <p>Young people from three mining communities were involved in this initiative. With the support of experts, they produced two videos highlighting the dangers of mercury use in the ASGM sector and the risks associated with pit intrusion on the RGM concession. The official launch of these two videos took place in January 2025, and the videos will be broadcasted to raise awareness.</p> <p>C. Elliott – EMSAGS PMU: With Zijin RGM, we have been discussing to organize a mini environmental fair this year at MTEC Brokopondo. This event will primarily target schoolchildren, specifically those in the fourth grade of MULO, to provide information on mercury, pit intrusion, and other relevant issues. The aim is to motivate students to stay in school and not drop out.</p> <p>To reach those who have already dropped out, the videos that were produced will be broadcast, and the youth involved in the project will also share them with their peers.</p> <p>This joint activity will be part of the partnership/ MOU between EMSAGS and Zijin RGM, which is currently being developed.</p>
7.	<p>W. Wilson – Newmont Suriname: First of all, my compliments to the presenters. Regarding the material that was presented, I would like to ask: who is the primary target audience? There</p>	<p>S. Bihari – EMSAGS PMU: The main target audience is the general public. We are aware that reaching people within the ASGM sector is challenging. They are not likely to sit and watch</p>

<p>are different groups—the government, schools, etc.—who can be reached with such a video, but then there are the communities themselves including the goldminers.</p> <p>As a gold miner, when I hear the term ‘illegal,’ I immediately become defensive. If I am correct, we had previously agreed to use the term ‘<i>informal</i>’ instead.</p> <p>I would also recommend taking a phased approach—this is how we do it at Newmont Suriname. Start with general information and then gradually move toward more specific topics like mercury-free mining. When you directly say, ‘mercury is harmful,’ that message can be a step too far for those currently working in the ASGM sector. The question is: how can we best approach this?</p> <p>I have two recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When producing such videos, I strongly suggest involving members from the SP, bringing together their expertise. This way, they can provide feedback, and the materials will likely be more effective and better received. 2. As we discussed in the previous SP meeting, the materials should be made easily shareable. People living in remote interior areas primarily use their mobile phones and can be reached effectively through platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. 	<p>television, which is why we use other options such as the NMA’s YouTube channel as a platform. This audience is best reached through one-on-one communication—by going directly to the groups in the field. When we move forward with establishing the demo sites, we will engage directly with the small-scale miners. However, the materials that have been developed at this stage are intended for the general public, including schools, government institutions, and others. Reaching small-scale miners has proven to be a challenge, as we have observed. They do not come to you; rather, you need to go to them. We have seen very limited attendance from small-scale miners at the MTEC facility for training. We will take this into account moving forward and ensure that information specifically targeted to the miners is provided.</p> <p>C. Elliott – EMSAGS PMU: With regard to the educational and communication materials that have been developed, I would like to emphasize that we have taken all target groups into consideration, including small-scale miners. The video that was shown is intended for a different audience, mainly from the coastal areas. In total, five videos have been produced, with both Dutch and English subtitles. These videos can be used at both national and international expos. Additionally, other videos and radio programs have been specifically designed for both coastal communities and interior communities, including small-scale miners.</p> <p>These materials are available in five languages: Dutch, Sranan Tongo, Aukanisi, Saramaccan, and Portuguese. They have been developed in a simple and accessible manner, starting with very basic information—for example, what mercury is and its impacts on human health and the environment. From there, we gradually move on to more complex topics, such as the ASGM sector and mercury use.</p> <p>This means that small-scale miners are indeed receiving this information. The videos are short and easily shareable via WhatsApp and have also been published on the NMA’s YouTube channel.”</p>
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As facilitator, Ms. Annete Tjon Sie Fat emphasized that capacity-building efforts are being provided within the context of a project, not a long-term program. Therefore, it cannot be expected that institutions will become fully self-sufficient as a result of this alone. When it comes to sustainable livelihoods, it requires longer-term support for the communities. This involves much more than technical training — aspects such as business management, the development of business plans, and entrepreneurship support must also be considered.

Another important factor to consider when providing training to small-scale miners is the timing. The day on which training is offered is critical, as miners are unlikely to attend if it means losing a day's income. This financial trade-off poses a real barrier to their participation in training sessions.

6. Presentation on Rapid Biodiversity Assessment – Compagniekreek by AdeKUS – National Zoological Collection of Suriname / Center for Environmental Research (NZCS/CMO) and the National Herbarium of Suriname (BBS)

During the presentation by AdeKUS — represented by the National Zoological Collection of Suriname (NZCS/CMO) and the National Herbarium of Suriname (BBS) — several key aspects were highlighted regarding the Rapid Biodiversity Assessment conducted in the Compagniekreek area.

The assessment focused on the following key components:

- Water quality, including the presence of mercury in soil and sediment
- Flora – an inventory and analysis of plant species in the area
- Fauna, with a focus on both:
 - Vertebrates – such as mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians
 - Invertebrates – including insects, arthropods, and other smaller species critical to the ecosystem
- Ecosystem services – identifying the essential services provided by the natural environment to the local communities and biodiversity

Conclusion regarding the water quality: Gold mining has significantly altered the course of the Compagniekreek, opening the landscape and removing much of the creekside vegetation. This has increased sediment runoff, turning the formerly clear creek turbid with elevated levels of sediment and metals such as mercury, aluminum, and silica. The creek's buffering capacity is now reduced compared to undisturbed creeks, increasing its vulnerability to pollution. Mercury has accumulated in sediments and fish, with indications of deposition even in areas without direct mining. Furthermore, the presence of *E. coli* poses a serious health risk to local communities relying on the creek.

Additional Conclusions from the Assessment:

- Spatial Extent: Gold mining activities are distributed throughout the Compagniekreek area, starting from the most upstream sections down to the downstream parts of the creek. This range extends from downstream of the village of Compagniekreek to the Tapoeripa area. The only exception is the vicinity of the Afobaka road, where mining activities are absent on both sides of the road.
- Duration: Gold mining began in the 1980s and continues to this day. Since 1970, the estimated forest loss in the area totals approximately 550.25 hectares.
- Frequency: As gold mining represents the primary source of income for the Compagniekreek community, mining activities occur continuously without significant interruption.

Some mitigation measures are proposed by AdeKUS such as:

Raise awareness within the community, especially among youth aged 18 to 30, about the negative impacts of gold mining, with a focus on promoting responsible mining practices and alternative livelihoods. At least one alternative income source should be established to reduce environmental pressure—for example, agriculture, commercial tree planting, or sustainable tourism. Furthermore, clear zoning of the area is needed to separate and regulate different economic activities. Rehabilitation of disturbed areas and protection of critical intact zones, such as swamp and riparian forests, should also be prioritized.

6.1. Questions/ comments and answers

No.	Questions / Comments	Answers
1.	<p>A. Turney – Consultant: I have noticed that some mitigation measures, such as zoning, have been mentioned. However, I believe there is a gap regarding the regulation of the ASGM sector, which is essential for ensuring transparency. Perhaps this aspect can still be incorporated. Additionally, is there any effort being made toward rehabilitation?</p>	<p>G. Landburg – NZCS/ CMO AdeKUS: Rehabilitation was not part of our assessment scope, but we did recognize this as an important issue. This is a question for the relevant institutions—how they plan to restore the land, particularly given the mercury contamination. Ms. Simons noted this will need to be approached step by step. Within the EMSAGS project, I understand that TAUW BV is conducting a rehabilitation study or project to determine how restoration can be achieved. However, it is crucial to emphasize that political will and community awareness are key factors in successfully implementing rehabilitation efforts.</p> <p>S. Bihari – EMSAGS PMU: Regarding rehabilitation, during the previous SP meeting, TAUW BV gave a presentation on the Soil Restoration project being carried out at Compagniekreek. This project focuses on restoring the soil functionality of mined-out areas to ensure that the land is not permanently lost. One key approach is preserving the topsoil before mining begins so that it can be reused afterward. This research is currently underway as the first step, and we have held extensive consultation sessions with the community on this. Several experimental plots have now been established, and CELOS is also involved in this project. Their role includes assessing which crops can be planted to help restore and maintain healthy topsoil. The village captain has given formal consent, and the community fully supports</p>

		<p>the project. The study has been clearly communicated and discussed with the community. The next step, following the research phase, is the actual rehabilitation of a selected mined-out area. Discussions with the community have identified preferred future uses for the rehabilitated land, including agroforestry, village expansion, etc. These inputs are now being incorporated into a project proposal.</p> <p>It is important to note that the EMSAGS project does not focus only on environmentally sustainable processing of ore but addresses the entire mining cycle, including the critical aspect of rehabilitation of mined-out areas, which is why this component is integrated into the project.</p>
2.	<p>A. Helstone – CELOS: As CELOS, we are working on agroforestry as alternative livelihood, and one of the practices we apply is rainwater harvesting for the plants. We have installed a durotank in the village and have also dug a well on one of the plots for water storage. Given this, we would like to understand the potential impacts of mercury contamination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the impact of mercury vapor on the soil? • To what extent, or how likely is it, that mercury ends up in the soil? • Is there a significant risk of mercury being present in rainwater? 	<p>G. Landburg – NZCS/ CMO AdeKUS: Compagniekreek is located in a hilly area, and generally, where there is emission, there will also be deposition. We observed this at Victoria, near the Bigi Tén Creek, where mercury was detected in the water, and much of that water flows toward the village.</p> <p>Therefore, it is highly likely that mercury is present both in the rainwater and in the soil. I strongly recommend that you have the rainwater tested. In the past, we conducted measurements at Tafelberg and were shocked by the mercury levels found in the rainwater. I do not expect the situation to be much different in Compagniekreek.</p>

7. Presentation on Gender Assessment in Snesi kondre, Paamaka area

The third presentation focused on the Gender Assessment for Snesi Kondre, highlighting the importance of integrating gender perspectives into natural resource management and community development processes.

The presentation covered the following key components:

- **Objectives and expected outcomes:** The primary objective of the Gender Assessment is to better understand the roles, needs, challenges, and opportunities for women, men, and youth within the Snesi Kondre community, particularly in the context of livelihoods related to the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector and other local economic activities. The assessment aims to support the design of more inclusive interventions that promote gender equality, empower women and youth, and improve community resilience.

- **Project area:** The assessment is focused on Snesi Kondre and its surrounding communities, where livelihoods are closely tied to mining, agriculture, and forest resources. The area is characterized by high dependence on natural resources and is impacted by mining-related environmental and social challenges.
- **Stakeholders:** Key stakeholders include community members (both women and men), youth groups, traditional authorities, local NGOs, government agencies, and private sector actors operating in the region, including those in the mining sector.
- **Approach and methodology:** The assessment applied a participatory approach involving community consultations, focus group discussions, and interviews.
- **Work Focus and planned activities:** The plan includes awareness-raising on gender equality, promoting alternative income-generating activities (such as sustainable agriculture or small businesses), and advocating for women's and youth participation in decision-making related to natural resource management and community development.

7.1. Questions/ comments and answers

No.	Questions / Comments	Answers
1.	W. Wilson – Newmont Suriname: Thank you for your presentation. I noticed that you indicated a specific area. We know that Snesi Kondre serves as a central hub within the Paamaka area, where people frequently come and go. Most of the small-scale miners' settlements are located deeper inland, away from the main roads. Will the assessment cover all sectors, including women involved in machinery, transportation, and even informal sectors such as bars or commercial sex establishments?	<p>A. Turney – Consultant: Ms. Turney confirmed that the map shown includes not only the main roads, but also highlights that people live along these roads, and they will be considered as stakeholders during the assessment. The stakeholder group will include people from various villages within the Paamaka area as well as those who are not originally from the community but have been living there for years due to their involvement in different economic activities, including mining-related enterprises.</p> <p>The assessment will consider all relevant stakeholders, regardless of their background, as the MTEC facility in Snesi Kondre is intended to be accessible to anyone involved in the ASGM sector. This includes access to training, information, and social services.</p> <p>Remark: Ms. Annette Tjon Sie Fat, who is also involved as consultant in the Gender Assessment, provided some clarification regarding stakeholders. She emphasized that when discussing women in the context of the mining sector, it does not refer solely to women directly engaged in mining operations, as this is not very common in Suriname. Instead, it includes all individuals connected to the sector, both directly and indirectly, such as those involved in support</p>

		services, transportation, trade, and other related activities.
	<p>B. Drakenstein - UNDP: Thank you for the presentation. Will the Chinese Ambassador and the umbrella organization representing Brazilians in Suriname also be considered stakeholders? The reason I ask is that I have heard the Chinese Embassy is interested in playing an active role in the ASGM sector. Additionally, a significant number of Chinese and Brazilian nationals are involved in this sector.</p>	<p>A. Turney – Consultant: No, I had not considered that, but I will discuss it with the team.</p>

8. Presentation on Agroforestry project Compagniekreek and Brownsweg Brokopondo

During his presentation, Mr. A. Helstone provided an overview of the CELOS Agroforestry Model implemented in Brokopondo, which is based on the Enable Rural Innovation (ERI) concept. The model aims to enhance livelihood security and resilience through improved food security. This project was implemented between May 2024 and May 2025.

Mr. Helstone shared the key achievements of the project as well as the challenges encountered, particularly in Compagniekreek, where introducing agroforestry proved more difficult. In contrast, the community in Brownsweg was already familiar with agroforestry, having started initiatives there since 2023. With the additional funding from the EMSAGS project, CELOS was able to expand the plots in Brownsweg and scale up their activities.

The primary goals of the CELOS agroforestry approach are to:

- Improve agricultural production by enhancing ecological conditions (water, soil, climate).
- Increase land productivity through the integration of tree components, including timber species, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and fruit trees (economic dimension).
- Improve livelihoods and support the adoption of technology and new knowledge (rural development and extension services).

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Helstone outlined the next steps, including:

- Establishing 20 agroforestry plots by December 2025.
- Developing a local agroforestry value chain.
- Continuing to provide ongoing coaching and support to farmers within the target communities.

As a closing highlight, Mr. Helstone presented a video of local women singing a song they created about the future benefits of agroforestry for their community.



8.1. Questions/ comments and answers

No.	Questions / Comments	Answers
1.	A. Monorath –Deputy Director at the Ministry of Natural Resources/ Chair of the EMSAGS Project Board: My compliments on the work that CELOS is doing. I am truly impressed by the agroforestry techniques being applied. What measures are being taken to sustainably improve soil quality in order to enhance productivity and increase farmers' incomes? I noticed that the introduction of ground cover crops seems to be missing from the approach.	A. Helstone – CELOS: One of the methods we apply is the introduction of tree species such as Inga and Gliricidia, which are known for producing large amounts of biomass. These trees are regularly pruned, and the branches are chipped to create mulch. Additionally, the leaves naturally cover the soil, contributing to the buildup of organic matter and improving soil health. At this stage, we are not using creeping ground cover crops. However, we are currently conducting an assessment to determine which leguminous species could be recommended for this purpose. There is one local species that we have already advised TAUW BV to consider — commonly known as 'Ogri Eye Pesi', belonging to the Mucuna species. Its added value for soil coverage still needs to be fully assessed. There is also 'Tyari Pesi', a climbing plant that grows abundantly, but our aim is to identify a species that provides more effective and consistent ground coverage. This remains a challenge. In some countries such as Brazil, species like the brown bean tree are successfully used for this purpose, but any solution must be culturally acceptable and suitable for the local communities.
2.	A. Gangadin – NZCS/ CMO: Currently, there are no additional nutrients being supplied to the soil, resulting in rather poor soil conditions. Agroforestry traditionally involves both plants and animals, yet I do not see any livestock integrated into this system. As a recommendation, incorporating poultry could	A. Helstone – CELOS: At this stage, livestock is not integrated into the agroforestry system. However, in Brownsweeg there is a large poultry farm, and manure is obtained from there. Additionally, CELOS supplies both chicken and cattle manure to support soil fertility. We apply these inputs in a responsible manner and advise

	<p>contribute to soil fertility through manure for composting.</p> <p>Additionally, considering the development of the oil and gas sector, is there any plan to expand agroforestry production beyond local purposes? Farmers could potentially supply products or services to this sector as well.</p>	<p>farmers not to rely on synthetic products or harmful substances.</p> <p>Regarding the oil and gas sector, this is something that may be considered in the future. However, CELOS prioritizes self-sufficiency and local commercial supply chains. It is important that farmers are well-prepared and properly equipped before considering supplying products or services to such large-scale industries.</p>
3.	<p>J. Rasdan – CI-S: Are farmers cultivating on lowland or highland areas? Is data being collected regarding site selection? Are there specific criteria that determine whether an area is suitable for agroforestry? For example, does it have to be an abandoned mining site, an area where forest has been cleared, or can it also be undisturbed land?</p>	<p>A. Helstone – CELOS: At the moment, we apply a minimum requirement, which is that there must be a creek nearby to provide a water source. When this criterion is applied, it often results in only one or two suitable farm plots, meaning farmers may eventually need to move to other locations.</p> <p>The landscape is a combination of flat and hilly areas. What we are currently working on is transforming all the indicators and field observations into concrete data, which will help establish specific criteria for site selection. This will also enable us to answer questions like this with greater precision.</p> <p>So far, we have not yet assessed the direct impact or suitability of former gold mining sites for agroforestry.</p>
4.	<p>J. Rasdan – CI-S: I would like to make a suggestion. I have learned that ‘Koffiemama’ trees (traditionally used as shade trees) not only provide shade, but also contribute to nitrogen fixation. Moreover, these trees are known for their ability to absorb water during the rainy season and gradually release it back into the soil during dry periods, helping to maintain soil moisture. It might be beneficial to plant these trees along natural water routes to support moisture retention.</p>	<p>A. Helstone – CELOS: That is a valuable suggestion, and we will definitely take it into consideration. This aligns perfectly with our intention to promote natural irrigation systems rather than relying on conventional irrigation methods.</p>
5.	<p>Marie – Jose Artist – VIDS: What I have observed is that agroforestry is closely linked to the traditional shifting cultivation (slash-and-burn) system. As a result, the difference between the two practices may not appear very significant at first. However, agroforestry holds considerable value, particularly in the context of climate change adaptation and promoting sustainable livelihoods. It is encouraging to see</p>	

	<p>that the focus is currently on using existing crops familiar to the communities, rather than immediately introducing new, unfamiliar products—perhaps this can be considered at a later stage. Overall, I believe this approach offers many opportunities, but it is important to recognize that communities will need time to adjust to these changes and gradually adapt to the new system.</p>	
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9. Closing remarks

Ms. Bihari give the closing remarks, noting that the next SP meeting is scheduled for November 2025. By that time, the Gender Assessment Study will be completed, and its findings will be presented to the stakeholders. She also mentioned that the MTEC facility in Snesi Kondre is expected to be completed and officially opened by then, and this milestone will also be presented during the meeting.

Furthermore, Ms. Bihari indicated that Ms. Artist has the opportunity to provide a presentation on the FPIC guidelines, which are currently under development. She encouraged participants that if anyone wishes to deliver a presentation during the next meeting, they are welcome to submit their proposal so it can be included in the agenda. She further explained that although the CELOS agroforestry project has officially concluded, discussions are ongoing to explore a potential follow-up, especially since women in the communities have expressed a strong interest in receiving further training. Additionally, the soil rehabilitation project in Compagniekreek is moving into Phase 2—the actual rehabilitation phase. CELOS will play a role in this process, particularly by supporting a test case for the reuse of rehabilitated mined areas, for example, by establishing agroforestry plots on restored land.

Ms. Bihari concluded by expressing her sincere gratitude to all participants for their valuable contributions and active participation.

Annex 1. List of attendants

No.	Organization	Acronym	Name	
1	Ministry of Natural Resources, represented by Geology and Mining Department (GMD)	MNR/ GMD	Danielle van Engel	X
2	Ministry of Natural Resources, represented by GMD	MNR/ GMD	Martandjojo Ferley	X
3	Ministry of Natural Resources, represented by GMD	MNR/ GMD	Zamora Jasadirana	X
4	Ministry of Education	MinOWC	Randjieta Patterson	X
5	Ministry of Regional Development and Sport	Min. ROS	Sharon Westerlow - Pinas	X
6	Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment	Min. ROM	Varsha Hira	X
7	Anton de Kom University of Suriname	ADEK	Ramon Finkie	X
8	Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control	SBB	Ilgia Hoepel	X
9	Large scale mining companies: Newmont Suriname	Newmont	Winston Wielson	X
10	Spatial planning: Spatial Planning Association Suriname	SPASU	Aneglika Namdar	X
11	Industry: Suriname Business Forum	SBF	Marion Stekkel-Vroom	X
12	Industry: Suriname Business Forum	SBF	Ratan Kalka	X
13	Environment: Conservation International	CI	Priscilla Dompig	X
14	Environment: Conservation International	CI	Jerry Rasdan	X
15	Indigenous and tribal communities: De Vereniging voor Inheemse Dorpschouffden in Suriname	VIDS	Marie - Jose Artist	X
16	Indigenous and tribal communities: Organisatie van Inheemse Volken in Suriname	OIS	Rene Artist	X
17	Commission for the Regulation of Gold Sector (OGS)	OGS	John Johanns	X
18	Commission for the Regulation of Gold Sector (OGS)	OGS	Eduard Kanape	X
19	De Stichting Centrum voor Landbouwkundig Onderzoek in Suriname	CELOS	Anwar Helstone	X
20			L. Helstone	X
21	Consultant		Annette Tjon Sie Fat	X
22	Gender Consultant: Organizational Support & Service	ATOSS	Mw. Turney	X
23	Gender Consultant: Organizational Support & Service	ATOSS	Mw. Frenclen Sullivan	X
24	Suriname Conservation Foundation	SCF	Jelani Naarden	X
25	GEF GOLD + Project	GOLD+	Mireille Cramer	X
26	GEF GOLD + Project	GOLD+	Jerrel Pinas	X
27	United Nations Development Programme	UNDP	Bryan Drakenstein	X
28	United Nations Development Programme	UNDP	Anuradha Khoen Khoen	X
29	EMSAGS PROJECT	EMSAGS	Sandra Bihari	X
30	Ministry of Natural Resources	MNR	Angela Monorath	X
31	Ministry of Natural Resources	MNR	Preciosa Simons	X
32	Ministry of Natural Resources	MNR	Marcel Breinburg	X
33	Ministry of Natural Resources (Communication Department)	MNR	Esmay Amos	X
34	EMSAGS project	EMSAGS	Minouschka Ferand	X

35	EMSAGS project	EMSAGS	Santusha Mahabier	X
36	EMSAGS project	EMSAGS	Carmen Elliott	X
37	EMSAGS project	EMSAGS	Eric Sosrojoedo	X
38	EMSAGS project	EMSAGS	Emmy Soetodrono	X
39	AdeKUS – National Zoological Collection of Suriname / Center for Environmental Research (NZCS/CMO) and the National Herbarium of Suriname (BBS)	(NZCS/CMO)	Aniel Gangadin	X
40	AdeKUS – National Zoological Collection of Suriname / Center for Environmental Research (NZCS/CMO) and the National Herbarium of Suriname (BBS)	(NZCS/CMO)	Gwendolyn Landburg	X
41	AdeKUS – National Zoological Collection of Suriname / Center for Environmental Research (NZCS/CMO) and the National Herbarium of Suriname (BBS)	BBS	Eliza Zschuschen	X