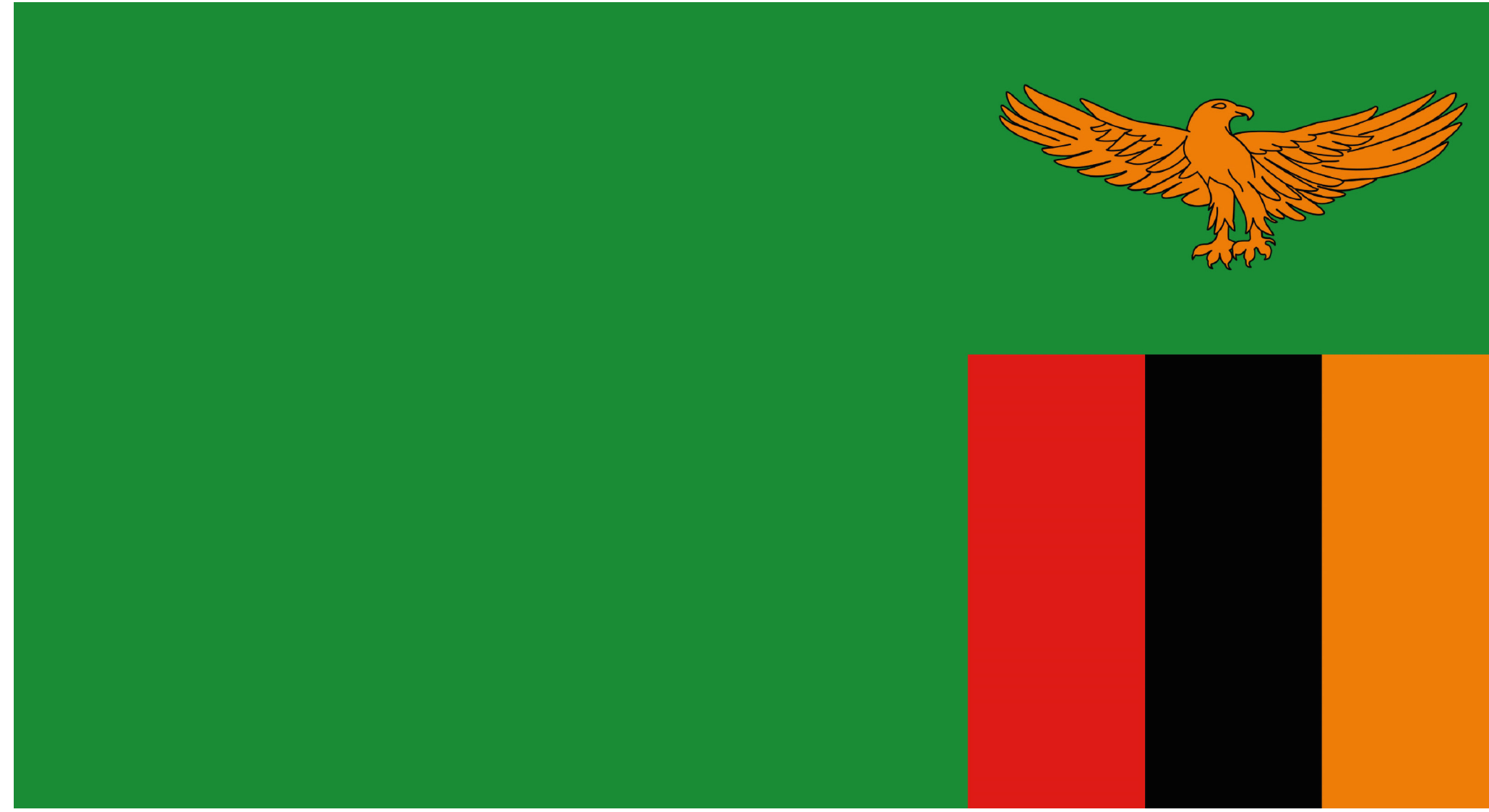


ZAMBIA



ASM Guidelines on Obtaining Mining and Environmental Permits and Licenses

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INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME 308
Mine Water & Mine Waste Management



THE CHANGE PROJECT

Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) provides livelihoods for thousands of Zambians, yet most operations remain informal and poorly regulated. Many ASM practitioners lack the knowledge, tools, and confidence to navigate government processes, leading to unsafe practices, environmental damage, and lost public revenue. This change project set out to explore how the permitting and licensing system could be made more accessible and inclusive, in support of Zambia's broader ASM formalisation agenda.

Led by a team from the Mines Safety Department (MSD), Mines Development Department (MDD), and the Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA), the project investigated why legal compliance remains low. The analysis identified multiple barriers: limited awareness of regulatory requirements, complex and bureaucratic application procedures, financial constraints, low literacy, digital access issues, and confusion stemming from informal traditional authority structures. Through research and stakeholder engagement, the team mapped out these challenges and proposed realistic, targeted reforms.

The project outcomes laid a solid foundation for future development of practical tools and policies for enhanced formalization. The ultimate goal is to enable safer, more transparent and environmentally responsible mining, while building trust between ASM operators and regulators and increasing the sector's contribution to Zambia's sustainable development.

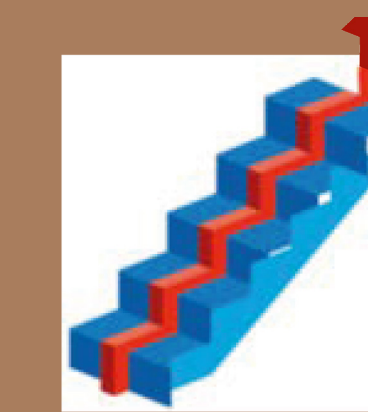


SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The project carries strong relevance for both communities and ecosystems. By uncovering the root causes behind non-compliance, it offers a pathway to safer working conditions, reduced pollution, and better protection of land and water. Legal formalisation also allows local miners to access training, fair income opportunities, and greater inclusion in Zambia's economic development. In short, the project supports a more just and sustainable use of the country's mineral resources.



Formalisation of the ASM sector will help protect the beautiful environments and natural landscapes of Zambia.



RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Through stakeholder consultations, field visits, and literature review, the team identified why many ASM operators remain informal, most notably due to complex rules, lack of information, and limited financial or technical capacity. These findings were synthesised into a set of actionable recommendations that aim to simplify both mining and environmental permitting. In doing so, the project has produced a knowledge base to inform future user-friendly tools and regulatory improvements that support ASM formalisation.



THE WAY FORWARD

The next phase involves translating these recommendations into guidelines and practical tools, such as flowcharts, illustrations, and posters, designed for ASM operators with varying literacy levels. These materials will be used in awareness campaigns and training sessions across Zambia. By clarifying roles, timelines, and application steps, the tools aim to empower miners to comply with the law, strengthen communication and cooperation between miners and regulators, and foster a culture of responsible, sustainable mineral development in the ASM sector.



Stakeholder meeting with ASM operators.