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# The public good dilemma of a non-renewable common resource: A look at the facts of artisanal gold mining

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## Abstract

Millions of people worldwide are involved in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Many of them live in conditions of poverty and insalubrities due to the mercury amalgamation of gold and the application of other rudimentary techniques. In spite of this, the sector has been nearly overlooked by resource economists. In this paper we analyze the sector based on a survey of the existing literature. We find some commonalities of artisanal and small-scale gold mining in different countries of the developing world as follows: low levels of mechanization and technology, labor intensiveness, low awareness of environmental degradation, poor training, high transience among some miners, and lack of financial savings. Moreover, with these commonalities in mind, we present some topics and challenges for a research agenda in the field of environmental, ecological, and development economics.

## Highlights

â–° We did a literature review of small-scale gold mining in developing countries. â–° Commonalities of this activity worldwide are discussed. â–° We discuss some approaches to analyze behavior and for policy assessment in ASGM. â–° We propose a research agenda.



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## Keywords

Small-scale gold mining; Mercury pollution; Collective action; Common-pool resource

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