



THE GEMFAIR WAY 2024

Scaling impact for artisanal and
small-scale diamond miners

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 - 9

Programme

- A recap on GemFair's membership
- Our management system
- An accessible digital solution to enable traceability

10 - 16

Sustainability - Building Forever

- Reclamation
- 2024 Key progress highlights
- Registration of farmers into associations
- Reclamation Show and tell
- Access to finance programme

17 - 20

GemFair in the world

- First sale of GemFair diamonds to consumers
- Angola delegation visit
- Al Cook's visit to Sierra Leone

THE CONTEXT



We reviewed the GemFair ASM Assurance Programme, which has been in place since we launched GemFair in 2018.

The revised standards, benchmarked against other leading responsible sourcing programmes, include our new standard membership category and a section for safety in semi-mechanised mining, further ensuring that we meet artisanal miners where they are at on their continuous improvement journey.



In 2024 we expanded our reclamation programme to include three more former mine sites. We also started to embed mine site reclamation into our access to finance programme, so that mine sites we support financially are held to high environmental standards and make the previously mined land available to the community for cultivation.



We were proud to host a delegation from the Government of Angola at our operations in Sierra Leone. During their visit, the delegation met with our team and toured several mine sites, gaining insights into the diamond logging process and interacting with miners.

They also visited a reclaimed mine site, observing the development of a rice field nearing harvest. This visit was an important opportunity for GemFair to highlight our journey and spark some thinking on applying this model to new contexts.

PROGRAMME



Despite a difficult year for the global diamond industry, GemFair scaled its programme. The expansion in member numbers also further increased GemFair's diamond purchases, with the number of diamonds purchased increasing 68 per cent in 2024, following a 77 per cent increase in 2023. This growth is due in large part to our decision, at the request of local civil society organisations and in alignment with the principals of the [OECD Due Diligence Guidance on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains](#), to widen GemFair's scope and become more inclusive to miners in earlier stages of their formalisation journey.

We also revised the [GemFair Responsible ASM Assurance Programme](#). This revision started by benchmarking our standard and assurance programme materials against other responsible sourcing programmes, including the latest version of De Beers Group's Best Practice Principles Assurance Programme, the OECD's Environmental Due Diligence Guidance, the World Bank's Forest-Smart Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining standards, among others.



After the benchmarking exercise, we went through each requirement of our standard to see where we needed to make changes and account for our new monitoring requirements, with a focus on ensuring the requirements reflect the context within which GemFair operates.

The revised ASM Standard and Manual will be available on our website in early 2025.

A recap on GemFair's membership

Core Members

Any licensed artisanal and small-scale miner who meets GemFair's Core Requirements and background checks, attends training on the GemFair ASM Standard and health and safety and logs all diamonds using the GemFair Toolkit at the mine site. Core Members are also eligible to receive access to finance from GemFair through our Forward Purchase Agreement (FPA) Programme.

Standard Members

Any licensed artisanal and small-scale miner who meets GemFair's Core Requirements and background checks and chooses to sell their diamonds to GemFair. Diamonds purchased from Standard Members are logged in the GemFair App at GemFair's buying office in Koidu, Sierra Leone.

All GemFair members receive a baseline mine site visit to assess their standards and working conditions.

A sample of a minimum 25% of Core and Standard Members receive spot checks every year. Core Members receiving finance from GemFair receive a minimum of two spot check visits to their site per year.

What we've learned from piloting a more inclusive membership category

There are many stakeholders involved in an ASM site.

This pilot has given us the opportunity to learn more about individuals who have an interest in the mine site, raising our understanding of our suppliers; how they work; and how we can make our programme more attractive to them.



Sub-contractors

Individuals who rent part of the mine site from the licence holder. We require the licence holder to maintain consistent standards throughout the mine site, regardless of the team working on a given pit.



Supporters

Individuals who finance some or all of a licence holder's operations, including covering workers' wages. We are exploring ways to connect more closely with supporters, onboarding them into the GemFair programme and sensitising them to our standards, particularly around fair labour practices.

We have learned more about how mine site actors often work in a network with one another: One site might be connected to another by their supporter or mine manager or even have the same licence holder. We are exploring ways to map out these connections as well as encourage all miners to bring their "network" sites to join the GemFair Programme.

We support our Standard Members to convert to Core Membership by sensitising them to the advantages, such as being eligible to receive financing and receiving onsite training from our field team.

Next steps

Over the course of 2025, we will be rolling out our revised Responsible ASM Assurance Programme which includes both membership types, accounts for how we onboard and monitor the progress of members, It also introduces guidelines on sourcing from semi-mechanised mine sites as a supplement to our baseline standards.

Our management system

2024

443 Sites participating in GemFair	6,645 Individual workers (approx.)	200 Anti-money laundering checks
8 Classroom training	433 People trained	
1,019 Mine site assessments	174 Mine sites received PPE	

2023

331 Sites participating in GemFair	4,965 Individual workers (approx.)	186 Anti-money laundering checks
9 Classroom training	86 People trained	
3,612 Mine site assessments	129 Mine sites received PPE	

An accessible digital solution to enable traceability

GemFair's digital solution is a set of hardware and software that helps GemFair maintain traceability of diamonds from the mine site through to export. Since we launched GemFair as a pilot in 2018, a bespoke digital solution to record diamond finds and offer traceability has been one of our core offerings. In designing this solution, we collaborated with miners and considered the following factors:

Online/offline function

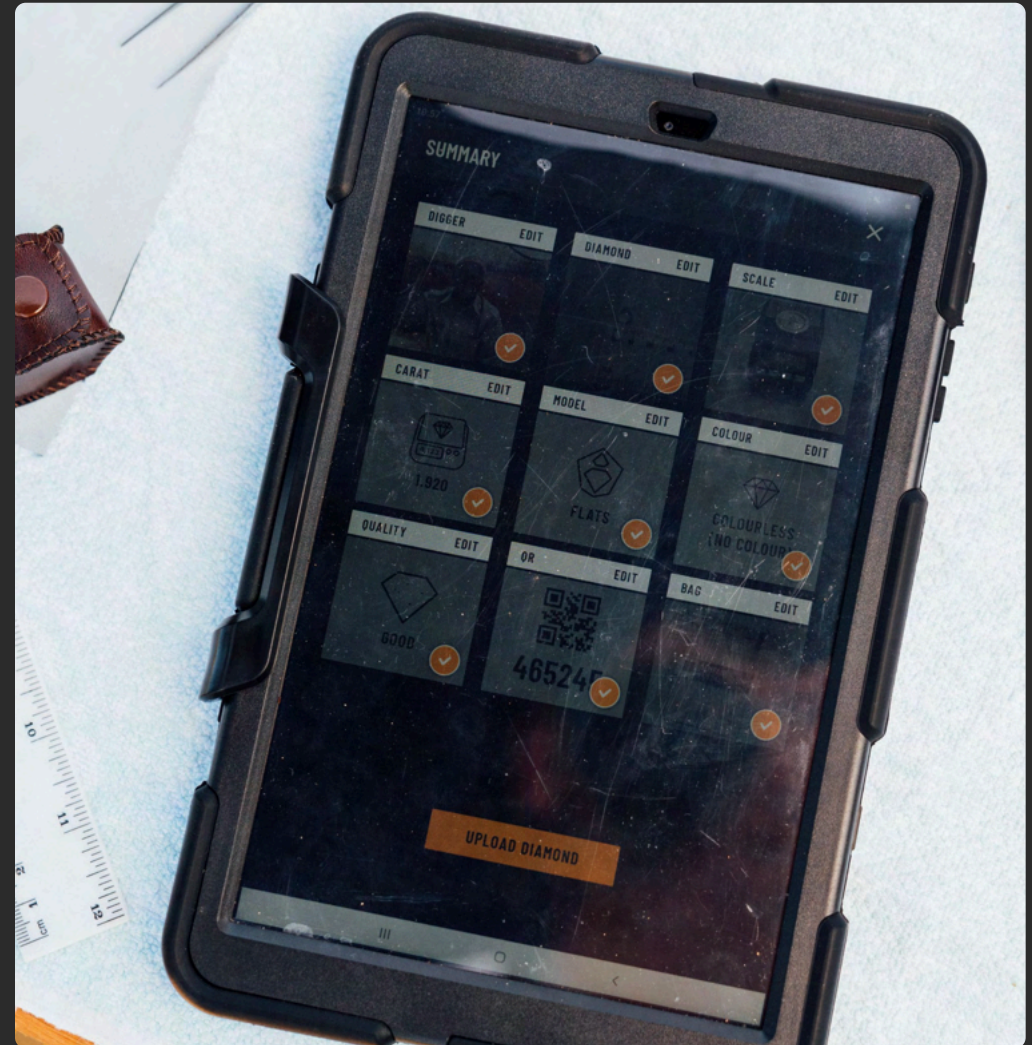
Artisanal diamond miners in Kono often work outside the range of a cell phone tower. We therefore designed a diamond logging app that could record data offline and then upload that information once the user is in data range.

Solar power

We included a solar charger for the tablet in the toolkit to take account of the fact that much of the power grid is out of service, sometimes for days at a time.

Colour scheme

Most artisanal mining takes place in a very sunny environment, so the colours of the app needed to accommodate a strong glare. We found orange, white and black works best.



Over the years we have had to adapt our technology to the needs of our members, including:

Accounting for illiteracy and poor eyesight

Many of the licence holders we work with are older and did not go through the formal education system, nor have much exposure to smartphones or tablets. When we implement our GemFair Toolkit training, we ensure that the licence holder nominates a suitably experienced person to also attend the training to provide support over the longer term when the miner is logging diamonds into the GemFair app. We also provide ad hoc support to miners when we visit their mine site.

Providing a confidential record keeping system for diamond production

The miners in our programme appreciate being able to record their diamonds and profits in the GemFair app – this helps them determine whether it was a successful season. Only users authorised by GemFair and the licence holder can use the app, so their data is kept confidential.

Scale and hand loupe

We have received positive feedback about the other diamond categorisation tools in the toolkit, such as the scale and hand loupe. The scale is especially valuable for miners who end up selling their diamonds to another dealer. With a scale, the miner can be sure of the weight of the diamond and is therefore in a better negotiating position with any diamond dealer they approach subsequently.



The GemFair toolkit

SUSTAINABILITY – BUILDING FOREVER

Reclamation

In 2024, we moved from pilot to full-scale implementation in our reclamation and farming programme. The programme is now embedded in our business-as-usual activities. By setting parameters around how many sites we can reclaim in a given year and putting limits on funding for each farm, we ensure that the programme has the biggest impact and its benefits are spread as widely as possible. We also expanded the programme to include sites in our access to finance (or Forward Purchase Agreement-FPA) programme, increasing our support for the entire life cycle of an operation, from mining to closure and beyond.



Fish farm

In May, we had our first harvest, with the fish sold to families in the neighbouring village. We plan to conduct further harvests twice a year, replenishing the pond with more fish stock after each harvest.



Soil improvements

As we continue to expand our programme to reclaim more former mine sites, we have found that one of the key barriers to converting mined-out land into farmland is the low quality of the soil. This is because years of mining strips the topsoil away, making the soil acidic and less nutritious. We reduce the acidity by using lime or oyster shells. Then we add additional topsoil –enriched with compost produced by local farmers and fertiliser –before planting the crops.



FPA site reclaimed

We selected one of the sites in our FPA programme for reclamation. Compared with other former mine sites we have reclaimed, this site took half the time to reclaim thanks to the trenching method we introduced as part of our FPA programme. This method involves each pit being backfilled before moving on to the next pit, reducing the time it takes to level the ground and introduce topsoil from an average of 60 to 30 days. We are planning to scale up our reclamation of FPA sites in the coming years.

Key highlights included:



Planting a new crop

"We're the ones supporting the family. Our men are working in the mines, but they don't always find diamonds, so we are the breadwinners. The support of GemFair has helped us keep our children in school. It's no small thing"

Grace, Farmer at New Meima Farm



Rice harvest

2024 Key progress highlights

7.5

Full-time jobs created

3

Sites reclaimed

2.33

Acres reclaimed

11

Pits backfilled

75

KG of seedlings donated

9

Types of plants harvested

9

Harvests

1

Fish harvest

3

Farming associations formed

69%

Female workers

Registration of farmers into associations

In 2024, we decided to support the small-holder farmers in our farming programme to form an association and register with the Ministry of Agriculture. Not only does an association help the farmers pool their resources and support the sustainability of their farms after GemFair completes its 12 months of support, but it also makes the farmers eligible with the Ministry of Agriculture for future capacity building programmes and inputs.

Our support consisted of helping farmers complete and submit their registration documents and open a bank account where they can start to save their income from the vegetable and rice cultivation. Any withdrawals, such as for next year's seedlings, must be approved by all the members of the association. Each association consists of 15 members, including an executive committee of a chairperson, treasurer and advisor.

"It's indeed progress for us as farmers to be registered with the Ministry of Agriculture and the District Council. This has never happened in the history of Waiyor village. As for the bank accounts, our income from our crops is now secured and accountable to us, the members of the group/association and our finances can be easily controlled by the executive members."

Papa Sheku, Farmer

Reclamation Show and tell



Reclamation show and tell

In September, we hosted a 'show and tell' for civil society organisations and government in Kono. This was an opportunity for us to showcase our reclamation programme and the transformation of former mining land into farms. First, we visited Tongoro 5 – a former mine site that participated in our access to finance programme (Forward Purchase

Agreement - FPA). We showed our delegates how the miners used the trenching system –the process of backfilling each pit before digging a new one—during extraction. The farm at Tongoro 5 is now growing rice.

We then showcased a site we are reclaiming, where our reclamation officer explained how we conduct our reclamation process:

1 | Community entry

We consult with the chief and community to understand which sites are their top priority for reclamation.

2 | Reclamation phase

Once a site is selected, village leadership identifies a workforce

3 | Levelling

The workers then level the site.

4 | Plotting

Once the site is levelled, we plan out the farm.

5 | Topsoil

The crew then enriches the soil and distributes a 20cm layer of topsoil to the area.

6 | Irrigation

The farm is now ready for irrigation, ensuring that water is fed into the planting area in a controlled manner.

7 | Cultivation

Planting and transplanting rice and other vegetables and fruits, depending on the season.

8 | Storage system

Harvest and storage of the crops.

9 | Register with the Ministry of Agriculture

The show and tell was popular and we plan to highlight our efforts in other areas of the programme, including the work we do at mine sites to raise standards.

"I have been trying to teach miners how to use the trenching system but I haven't been able to get uptake. Now that I've seen an example with my own eyes, I will amplify it whenever I engage with miners."

Local NGO representative



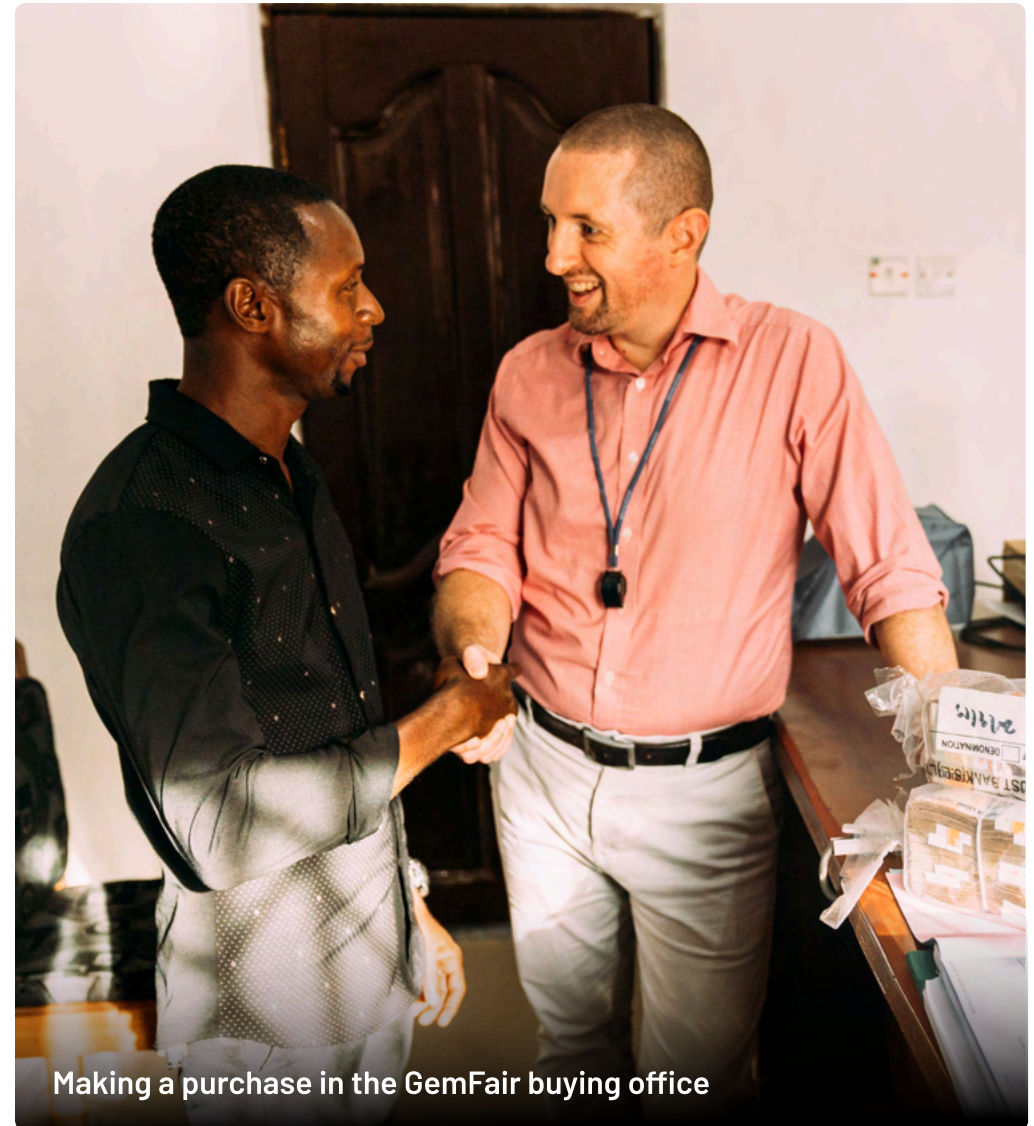
Reclamation show and tell

Access to finance programme

As a way to increase inclusion, we pivoted our access to finance (Forward Purchase Agreement, or FPA) programme by supporting more sites for a shorter period – 71 mine sites in 2024, compared to 56 in 2023. This enabled the benefits of the programme to be shared among a larger community of miners. We also introduced the trenching system to all FPA sites where the topography allowed. In 2024, 54 of the 71 sites in our FPA programme conducted trenching.

We also changed how we monitored sites in the programme: We split our FPA class into smaller cohorts and assigned each cohort to a different GemFair Field Officer, allowing our team to focus on training the miners in their cohort on management skills and bookkeeping. In 2023, we included one FPA site in our reclamation programme on a pilot basis. Now our focus is to make reclamation part of this programme.

While the results on mitigating environmental impacts and improving the organisation of sites in our FPA programme are encouraging, FPA did not lead to promising commercial results for GemFair. Fewer sites found diamonds compared to previous years, but fluctuations in production in artisanal mining are normal. Nevertheless, the programme is an important source of support for the ASM community, and it is a crucial tool for us to build a relationship with our suppliers that is based on mutual trust. We will continue FPA in the future, but we may need to refine our site selection procedures.



Making a purchase in the GemFair buying office

GEMFAIR IN THE WORLD

First sale of GemFair diamonds to consumers

D'Amadeo, a California-based jeweller, purchased GemFair-sourced rough diamonds from De Beers Auctions in 2021. We worked closely with Tracr to create a Diamond Search Tool, which allows D'Amadeo to show its customers the story behind rough diamonds in the collection. In January of 2024, D'Amadeo sold GemFair-sourced rough diamonds at the American Gem Trade Association Fair, where they received a hugely positive reaction. Visitors to D'Amadeo's booth were captivated by the story of the small producers who made GemFair-assured diamonds possible.

"We were beyond excited to offer artisanal diamonds from Sierra Leone via the GemFair program at AGTA, so it was gratifying when our excitement was surpassed by that of our customers. Like us, many had been waiting for so many years to purchase diamonds from artisanal sources with rock-solid provenance assurances provided by an excellent program."

Jared Holstein, Founder, D'Amadeo



D'Amadeo booth at the 2024 AGTA Gem Fair

Angola delegation visit



Logging a diamond at a GemFair participating ASM site

In early 2024, De Beers Group and the Government of Angola signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), one component of which involved exploring opportunities to support the formalisation of Angola's ASM sector. In September, GemFair hosted nine representatives from the Government of Angola in Sierra Leone. The visit began in Freetown, Sierra Leone's capitol, where the delegation met with representatives from the Ministry of Mines, National Minerals Agency (NMA) and Precious Minerals Trading Unit.

The delegation learned how the government of Sierra Leone manages the ASM sector and the export and taxation of its diamonds. The delegation then travelled to Koidu, where they met with staff from the regional office of the NMA and learned more about the practicalities of managing ASM licences and monitoring standards at mine sites in the Kono district.

We then hosted the delegation at our buying office, where we had in-depth discussions about GemFair's ASM Assurance Programme, how we use technology and a strong field presence to implement our traceability and chain of custody requirements and how we engage with mining communities.



De Beers Group and Angolan government delegation participants



Mine site visit

We visited two artisanal mine sites participating in GemFair so the delegation could witness all the mining phases, from excavation to diamond recovery. The members also met with miners and discussed their experience of working with GemFair. We then visited one of the sites in our reclamation programme that is now operating as a small farm.

This visit was a wonderful opportunity for us to promote our model of positive engagement with the ASM sector and explore its potential in another geographical context.

Al Cook's visit to Sierra Leone

We were pleased to host De Beers Group CEO Al Cook in Sierra Leone to show him around our buying office and visit several mine sites and the farming project.



ASM site tour



Al Cook's mine site visit

CONCLUSION

In 2024, GemFair made important progress and achieved several significant milestones. This included increasing the volume of diamonds we purchased, embedding a more inclusive membership option for miners at earlier stages of their formalisation journey and making responsible mine site closure a core part of our programme.

We widened our membership base significantly and solidified how to make GemFair's Assurance Programme more inclusive, responsive to risk and scalable. In the year ahead, we look forward to exploring new ways to bring GemFair diamonds to market and the exciting opportunities for traceable and responsibly sourced ASM diamonds from the source to store.



Learning about the GemFair diamond logging toolkit