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Chairman of the international Association of Assay Offices and a member of the International Hallmarking Convention's Standing Technical Group and Vision and Strategy Group.

Edinburgh Assay Office

The Edinburgh Assay Office is the trading name of the Incorporation of Goldsmiths of the City of Edinburgh.

The Edinburgh Assay Office tests and hallmarks over 10,000 pieces of jewellery every day. The organisation has been testing precious metals and applying hallmarks in Edinburgh for over 550 years.

Scottish Gold and its Chain of custody

Edinburgh Assay office has worked closely with Scotgold PLC, a gold mining company, to design and independently oversee a rigorous chain of custody that has enabled Scotgold to make concrete guarantees to manufacturers and consumers about the origin of the gold used to produce jewellery alloys supplied to jewellery makers under a trial scheme. The Scotgold project presented a unique opportunity for the Scottish jewellery industry as it was Scotland's first commercial gold mine.

It was important to all stakeholders to ensure the gold that was mined at the Cononish mine in the Scottish Trossachs was the only gold that was used to make up certified Scottish gold jewellery alloys supplied to a trial group of Scottish makers. It was also important that each alloy was traceable back through the refining process and back to the mine. For jewellery consumers in particular it was important that the individual piece of jewellery was also individually identified and traceable back to the mine.

Working with the mine, the refiner and the jewellery makers, Edinburgh Assay office was able to design a process that controlled the material at every stage. The addition of special traceable alloy constituents enabled a "finger printing" process that also allowed each alloy to be positively identified at the final stage of presentation to the Assay office for testing and marking.

At the final stage of conformation, a special Scotgold Mark was applied along with an individual serial number.

The presentation will detail the various stages of the chain of custody and explain why the provenance of the material was so important in enabling the product's premium value to the consumer.

The trial scheme proved to be a complete success and Edinburgh Assay Office and the mine will go into full production later this year.