

ASM Baseline Report and Management Plan for ASM/LSM Interactions in the DRC

Location: DRC
Year: 2010
Party: Private Sector Client

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*Milled ore waiting to be sluiced.
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Summary

The study investigates the complex ASGM/LSM interactions on a mining concession in the DRC. The study found that development of an industrial mining project will face a high degree of uncertainty, lack of information, potential conflict triggers, and many vested economic and political interests related to existing and historical ASGM activity. However, the study also found that, if properly engaged using the right strategies and personnel there is potential for successful engagement with ASGM that can have tangible benefits for the mining company, such as making it a more desirable partner for developing other deposits both locally and nationally. In addition, a number of international initiatives, industry efforts, and national efforts are underway to regularize and formalize artisanal mining in DRC. Because of its critical importance to the economy and stability, it is recommended that the mining company aim for minimal disruption to the ASGM economy, with cooperation as the optimal strategy.

Methods

Mine site profiles, surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, analysis of company literature, consultancy reports, NGO reports, and news reports

Existing Situation

Industrial and ASGM have intermittently occurred on the same concession in the DRC since the 1990s, with varying degrees of consultation and conflict between the groups throughout this time. Approximately 72% of the area population near the mining concession depend on artisanal mining for some aspect of their livelihood. A licensed mining company has started to develop a gold mine in the concession, which has elevated the need to develop a sustainable solution to conflicts that arise from ASGM/LSM interactions.

Mercury Use

Mercury is used for processing ore, with about 12 kg of mercury consumed and discharged into the environment on a weekly basis. There is almost no awareness amongst miners of the health and environmental implications of burning mercury.

Recommendations

The study outlined ASGM management principles and potential impacts on ASGM based on various scenarios, displacement management guidance, and guidance for positive transformation of the ASGM sector that stimulates development whilst managing

certain company risks. Specific recommendations include:

- Avoid impacting the ASGM sector to the extent possible. Where impacts are inevitable, the emphasis should be to minimize the negative impacts of ASGM and optimize the positive.
- If resettlement is necessary, engage ASGM stakeholders in resettlement planning to ensure that solutions are workable in practice and do not lead to resistance or conflict.
- The positive impacts of the mine at the local, provincial and national levels should be clearly demonstrated in order to gain wider support for the mine's presence and thwart attempts to breed dissent amongst vested interests who may be ill-affected.
- Contribute to community development through concerted support to the ASGM sector, e.g. in addressing its social and environmental liabilities and helping miners professionalize, formalize, and improve their productivity.
- To maximize long-term sustainable development of the area, the plan suggests the firm make investments to promote economic diversification away from ASGM, but making sure to use participatory and consensual methods.

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