

# Democratic Republic of Congo

The impact of artisanal and small-scale diamond and gold mining on the environment in Kasai-Oriental and Tshopo provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo

## Executive Summary



GAERN and CENADEP

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*Grassroots research on local diamond mining impact*



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# Executive Summary

The study was conducted in the provinces of Kasai-Oriental and Tshopo in the Democratic Republic of Congo, two provinces where gold and diamond mining play an important role in the local economy and constitute an important source of income for local communities. This grassroots research aims to assess **the environmental impact of artisanal and small-scale diamond and gold mining** in the adjacent communities in the territories of Bafwansende and Banalia (Tshopo province) and in the territories of Lupatapata, Miabi and Katanda (Kasai-Oriental province).

To achieve this **objective** the study addresses the following three questions:

- What is the nature of artisanal and small-scale diamond and gold mining in Kasai-Oriental and Tshopo provinces?
- What is the impact of artisanal and small-scale diamond and gold mining on the environment in mining areas?
- What are the potential measures to address the problems of sustainable environmental management in artisanal and small-scale diamond and gold mining?

## Key findings

Various environmental impacts have been observed, including water pollution, deforestation, and soil degradation. The study highlights that more than 60% of respondents recognise that soil degradation is the biggest consequence of artisanal and small-scale diamond and gold mining in the community. This degradation renders the soil unusable for hunting or agriculture activities. It is therefore very important to initiate actions to raise the awareness of all local communities, all artisanal gold and diamond miners and all actors involved in this sector on the protection of the environment through the sustainable management of mining areas.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of their study, GAERN and CENADEP recommend:

- To the special services of the Ministries of Mines and Environment of the Congolese state, to:
  1. Enforce the rules and laws governing the mining sector in artisanal and small-scale gold and diamond mining.
  2. Define and implement environmental protection regulations.
  3. Strengthen and/or support SAEMAPE, in particular by providing it with all possible means to enable it to carry out its work of supporting and supervising artisanal miners in the exercise of their activities, and also to increase the number of agents in this institution to be able to cover all mining sites.
  4. Carry out periodic and ad hoc environmental inspections of artisanal mining sites and verify their compliance with mining environmental protection obligations.

- To artisanal miners, to:

1. Respect the laws and rules that govern the mining sector in terms of the management of the mining environment.
2. Respect the perimeters where they are allowed to freely exploit diamond and gold.
3. Buy diggers' cards (cartes des creseurs)
4. Stop using explosives and mercury in Artisanal Mining Zones (ZEAs, in French Zones d'Exploitation Artisanale) and avoid cutting down trees in the sites and rehabilitate each portion of the ZEAs when mining has stopped there.

- To Civil Society Organisations, to:

5. Organise training and awareness sessions for artisanal miners on mining methods.
6. Intensify campaigns to popularise the legal texts governing the mining sector.
7. Organise training for artisanal miners on the sustainable management of mining areas.



**Groupe d'Appui aux Exploitants des Ressources Naturelles (GAERN)** was created in early 2005 and is based in Mbuji-Mayi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. GAERN strengthens the capacities of associations of artisanal miners, monitors and accompanies diggers' associations in the field, raises awareness on forestry and mining laws and lobbies the authorities for their respect and application of laws relating to natural resources. GAERN is active in the following areas: Mines, water and forests; Environment; Peace and conflict transformation; Good governance; HIV/AIDS; Informal education; Public policy.



**Centre National d'Appui au Développement et à la Participation Populaire (CENADEP)**, is a non-profit association created on 09 September 2000 in Kinshasa. It is an integral part of the Congolese civil society and has legal personality.

CENADEP works for the integral well-being of the most underprivileged sectors of the population, in urban and rural areas. It accompanies the organisation of the population at grassroots level so that together they strengthen their struggles and support community projects that promote social change and sustainable self-help and reduce dependency. CENADEP works in the following areas: Mining Governance; Popular Education for Development; Sustainable Development and Strengthening of People's Organisations; Democracy, Good Governance and Civic Education; Gender and Human Rights; Peace and Conflict Resolution; Forestry and Environment; Agriculture and Food Security.

**Context:** This report is part of a larger pan-African research project called *Grassroots research on local diamond mining impact* which was run in eight African countries by ten African member organisations from the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition.

The eight country reports intend to study some of the impacts of artisanal and small-scale diamond mining in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory-Coast, the Republic of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe and the impact of industrial diamond mining in Lesotho.

The full version of the reports can be read and downloaded on <https://www.kpcivilsociety.org/publications/publications-from-the-coalition/grassroots-research-on-local-diamond-mining-impact/>



This study was conducted with the guidance and technical support of the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition (KP CSC). The KP CSC is the umbrella organization that acts as an observer to the Kimberley Process (KP) on behalf of civil society. Most of the coalition's members are based in Africa, the world's largest diamond producing continent. Representing communities affected by diamond mining and trade, members work to improve the governance of the diamond sector in their home countries. The coalition's local and regional expertise allows us to monitor responsible diamond sourcing on the ground and to articulate a citizen's perspective on the diamond sector in national, regional and international forums. The Coalition includes representatives from Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Guinea, Ivory-Coast, Liberia, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and Belgium.



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