Reconciling Economic Growth and Forest Protection in the Congo Basin: Mining

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Untapped wealth: Prospects for Mining development in the Congo Basin

• With the exception of the DRC, the mineral wealth of the Congo Basin remains largely underdeveloped:
  - Lack of infrastructure, in particular transport
  - Inaccessibility of the resources
  - Instability
  - Poor investment climate
  - The regions’ economies rely heavily on oil

BUT this is changing: all Congo Basin countries have identified Mining as a priority sector
Technology, High prices, high demand have drastically changed the rules of the game.
Impacts on Forest

Industrial Mines
- New in all countries but the DRC
- Often junior companies
- Different phases have different impacts: Exploration-construction-production-closure

Artisanal and Small scale Mining (ASM)
- By far the largest sector
- Largely Unregulated
Key Challenges for mining and conservation in the Congo Basin
Associated Infrastructure development
Population influx and increased economic activities in previously inaccessible areas
Increased Hunting & Poaching
2. Conflicting land use (mining and conservation)
3. Unregulated ASM

- By far the largest mining sector in the Congo Basin
- Can be an important livelihood
- Significant direct (mercury, river diversion etc) and indirect (increased logging, hunting etc) impacts
- Increased ASM in protected areas
Kahuzi-Biega National Park, DRC

The effects of conflict minerals and ASM in KBNP, 2006
Recommendations
1. Promote Integrated Land Use Planning for Mining and Associated Infrastructure Development

Indirect impacts associated with mining operations and associated infrastructure development can constitute a major threat to forests.

An appropriate land use planning exercise that identifies the most promising corridors (for mining as well as other commodities) and the appropriate mix of transportation modes (roads, railway, rivers) can help reduce the effects of mining activities on forests.
2. Strengthen governments’ capacities to manage and monitor the mining sector (ASM and LSM)

- Develop a system of effective oversight from early exploration through to mine closure
- Make sure newly developed legislation incorporates achievable, international best practices/standards for all stages of a mining operation
- Review and monitor the quality of ESIAs and environmental management plans
- Regular multi stakeholder dialogues
3. Promote Innovative Mechanisms to Offset Negative Impacts

Considering the scale of expected mining activities in the Congo Basin, offsets may be the only mechanism that can prevent a net loss of biodiversity in the region.

A significant amount of work remains to be done to put theory into practice and to assess the relevant methodologies and the capacity needed to assess, measure, and monitor impacts and mitigation measures for mining projects in the Congo Basin.

Ideally, an appropriate methodology will be identified that can be used at the landscape level to measure losses and gains, so that residual effects from mining operations will be taken into account, measured, and offset.
4. Improve Management of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector in Areas of High Biodiversity

- Focus on organizing small-scale miners and applying regulatory frameworks, including enforcement of no-go zones for mining.
- Address the specific rights and duties of artisanal miners, including long-term security of tenure, and realistic environmental and safety requirements.
- Artisanal mining activities should be taken into account in land use planning processes.
- Facilitate the use of environmentally friendly technologies, and mindful, conservation-minded mining strategies.
- Market-based interventions and sustainable supply chain initiatives.
Thank You!

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