



**WAGES REGIONAL FORUM 2021
(report - short version)**

« Maximizing the economic benefits of extractive areas for women and young entrepreneurs – how to network, collaborate, scale-up »

November 30, December 1 and December 2, 2021

WAGES

WEST AFRICA GOVERNANCE AND
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY IN
EXTRACTIVE AREAS



In partnership with
Canada

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PRESENTATION OF THE FORUM

“Maximising socio-economic benefits of extractive areas for women and young entrepreneurs – connect, collaborate, scale up”

Since the inception of the project for West Africa Governance and Economic Sustainability in Extractive Areas (WAGES), each year, World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and the Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) have worked together in organizing a flagship event with funding from Global Affairs Canada (GAC). Through WAGES, these events bring together, various stakeholders from the sub-region including Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea to reflect on the progress and challenges regarding local governance and the role of women and youth in the economic development of extractive areas

About World University Service of Canada (WUSC)

World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a Canadian non-governmental organization focused on the economic empowerment of youth and women around the world.

Our vision is of a better world for all young people. It is a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable world in which all young people, especially women and refugees, are empowered to secure a good quality of life for themselves, their families and their communities.

We work with a diverse network of students, volunteers, institutions, governments and businesses to improve education, economic and empowerment opportunities for young people

<https://wusc.ca/en/>

The theme that was chosen for 2021 was:

“Maximising socio-economic benefits of extractive areas for women and young entrepreneurs – connect, collaborate, scale up”



- 83 attendees from Burkina Faso (BF), Canada, Ghana (GH), and Guinea (Gu)
- The program of this forum was intended to address topical issues, including participatory and inclusive local development in extractive areas.

About CECI

The mission of CECI is to combat poverty, exclusion and inequality. To this end, **CECI builds the development capacities of disadvantaged communities. We support gender equality, violence reduction, food security, resilience and adaptation to climate change.** We mobilize resources and promote knowledge sharing.

CECI strives for innovation and efficiency. We work on sustainable development strategies by collaborating with strategic partners to carry out programs and projects. Through all of our interventions, our relations with our partners in the South are becoming more egalitarian. **Strengthening democratic governance and protecting the environment** are systematically incorporated into all of CECI's programming.

Since it was founded in 1958, CECI has:

- Mobilized over 12,000 volunteers and employees in Canada and in 30 countries around the world
- Supported more than 8,000 local partner organizations
- Changed the lives of over 30 million people

<https://ceci.ca/en/>

THE MAIN TOPICS



Topic 1

Participatory and inclusive local development in extractive areas - What are the strategies to ensure that the needs of women and youth are taken into account in order to empower them?



Topic 2

Women and young entrepreneurs in mining areas - How can they access financing and technical support to grow their businesses?



Topic 3

Local mining development funds and other mining revenues: a tool for sustainable and inclusive local development?

For each of these topics, presentations from different partners encouraged the sharing of outcomes and provided a platform for members of the community and international organizations to share their experiences and thoughts.

In addition to knowledge sharing, the regional forum offered entrepreneurs the opportunity to sell their products through an exhibition; more than 20 entrepreneurs from all three countries were able to present a wide range of products: including jewellery, beauty products, creams and food products.

On November 30, 2021, an opening ceremony of the WAGES 2021 Regional Forum was held with the participation of: The High Commissioner of Canada to Ghana, Her Excellency Kati Csaba, The Director of the Ghana Enterprises Agency, Ms. Kosi Yankey- Ayeh, and WUSC Country Director in Ghana, Emelia Ayipio Asamoah, who gave their keynote addresses.

It should be noted that as the Forum is taking place during the global COVID-19 pandemic and given the appearance of the new "Omicron" strain, WUSC and CECI have assessed the risks of maintaining the WAGES Regional Forum in Ghana, from November 30 to December 2, 2021 and have chosen to maintain the forum at the chosen date and venue, with reinforced COVID protocols and additional mitigation measures to protect its participants.

MAIN RESULTS OF THE WAGES PROJECT REGARDING PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

WAGES is an initiative funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented cooperatively by WUSC and CECI in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Guinea for 6 years (2016 to 2022). Working in partnership with communities, local governments, the private sector and other stakeholders, the project helps communities, especially women and youth. **WAGES aims to maximize the socio-economic benefits of investments in the extractive sector in West Africa.** More specifically, the project aims to empower local communities, and more specifically to integrate women and youth, so that they fully participate in local governance, economic opportunities and the sustainable development of these areas.

In Burkina Faso, **33.8% of companies supported by WAGES recorded growth in sales and turnover, with higher growth rates of 56.5% and 61.4% growth in Ghana and in Guinea respectively.**

To improve local economic development, and through a partnership with Global Affairs Canada, the project has disbursed over C\$300,000 across the three countries in the form of direct grants to women and young entrepreneurs.

Some the outcomes

35

local development plans were reviewed

7 898

people (62% women - 60% youth)
coached in entrepreneurship

1292

businesses were created
, (BF : 37.5%, GH : 56.1%, et GU : 69%).

« In terms of the participation of women and youth, what made the difference in this project was having organized trainings and led discussions in local languages. For me, this is definitely a success factor. Organizing workshops on leadership, communication, advocacy and lobbying enabled women and youth to be better organized and prepared. Women have fully understood that in our communities, power will not be handed over to them; they must take it. We now have women in the Boké region who aspire to be business owners and actively participate in the management and decision making of the city.»

STATEMENT BY DR BALDÉ ALPHA MAMADOU, GUINEA

« “This program leaves good memories. It will live on. It provided us with training and we, in turn, will train others. I myself was able to create a cooperative, the Agricultural Development Cooperative. We 4 are now part of a network, to improve our capacities and better meet the needs of our customers, the Boké Young Entrepreneurs Platform. We are also linked to other organizations, to benefit from capacity building.»

RESPONSE FROM A MAN

« Everything about this project has helped me a lot. They helped me, they helped me move forward, so I would like to say a big thank you to WAGES because they helped me a lot. But they are not finished, they should not leave, they should continue to help women and youth in our community..»

RESPONSE FROM A MAN

«When the project arrived, I had already started raising chickens while going to school. I started doing various trainings on animal husbandry and business management and eventually I started thinking that I should just focus on my business and hire white collar one day, instead of becoming one myself. My business has grown steadily ever since, thanks to the project and everything it has given us. We are now creating structures to ensure that everything we have learned through the project can benefit others»

RESPONSE FROM A MAN

TOPIC 1 : PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN EXTRACTIVE AREAS

What are the strategies to ensure that the needs of women and youth are taken into account in order to empower them?

Round table on Participatory and inclusive local development in extractive areas

On November 30, 2021, launching the debate on the first TOPIC of the forum with a round table featuring the following six (6) panellists:

- Mr. Isaac Dasmani (PhD)-PHV Municipal Chief Executive.
- Mr. Isaac Danquah-Happy Youth Development Association, Ekutuase. Wassa East District and Atobiase Youth Association.
- Mr. GNOUMOU Dissan Boureima: former Mayor of Houndé, local elected official (MP) of the BF region
- Ms. PARE Virginie, Citizen Watch Committee of Houndé, women's CSO, Burkina Faso
- Ms. GNAISSA Maimouna (Framework for Consultation and Women's Actions) Women's CSO, Guinea
- Mr. BAH MAMADOU HOUDY, Mayor Commune of Sangarédi, Guinea



“What are the strategies to ensure that the needs of women and youth are better taken into account in order to empower them?”

In all three countries, the speakers expressed their commitment to taking into account the needs of women and youth. Particularly when drawing up local development plans, mechanisms are put in place to collect the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders.



STATEMENT BY BOUREIMA GNOUMOU, MAYOR OF HOUNDÉ, BURKINA FASO

«We have a five-year participatory community development plan (2017-2022). It is a structural mechanism. The WAGES Project has contributed to raising community awareness of development issues in mining areas. Each year, we draw up our annual investment plan, for which we consult the population of each sector on their specific needs. »

TOPIC 2 : WOMEN AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS IN MINING AREAS

HOW CAN THEY ACCESS FINANCE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO DEVELOP THEIR BUSINESSES?

Lunching debate on topic 2, two Business financing experiences were presented; the experience of PRIDE, the training firm specializing in entrepreneurship and the experience of micro-financing in Burkina Faso. These two programs have the mission of "facilitating the access of women and young entrepreneurs to financing and supporting the start-up of their small scale business (Program in Guinea) or in order to increase their production capacities and strengthen their economic empowerment (programme in Burkina Faso)"



PRIDE's mission is to develop the entrepreneurial spirit. PRIDE has become a partner of the WAGES/CECI Project by setting up and deploying a team of entrepreneurship instructors and coaches throughout the project area in Guinea.

SUCCESS STORY

GUINEAN COMPANY - GIE KADOGONE- agro-food

Salématou COUMBASSA, President EIG KADOGONE - Mining Operator



Creation of 7 direct and 15 indirect jobs for young people and women to curb poverty and reduce youth immigration

Economics
Social
Impacts



Improved sources of income for members / employees and self-employment

Environnemental
Impacts



Use of a dosage standard in the manufacture of natural juices and compliance with **hygiene and Health-Safety and Environment (HSSE) regulations**

The support of WAGES/CECI-Guinea has made it possible to:

- Strengthen capacities in associations, economic and environmental advocacy / lobbying techniques;
- Mitigate the impact of COVID-19 with a grant of 8,030,000 GNF
- Benefit from the FODEL fund of 39,000,000 GNF and 7,000,000 GNF
- Succeed in job creation;
- Guarantee a high quality natural and regular production;
- Validate 5 market segments to date: supermarket, employee of mining areas, restaurants, vendors in local markets and civil servants (2040 bottles of juice or 20,400,000 GNF during 06 months);
- Be competitive at the prefectural, regional and even national level.

Some PRIDE key outcomes

Through its grant program, the project aimed to “.” In two cohorts (2020 and 2021), the project facilitated the grant for:

- 60 young business projects (Start Ups);
- 40 agricultural groups, minimum of 807 beneficiary members including 361 young women, 247 women, 109 young men and 90 men.

The projects are financed up to 70% by WAGES and 30% by the beneficiaries. The agricultural groups benefiting from the subsidies have created their own micro-credit funds: the Groupements Villageois d'Epargne et de Crédits. These funds, made up of 97% women, have mobilized more than US\$160,000 in savings and more than US\$80,000 have been redistributed in short-term loans at the rate of 5 to 10% per month for the promotion of micro-enterprises.

SUCCESS STORY

KAKANDE COMPANY – VEGETABLES – Guinea

Entrepreneur; Fadjigui KANTE, Manager

MISSION

Produce and market - healthy and easily conserved - organic vegetables, in order to contribute to food self-sufficiency and the creation of sustainable employment for young women and men in the locality.

Social impacts



Job creation for young women and men;

Economics impacts



Creation of **sources of income** for employees and self-employment

Environmental impacts



Use and contribution of **organic fertilizers (composting), organic-based pesticides and compliance with HSSE**

The support of the WAGES/CECI-Guinea project has made it possible to:

- Strengthen our capacities in techniques for setting up a business plan, marketing, Personal Development, Financial Education;
- Creation of permanent and temporary employment for the community;
- Guarantee the production of quality organic fresh vegetables thanks to a grant of \$1,136.19 from the WAGES project;
- Signature of a delivery contract with 03 customer segments to date: the cafeterias of the (mining) companies TMH/UMS and TGH+, association of women wholesalers of the local market (1,612 kg of fresh vegetables delivered, i.e. \$1,702.22).

MICRO-FINANCING IN BURKINA FASO

Financing in Burkina Faso has made it possible to support 34 collective Rural Microenterprises (RME) and 71 individual RMEs for a total amount of 36,124,348 FCFA. The maximum amount of the subsidy is 350,000 FCFA for individual projects and 650,000 FCFA for collective projects.

This micro-financing has had a specific impact on the increase in the volumes of goods and services produced and turnover. In several cases, the subsidy has contributed to creating conditions allowing the RMEs to build up reserves for self-financing and to access funds to access public financing by creating the conditions for access to credits from financial institutions.

Several companies also stated that micro-financing has reduced working time by mechanizing certain tasks; increased the number of employees and improved their working conditions.

On Thursday, December 2, 2021, Ghana Enterprises Agency (GEA) organized a Masterclass and a networking session for 36 Forum participants including entrepreneurs, academics, government and financial institutions, representatives of business associations and civil organizations.

The objective of the " Access to financial support in Ghana " session was to present different access to financing portfolios offered by GEA to MSMEs. GEA, in partnership with its development partners and stakeholders, has designed and developed innovative funding sources programs to support entrepreneurs, especially women and youth. One such program is the Ghana Tourism Development Project (GTDP), which is implemented by GEA in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Ecobank's presentation focused on ways to digitize corporate business operations including programs such as: OmniLite; EcobankPay; E-Commerce; the Ellevat program and professional prepaid cards. Ecobank offers unified digital channels across its network, allowing its customers to access a variety of digital products and services across the country. Compared to traditional business methods, digitizing commerce results in lower setup costs and provides value-added solutions for growth.

« “What are the existing deficiencies in terms of support for entrepreneurs in mining areas (think women and youth)? » »

The main deficiencies identified by the participants are:

- Limited access to financing for MSMEs;
- Insufficient entrepreneurial and managerial skills;
- Limited market access and inadequate data on MSMEs;
- Products not developed according to international standards; Unawareness of existing opportunities;
- Poor access to road networks and other infrastructure;
- Not enough entrepreneurship training centers and funds for entrepreneurship training;
- Little support from mining companies to promote entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship;
- No commitment from mining companies to provide capacity building to MSMEs;
- Little financing available for sole proprietorships; financing via the mining fund goes mainly to groups, cooperatives and economic interest groups.

The recommendations of the participants

- Mentoring to help young entrepreneurs in their formalization procedures. Given the lack of support in mining areas, local SMEs could provide this support to young entrepreneurs;
- Organize trade shows and invite other potential customers and competitors to the district. Every three months, the district assemblies organize town halls. They should invite SMEs to take advantage of the opportunity and use town halls to do their marketing.
- Continue building the capacity of MSMEs so that they can go out, do their own shopping, bid for contracts and open their market. The assemblies should try to group these MSMEs into small groups and help them find contracts with large companies. The assemblies should help MSMEs form groups to share the money and use it as working capital for their businesses.
- Create business resource centers at district level and that SMEs organize fairs and exhibitions to market their products.

« What are the opportunities in mining areas in terms of access to financing and markets (think of women and youth)?»

Among the suggestions, it appears that local mining development funds could support local economic operators with a guaranteed fund, allowing them to mobilize funds from financial or non-financial institutions.

The government could define policies to encourage local content and find tax changes. Business incubators and outreach services for local SMEs could help local SMEs.

A presentation of the support programs of the Chamber of Mines of Ghana and Burkina Faso took place

The Ghana Chamber of Mines is an advocacy organization for major mining companies in Ghana, their related support service companies and other organizations with an impact on the mining industry.

Over the years, member companies of the Ghana Chamber of Mines have taken initiatives and implemented policies to promote the participation of women and youth in the mining industry including the establishment of policies to increase the recruiting and retaining local employees but also targeting women in particular and setting up training centres.

SUCCESS STORY

Alliance of Burkinabe Mining Goods and Services Suppliers – ABSM

The ABSM is a reference association in the remuneration of the benefits of the mining sector through the promotion of the local supply of goods and services.

MISSION

ABSM's mission is to "Promote the local supply of goods and services to mining companies, through the professionalization of local suppliers, the improvement of the business environment in the sector and the development of structuring partnerships with all the actors concerned. ". Its areas of expertise are: capacity building; advocacy ; information and partnership development

Support or solutions offered by ABSM to its members:

Implementation of financial products adapted to the needs of SMEs;

- Mastery of the specificities of the mine and the mining industry value chain;
- Implementation of marketing and customer management tools/techniques;
- Formalization, Restructuring and upgrading;
- Implementation of tools/systems for planning, administrative and accounting management

Some results

- **11 actions plan carried out**/ technical and financial offers;
- **11 companies** to improve their communication tools;
- **3 companies** had financing files
- More than **60% of the management tools** made available have been adopted and are in use particularly at the administrative, accounting and commercial level

For its part, the Chambre des Mines du Burkina Faso (CMB) was created in 2011 and if the full members are mining companies in production, construction and research, the CMB also welcomes associate members such as Geo services companies; explosives and quarrying or underground mining as well as affiliate members such as suppliers of goods and services.

The local supply of goods and services is the lever that has the greatest multiplier effect in the economies of gold-mining countries. The CMB has supported several initiatives in this area through the production of thematic studies, the development and implementation of a strategic plan to promote local supply, information training, capacity building of mining suppliers as well as the organization of trade missions

TOPIC 3 : LOCAL MINING DEVELOPMENT FUNDS AND OTHER MINING REVENUES:

A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Round table on Participatory and inclusive local development in extractive areas

On December 1st, the second day of WAGES' Regional Forum, 3 panellists moderated a debate on mining development funds:

- Mr. Emmanuel Okang, Projects Manager, Mining Development Fund who reviewed the Ghana Mining Development Fund, its use, challenges and management to help (at best) help the development of our communities.
- Mr. Tanga Félix Ouedraogo, Project Manager, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Quarries in Burkina Faso
- Mr. Néné Moussa Maléya Camara, Director General of Community Relations and Local Content Development, Ministry of Mines and Geology of Guinea

Presentation of mining funds

Mining revenues forwarded to municipalities are an essential lifeline for mining communities. In Burkina Faso, Ghana and Guinea, the mining codes set the parameters for the constitution, procurement and management of local mining development funds. Depending on the country, these funds are fed by a share of mining royalties paid to the State and/or by special taxes based on the turnover of mining companies. These funds are distributed by the central State, through distribution keys specific to each country, in all municipalities, but with a significant share for municipalities located in mining areas. Mining municipalities therefore have access to significant resources to carry out inclusive and sustainable local development initiatives. WAGES was able to facilitate dialogue between local governments, community members and trustees of Local Mining Development Funds to ensure women and youth participate in planning these resources and benefit from them.

Guinea relies on its mining resources to address the challenge of financing local development. With several of its partners, especially CECI, They have been considering the possibility for sustainable structures. The funds created are equipped with implementation mechanisms that allow for effective support to local authorities in their development process. The two funds are:

- The Local Economic Development Fund (FoDEL);
- The National Local Development Fund (FNDL).

Presentation of mining funds

In Burkina Faso, the project supported the efforts of civil society organizations at the national level to participate in the national dialogue. The action of the project in this area was to support a framework for consultation and action of CSOs involved in mining governance (CSOs which were at the origin of the institution of the LMDF in 2015). It was a question of drawing a roadmap of collaboration which will have for end to cause on the one hand, a real implication of the communities in the management of the LMDF and to encourage the local and national authorities to more accountability and on the other hand, to plead for the review of the LMDF decrees in the interest of the communities (taking into account economic needs). While in Ghana, the project has supported the Mining Development Fund to put in place a roadmap for the development of regulations for the MDF law of 2016 (Law 912) as well as strengthening the capacities of the local management committees of the mining community development programs.

Following the presentations on the various mining funds on December 1, participants were able to discuss with the panellists, specifically on the implementation of mining funds, progress towards the development of regulations and to share experiences in the use of mining funds in the 3 countries in order to draw lessons.

The main questions were: How do these funds contribute to the economic empowerment of women and youth? Are there any challenges on the use of these funds for this purpose? What can be done and by whom to increase the leverage effect of these funds for the benefit of women and youth? Are there other sources of mining revenue that can be used to support the economic empowerment of women and youth?

DISCUSSION IN SMALL GROUPS

Round table on the TOPIC of the Forum

Thereafter, small group discussions with representatives of local communities and civil organizations, women and youth groups allowed to hear their point of view on the benefits of mining activities for women and youth.

« This Fund has helped us a lot. Thanks to this fund, we were able to build a large market, the second or third largest market in the Western region, many women and young people do not have to walk to the capital to receive medical treatment. A percentage of this fund must be allocated to training, for women and youth in the region.»

**MR. EVANS ABOA AGOSO, YOUTH ORGANIZATION
DELEGATE GHANA**

« We are in the food industry, 6 women and 1 man. Thanks to WAGES, we received training in entrepreneurship, food processing, and business planning. We did the incubator program and we received grants to buy equipment and raw materials. We started production and our products helped us gain recognition within our community and beyond. We can then benefit from the FoDEL fund.»

“We drew up a business plan and sent it to our mayor. We had, at that time, 2 products. With FoDEL we were able to expand our product range to 12 items. We have increased our number of customers and we have more processing contracts. We have increased our staff. We were 7, we hired 15 more women, for a total of 22. Once we have paid all our bills and are due to FoDEL and other charges and savings, what remains of the money is distributed among the members in depending on the number of hours worked. It has changed our lives and the lives of our children, we have food and we can pay school fees. We have not yet achieved our goals but we are slowly getting there.»

**MS. SALIMATOU KOMBASA, REPRESENTATIVE OF
WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN GUINEA**

Parallel conferences

To close the second day of the Forum, on December 1st 2021, parallel conferences were held at the end of the day, notably concerning IFC Canada's Extractive Local Economic Development Program; Environmental and social monitoring frameworks for mining impacts and the Beyond Zero Harm (BZH) program

IFC Canada's Local Extractive Economic Development Program

The program (Extractive Sector Benefits Sharing Program), was signed with Canada in 2016. The program will continue until June 2023. The program operates in four countries: Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Kenya and finances private sector development projects and provides advisory support to the companies or clients we work with, so that they can also generate more benefits from their operations for the communities that host the projects. The companies are mainly from the mining sector 46% ; energy 23%; oil and gas 23% and transport 8%.

One of the objectives of the program is to support a large number of women, to access the benefits of the development of our activities. The inclusion of women is a basic principle around which our project has been developed. The areas of engagement of the program are:

- Development of local content - for example: Development of a permanent interface between large companies that offer opportunities and SMEs looking for supply chain opportunities (Guinea).
- Local economic development -for example: the partnership with the mining company GAC helped launch eight livelihood initiatives to build a stronger economy in the communities (Bouquet-Guinea area).
- Institutional capacity building by strengthening local institutions to equip entrepreneurs, and particularly women entrepreneurs, with entrepreneurial skills..

In terms of results (latest annual figures for 2020):

- 12,122 people reached and 5,054 women impacted (women 40% of beneficiaries)
- 304 entrepreneurial entities supported (107 owned or managed by women)

Lesson learned : We have developed strong partnerships with mining companies, leading to more local jobs and better gender outcomes. Diversification outside of mining supply chains is essential to help reduce the dependency and vulnerability of local communities. We cannot focus all of our efforts on mining supply chains. There are only a limited number of local businesses that can operate in the mining supply chain, as many opportunities as mining supplies can provide. This is where the development of the local economy takes on its full importance. And this is also why the strengthening of local capacities is so important. These two elements go hand in hand, complementing the local content project.

CONCLUSION, PARTICIPANT EVALUATION AND OUTLOOK

The 2021 WAGES Regional Forum highlighted the successes as well as the challenges of the project. It also highlighted the dynamics of MSME development, particularly within mining communities in the three(3) implementation countries, given their distinct institutional and political structures.

Overall, the Forum was a success as it sought to bring together all key stakeholders, including women and young entrepreneurs, to share knowledge and lessons learned, network and explore ways to strengthen ties between local, national and international partners, including CSOs, the private sector and governments around governance and transparency on mining revenues and their use for the growth and development of MSMEs operating in extractive areas.

The session to elicit opinions from local communities and local governments on access to financing and market as well as support from local governments.

Points of interest raised

- Entrepreneurs want licensing agencies such as the FDA to be decentralized to increase access to certification. They encouraged the creation of such funds;
- Some mining groups provide financial support to entrepreneurs in groups/associations.;
- Entrepreneurs must be grouped together;
- The establishment of village savings and credit associations as an alternative source of business financing in mining areas;
- The importance of decentralizing permitting agencies such as the FDA to reduce travel time to regional capitals, travel time, costs and therefore corporate profit levels in mining communities.;
- The centralized nature of product licensing agencies in regional capitals such as the FDA results in round-trip transportation costs between mining communities and the regional capital; affects prices, which reduces corporate profit levels and generally slows market penetration of products in the country;
- There is bank financing but entrepreneurs do not have access to it because of the guarantees required.;
- Markets for products are available, but contractors do not source from contractors due to limited capacity for large quantities and licensing issues;
- Public meetings should be used to invite entrepreneurs to present their products to mining communities through district assemblies..

Monitoring social and environmental impact of mining operations on mining communities – ABOKEN: a Ghanaian experience

Building on the principles of public participation mandated by the national environmental policy, Ghana's EPA created the AKOBEN program which uses public pressure to motivate companies to follow environmental regulations. AKOBEN measures the environmental and social performance of companies using a five-color rating.

These color codes assess companies' operational performance, including mandatory regulatory compliance with permits and toxic/hazardous waste risk mitigation as well as companies' voluntary commitments to social responsibilities and community relations. The ratings provide clear information on how to improve environmental performance.

To achieve this, companies provide their monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual data in a standardized format. The EPA compiles information from community feedback and media reports. Site audits provide additional information and verification of data. In addition to reducing costs, the ABOKEN approach improves administrative efficiency and increases transparency, which reduces the risk of disputes between stakeholders.

For more information visit: <http://www.epa.gov.gh/epa/>