



“Mapping and Assessing the Environmental and Health Impacts of Abandoned Mines in Sub-Saharan African Countries”

CALL FOR APPLICATION

Background

An important advancement in the mining sector is the legal obligation for mining companies to rehabilitate former operational mine sites and ensure that they are restored to a safe environmental state after the mine is closed. While this concept is well rooted in mining legislation in many developed countries, this is not always the case in developing countries, especially in Africa. Apart from poor environmental governance as highlighted in the Africa Mining Vision, many African countries lack a precise assessment of the impacts of old mining activities in their territories. It is therefore crucial to undertake an assessment of the true extent of the detrimental effects of metal pollutants from old mining sites and their impact on the ecosystem as well as on human and animal health. This is a pre-requisite for appropriate legislation development and enforcement.

Thanks to funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), UNESCO has embarked on an ambitious research project to fill this gap. During the scoping phase in 2013, UNESCO was able to (1) mobilise a network of scientists to conduct field experimentations in nine African countries and (2) to bring together academia, geological surveys and mining industries to allow countries or companies involved in promoting good environmental mining practices to share their experience with others. UNESCO and Sida are moving forward with a four-year Programme Cooperation Agreement (2014-2018) to intensify the research in this field.

Objectives of the programme

This research is open to scientists from various fields including geoscientists, environmentalists, biologists, medical scientists, and social scientists; they are requested to look into various aspects of the environmental and health impacts of mining activities in sub-Saharan African countries, with focus on abandoned mines. With the overall goal to produce scientific knowledge that helps decision makers to improve the management of adverse effects of mining activities, the project proposals will specifically address one or more of the following objectives:

- To understand how past, present and future mining activities negatively affect ecosystems and health of the adjacent communities. This includes the mapping of present distribution of abandoned mine sites in the country and field works on targeted mine sites to assess the potential threats on environment (soil, surface and ground water, vegetation and crops) as well as animal and communities living around the mine sites);
- To identify, through experimentation, the most appropriate rehabilitation technologies and remedial actions for sites contaminated by trace metals from mining. This project intends to have a special focus on phyto-rehabilitation
- To use science-based evidences to influence policies on issues of abandoned mines. It is important that local stakeholders (government officials, mining enterprises and local

communities, and interested NGOs and associations) are involved and support the project, and facilitate the implementation of the outcomes. Policy Briefs to decision-makers and other interested stakeholders are expected to be an important outcome of the proposal dealing with this objective.

Requirements

- Be a PhD, a postdoc student, a young scientist under 10 years of PhD, or an engineer in the mining sector;
- Have an ongoing research project on at least one of the theme of the project (*the grant does not intend to fund a project not yet started*); or have received the UNESCO-Sida funding during the scoping phase in 2013;
- Demonstrate a multidisciplinary approach;
- Demonstrate a strong implementation partnership links inside and outside Africa;
- Demonstrate active involvement of stakeholders (e.g., *geological survey, department of Mines, environmental body, mining companies, or NGOs and associations*) in formulating the research question, in implementing the project, and in using the outcomes of the research.
- Have the project endorsed by the home institution of the lead applicant;
- Have the project endorsed by the relevant stakeholder interested by the outcomes of the project.

Applicants are expected to address one or more of the three objectives above. In addition, projects with special attention to youth and female in the mining sector are also welcomed. This programme intends to cover as much possible countries in sub-Saharan Africa and various types of mines; participants from all countries (not only those with significant mining activities) are therefore encouraged to apply.

Application form

All applicants must use the template proposal form below, which is available at www.abandonedminesafrica.org.

Selection and assessment of the projects

An International Selection Committee will be set up to select proposals for funding and to assess the results of the project.

Funding

Each selected project will receive a two-year funding, of maximum 10,000 USD per year.

Deadlines

All applications should reach the UNESCO Nairobi Office on the **31 December 2015 latest**. Selection will take place in February 2016 and successful applicants will be informed by early March 2016.

Send your application to David N'yan'Acha d.nyangacha@unesco.org