resource matters

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Our mission

Harnessing Congo's natural wealth for the benefit of its people and the energy transition

Our Priorities

Mining Governance

The Democratic Republic of Congo has huge deposits of cobalt, copper, and lithium—minerals that are critical to the global transition from fossil fuels to renewables and advanced technologies. Despite this wealth, Congolese citizens have seen little improvement in their quality of life. Resource Matters works to promote equitable and sustainable management of these strategic minerals to the benefit of people living in the DRC and the global energy transition.

Energy

Although the Democratic Republic of Congo has extraordinary renewable energy potential—ranging from powerful river systems to vast solar resources—access to electricity remains extremely limited, reaching less than 25 percent of the population. Resource Matters is committed to promoting clean, sustainable, and affordable energy solutions that can meet the country's growing energy demand.

Corruption

Corruption remains one of the most significant causes of poverty in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Resource Matters works to promote accountability by exposing and confronting corrupt practices in the natural resources sector.

Foreword

DRC, Energy Transition:
Who Loses, Who Wins?

The year 2025 could mark a turning point for the Democratic Republic of the Congo's role in the global energy transition. As the world accelerates its transition to cleaner energy systems, Congolese minerals—particularly cobalt, copper, and lithium—hold a strategic position. Yet for decades, the DRC has supplied a large portion of these essential resources without always reaping the full benefits of the value created.

This raises an important question: Who really stands to gain from the global energy transition? A sustainable transition cannot be limited to securing supply chains; it must also enable producing countries and their populations to benefit more from the wealth they help to create.

In 2025, the measures taken by the Congolese government regarding cobalt—notably the temporary ban on exports followed by the implementation of a quota system—reflect a desire to regain greater control over the country's strategic resources. But controlling exports is only one step. The real challenge is to transform natural resources into jobs, industrialization, access to electricity, and better-quality public services. In other words, to ensure that the country's wealth benefits the Congolese people first and foremost.

It is with this in mind that Resource Matters continues its commitment. The organization contributes to discussions on cobalt governance, the local development of resources, and strategies enabling the DRC to derive greater benefits from its mining potential. It also acts as a bridge between public, private, national, and international stakeholders to promote partnerships aligned with Congolese priorities. The energy transition must be built in partnership with the DRC, not solely based on its resources.

This vision also guides our work in the electricity sector. While the industrialization and local processing of minerals require reliable and affordable energy, the energy transition can only succeed if it also improves access to electricity for the Congolese people. By linking mining and energy issues, Resource Matters works to ensure that investments related to the energy transition support both economic development and more inclusive access to energy.

Finally, this vision requires transparency and accountability. Corruption, pollution, violations of workers' rights, and opaque contracts continue to divert a portion of the profits from Congo's natural resources. A just energy transition therefore also depends on better governance, greater accountability, and increased citizen participation.

The decisions made today will determine whether the global energy transition will become a historic opportunity for the DRC or yet another cycle of exploitation of its natural resources for the benefit of other actors. Resource Matters remains committed to ensuring that the voices, priorities, and interests of the Congolese people remain at the heart of this transformation.

Elisabeth Caesens
Executive Director

Jean Claude Mputu
Deputy Executive Director

Mining

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a linchpin of the global energy transition, supplying the vast majority of the world's cobalt, more than three million tonnes of copper, almost half of the known tantalum, as well as vast untapped lithium reserves essential for electronics, electric vehicles, and energy storage.

Maximizing positive benefits and minimizing harm from their extraction is at the heart of Resource Matters' work. To further this goal, the team works with different stakeholders, including:

- The DRC government, to adopt coherent measures that will allow to tap economic and social benefits from Congo's minerals
- Congolese civil society, to make sure local voices are heard
- Cobalt buyers, to leverage their purchasing power to improve corporate behavior on the ground
- International partners such as the EU, to ensure that its DRC strategy aligns with the priorities of Congo's civil society

Helping frame Congo's cobalt quota system

Supported by the 11th Hour Project

Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo is often described as a potential "OPEC of the energy transition" because it holds more than 70% of the world's cobalt reserves, it has exercised little influence over global cobalt markets until 2025. Multinational mining companies largely dictated export volumes, contributing to oversupply, a collapse in prices, and the loss of more than a billion dollars in public revenue.

In February 2025, the Democratic Republic of the Congo took decisive steps to address this trend. The country's Strategic Mineral Substances Regulator, ARECOMS, introduced a temporary ban on cobalt exports in an effort to stabilize collapsing global prices, with the suspension remaining in place for much of the year. ARECOMS also prohibited the mixing of artisanal and industrial cobalt and reaffirmed the export monopoly of the state-owned Entreprise Générale du Cobalt (EGC) over artisanal cobalt ore.

Shortly after the export ban was announced, Resource Matters analyzed the causes of the cobalt price collapse and its impact on the Democratic Republic of the Congo's public finances. In its policy note, Congo's Cobalt Export Ban: A Short-Term Solution that Calls for Structural Change, Resource Matters called for a transparent quota system based on broader criteria than export volumes alone, including incentives for local value addition. The organization also encouraged coordinating export volumes with other producer countries, such as Indonesia—recommendations that helped inform the Congolese government's formal adoption of a cobalt quota system in October 2025.

The policy note generated strong interest among Congolese officials at the OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains in Paris, where Resource Matters co-hosted a closed-door dialogue on the DRC's new cobalt regulations with the Cobalt Institute. The discussion brought together government representatives, civil society organizations, the state-owned Entreprise Générale du Cobalt (EGC), and downstream industry actors. Resource Matters' country director, Jimmy Munguriek, also presented the organization's quota recommendations at the 2025 Cobalt Congress in Singapore.

By mid-October, the export ban was lifted and replaced with a strict annual quota system aimed at controlling cobalt exports and increasing state revenues, while allowing limited shipments for the remainder of 2025 and beyond. In line with recommendations made by Resource Matters, the strategic minerals regulator publicly disclosed both the quota allocation criteria and the volumes assigned to each company. Resource Matters will continue advocating for future quota allocations to place greater emphasis on local value addition and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) compliance.

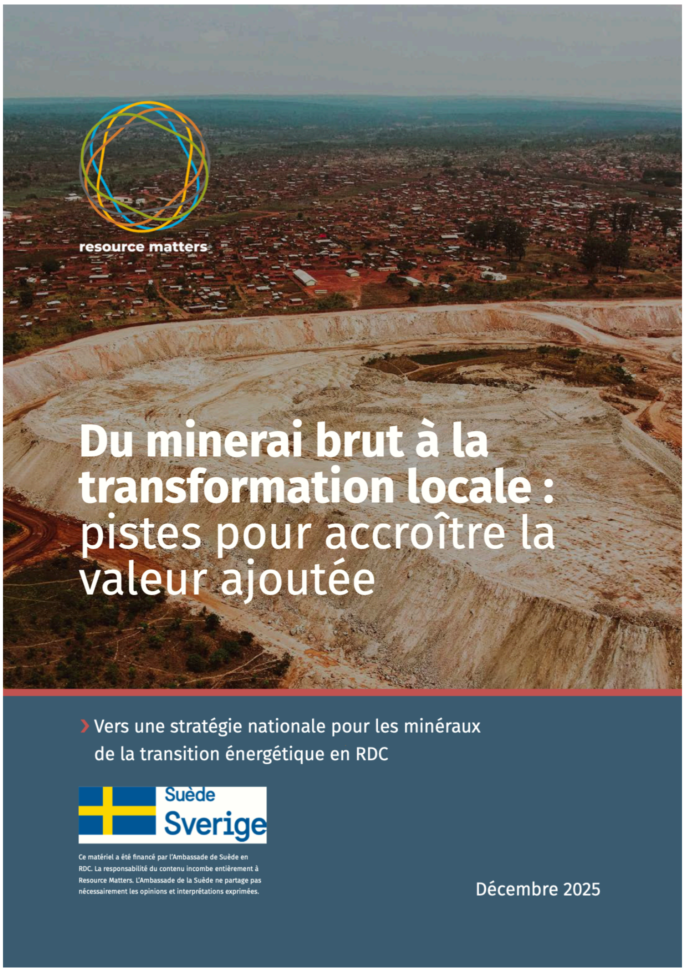
Towards a more comprehensive national energy transition minerals strategy

Supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, In partnership with the DRC Ministry of Mines

Many mineral-rich countries have adopted comprehensive strategies to ensure that they benefit from the increased demand for critical minerals resulting from the global energy transition, according to the International Energy Agency's policy tracker. The DRC has yet to adopt such a coherent, holistic national strategy.

The cobalt measures offer a striking example: the steps to be taken after the ban were not predefined and the lack of a clear procedure to implement the ensuing quota system delayed exports by another quarter. Similarly, efforts to develop downstream processing—such as a battery precursor plant—have stalled, partly due to the absence of a clear long-term electrification and industrial vision.

In late 2024, Resource Matters intensified its collaboration with the DRC Ministry of Mines to advance a shared national vision for energy transition minerals. Multi-stakeholder dialogues held in Kolwezi and Kinshasa brought together government representatives, industry actors, and civil society organizations to identify and discuss the main pillars of a future national strategy.



Building on this momentum, Resource Matters published a White Paper in 2025 focused on local processing and value addition—one of the national strategy's core objectives. This document reviews Congo's attempts to impose local processing requirements in the copper, cobalt and lithium sectors over the past 20 years. It analyses key bottlenecks and offers operational guidance to help the DRC achieve these ambitions for its most strategic minerals. A draft was presented to stakeholders at the Mining Indaba in Lubumbashi in October 2025. Their feedback helped refine the final version, which was officially launched in Kinshasa in December 2025.

Resource Matters will continue to work closely with government officials to adopt and start implementing the strategy in 2026.

Scan me to access the White paper

Amplifying community voices on the social and environmental impact of mining

Supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the 11th Hour Project, In partnership with Sentinelle des Ressources Naturelles, civil society consortia in Lualaba and Haut-Katanga and the University of Lubumbashi

Congolese civil society has long played a decisive role in improving mining governance, notably through its contributions to the 2018 Mining Code, which strengthened revenue-sharing, transparency, social spending, and environmental oversight. Yet, their voice is often overlooked in global debates on energy transition minerals. In response, Resource Matters has worked with local partners to ensure that Congolese realities inform both national and international discussions.

Developing a civil society roadmap for governance of energy transition minerals

In 2024, Resource Matters supported civil society in developing and adopting a joint roadmap for the transparent, equitable, and sustainable governance of transition minerals, culminating in its formal endorsement at the Alternative Mining Indaba and the creation of a commission to oversee implementation.

In 2025, this commission evolved into a permanent working group, entitled the Strategic Minerals Management Working and Advocacy Group, bringing together civil society actors committed to advancing the roadmap. The group now serves as a collective platform for reflection, coordination, and advocacy on the priority areas set out in the civil society roadmap.

Spotlight on working conditions and labour rights

In Lualaba and Haut-Katanga, serious labour rights concerns were reported at COMMUS, including allegations of unsafe working conditions and inadequate worker welfare provisions. To address these issues, Resource Matters supported a civil society consortium to document labour conditions and advocate for improved protections for workers.

In 2025, the consortium published its research findings and advocacy briefs and carried out targeted engagement at local and provincial levels. These efforts contributed to work meetings and concrete improvements at COMMUS, including access to safe drinking water and adequate meal-break facilities for workers. Importantly, COMMUS formally requested dialogue with the consortium, signalling a shift toward constructive engagement and trust-building.

Tackling major environmental pollution

In 2024, civil society groups identified environmental pollution as one of the main concerns raised by communities living near mining sites in Lualaba Province. With support from Resource Matters, a consortium of local organizations documented pollution incidents in several mining areas.

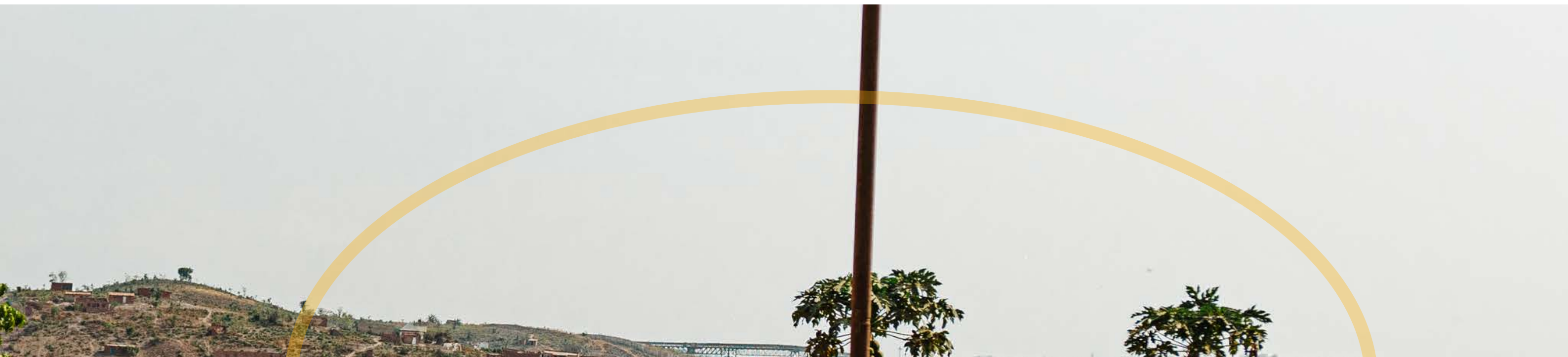
In 2025, the consortium published a series of reports and advocacy materials highlighting these environmental impacts. Mining companies, including Mutanda Mining (MUMI) and Tenke Fungurume Mining (TFM), formally disputed some of the findings, but their responses also underscored the growing visibility of community-based evidence gathering.

The consortium continued monitoring pollution concerns around TFM operations, particularly near the 30K cobalt processing plant close to Manomapia, where residents reported serious air pollution issues. Resource Matters and the consortium worked with scientists of the University of Lubumbashi to monitor SO_2 pollution peaks.

Resource Matters also helped local civil society groups participate in the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) audit of the TFM complex. IRMA upholds some of the strictest ESG standards and the audit presents a real opportunity to address air pollution and other harmful impacts.

Through sustained engagement with IRMA, TFM's parent company CMOC Group, and downstream buyers, Resource Matters aimed to ensure that affected communities could safely and meaningfully contribute to the audit process. These efforts helped secure additional time for community consultations and strengthened local participation in the assessment.

At the same time, Resource Matters supported the creation of an informal coalition of Congolese and international NGOs to monitor and follow the audit process through the end of 2025. Building on this work, Resource Matters and its partners will continue pushing for stronger corporate accountability measures in 2026, including the establishment of an independent multi-stakeholder body to oversee corrective actions and follow-up commitments arising from the IRMA process. In particular, Resource Matters and partners hope the TFM will act on IRMA’s recommendations and stop air pollution at its 30k plant.



Since late 2023, TFM's 30K lime plant has smothered the Manomapia neighborhood of Fungurume in suffocating smoke. Media and civil society repeatedly citing scientific studies of the resulting air, water, and soil pollution.

Mapping the mineral supply chain to enhance corporate due diligence

Supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the 11th Hour Projecti

Ensuring accountability for the social, environmental, and corruption risks linked to mining extends far beyond mine companies themselves. Regulators, traders, refiners, and downstream manufacturers all share responsibility for preventing harm across supply chains—obligations that are increasingly reflected in new European Union regulations. Yet companies frequently point to the complexity of global supply chains to justify weak or incomplete due diligence.

To address this gap, Resource Matters has developed a publicly accessible cobalt supply chain platform that traces minerals from mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through traders and processors to battery and electric vehicle manufacturers worldwide. Since 2021, the platform has systematically compiled data from corporate disclosures and other public records. The tool demonstrates that tracking cobalt flows is both possible and practical.

The platform has supported engagement with policymakers and industry initiatives, including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Energy Agency, European Union institutions, the Responsible Minerals Initiative, and civil society networks.

In 2025, despite funding disruptions, Resource Matters expanded the platform's coverage, mapping 347 cobalt companies and 507 transactions. It also added new functionality, including a major upgrade linking company profiles directly to the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre database, allowing users to quickly identify recent environmental, social, and governance (ESG) allegations in specific supply chains.

Scan me to access the platform

Resource Matters also began applying the same methodology to lithium supply chains, initially focusing on the Manono project in southeastern Congo, and eventually documenting 192 transactions involving 164 companies. The lithium map is expected to be released in 2026. At the same time, the organization explored extending this work to coltan supply chains, where risks linked to conflict financing remain particularly high. Early research showed that coltan trade flows between the DRC, Rwanda, and international markets are significantly more difficult to trace than cobalt or lithium flows The work was ultimately paused due to financial constraints.

Beyond supply chain mapping to improve responsible sourcing, Resource Matters also focused on legislative developments that pose direct risks to corporate supply chain accountability at the EU level. Resource Matters challenged deregulatory narratives surrounding the EU Omnibus packages, warning that delays to the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the weakening of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) would undermine supply-chain integrity. Resource Matters consistently argued that Europe's long-term competitiveness depends on enforcing strong, credible rules that prevent abuse and ensure accountability, rather than on lowering regulatory standards.

Advocating to the EU for better mining governance in the Great Lakes region

Supported by Open Society Foundations and the 11th Hour Project

As the global demand for so-called “critical minerals” continues to surge, geopolitical competition over access to these resources has sharply intensified. Alongside the United States, China, and Japan, the European Union has taken strategic steps to secure mineral supply chains through flagship initiatives such as the Global Gateway strategy and the Critical Raw Materials Act. Within this broader context, the EU–DRC Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Raw Materials, announced in 2023 and formalized via a roadmap in 2024, set ambitious goals including responsible sourcing, local value addition, and community empowerment. However, progress on the ground has so far been limited. Chinese companies continue to dominate large segments of the Congolese mining sector, while US enterprises benefit from active diplomatic and financial support to invest in Congo. European engagement remains comparatively modest and often narrowly focused.

Central to Resource Matters’ advocacy is the firm conviction that Europe must uphold its core values and principles in its relationship with the Democratic Republic of Congo. The pursuit of secure mineral supply chains must never come at the expense of human rights or democratic governance. It is essential that the European Union acts consistently with its own commitments to respect human dignity, promote good governance, and protect fundamental freedoms in Africa. Upholding these values is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic strength, especially in a global context where economic and geopolitical interests often overshadow ethical considerations. By embedding respect for human rights and democracy at the heart of its partnerships, Europe can demonstrate true leadership and credibility on the continent.

On March 4, 2026, Resource Matters spoke at the high-level event "Geopolitics of Raw Materials" hosted by MEP Jana Jalloul, and featured the EU Commission and various MEPs.

Throughout 2025, Resource Matters intensified its advocacy and policy engagement in both the Democratic Republic of Congo and Brussels to shift this dynamic. Building on extensive research, the organization developed a confidential policy briefing for the European Commission, the EU Delegation in Kinshasa, and members of the European Parliament. This briefing highlighted the urgent need for stronger EU support in helping the DRC formulate a coherent and inclusive national strategy on minerals critical to the energy transition, emphasizing enhanced inter-ministerial coordination and meaningful participation of Congolese civil society in policy design. Resource Matters urged the EU to focus on technical assistance that strengthens legal and institutional frameworks—including transparent export quota systems, governance of special economic zones, and comprehensive energy planning—rather than direct involvement in mining contract negotiations.

A central pillar of Resource Matters' advocacy has been promoting local value addition. The organization called on the EU to move beyond a narrow cobalt-centric approach and actively support broader industrial development in the DRC, encompassing copper processing, production of battery precursors, and fostering transparent industrial partnerships. Equally pressing is the need to address the country's chronic electricity deficit through inclusive, decentralized energy investments capable of powering both mining operations and the surrounding communities. Resource Matters stressed that the energy transition must benefit

Congolese populations first and foremost, rather than serving solely European industrial interests.

Transparency and accountability across mineral supply chains remain foundational priorities. Resource Matters championed stronger civil society participation in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), more robust due diligence obligations for companies sourcing Congolese minerals, and enhanced supply chain traceability facilitated by publicly accessible mapping tools. These recommendations framed the organization’s high-level discussions during the DRC Mining Week in Lubumbashi, as well as its regular dialogues with European Commission and Parliament officials.

In line with its strategic advocacy, Resource Matters took an active role in the 2025 EU Materials Weeks, contributing to two key panels including one focused on the Lobito Corridor project—an emblematic initiative representing the EU’s ambitions in Central Africa. Resource Matters presented the corridor as a critical test of Europe’s environmental and social credibility in Africa. The discussions underscored three core imperatives: full transparency of all contracts and financial flows related to the corridor; stringent management of environmental risks—particularly the protection of the Miombo forests and other vulnerable ecosystems—and the necessity of a just energy transition that includes electrification of local communities impacted by mining activities. Resource Matters emphasized that the success of the Lobito Corridor cannot be measured solely by logistical efficiency or export volumes but must be judged by the real benefits it delivers to Congolese communities in terms of justice, sustainable development, and energy access.

Finally, throughout 2025, Resource Matters has called on the EU to align all its regional partnerships with its stated governance and sustainability goals. This includes applying consistent standards on mineral traceability and supply chain transparency across all strategic raw material partnerships, especially given persistent concerns over conflict minerals and illicit trade flows in the Great Lakes region. The organization actively contributed evidence and policy analysis to inform European policymakers and joined broader civil society initiatives urging the EU to adopt a principled and responsible approach that ensures mining development fosters long-term structural reforms and inclusive growth in the DRC.

Electricity

For decades, electricity development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been dominated by a centralized vision focused on medium- and large-scale hydropower projects. National energy planning has prioritized flagship infrastructure such as the Inga dams to supply mining operations and major urban centers. While these projects symbolize the country's vast hydroelectric potential, they have delivered only limited improvements in electricity access for most of the population. Today, the DRC still has one of the world's lowest electrification rates, particularly in rural and mining-affected regions.

At the same time, falling technology costs have created new opportunities for decentralized electrification through small-scale hydropower, solar mini-grids, and hybrid systems. These solutions are often faster to deploy, less capital-intensive, and better suited to remote communities and dispersed economic activity. Yet public institutions, financing models, and regulatory frameworks have struggled to adapt. Energy planning remains fragmented, coordination between sectors is weak, and reliable data on electricity demand and infrastructure remains limited. Donor funding and public policy also continue to favor large infrastructure projects, risking missed opportunities to expand electricity access through more flexible and locally adapted solutions.

Against this backdrop, Resource Matters focused its electricity work on three priorities: strengthening evidence-based energy planning through the Congo Epela platform; advocating for more integrated planning and greater support for decentralized renewable energy; and promoting practical local electrification models, including the use of mining royalties for decentralized electrification and rooftop solar systems for public buildings in Kinshasa.

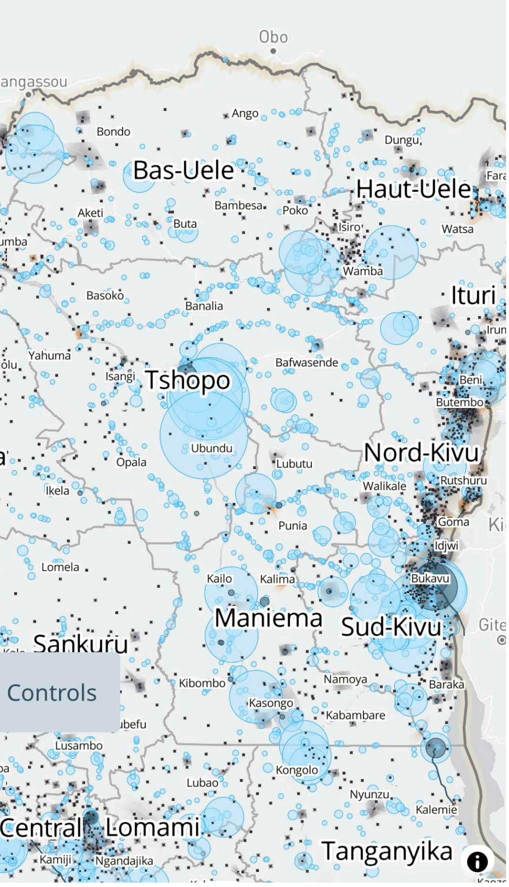
Improving the data behind electrification planning

With the support of the 11th Hour Project and the American Jewish World Service

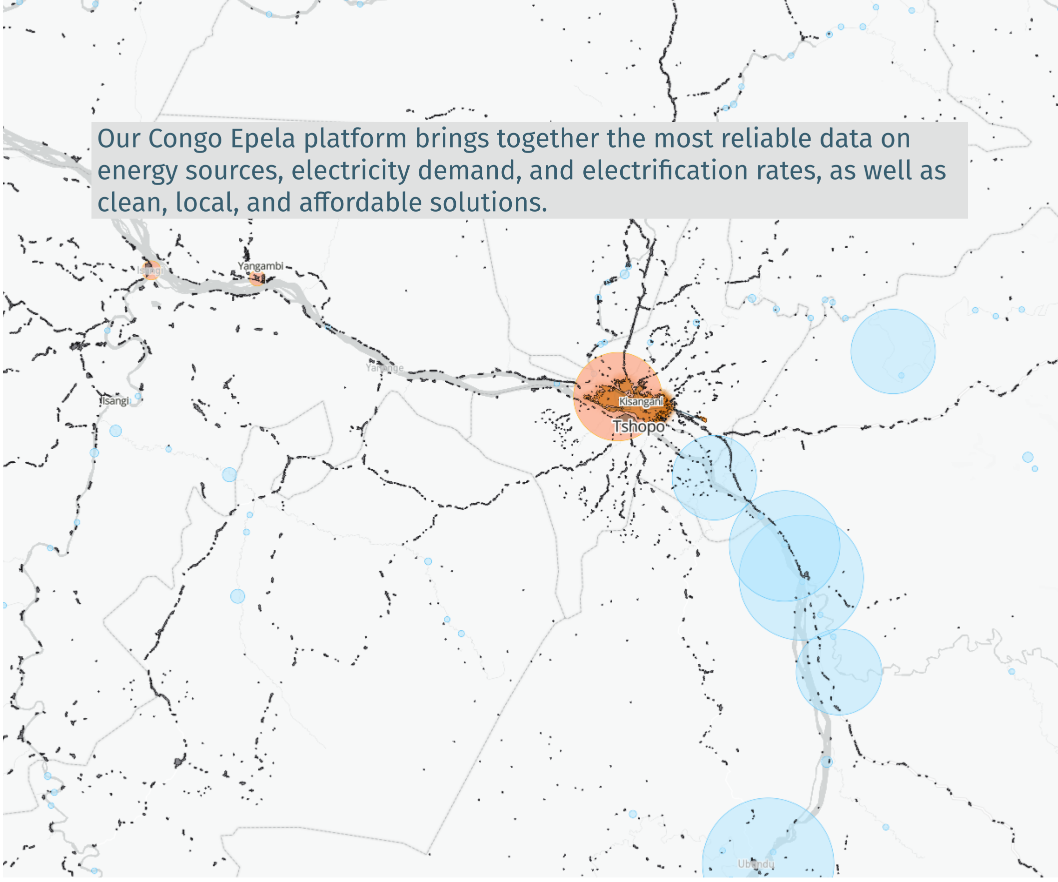
One of the main challenges in planning electricity access in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the lack of reliable and up-to-date data. In a country where no population census has been conducted in more than forty years, even basic information about where people live, how much electricity they need, and what infrastructure already exists often remains incomplete.

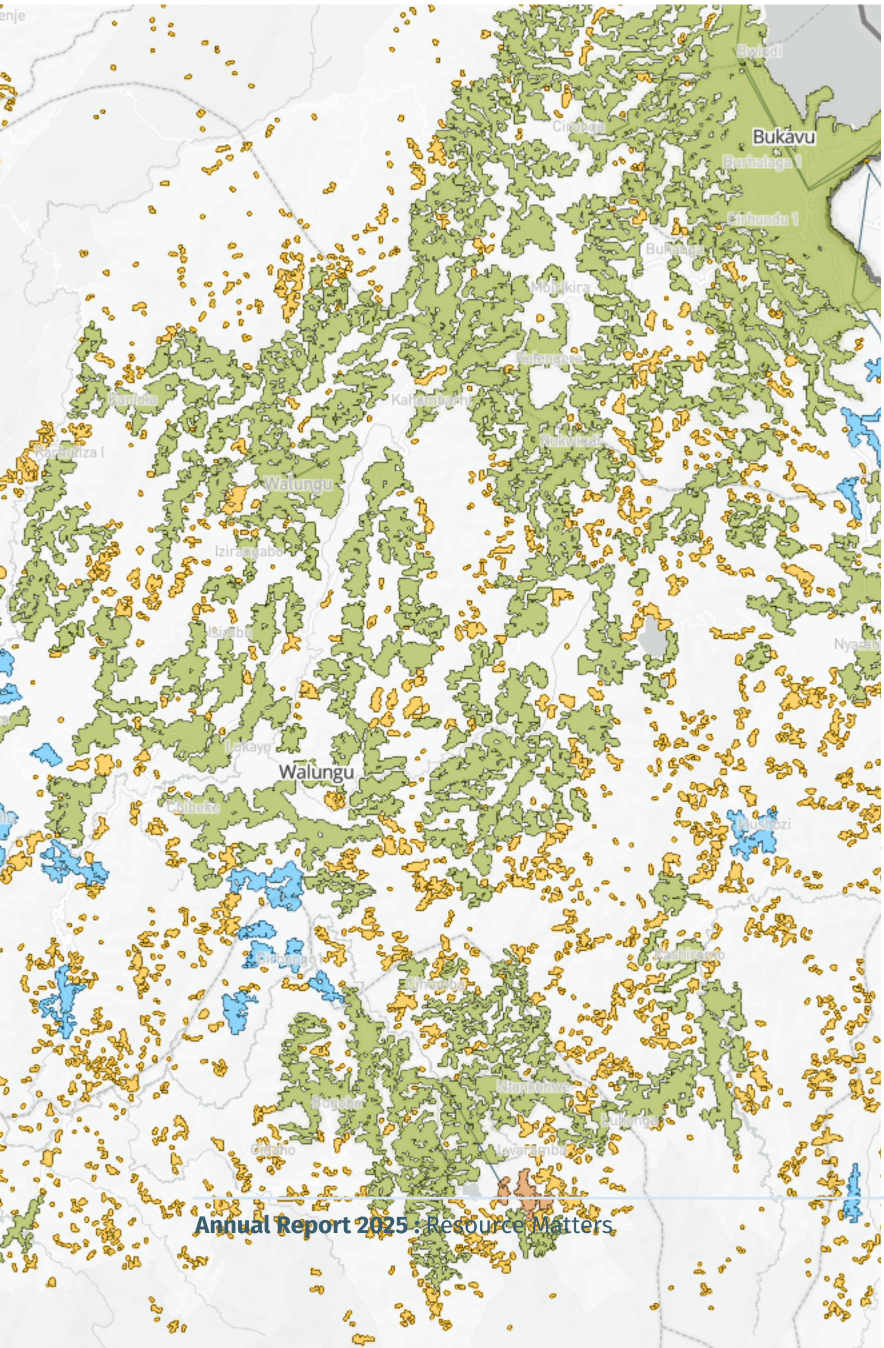
Throughout 2025, the team continued improving the quality of the information feeding into Congo Epela, Resource Matters’ electrification data portal. Because electrification models are only as reliable as the data they rely on, a major part of this work focused on updating the input data used by the Open Source Spatial Electrification Tool (OnSSET), which helps estimate the most realistic electrification solution for different parts of the country.

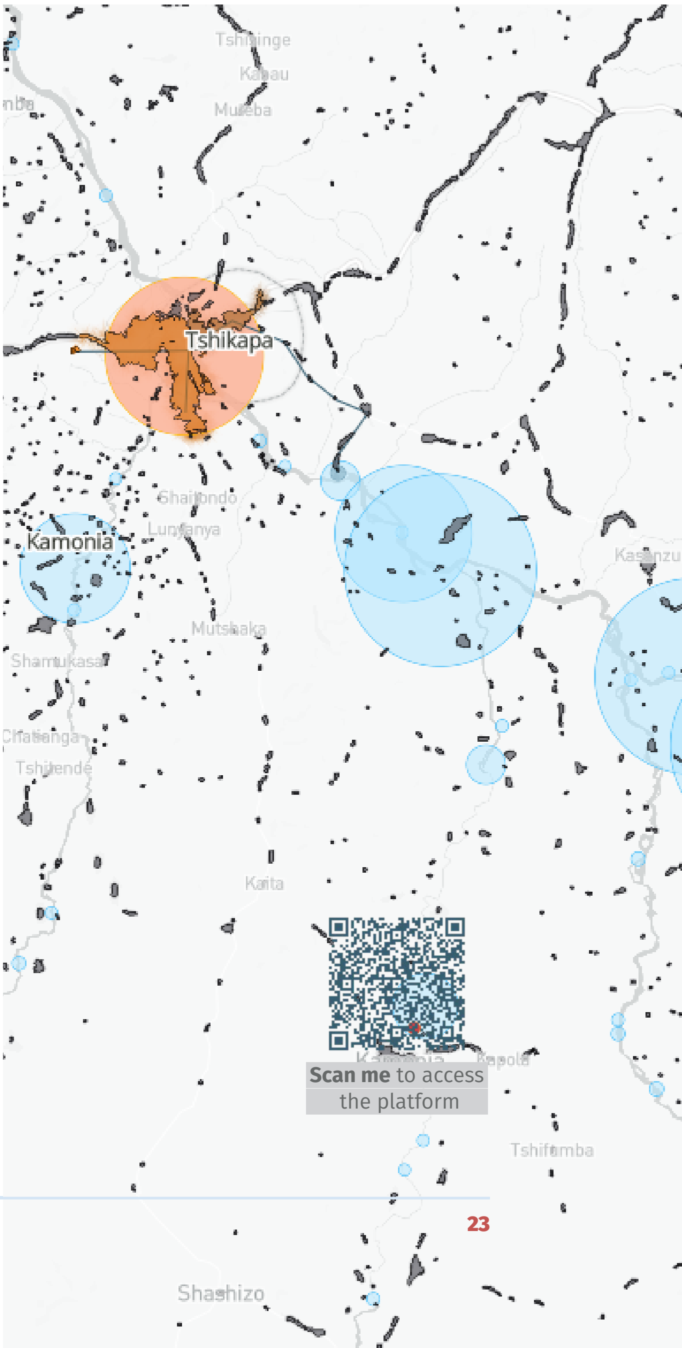
Using revised population figures and new electricity access data provided by the Reiner Lemoine Institute (RLI), the platform can now more accurately identify which communities are best suited for connection to the main electricity grid and which are more likely to benefit from decentralized solutions such as solar mini-grids or standalone systems. New inventories of existing coal, solar, and hydropower infrastructure were integrated into the platform. The platform now contains 251 hydro existing, 3348 potential hydropower sites across the country, 20 solar sites existing and 101 potential. The team also updated health-sector energy demand data covering 22 provinces.



Our Congo Epela platform brings together the most reliable data on energy sources, electricity demand, and electrification rates, as well as clean, local, and affordable solutions.







Scan me to access the platform

Testing different electrification pathways

Beyond improving the data itself, Resource Matters also expanded the platform's ability to test different policy and investment choices. The updated version of Congo Epela now includes six predefined electrification scenarios modeled with OnSSET. These scenarios explore how different assumptions—such as higher or lower energy demand, fluctuations in diesel prices, or tax exemptions for household grid connections—can affect the cost and feasibility of electrification strategies.

This type of scenario analysis helps policymakers and investors better understand the consequences of different decisions. For example, high diesel prices tend to make renewable mini-grids more competitive, while reducing household connection costs can significantly increase the number of people connected to centralized grids. By comparing these scenarios, the platform helps identify which combinations of technologies and policies are likely to deliver the fastest and most affordable expansion of electricity access.

Identifying the best energy mix for the national grids

In parallel, Resource Matters continued its collaboration with the University of Cape Town (UCT) to model the optimal energy mix for the DRC's two main electricity networks, which remain physically disconnected from one another. Using the Open Source Energy Modelling System (OSeMOSYS), the project seeks to determine the most efficient balance between different energy sources—including hydropower, solar, thermal generation, and other technologies—for both the eastern and south-western grids.

The first results of this modeling work were integrated into Congo Épela in 2025 and provide a clearer picture of how different energy sources could complement one another over time. The most remarkable outcome seems to be that wind energy could be a significant potential source to feed the grids. While the analysis is still being refined to ensure all hypotheses used in the model are accurate, it already offers important insights into how the DRC could move beyond fragmented and reactive energy investments toward more coherent long-term planning.

Significant data gaps remain, particularly regarding electricity demand from mining companies, SMEs, and schools.

Stakeholder workshop on electricity sector reform in the DRC: building collaboration and advocacy to strengthen the sector's legal and regulatory framework.

Outreach and influencing electrification policies

In 2025, Resource Matters expanded the visibility and policy reach of the Congo Epela platform through presentations at regional and international forums, including an energy modeling conference at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, a high-level African Union event in Addis Ababa, the African Climate Summit, and EU Raw Materials Week in Brussels.

Using evidence generated on Congo Epela, the organization advocated for more transparent and evidence-based energy planning, arguing that decentralized renewable energy solutions offer a faster, more realistic, and more equitable pathway to expanding electricity access in the Democratic Republic of the Congo than costly megaprojects.

Réseau Mwangaza

Strengthening civil society action for sustainable electrification

With the support of the 11th Hour Project and the American Jewish World Service

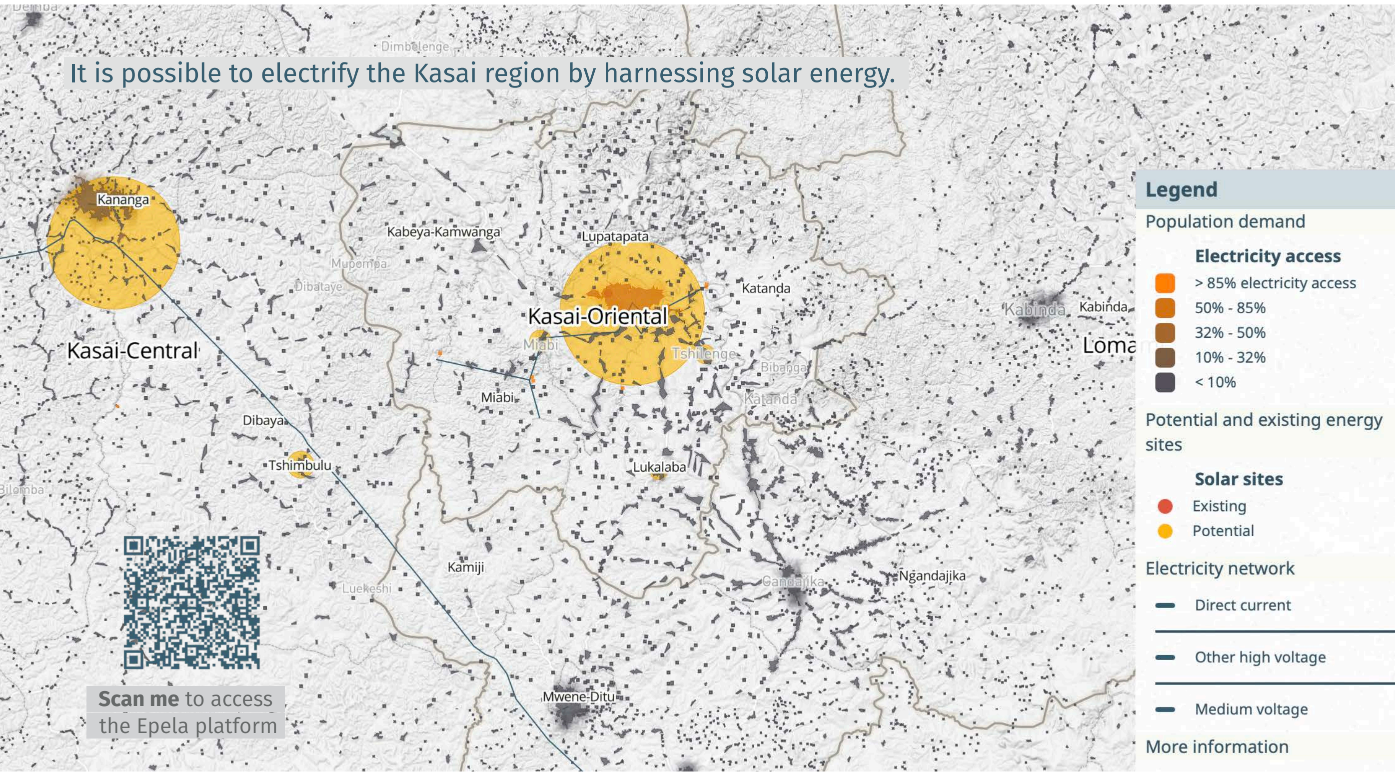
Since 2018, Resource Matters has supported civil society organizations at the national, provincial and local level to advance universal, clean, and affordable electrification. These organizations form the Mwangaza coalition, comprising nine member organizations across seven provinces.

Advocating for integrated energy planning

At the national level, the Mwangaza network continued advocating for more integrated energy planning that takes into account the country's diverse economic sectors and energy needs. A key milestone in 2025 was a regional exchange seminar in Kenya, which brought together representatives from major Congolese electricity institutions, provincial authorities, Mwangaza members, Kenyan government agencies, county representatives from Kitui and Meru, and Kenyan civil society organizations, including the ACCESS Coalition. The seminar provided an opportunity to learn from Kenya's experience with Energy Delivery Models (EDM) and helped inform future collaboration on integrated energy planning in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Following the seminar, Resource Matters and its Kenyan EDM partners developed a joint activity plan aimed at improving coordination between energy stakeholders in the DRC. The process included technical reviews in Dar es Salaam, with implementation expected to begin in 2026 through a national multi-stakeholder energy roundtable.

At the provincial level, Mwangaza members consolidated their respective electrification diagnostics into a joint policy report. In several provinces, these assessments led to expert roundtables in which Resource Matters used the Congo Epela platform to propose electrification strategies adapted to local realities. In mining regions, coalition members also reviewed mining companies' community development commitments and local investment plans to advocate for greater support for electrification projects and stronger coordination between mining companies and local authorities. This approach was applied in Lualaba Province and the diamond-producing Kasai Region.



Strengthening the legal framework for renewable energy

The Mwangaza network played a central role in debates around the reform of the electricity sector law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While most stakeholders agreed that the 2014 Electricity Law needed updating to better accommodate solar and wind energy, civil society organizations and energy sector actors criticized the government's 2025 reform process for being rushed and insufficiently consultative. The Mwangaza network teamed up with the Association Congolaise pour les Énergies Renouvelables (ACERD), which represents companies active in decentralized renewable energy, to advocate for substantial improvements.

Beyond concerns over process, Mwangaza and ACERD argued that the revised law remained poorly adapted to the realities of decentralized electrification and failed to create a coherent framework for renewable energy development, integrated energy planning, and local electricity governance. In particular, Mwangaza opposed provisions that would weaken provincial authority over local electricity projects.

The Mwangaza coalition and ACERD also advocated for a more practical and investment-friendly framework, including simplified licensing procedures for decentralized projects, stronger and more independent regulation of the electricity sector, and better coordination between existing institutions instead of creating new bodies with overlapping mandates. Mwangaza members further called for clearer mechanisms to ensure that electrification policies benefit local populations without creating unrealistic obligations that could undermine renewable energy investments.

Throughout 2025, these recommendations were promoted through media outreach, workshops, policy memorandums, and direct engagement with government institutions and parliamentarians. Although the revised law was ultimately promulgated, advocacy efforts continued to ensure that key civil society recommendations are incorporated into the implementing decrees that will shape how the reform is applied in practice.

Showcasing concrete decentralized electrification solutions

Building on its research on decentralized electrification pathways and its support to local civil society advocacy, Resource Matters also worked to demonstrate how these approaches can translate into concrete and scalable implementation models. In 2025, this included efforts to link local mining revenues to electrification investments and to promote rooftop solar solutions for public infrastructure. Together, these initiatives illustrate how practical technical solutions can help advance more inclusive and sustainable energy access in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We unite all players in the electricity sector: government, providers, consumers, and civil society, to give every Congolese effective access to power.

Allocating local mining royalties to decentralized electrification projects

With the support of the 11th Hour Project and the American Jewish World Service

Building new electricity infrastructure in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains costly, even when relying on decentralized and low-cost solutions. Closing the financing gap therefore requires mobilizing all available sources of funding—public and private, international, national, and local. Since the 2018 revision of the Mining Code, mining royalties allocated to provinces and local entities (entités territoriales décentralisées or ETDs) have emerged as a potentially important source of investment for local development, including electrification.

Through the Makuta ya Maendeleo platform, Resource Matters and its partners track mining royalty payments using local statistics and Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) data. The platform shows that several provincial and local governments receive tens of millions of dollars annually from mining royalties, with revenues in Lualaba Province exceeding USD 250 million in 2023. In 2025, Resource Matters updated the platform with new mining division data and continued advocating for more complete and systematic disclosure of subnational revenue flows in EITI reporting.

Building on this transparency work, Resource Matters continued efforts to translate mining revenues into concrete electrification outcomes. Following a 2024 partnership with the Reiner Lemoine Institute, which included case studies in the ETDs of Luilu, Kaponda, and Kakangayi and a national roundtable bringing together ministries, ETD representatives, and donors, advocacy efforts continued throughout 2025 at both local and national levels. Resource Matters published and widely distributed a policy brief outlining the most suitable electrification options for ETDs and the scale of investment required.

These efforts helped initiate discussions between ETD authorities and private energy companies on possible implementation models for decentralized electrification projects. In the ETD of Luilu, for example, local authorities have begun considering the use of mining royalty revenues to finance future electrification infrastructure, illustrating how improved transparency around subnational mining revenues can support concrete local development planning and investment decisions.

Scan me to access the mining-energy nexus

Promoting rooftop solar panels for public buildings

With the support of the 11th Hour Project and the American Jewish World Service

Electricity reliability remains a major challenge across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including in major urban centers such as Kinshasa. In response, Resource Matters launched an initiative to promote rooftop solar systems on public buildings, with the aim of transforming them from unreliable electricity consumers into local centers of solar energy generation.

In 2025, Resource Matters, in partnership with the Reiner Lemoine Institute (RLI), carried out a pre-feasibility study to assess the potential for making selected public buildings more energy self-sufficient through solar power. The initiative aims to encourage public authorities to invest in greater energy autonomy for public infrastructure while improving energy efficiency and resilience in Congolese cities.

During the pilot phase, the Institut Supérieur des techniques Appliquées (ISTA) and Société Nationale de l'Electricité (SNEL) headquarters were selected for pre-feasibility studies. The findings were shared with relevant institutions, enabling progress toward detailed feasibility studies. In 2025, a policy note and a documentary highlighting energy challenges was released to accelerate decision-making. In 2026, advocacy will focus on securing concrete funding—particularly for ISTA—to establish a replicable model for public buildings nationwide.

The Higher Institute of Applied Technology (ISTA)'s rooftop for prefeasibility studies for the electrification of buildings.

Corruption

The Democratic Republic of the Congo holds some of the world's largest reserves of critical minerals—resources that could underpin national development and energy sovereignty. Yet systemic corruption continues to block these benefits. In Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, the DRC scored 20 out of 100 and ranked 163rd out of 180 countries. Nowhere is this more evident than in the mining sector, where opaque contracts, bribery, and the embezzlement of public funds have allowed elites and multinational companies to profit while communities remain excluded.

Resource Matters maintains that mining revenues must serve national development rather than private enrichment. Working alongside other members of the Congo N'est Pas À Vendre (CNPAV) coalition, the organization targets emblematic cases of corruption and conducts advocacy at both national and international levels to promote accountability and the transparent, fair management of the country's mineral wealth.

Seeking a fair outcome in the Dan Gertler case

With the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

Israeli businessman Dan Gertler has been subject to U.S. sanctions for high-level corruption since 2017. Judicial authorities in the United States, Switzerland, and Canada have all investigated companies that partnered with Gertler—including Glencore, Katanga Mining, and Och-Ziff Capital Management—and concluded that these companies failed to do enough to prevent bribery linked to their business dealings with him. Yet despite these cases and longstanding allegations of corruption, Gertler himself has still not been held legally accountable. According to estimates by the CNPAV coalition, mining and oil deals linked to his companies have cost the Democratic Republic of the Congo more than EUR 2 billion.

In 2022, the Congolese government nevertheless signed an agreement allowing Gertler's company to retain some of its most valuable mining and oil assets, while also compensating him for other assets he had been unable to sell before the sanctions were imposed. For the CNPAV coalition, this agreement further enriched Gertler despite the highly problematic conditions under which many of these assets were originally acquired. Since then, the coalition has consistently advocated for the agreement to be renegotiated and has argued that the only acceptable outcome is for Gertler to relinquish these assets to the Congolese state without additional financial compensation.

Throughout 2025, CNPAV sustained its advocacy efforts through the dissemination of a report and a comic book published at the end of 2024. The coalition also urged U.S. authorities to maintain sanctions and avoid any sanctions relief that could allow Gertler to profit further from assets linked to alleged corruption.

In July 2025, Bloomberg published an article on arbitration proceedings in Israel in which Gertler reportedly acknowledged paying bribes to senior Congolese political figures. CNPAV responded publicly, triggering a coordinated media campaign in the DRC targeting the coalition, including the Executive Director and Deputy Director of Resource Matters.

Despite these attacks, CNPAV continued advocating for accountability, the maintenance of sanctions against Gertler, and the renegotiation of the 2022 agreement. As of December 2025, U.S. sanctions remained in place. Legal proceedings initiated by Gertler against Resource Matters and against Jean-Claude Mputu, Deputy Director of Resource Matters and spokesperson for CNPAV, also remained pending without significant progress.

CNPAV outside the Swiss Embassy in Kinshasa, pressing for the Congolese people to benefit from Glencore's $150M Swiss corruption settlement.

Investigating corruption risks in the lithium sector

The Manono region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo contains some of the world's largest untapped lithium deposits, making it a strategic area for the global battery industry. But even before industrial production has begun, the sector has already been marked by opaque deals, legal disputes, and politically exposed intermediaries competing for access to mining rights.

After a year of research, Resource Matters published the report Manono: Nine Warning Signs in the Nascent Lithium Sector in the DRC in December 2025. The investigation highlighted several concrete red flags. One example concerned the long-running dispute between AVZ Minerals and the state-owned company Cominière over ownership of the southern part of the Manono deposit, a conflict that exposed broader concerns around the transfer of state mining interests and the role of politically connected actors in strategic negotiations. Another example involved the USD 70 million dollar payment to a politically connected NGO, arguably linked to the acquisition of rights over the northern part of the Manono project. The transaction raised major questions about the real beneficiaries of the deal.

Rather than treating these issues as isolated incidents, the investigation showed how weak oversight and lack of transparency were already shaping the structure of the emerging lithium sector. By documenting these warning signs early, Resource Matters and the CNPAV coalition sought to encourage greater scrutiny from Congolese authorities, investors, and downstream buyers before governance failures become entrenched. The report argues that the DRC's lithium sector still has an opportunity to develop differently from parts of the copper and cobalt industries—but only if transparency and accountability are built into the sector from the outset.

The organization also used these findings to argue that EU and US mineral strategies—such as Global Gateway, ResourcEU and the US-DRC mineral partnership—must be conditioned on strict transparency, oversight, and accountability requirements. Without rigorous governance safeguards, Resource Matters warned, the geopolitical race for lithium risks entrenching the same extractive and predatory practices that have long undermined development outcomes in the DRC.

Scan me to access the Red Flags

Understanding the losses from the renegotiation of the China–minerals-for-infrastructure deal

With the support of The Carter Center and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

In 2008, Chinese state-owned companies partnered with the Congolese mining company Gécamines to launch the Sicomines project, presented as a “minerals-for-infrastructure” agreement. Under the deal, mining revenues were supposed to finance infrastructure investments while the Sicomines project would benefit from extensive tax exemptions. From the outset, however, the agreement was criticized for its opacity, weak oversight, and the imbalance between the enormous value of the mineral reserves transferred to Sicomines and the relatively limited infrastructure ultimately delivered to the Congolese population.

Following years of advocacy by Resource Matters and the CNPAV coalition, Amendment 5 to the Sicomines agreement was finally made public in 2024. The coalition’s analysis showed that, despite promises of reform, the renegotiated deal continued to heavily favor the Chinese consortium. The agreement maintained major tax exemptions, tied infrastructure financing to volatile copper prices without taking into account how much copper and cobalt is actually exported. According to CNPAV’s calculations, the structure of the revised agreement continues to deprive the DRC of hundreds of thousands of dollars in potential public revenues every day.

The coalition also raised concerns about governance and transparency. Its analysis revealed that Sicomines had paid over $20 million dollars in fees to public officials who had negotiated Amendment 5 on behalf of the DRC. Resource Matters and CNPAV formally addressed these concerns to the relevant ministers and published several detailed analyses explaining the financial, legal, and governance implications of Amendment 5.

Throughout 2025, the coalition continued advocating for a deeper renegotiation of the Sicomines agreement, arguing that the special tax exemptions should be abolished and that Sicomines should pay the same taxes as all other DRC-based mining companies.

With CNPAV, Resource Matters is calling for a review of the DRC-China minerals-for-infrastructure deal. Promoted as a win-win, it has drawn heavy criticism for its financial opacity, generous tax breaks, and weak oversight.

Who Loses, Who Wins? A Joint Podcast with Actualité.cd

With the support of the National Endowment for Democracy

To reach wider and more diverse audiences, Resource Matters partnered with leading Congolese news platform Actualité.cd to launch the podcast Who Loses, Who Wins? in late 2024. As the country's most visited online news outlet, Actualité.cd offers an independent platform well suited to addressing sensitive governance issues in the mining sector.

Throughout 2025, the podcast explored key dynamics of mining in the DRC, including:

- DRC v. Apple (January): examining supply chain failures linked to conflict minerals.
- The Busanga Hydropower Plant (February): assessing local impacts of a Sicomines-funded project.
- Manono Lithium: Between Expectations and Despair (May): highlighting community perspectives.
- The Suspension of Cobalt Exports (June): analyzing economic and policy implications.
- The Energy Deficit and Its Consequences (July): linking energy access to mineral processing.
- Dan Gertler: "A King in Congo" (August): exploring the scale of state losses tied to corruption.
- Mining Subcontracting Challenges (September): reviewing loopholes in the subcontracting law.
- Congolese Germanium: An Alternative to China? (October): assessing strategic partnerships.
- Mining Expansions and Forced Relocations (November): examining impacts on communities.
- Pollution and Corporate Liability (December): analyzing compensation following an industrial spill.

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Partners

A special thank you to our partners

Financial partners

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Civil society partners in the DRC

Action for the Defense of Human Rights (ADDH), African Resources Watch (AFREWATCH), Framework for Civil Society Consultation on Natural Resources in Ituri (CDC/RN), Initiative for Good Governance and Human Rights (IBGDH), Justice for All (JPT), Congolese Centre for Sustainable Development Law (CODED), Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for the Monitoring of Reforms and Public Action (CORAP), Regional Council of Non-Governmental Development Organizations (CRONGD), Ebuteli, Filimbi, Lutte pour le Changement (La LUCHA), Observatory for Studies and Support to Corporate Social Responsibility (OEARSE), United States.

International Civil Society Partners

Witnesses, Rights and Responsibilities in Global Development (RAID), Platform for the Protection of Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF), Congo Research Group (CRG), Carter Center, European Coalition for Corporate Justice.

Civil Society Coalitions

Mwangaza Network (advocacy for access to electricity in the DRC), Makuta Ya Maendeleo (advocacy for transparency and accountability of local mining taxes), Congo is not for Sale (fight against corruption in the DRC), European Commodities Coalition (ensuring that European consumption of raw materials protects people and the planet), EU Raw Materials Coalition (including membership of the Steering Committee and coordination of the

Working Group on Financing of the CRMs), European Coalition for Corporate Justice and Resource Justice Network.

Academic partners

The Kitsisa Khonde Centre for Studies and Research on Renewable Energies of ISTA (RDR) (CERERK), the Institute of Political Science (France) (SCIENCES PO), The Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden) (KTH), the University of Cape Town (South Africa) (UCT), the Reiner Lemoine Institute (Germany) (United Kingdom).

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