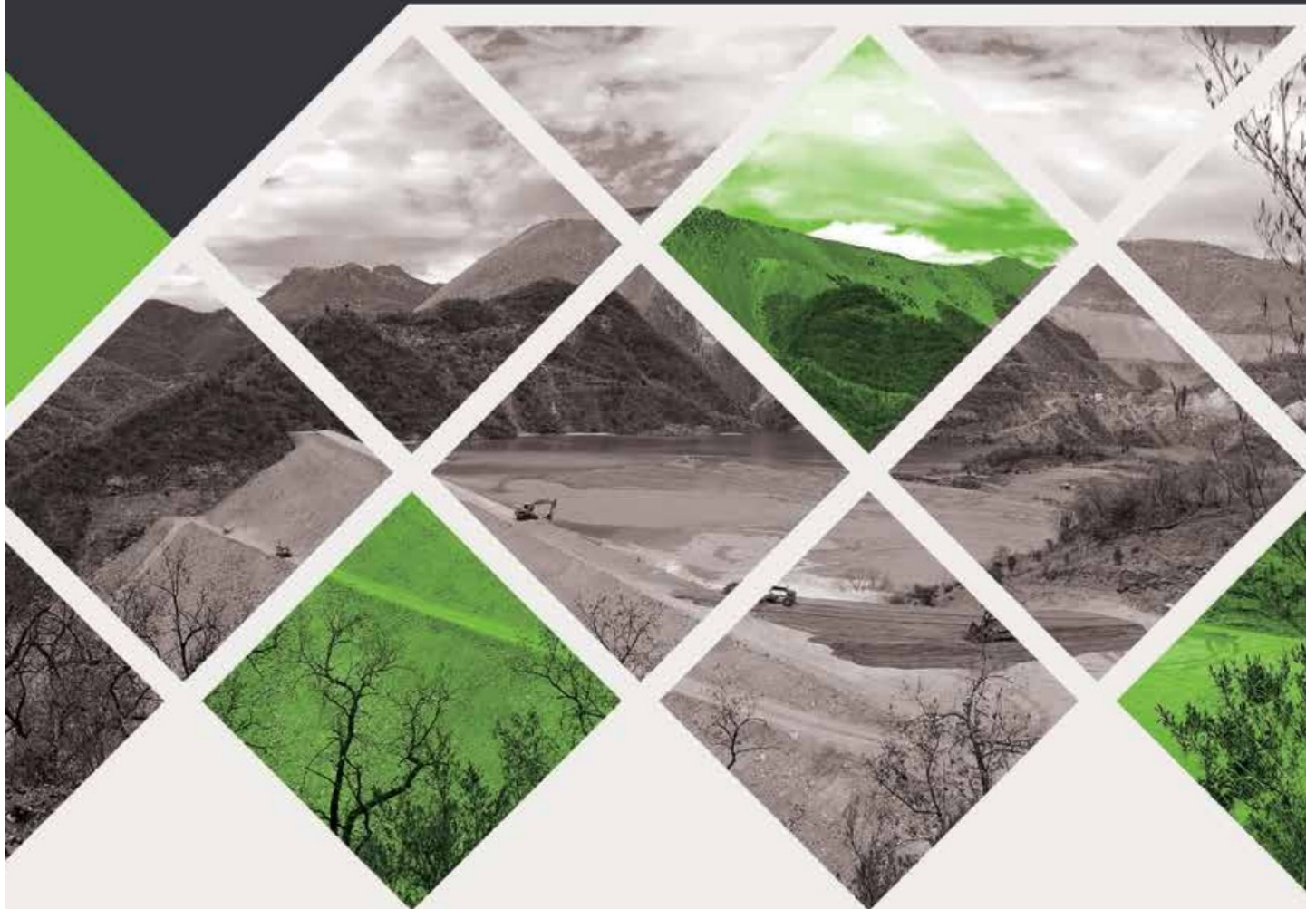




Knight Piésold
CONSULTING



ABOUT US

In the Mining sector, the name Knight Piésold has become synonymous with quality civil engineering, environmental science and construction support for mine infrastructure. Knight Piésold's mining expertise has been utilised on hundreds of surface and underground mining projects worldwide for all stages of permitting, project development, construction, operation and closure.

The research, design and implementation of pioneering solutions to mining waste management (tailings) and heap leach systems, as well as specialist geotechnical investigations for mine developments, have positioned our company as the foremost leader in these fields.

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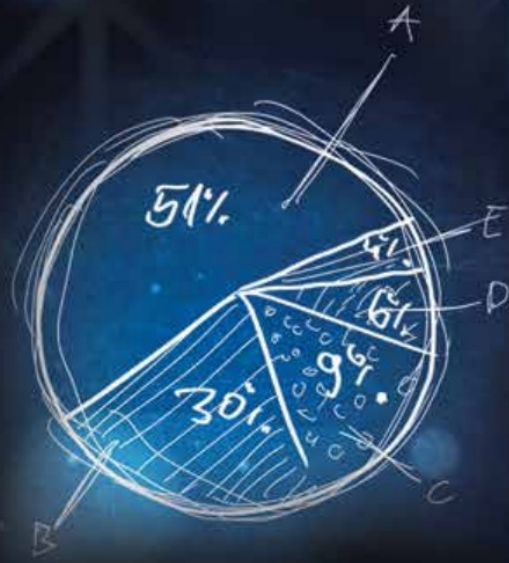
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The future of mining projects in Africa no longer rests only on their financial viability but also on their sustainable efficacy, which includes managing and satisfying all stakeholders.

This to a large extent includes neighbouring project communities – an important component for the environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspects of a project.

Communities have an active interest in any mining activity in close proximity to them – and as such they have the right to know about the project and associated impacts, and also what economic benefits are associated with a new or even existing mining project or operation.

“Because of the significant role communities play in contributing towards project viability, it is essential that mining companies invest

in consultation and engagement strategies, which for the majority of Africa does form part of regulatory requirements,” states Amelia Briel, Environment Section Manager at Knight Piésold.

Knight Piésold, an engineering and environmental consulting firm with a Level 1 BBBEE rating, in 2021 celebrates its 100-year anniversary and is looking forward to growing its name moving forward as its service offerings lie in a multitude of critical touchpoints for the industry – environmental management and community consultation.

“The pressure to be compliant is undeniably increasing and licences and permits are being rejected in instances where compliancy is not adhered to,” comments Andrew Copeland, Technical Director for Mining at Knight Piésold.

The key to successful community engagement requires mining companies to operate beyond the basic levels of compliance. They should truly invest in understanding the needs and expectations of the communities and above all, should treat those communities as neighbours, Briel highlights.

A simple analogy yet a very effective one. “The respect you pay towards your neighbours at home is the same principle required on site – would you play loud music late at night? Would you therefore blast or make loud noise on site late at night?” she asks.

Briel specialises in environmental studies and has over 11 years of consultation experience in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) alone – a region of strategic importance to Knight Piésold, which has a fully-fledged operating branch in the country’s capital, Lubumbashi.

DRC mining communities: Managing expectations

One of the DRC’s greatest challenges is the general lack of infrastructure. Consequently, government spend doesn’t always reach communities and so there is an expectation that mines



must provide community upliftment to the point of unrealistic expectation. "This does create some unease within communities which needs to be managed. Not always an easy task considering in many instances their expectations are the result of absolute desperation," Briel outlines.

Stakeholder consultation is a legal requirement in the DRC and in terms of the 2018 Mining Code, mining companies are required to work with their communities in order to develop a social development plan. Whenever an Environmental Impact Assessment needs to be delivered or upgraded, Knight Piésold provides the necessary expertise – as an independent, unbiased third party.

The company's work in this field starts with identifying communities and compiling a stakeholder engagement plan. Consultation is executed in collaboration with a local company to make sure languages and cultures are respected. Meetings are conducted in a community hall/church/school with messages delivered using posters and easy to understand material. Community members' concerns are recorded and a consultation report written summarising all key points with recommendations included.

With such extensive experience in the central African mining hotspot, Briel notes that community spend for agricultural initiatives, potable water supply, education and health have the biggest impact and the widest reach for communities. "Consider the effect clean water can have on the mortality rate of young children – one example of a small initiative having a major impact," Briel shares.

Engineering focus delivers community benefits as well

Two of the key engineering strategic areas Knight Piésold will focus on in 2021 and beyond are hydropower and responsible tailings storage facility design, delivery and management – both of which have a significant impact (positively) on communities.

"The establishment of a hydropower plant – of which there is substantial opportunity in the DRC in particular – not only delivers reliable and cost effective power for the mine, but can also provide power to neighbouring communities, both during and post the closure of a mine. This development in turn creates potential new job opportunities," notes Copeland.

Knight Piésold has developed a strong proficiency in hydropower projects with a steadily growing track record.

On the back of the release in 2020 of a global tailings dam management standard, Copeland notes the importance of this towards maintaining close relationships with communities. "Responsible environmental management, of which tailings facilities is a significant part, contributes towards investor ESG expectations. But over and above this, communities need to understand the social, environmental and health risks associated with a tailings facility, especially within its zone of influence. It is essential to consider this element of your mine from a community perspective and Knight Piésold has the skills to ensure the delivery of a well-structured facility and one that won't compromise your communities." ■

Image: Community engagement is key to establishing sustainable mining operations

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