

Number 2

# ProMESS

PROJET MINES-ENVIRONNEMENT-SANTÉ ET SOCIÉTÉ

## NEWSLETTER



*Key figures ( Pages 3 - 4 )*

*Life of the project ( Pages 5 - 9 )*





# Editorial

## Justin KAMGA

*Coordinator of FODER ( Forêts et Développement Rural)*

### THE URGENT NEED TO DEFINE MODALITIES FOR THE USE OF FIREARMS IN MINING SITES

The second year of implementation of phase 2 of the Mines-Environment-Health and Society Project (ProMESS2) ended with significant progress in achieving results and change between the period March 2020 to March 2021. Indeed, through raising awareness, capacity building and support to beneficiaries, the project has improved the knowledge of artisans on the advantages of a formal exploitation activity and facilitated the structuring and formalisation of mining artisans' activities. This initiative also helped to improve the knowledge of local populations about their rights and responsibilities in mining.

Through the project, staffs of ministries in charge of mines and environment improved their capacity in

geomatics and “Physical monitoring of industrial exploration activities and production operations of Small-Scale gold mining”. This was achieved through trainings organized with the support of experienced consultants in the field, the aim being to strengthen the control of mining activities. In addition, the communities supported were also equipped with mechanisms for reporting cases of alleged illegal mining, which will improve their participation in the application of the law through the monitoring of mining activities.

With the aim of increasing the income of the local communities and making them less dependent on mining activities, the project has supported them in the development of agricultural activities (plantain and cassava). At the end of this second year of the project, communities involved in the development of agricultural activities as an alternative to mining have created an area of 8.7 ha for plantain and 10.5 ha for the exploitation of improved varieties of cassava. Currently 7.5 ha of cassava and 7.5 ha of plantain have been developed.

Through the dynamic team of facilitators in the field and the members of the Citizens' Watch Committees (CVC) who, in addition to documenting irregularities in the mining sector and accompanying beneficiaries, have been involved in easing social tensions between semi-mechanised mining operators and artisans on one hand and between semi-mechanised mining operators and communities on the other. These tensions have often led to loss of life and property. Deaths have been recorded at mining sites for a variety of reasons: drowning caused

# KEY FIGURES

by larges opened pits abandoned by miners, and as a result of landslides. These deaths also include children aged between 2 and 13 years. In addition, it is worth noting that firearms are used in mining sites as a tool for resolving conflicts between employees and employers on one hand and between population and operators on the other. In view of the number of deaths recorded as a result of the use of firearms, we are entitled to question the relevance of granting permits to carry weapons to expatriates operating in the mining sector, especially in a precarious social and security context. It is imperative to regulate the use of these weapons.

Beyond this sad page, the happy outcome that the project was able to obtain due to its judicial assistance in the case opposing the heirs of SAMBA Sosthène Brandon C/ METALICON CAMEROON SA and others is encouraging. On August 25, 2020, the Batouri Court of First Instance, ruling publicly and in absentia against the defendants and contradictorily against the heirs of Samba Sosthène, declared the defendants guilty of dangerous activities and manslaughter. In repression, the court sentenced them to 500,000 FCFA forfeit each and ordered the company Metalicon SA to pay to the beneficiaries the sum of 2,140,939 FCFA. SAMBA Sosthène Brandon, then aged 12, had died by drowning in a mining pit opened and abandoned by the company METALICON CAMEROON SA in the locality of Batouri. This conviction will certainly not bring back the little SAMBA, but it is a strong signal to families of victims of opened and abandoned mining holes to demand justice. We hope that the case of the little SAMBA will incite authorities in charge of mines as well as judicial authorities to take strong measures against mining operators; authors of the mining activities which cost the lives of many people, particularly children.

Our actions are continuing in the field, please take note of the results already obtained at the end of the second year of the project.

*Bonne Lecture!*

## 15 000

*Members of 82 communities living in the vicinity of mining sites covered by the project were informed and sensitised on various themes: school drop-out linked to the presence of children in mining sites rather than in classrooms during school periods, rights and responsibilities of communities in mining, the importance and role of communities constituted as CVCs, the denunciation of illegalities, the dangers of mining, the need to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in mining, the mining regulations, etc...*

## 444

*Artisanal miners, including 153 women, formed 23 groups following sensitization on the importance of organizing themselves into cooperatives, the importance of complying with mining regulations by obtaining artisanal miners' cards, collectors' cards and authorisation for artisanal exploitation. These artisanal groups are spread across the subdivisions of Garoua Boulai, Meiganga, Yokadouma, Gari gombo, Batouri, Kentzou, Bétaré Oya, Ketté and Ouli. Women make up to 34.5% of the members of these groups.*

# 2160

Kindergarten and primary school children have returned to school following sensitization in communities and the creation of parents' schools by CVCs supported by FODER in the framework of the project.

# 80

Table-benches donated to schools, 60 by the ProMESS Project and 20 by the Bindiba CVC in order to encourage parents to send their children to school rather than leaving them at gold mining sites. The following donations were made to schools: 20 desks and a blackboard to the Ngoe-Ngoe parents' school, 10 desks to the Kissi public school, 06 to the Yassa parents' school, 20 to the Bindiba public school, 13 to the Bindiba secondary school and 07 to the Boum public school in Bindiba.

# 21

New cases of mining-related deaths were recorded in the project intervention areas. With these new cases, the number of people who died from 2014 to April 2021 as a result of mining has reached 157. Of these deaths, 25% were due to drowning and landslides caused by open pits left by miners. These deaths also include children ranging in age from 2 to 13 years.

# 23

Is the number of mining cooperative groups that have been supported.

- **04 groups** (SCOOPS-AMIF, SCOOPS-AMIK, SCOOPS-AMIG, Femmes dynamiques de Sandji) are made up mainly of women and 43.3% are managed by women.
- **03 cooperatives** (SCOOPS-AMIF, SCOOPS-AMIK, SCOOPS-AMIG) operate under the cooperative model
- **05 groups** (Union fait la force, KÔ ADJANG KÔ, YENAYI, Mbangbel group, the Baka-Bantou group of Mboy) are dynamic, structured and functional (regular and weekly meetings, functional membership fees, availability and keeping of the group's notebooks, existence of office members and good management of the group, democratic decision-making, practice of mutual aid etc.);
- **11 groups** (YENAYI Group, Mbangbel Group, Mball artisanal Minner's Group, Bedobo, Béké route, Ketté, Zimbi, Ouli), although functional, continue their structuring and dynamization work;

# 18

New Citizens' Watch Committees (CVCs) have been set up in Ketté, Ouli and Kentzou subdivisions. These CVCs carry out actions in the interest of their communities, particularly in: Mbile, Lolo 1, Mbouyé, Ndongotto, Banda (Kenzou); Wantamo, Lala, Gogazi, Bedobo, Boubara, Beke-route, Kette centre, Béké chantier, Kana-chantier; (Ketté); Bengue-tiko, Ouli centre, Tocktoyo and Zimbi (Ouli); bringing the total number of CVCs to 57, of which 18 are from new subdivisions and 39 from the former project intervention zones.



## LIFE OF THE PROJECT

### Capacity building

**542** people have benefited from capacity-building activities as part of the implementation of the project. These people were mainly staff from Ministries of Mines, Environment, Citizens' Watch Committees (CVCs), journalists (written press and cybernetics, radio, television), and FODER staff. The training for ministry staff included Physical monitoring of industrial exploration activities and production operations of Small-Scale gold mining and the use of Geomatics as a tool of mining activities monitoring and control. 25 staff members from these ministries (16 from MINMIDT and 09 from MINEPDED) took part in the training. 13 media personnel, were able to improve their knowledge on risks of fraud and corruption in the value chain of the extractive industries, investigation tools and techniques and the monitoring of legal and contractual obligations among other things. As for the CVCs, about 500 of them, all artisans, were trained on various topics related to mining. These included the rights and responsi-

bilities of CVCs as well as the defence of community rights, the importance of monitoring mining activities in their village, the importance of communities complying with regulations in artisanal gold mining, the documentation of facts and steps of a denunciation process, negotiation and conflict prevention, collection and transmission of information, the prohibition of child labour on mining sites, etc. .



# Dissemination of the study »Mapping integrity deficits in the mining value chain in Cameroon«

It has improved public knowledge at local, national and international levels on the level of transparency and the integrity deficit in the mining value chain in Cameroon. The study revealed the "corruptogenic"

nature of the legal framework and helped in identifying actors, the illicit practices that have made their nest in the mining value chain and to prioritise actions to be taken to reduce these practices..

## Support to artisans and collectors

The support of artisanal miners and collectors in the process of obtaining artisanal miners' cards, collectors' cards and artisanal mining permits has resulted in:

- **95 artisans' cards** (16 cards in Batouri and Kentzou, 15 cards in Bétaré Oya, 06 cards in Yokadouma and Gari Gombo, 28 cards in Meiganga, 30 cards in Ketté and Ouli). It should be noted that 127 cards, including 98 cards for artisans in Bétaré Oya and 29 cards in Ketté and Ouli, are currently being issued in the departmental delegations of the Mines of Lom and Djerem and Kadéï. Fees for these cards have been paid by the artisanal miners. The number of artisanal miners' cards being issued remains low due to the fact that the acting Departmental Delegate of MINMIDT in the locality of Bétaré Oya is not authorised to sign these cards.
- **17 collector cards**, including 13 cards in Meiganga (01 in Batoua Godolé, 05 in Meiganga, 04 in Ngaoui, 03 in Fell), 04 cards in Ketté.
- **One (01) artisanal mining permit (AEA)** for the cooperative "richesse minière of Batouri. The cooperatives are in the process of being legalised



# Social achievements as a result of advocacy and lobbying

**A**dvocacy and lobbying actions carried out by FODER and CVCs have led to several social achievements in mining communities. These include:

The construction of a school and a borehole to the residents of Kana/Ketté by the mining company CHINA MINNING,

The construction of 07 portable water boreholes by mining companies in Batouri-Kambélé. The boreholes constructed are compensation measures for the de-

gradation of watercourses caused by mining activities.

The construction of a parents' school in Yassa (Bindiba Garoua-Boulaï Canton) by a semi-mechanised mining operator, ALADJI BAWÉ,

The acquisition of a motor pump offered by the site manager to the cooperative "la voix des sans voix" of Gbanam due to the good collaboration between FODER and CAPAM.



# Legal assistance: favourable outcome for beneficiaries of a victim who drowned in a mine hole





**12 ANS**  
**SOSTHÈNE SAMBA**  
élève **mort noyé** dans un **trou d'or abandonné**  
par la **SOCIÉTÉ METALICOM**

**Il se rendait aux champs**  
**pour aider sa maman**  
**aux travaux champêtres**



**F**our (04) years after the death by drowning of the little SAMBA Sosthène (12 years old), in an open and abandoned hole after exploitation in a mining site of the company METALICON SA (Greek nationality), the Court of First Instance of Batouri (Eastern Region), finally found the mining company guilty of manslaughter. This sentence was pronounced on 25 August 2020, following a long legal procedure initiated by the family, with the support of the organisation Forêts et Développement Rural, within the framework of the implementation of the Mines-Environment-Health and Society Project (ProMESS). The Court of First Instance (TPI) of Batouri, ruling in absentia with regard to the defendants and contradic-

torily with regard to the civil parties, also declared the company METALICON SA and its representatives guilty of dangerous activities and manslaughter. In repression, METALICON SA is condemned to pay a fine of 500,000 FCFA. And, to the rightful plaintiffs, namely the family of the deceased SAMBA, the mining company will have to pay damages, fixed at 2,140,939 Fcfa. Although these damages are very low in relation to the harm caused, this court decision is nevertheless welcomed and gives hope to the mining communities that are often victims of mining abuses.



# Monitoring of mining activities: Denunciations by the Citizens' Watch Committees (CVC) lead to actions by administrative authorities



**A**t the end of the second year of project implementation, about twenty relevant denunciations were obtained, which were brought to the attention of FODER and/or the administrative authorities by members of the CVCs or communities. Some of these denunciations led to the intervention of the administration for their resolution, to amicable settlements of disputes between communities and companies, to the intervention of CVCs in search for endogenous solutions, etc. The intervention of administrations

can be summarised, among other things, by the organization of control missions, the sealing of equipment of presumed illegal mining operators, and summonses to repair the damage. In total, six (06) joint missions to monitor mining activities were carried out by staff from the Ministry of Mines, Senior Divisional Officers and mayors. The table below details the types of infractions reported and actions taken by administrative authorities. .

Infraction	Place of offence	Authorities in charge	Actions taken by authorities
Mining on the Lom River bed between the Bétaré-Oya and Bidinba border	Between Bétaré-Oya and Bidinba	Chief of Bidinba Canton, the senior divisional officer, the environmental delegate and the brigade commander	A control mission was carried out (on 03 April 2020) by the senior divisional officer, the brigade commander and his elements.  The operating equipment was sealed by the senior divisional officer and the Brigade Commander
Obstruction of water-courses leading to flooding and destruction of people's property	Mball	The senior divisional officer and CAPAM	The company was forced to open the dyke again to allow water to flow into its bed. Negotiations are continuing to enable community members who have suffered damage (destruction of a pond, fruit trees and flooding of fields and equipment) to be compensated by the company responsible.
Illegal installation of a mining company in a site for operation	Gbakoussi of the Bidinba canton	The traditional ruler of the Bidinba canton, the mayor of Garoua-Boulai, CAPAM and the Brigade Commander	Two mining machines were sealed following a visit to the site by the Mayor of Garoua-Boulai, the representative of the Bidinba canton chief, CAPAM and the brigade commander.
The misuse of cyanide by Burkinabé mining operators	Laï 2 neighborhood in Bétaré-Oya  Zimbi	The Senior Divisional officer and the Mayor of Bétaré-Oya  Mayor of Ouli	The operators were ordered to leave the premises  Sealing of Burkinabe operators' facilities
Non-payment of taxes related to the absence of an environmental impact statement by PHOENIX MINING and MENCHENG I, II and III companies	Kambélé 2, Kambélé 3, Mongonam, Pater and Batouri centre	The mayor of Batouri council	The sites of four companies and two gold smelters were sealed for non-payment of taxes due to the absence of an environmental impact statement

A man wearing a red tank top and yellow shorts is working with a large black plastic bag at a mining site. He is leaning over the bag, which is filled with a dark, granular material. The background shows a white plastic sheet and some greenery. The image is partially obscured by an orange overlay on the left side.

## Geo-referencing of mining sites

**G**eo-referenced data from 12 small scale mining sites and 06 artisanal mining sites were collected for the monitoring of artisanal and small-scale gold mining. 205 geographical coordinates and 29 tracking of mining activity areas were collected in 09 of the 10 subdivisions of the project.



«The content of this newsletter is the sole responsibility of FODER and can in no way be considered to reflect European Union's opinion».

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