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South African transnational mining companies and environmental impact assessment in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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2015-02
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/20217

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the practice of environmental impact assessments (EIAs) by South African mining transnational companies (TNCs) operating some mining projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It analyses whether and how South African mining TNCs carry out EIAs for their mining projects in the DRC, especially whether they follow (1) the DRC EIA policies, (2) the South African EIAs policies (3) international EIA policies, or (4) internal company policies. It also examines what motivates the companies to follow any of the policy path, by assessing whether financial or policy regimes evaluations motivates the TNCs to follow the certain path. Through the case studies of AngloGold Ashanti and Metorex (Pty) Limited, the study demonstrates the complexity involved in making decisions on choosing a policy path to follow which confronts TNCs. The conclusion we draw from this study is that TNCs do not follow a single policy path in carrying out EIAs but integrate a number of policies and standards and the integration of various policies and standards demands highly qualified and well trained staff as well as availability of an enabling scientific and research infrastructure within the host country.

Keywords: environmental impact assessment; South Africa, transnational mining companies; business and sustainability; DRC.