



Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences  
Koninklijke Academie voor Overzeese Wetenschappen  
Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer

# International Conference Strategic minerals, mining and society in the D.R. Congo



**April 2-4, 2025**

**Palace of the Academies,  
Hertogsstraat - 1 - Rue Ducale,  
Brussels (Belgium)**



## Rationale

Industrial mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) started in the early 20th century and has known ups and downs along with the price of metals, and the world demand. In the last decades, the need for strategic metals for IT and green tech has caused a rush for copper, cobalt, tantalum and, more recently, lithium. Besides, gold mining also develops in many parts of the country. Since the turn of the 21st century, artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) have coexisted with industrial exploitation, by major mining companies and commodities traders. Mining and mineral processing in DRC have a profound impact on mineworkers and citizens, society and the geosphere.

Some of these impacts have been documented, such as labour issues around artisanal and small-scale mining or water pollution, but the narrative on mining in the DRC is highly influenced by unnuanced and media-tized accounts. This conference aims to bring together scientific research from multiple dis-

ciplines to take stock of the impact of mining and mineral processing so far, and identify the major challenges for the near future. The energy transition and technological innovations as well as geopolitical shifts and the presence of China in turn have a profound impact on the Congolese mining sector, which needs to be understood.

The added value of this conference is to bring together research from disciplines such as anthropology, social and political sciences, economy, earth and environmental sciences, toxicology, medicine in an attempt to learn from each other and create more positive outcomes for humans and nature in the DRC.

The Academy welcomes concise, informative and updated talks and posters in all these disciplines. Different viewpoints from various disciplines are most welcome. Speakers are encouraged to present talks that are understandable to a broad multi-disciplinary audience.



The organisers invite proposals for contributions (posters, talks) by 02/02/2025, to be sent to:

[events\\_raos@kaowarsom.be](mailto:events_raos@kaowarsom.be)

Submitted proposals will include a title, author(s) with affiliations, and an abstract of max. 300 words (a template is available on the conference website). Proposals will be peer-reviewed and acceptance will be notified to the authors by 28/02/2025. English is the preferred language though contributions in French will also be accepted.

Registration fee for the 3 days is:

- 100 € for participants affiliated to a university and/or a research institute.
- 30 € for the members of the RAOS.
- 10 € for students and PhD applicants (a scan of the student card is required).
- A video link can be provided for free to overseas participants who could not attend the meeting in Brussels. Registration is required to get access.

<https://www.kaowarsom.be/en/form/registration-strategic-minerals>

Contributions will be published in a peer-reviewed volume of the Proceedings of the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences; more information will be available by 30/04/2025.

## Provisional programme

Poster sessions will take place during the coffee and lunch breaks.

### 1st day – April 2, 2025

13:00-13:30 introduction

13:30-14:00 keynote geology & technology

14:00-14:30 Q&A

14:30-15:00 coffee break

15:00-16:30 research presentations on geology & technology

16:30-17:00 Q&A

17:00-17:15 concluding remarks

### 2nd day – April 3, 2025

08:45-09:00 opening remarks

09:00-09:30 keynote environment

09:30-10:00 Q&A

10:00-10:30 coffee break

10:30-12:00 research presentations on environmental sciences

12:00-12:30 Q&A

12:30-13:30 lunch break

13:30-14:00 keynote health sciences

14:00-14:30 Q&A

14:30-16:00 research presentations on health sciences

16:00-16:30 Q&A

16:30-16:45 concluding remarks

16:45-17:15 projection of documentary films

17:15-18:00 cocktail

### 3rd day – April 4, 2025

08:45-09:00 opening remarks

09:00-09:30 keynote social sciences

09:30-10:00 Q&A

10:30-11:00 coffee break

11:00-12:30 research presentations on social sciences

12:30-13:00 Q&A

13:00-14:00 lunch break

14:30-15:00 projection of documentary films

15:00-15:30 closing remarks and further interactions

## Related documentaries

Quentin Noirfalisce – “Cobalt, l’envers du rêve électrique”

RoyMaconachie, SimonWharf&BossissiNkuba – “Cobalt Rush”

