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ITSCI standards protect endangered species

The ITSCI due diligence and traceability programme monitors over 2,000 tin, tantalum and tungsten (3T) mine sites across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. These countries, besides their rich mineral resources, are also known for their national parks and protected areas which host some of the world's most endangered species. These include mountain gorillas (*gorilla beringei beringei*) found in the Virunga volcanic massif protected by national parks in three countries; Virunga National Park in the DRC, the Volcano National Park in Rwanda and the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in Uganda.

ITSCI standards are 100% aligned with the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for responsible supply chains of minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas. The OECD Guidance does not extend to managing environmental risks yet ITSCI procedures have always gone beyond OECD expectations in this regard by integrating the reporting of risks in protected areas, including national parks, through our incident system. This includes reporting of any known 3T mining at non-ITSCI sites, or the mining of gold or other minerals when relevant. When such issues are reported, ITSCI contributes to developing and agreeing mitigation measures implemented by relevant authorities. For example, in **2016 ITSCI helped to encourage disciplinary action against park rangers involved in illegal mining at the Upemba National Park** in today's Haut-Lomami Province, DRC (<https://www.itsci.org/2016/12/16/helping-protect-upemba-national-park/>).

Our on-the-ground field teams conduct on-going monitoring in all 3T mining areas, including in the vicinity of national parks. For example, in January 2020, a case of miners illegally searching for minerals in a national park in Rwanda was reported and is being monitored by ITSCI field teams through the ITSCI incident reporting mechanism although there are so far no indications that any minerals were extracted from the park. In the DRC, reports of gold mined in protected areas, for instance in the Maiko National Park, and with the involvement of local non-state armed groups, are documented by ITSCI. While gold is outside the scope of ITSCI activities and these cases have so far had no impact on 3T minerals or the ITSCI supply chain, we continue to monitor potential risks and to work closely with local and provincial stakeholders, engaging with park rangers or with the Congolese Wildlife Authority which is responsible for ensuring protection of national parks and can take actions against abuses such as illegal mining.

In the Virunga volcanic massif there are no ITSCI mine sites, and no reported mining activities of 3T minerals known to ITSCI or reported by other external sources such as IPIS. There are also no ITSCI sites in any national parks in the countries where we operate, including for instance the Kahuzi-Biega National Park which stretches over the Provinces of South Kivu, North Kivu and Maniema, DRC. In addition there are no known direct impacts from mining, or indirect impacts from influx of miners or similar effects reported during the tantalite (coltan) boom of the early 2000's associated with ITSCI minerals. ITSCI implements appropriate supply-chain standards for managing risks to the protected habitats of important ape species for minerals tracked through our programme.