



PRESS RELEASE
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**DDI RELEASES STANDARDS &
GUIDELINES FOR SIERRA LEONE**

The [Diamond Development Initiative \(DDI\)](#) announced today the release of its *Standards & Guidelines for Sierra Leone's Artisanal Diamond Mining Sector*. The release, in partnership with Sierra Leone's Network Movement for Justice and Development, is the first comprehensive guide to a sector that was, during the 1990s, plagued by armed rebellion and horrific violence.

Today, Sierra Leone is at peace, but the diamond industry remains troubled. Despite the wealth they generate, artisanal diamond mining districts in Sierra Leone – as is the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Brazil and elsewhere -- are less developed, have greater health problems, more illiteracy and greater poverty than other areas. One reason for this is the informal nature of the diamond economy and the absence of development organizations working in mining areas – governmental and non-governmental. Diamond mining areas are difficult places to work: they are socially fractious and often violent, and typical community development approaches are rarely successful. New private sector investors often fail.

A major objective of the Diamond Development Initiative is to draw development organizations and more developmentally sound investment into artisanal diamond mining areas, to find ways to make development programming more effective, and to help bring the informal diamond mining sector into the formal economy.

One way of doing this is to help potential investors and development organizations understand the political economy of development and investment in artisanal diamond mining areas, and to provide them with guidelines that will help them to avoid past mistakes and to learn from what has worked elsewhere.

The Standards and Guidelines Project, carried out in conjunction with Partnership Africa Canada, with support from the Communities & Small Scale Mining Secretariat and several major diamond mining and retailing companies, has produced practical, relevant information, standards and guidelines for a wide cross-section of government departments, investors and development organizations.

“A great deal of work has gone into this project,” said Ian Smillie, Chairman of DDI's Board of Directors, “including detailed consultation with all levels of government, industry and civil society in Sierra Leone. We hope and expect that this publication will contribute to better understanding of this vital industry, and the roles that can be played to make it a real force for development in Sierra Leone.”

For more information, please contact:

Ian Smillie, Chairman, DDI Board of Directors: +1-613-728-9725

Bernard Taylor, Executive Director, Partnership Africa Canada: +1-613-237-6768

The DDI brings governments, civil society and industry together in efforts to address the political, social and economic challenges facing Africa's one million-strong artisanal diamond mining sector.