

Transforming Mine Closure

Driving Economic Resilience & Community Prosperity

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What is Mine Closure?



- The process of permanently shutting down a mining operation, which includes **ceasing extraction activities, decommissioning** equipment, and **rehabilitating** the land to a **safe** and **environmentally** acceptable state
- The desired outcome of mine closure is to **eliminate** or **minimise** to an acceptable level the **social** and **environmental impacts** of a mining operation **post-closure**

Key Aspects



1. Physical infrastructure of a mine



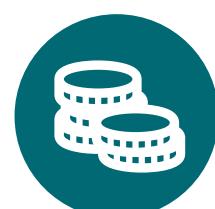
2. Natural environment



3. Socio-economic development



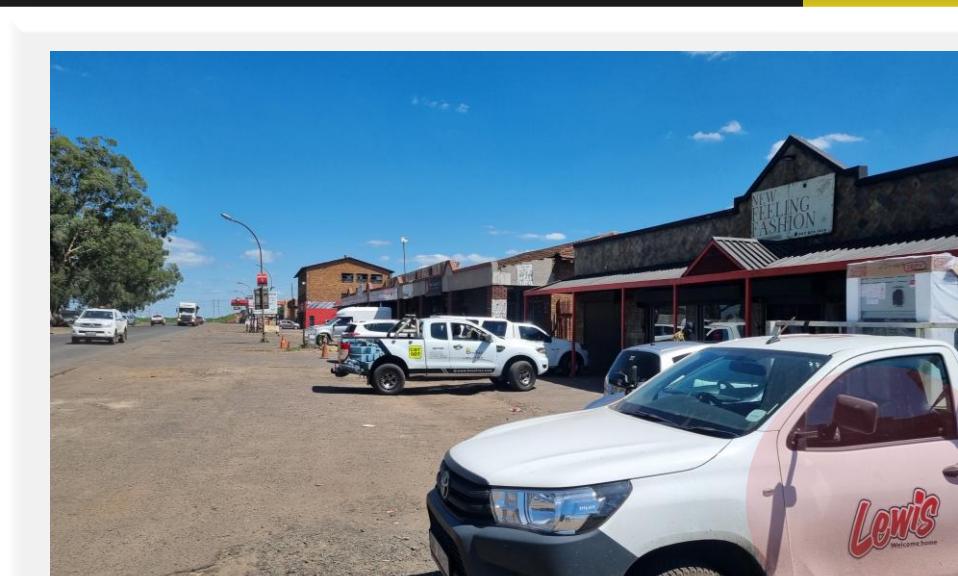
4. Host communities



5. Financial implications

A central question is:

How do we create socio-economic opportunities that ensure a thriving future for mining-affected communities?



Challenges in the **Current Paradigm**

Overemphasis on **Environmental Rehabilitation** has resulted in socio-economic impacts being sidelined:



- Communities are **often unprepared** for the socio-economic consequences of mine closure.
- Valuable infrastructure and by-products are **left underutilized**.



Regulatory Challenges

Mistrust arises from the slow enforcement of MPRDA and SLP commitments.

Regulatory uncertainty allows companies to delay decisive action.



Without proactive planning

Communities face economic stagnation & dependency on social grants.

Land and infrastructure assets remain unproductive, missing opportunities for regional growth.

Consequences of Inaction



Community Impact

- Unemployment exacerbates poverty and widens inequality, especially in historically mining-dependent areas.
- Declining social cohesion as families relocate for work opportunities.



Environmental Impact

- Acid mine drainage and soil degradation reduce the land's agricultural and ecological value.
- Delayed rehabilitation escalates costs and decreases future usability.



Reputational & Financial Risks

- Companies face increasing scrutiny from communities, advocacy groups, and international observers.
- Lack of trust in the industry hinders future investments and partnerships.



Missed potential to convert mining sites into economic engines for local and regional development.





Mine Closure and Economic Diversification



Why Economic Diversification Matters?



Reducing Dependency: Mining-dependent communities face economic collapse without alternative industries.



Creating Resilience: Diversification allows for sustainable livelihoods through.



Agriculture: Leveraging rehabilitated land for farming, aquaculture, and agro-processing.



Renewable Energy: Transforming sites into solar farms, wind energy projects, or hydroelectric facilities.



Tourism: Developing eco-parks, cultural heritage sites, and adventure tourism attractions.



Local Industry: Using infrastructure and supply chains to foster light manufacturing and entrepreneurship hubs.



Alignment with Policy Goals: Supports the objectives of South Africa's IDPs, SLPs, and SDGs, enhancing community prosperity and environmental health.



Actionable Steps for Sustainable Closure



Start Early

Initiate closure provisioning for pilot projects during operations to test feasibility and community acceptance.

Collaborate Broadly

Engage local governments, NGOs, and businesses in co-funded ventures that expand impact.

Focus on Long-Term Viability

Prioritize investments that align with community strengths and future market needs, ensuring sustainability.

Transparency and Accountability

Publish update reports and project outcomes to build trust.

Social Investments & ESD as Key Enablers



Social and Labour Plans (SLPs), Corporate Social Investment (CSI), and Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programs are vital tools for mine closure:

Building Local Supply Chains:
Encourage the development of local businesses that can support operations and post-closure activities.

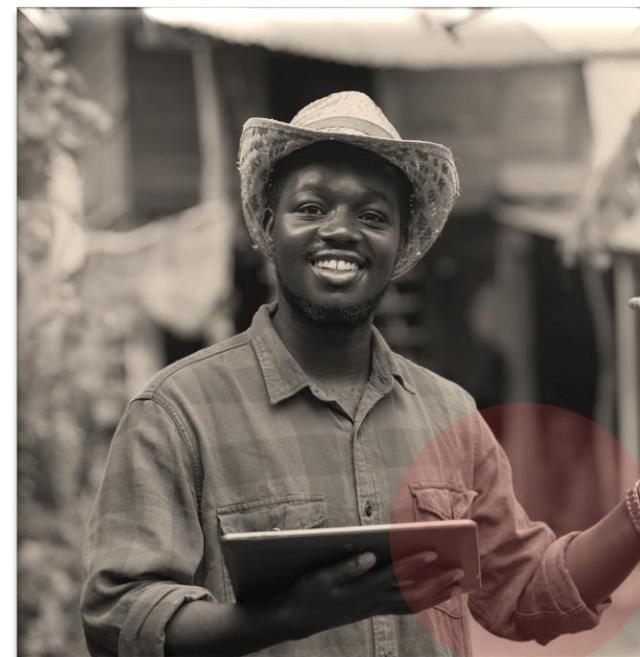
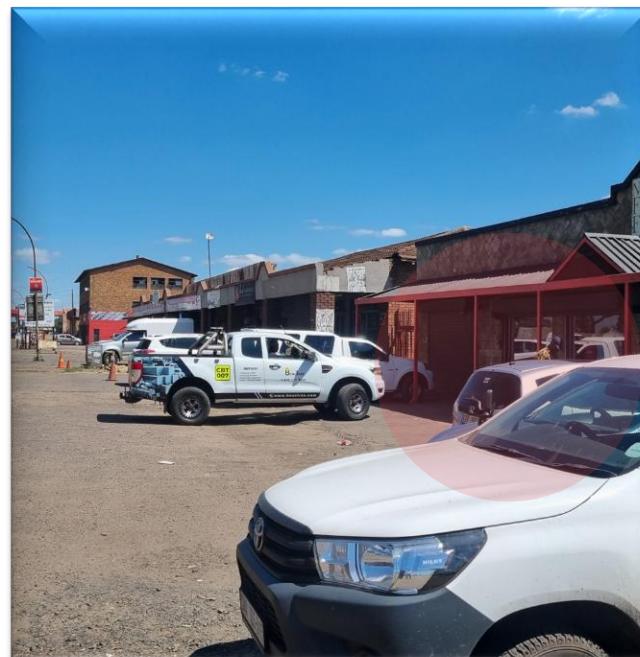
Skills Development:
Establish training centers for future-facing industries like renewable energy and agriculture.

Community Entrepreneurship:
Provide mentorship, funding, and networking opportunities to local entrepreneurs.

Integration with IDPs



Collaborate with municipalities to ensure alignment with broader development goals and long-term community benefits.





Repurposing Mine Assets



Land

Transition rehabilitated land to agricultural zones or renewable energy projects.

Develop eco-tourism parks showcasing biodiversity and conservation.



Tailings & By-products

Reprocess waste for construction materials or other industrial applications.

Partner with regional businesses to utilize residual resources efficiently.



Infrastructure

Convert housing into affordable residences or tourism lodges.

Repurpose mine offices as schools, clinics, or business incubators.

What Practitioners **Can Do Today?**



Engage Communities

- Involve stakeholders early in planning, ensuring alignment with their aspirations.
- Build trust by regularly communicating mine closure progress and opportunities.



Leverage Assets Strategically

- Conduct audits to identify unused assets and their potential for repurposing.
- Partner with experts to create feasibility studies for innovative asset use.



Pilot and Learn

- Start small with projects like community gardens or vocational training programs.
- Use pilot outcomes to refine strategies and secure further funding.



The Role of Leadership in Mine Closure

Vision

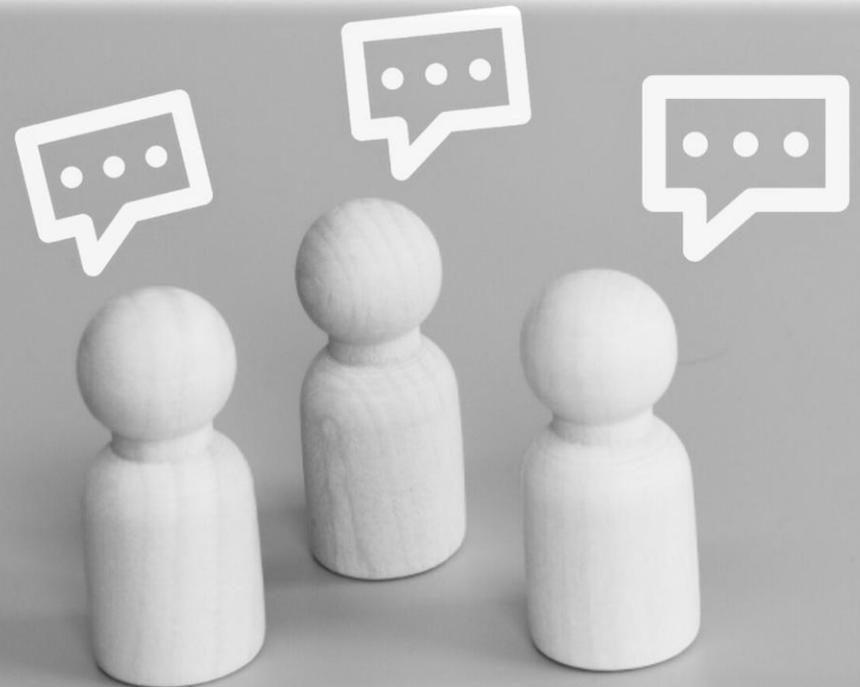
- Focus on holistic outcomes that serve communities, ecosystems, and economies.

Courage

- Take proactive steps to integrate socio-economic objectives into mine closure plans.

Action

- Ensure closure strategies are well-funded, transparent, and inclusive of all stakeholders.



Call to Action

Practitioners must:

- **Begin closure planning** during operations to embed sustainability from the start.
- **Leverage regulatory tools** like SLPs, CSI, and financial provisions for impactful initiatives.
- **Work collaboratively** with communities, governments, and industry peers.



“Economic diversification ensures mine closure **becomes a **foundation** for long-term regional prosperity.”**





Can we **reimagine** Mine
Closure as a gateway to
Community Prosperity?