



## Concept Note

### Partnership Between Corps Africa/Rwanda and Rutongo Mines Ltd

#### 1. Intro

The partnership between CorpsAfrica Rwanda and Trinity Metals aims to address the issue of illegal mining in Rulindo District, “*Masoro and Cyinzuzi Sectors,*” by deploying five experienced and specialists CorpsAfrica volunteers. These volunteers will work closely with local communities to combat illegal mining and trading of illegally mined minerals activities, provide alternative livelihood opportunities, and promote sustainable mining practices. This collaboration leverages Corps Africa’s expertise in community-led development and Rutongo Mines’ commitment to fostering responsible mining practices. The partnership will also align to Trinity Metals’ existing community development’s initiatives or plans.

#### 2. Background:

##### ***About CorpsAfrica:***

Founded in 2011 by former Peace Corps Volunteer Liz Fanning, CorpsAfrica is built on the belief that young Africans can be the catalysts for lasting development in Africa. CorpsAfrica trains young, highly educated Africans to live in rural communities and work with local people to identify and solve pressing challenges. Since its inception, CorpsAfrica has deployed hundreds of volunteers across 10 African countries, facilitating over 800 community projects aimed at empowering locals and creating sustainable growth.

##### ***About Rutongo Mines:***

Rutongo Mines is a mining company that was granted a 25-year mining license by the Government of Rwanda to operate Rugongo mines concession. It is part of Trinity Metals Group that owns other two sister companies in addition to Rutongo Mines namely Trinity Musha Mines operating Musha and ntunga concessions and Trinity Nyakabingo Mine operating Nyakabingo Mine. Trinity Metals under equity backing from Techmet, a UK-based private industrial company working to secure the technology metal supply chain in a world with rapidly increasing demand, is committed to promoting responsible mining practices and to contributing to Rwanda's economic growth.

#### 3. Rationale for the Partnership:

Illegal mining and trading of illegally mined minerals is the most pressing challenge in Rutongo Mines concession with devastating consequences. The cost of illegal mining activities can be measured in lost lives, revenue, governance challenges, environmental degradation, and social and instability,.. Often involving youth who lack access to legal employment opportunities.

On one hand, Trinity Metals Group have been using different approaches across its three mines including Rutongo to address illegal mining which includes approaching and mobilizing illegal miners to join our mining companies where they can be trained to work professionally and where



they can ensure a more secure future for themselves and their families. On the other hand, Corps Africa/Rwanda, has proven experience working in the Masoro Sector within Rutongo Concession for over a year where 5 volunteers were deployed and successfully engaged and converted over 250 youth to exit illegal mining through mindset change and alternative employment or source of income.

Building on previous experiences and success, the partnership between CorpsAfrica and Rutongo Mines part of Trinity Metals will enhance efforts to provide sustainable solutions that address the root causes of illegal mining. Volunteers engaged community members in many other social protection activities in addition to creating works for the youth.

In the first 2 months, volunteers connect with the communities, identify pressing needs, and engage them in different integration activities to foster community cohesion, build trust, and set the foundation for lasting sustainable development. Volunteers facilitate several integration activities, including:

- ❖ Activities that address human security issues: They prioritize the well-being and dignity of communities by facilitating access to and improving community hygiene and sanitation. (Establishing kitchen gardens, platerack, clotheslines, household latrine, step and wash, washing station, house smearing, environmentally friendly stove, drinking safe and clean water, hygiene: body and house, washing dishes and utensils.).
- ❖ One-on-one visit: Learn about the community's lifestyle, assets, mobilization, and needs. This helps volunteers understand the community better, which is key to their work.
- ❖ Community Meetings: Attend Inteko and call for the community meetings (under the mango tree meetings). followed by the formation of community groups and youth associations. They begin small meetings and bring together the youth and older community members. The overall cost of all integration activities is approximately estimated at \$370,000, overall, in the 79 villages we operated in, in 2023-2024.

#### 4. Objectives of this partnership (we are being informed by the success of our 5 volunteers in Masoro):

**Combat Illegal Mining:** Reduce illegal mining activities in Masoro and Cyinzuzi Sectors by promoting sustainable and responsible mining practices. Each Volunteer will work with at least 100 people in different households, (60 of which being youth).

**Youth Empowerment:** Engage local youth in training programs that provide alternative livelihood options, such as skills development in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and more. Each Volunteer will work with at least 60 youth to create alternative steady income generating activities ...

**Community Development:** Foster community resilience through participatory approaches to development, ensuring that local people are actively involved in identifying solutions. Implement any community development plan that Rutongo Mines has.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Promote environmentally friendly mining practices to reduce land degradation and conserve natural resources. Nursery beds for trees (agro forestry and fruits) will be made with the people.



## 5. Implementation Strategy:

### Volunteer Deployment:

Volunteers will be deployed to Masoro and Cyinzuzi Sectors for an 11-month period, and if Trinity Metals sees it fit, the same volunteers would be deployed for a second year. Real change takes time, and if one wants sustainability, a second deployment is always needed. As soon as this partnership comes into reality, a few days' training by Trinity Metals would be necessary. These volunteers, trained in community engagement and development methodologies, will live within the community, build trust with local stakeholders, and work alongside local leaders to support the following initiatives:

**Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct educational campaigns to raise awareness about the risks of illegal mining and the benefits of legal, sustainable mining practices.

**Peer Training Programs:** Organize vocational training in alternative livelihoods, such as small-scale farming, small businesses, and mining technologies, to provide viable employment opportunities for the youth. Our volunteers will learn from different Trinity Metals' community outreach programs and a comprehensive approach to societal engagement, focusing on boosting economic development and ethical business practices. They will also benefit from Trinity Metals maintaining high standards through robust management systems, fostering respectful relationships with the community around mines and other stakeholders, and ensuring societal protection.

**Community Engagement:** Facilitate participatory development planning sessions with local leaders, youth, and community groups to identify priorities and design projects that address community needs. Here are some of the activities volunteers operated in the Masoro sector engaged the community last cohort in:

1. Saving scheme
2. Modern rabbit farming
3. Integrated fish and rabbit farming project
4. integrated fish and rabbit farming project
5. Grinding Machine (Women Project)
6. Local leaders training
7. Mushroom farming
8. Addressing human security issues
9. Nursery bed



10. Bricks making
11. Creating small businesses for youths (Small income generation businesses)
12. Beekeeping project.

Based on areas of deployment discussed between Rutongo Mines and Corps Africa, the activities may differ from the above mentioned, but won't be very different, from experience.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Work with Trinity Metals to track the progress of community development projects and assess the impact of efforts to reduce illegal mining. A clear M&E plan will be developed between Trinity Metals and CorpsAfrica.

#### 6. Roles and Responsibilities:

**CorpsAfrica/Rwanda:** Recruit, train, and deploy five volunteers to Masoro Sector; provide ongoing support to volunteers during their service; and facilitate the implementation of community-led initiatives and projects.

- ❖ A key focus of the volunteers' community service mission is creating job opportunities for young people in the communities they serve in. In collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government, LODA, and the Mastercard Foundation, the volunteers learned about different initiatives that equipped them with job creation skills and mindset change by tapping on the expertise of the Mastercard Foundation, Minaloc, Loda, and other experts. 76 projects and small income-generating activities were implemented; 3,559 jobs were created for youth and 698 jobs for adults across all sites as per last year cohort 5 only.

**Rutongo Mines part of Trinity Metals Group:** in year 1 of this partnership, provide funding to support the deployment of 5 volunteers, and activities of the CorpsAfrica volunteers; offer technical expertise on mining operations; and collaborate with volunteers on community engagement efforts.

#### **Below is a breakdown of a volunteer's budget:**

1. Stipend= 3,500 USD (this has transport, accommodation, food and other expenses, communication).
2. Insurance = 500 USD
3. Trainings: 1,250 USD (this reduced because we are bringing on board returning volunteers who have already undergone PST. PST takes around 3,750 USD per volunteer. In case one day we bring on board new volunteers, training per volunteer would cost around 5,000 USD. Total days of training throughout the service is 90 days.
4. Projects= 3,750 USD

**Tot = 9,000 USD**



Note that communities bring in their contribution (in kind or cash) towards activities and projects, due to mindset change.

**Local leaders and community members:** Collaborate with volunteers and Trinity Metals to ensure that local needs and priorities are addressed and that sustainable solutions are implemented.

#### 7. Expected Outcomes:

**Reduction in Illegal Mining:** A significant decrease in illegal mining activities in Rutongo Mines Concession through mindset change, employment alternatives, and community engagement. CorpsAfrica will ensure that initiatives are aligned with what the community genuinely wants, leading to greater ownership and long-term commitment. By involving community members in decision-making, planning, and implementation, CLD will create solutions that are culturally relevant, resource-efficient, and more sustainable. As a result, we will have projects with a higher chance of success and continuity that are also rooted in local priorities and supported by the people where our volunteers serve.

**Increased alternative employment opportunities:** youth engaged in alternative livelihoods, leading to improved economic conditions and reduced dependence on illegal mining. By using our approaches, our volunteers will work with community members and others who participated in illegal mining activities in the Rutongo Mines concession to have mindsets shift by identifying alternative livelihoods that leverage their existing skills and resources. The shift in mindsets will involve former illegal miners in co-creating sustainable economic activities and creating income opportunities, which will ultimately reduce reliance on illegal mining.

**Synergizing:** We currently have 3 mandates that the Rwanda office implements: Community-Led Development from CorpsAfrica, Young Africa Works (Mastercard Foundation), and graduation Government of Rwanda mandates, and we might have the 4th mandate with Trinity Metals Group.

**Strengthened Community Resilience:** Empower local communities with the tools, knowledge, and resources to lead their own development efforts and tackle future challenges. By leveraging on the strengths and achievements we've already established, we will use mindset shifts, scale proven methods, and explore new opportunities for growth. This will not only enhance our effectiveness but also ensure that our efforts continue to resonate deeply with the communities we serve and empower them to lead their economic transformation journey.

**Improved Environmental Practices:** enhanced sustainable mining practices that protect the environment and promote long-term productivity. As part of contributing to the global efforts of



sustaining the environment, through the CorpsAfrica green initiative, we have made nursery beds contribute not only to the income generation of the community but also enhance environmental sustainability, boost resilience, and reap the benefits of a healthy community. In these efforts, the community has successfully planted **39,612 trees** in diverse tree categories across different sites. **Among them, 25,640 trees** were sold for \$11,429, and 1274 were planted in the Masoro sector last cohort.

As we move forward, our focus will be on building upon our existing successes and expanding our approaches to reach even greater impact. The partnership between Corps Africa/*Rwanda* and Rutongo Mines part of *Trinity Metals Group* represents a powerful model for addressing illegal mining through community engagement and sustainable development. By combining Corps Africa's expertise in grassroots development with Trinity Metals' commitment to responsible mining, this initiative will create a lasting impact on the livelihoods of Masoro Sector residents and beyond while contributing to Rwanda's broader goals of economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Together, the two organizations will work to build a brighter, more prosperous future for the youth and community members of Rulindo District.