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► Employment impact assessment of the Gypsum Mining Sector in Garissa County, Kenya



► **Employment Impact Assessment of the Gypsum Mining Sector in Garissa County, Kenya**

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First published 2026.

Cover Photo: Collins Oyuma, ILO External Consultant (2025)



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ISBN: 9789220433911 (print); 9789220433928 (web PDF)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54394/00033243>

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ASM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (Miners)
ASMAK	Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners Association of Kenya
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
CDAs	Community Development Agreements
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
COTU-K	Central Organization of Trade Unions- Kenya
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EC	European Commission
EMCA	Environmental Management and Coordination Act
EmplA	Employment Impact Assessment
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GCP	Gross County Product
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HCI	Human Capital Index
HDI	Human Development Index
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KSh	Kenyan Shilling
MT	Metric Tonnes
NEMA	National Environmental Management Authority
NDVI	Normalised Difference Vegetation Index
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
SAM	Social Accounting Matrix

Acknowledgements

This report was produced by the International Labour Organization (ILO) under the ILO-EU STRENGTHEN2 project, co-funded by the European Union, and the ILO PROSPECTS programme, funded by the Government of the Netherlands. The authors would like to thank Mito Tsukamoto, Branch Chief of the Employment in Investment (EMPINVEST) branch (ILO) and Ralf Krueger, Chief Technical Adviser (ILO), for providing overall guidance of this reports' production. The authors would also like to extend thanks to Camila Pereira Rego Meireles, Specialist in Extractives, Energy & Manufacturing Sectors (ILO) and Isaac Kimitei, County Director for the National Environment Management Authority in Garissa for their review and insights.

Executive summary

Gypsum mining in Garissa took a significant setback in 2023 when rising local tensions led to a mining suspension.

The gypsum mining sector plays a pivotal role in employment and community development, providing jobs for both skilled and unskilled workers. Gypsum extraction, transportation, and processing require a diverse workforce, thereby creating job opportunities in areas with limited employment alternatives, particularly in Garissa County, a historically marginalized region of Kenya (UNDP, 2014).

However, mining activities in Garissa County were suspended in August 2023 following a decision by the Regional Security Committee and the Garissa County Government, largely in response to heightened insecurity and violent confrontations at mining sites triggered by land disputes and inter-clan conflicts. These incidents resulted in the deaths of at least six young men. Additional concerns include the widespread presence of illegal miners, the degradation of prime pastureland, severe landscape scarring, extensive environmental damage, and increased risks to both livestock and human populations. The gypsum mining ban significantly disrupted the livelihoods of individuals whose incomes depended, whether directly or indirectly, on mining-related work, while simultaneously resulting in an estimated annual revenue shortfall of approximately Kenyan shilling (KSh) 8 million for the Garissa County Government.

Can gypsum mining provide employment and livelihood opportunities, and improve the lives of communities in Garissa County?

Gypsum mining has provided a significant boost to the local economy, fostering optimism about its potential to further contribute to regional development. Community leaders underscore the broader socio-economic benefits of gypsum mining, if conducted properly, including financial support for public services, infrastructure development, and educational initiatives. At a strategic level, Kenya Vision 2030—the country's long-term development blueprint—identifies mining as a key sector for accelerating economic growth and reducing poverty.

Gypsum mining is recognized as a source of livelihood, skills development, and broader socio-economic benefits, including enhanced employability, improved public services, infrastructure development, and educational opportunities.

Based on the limited information collected during the July 2025 field study, during the mining ban, gypsum mining activities in Garissa are estimated to have provided direct employment to approximately 240 individuals prior to the 2023 ban, the majority of whom worked in informal arrangements. In addition, the sector generates non-direct employment opportunities in transportation, processing, and related service industries within Garissa and other regions of Kenya, amounting to an estimated 1,860 jobs annually. Prior to the 2023 suspension of gypsum mining activities, the industry was estimated to generate about KSh 800 million in annual sales and to contribute approximately KSh 8 million per year in royalties and levies. In addition, plaster and cement produced from locally gypsum mining reduce reliance on imported materials and lower construction costs through increased utilization of these domestic products. If the 20 percent projected annual growth rate reported by local mining businesses is achieved, the sector could create an additional 360 direct jobs and approximately 2,760 indirect jobs within five years.

This study employed both macroeconomic modelling using an Input-Output approach (Social Accounting Matrix Multiplier Analysis) to estimate employment impacts and bottom-up data-collection methods to address socio-economic issues. The objective of this study was to generate evidence to inform post-ban policy decisions, and to support county and national planning and regulatory frameworks.

Thus far, gypsum mining has failed to offer a transition to formal, decent work, and offers few returns to the communities under a weakly implemented legal framework.

Gypsum mining in Garissa initially began in 2014 as an artisanal activity undertaken by local community members, although no official data are available on the number of people involved. By 2023, artisanal mining had largely disappeared, having been replaced by small-scale extraction companies operating in both Tana River and Garissa Counties. Following the ban, most small-scale operators relocated their activities to neighbouring Tana River County.

Before the ban, gypsum mining directly employed about 240 workers, frequently at wage levels above the national minimum. While some former artisanal miners transitioned into company employment or established their own small-scale businesses, local community members were predominantly engaged in low-skilled, manual roles. By contrast, higher-skilled positions and most economic returns were largely accruing outside Garissa.

The findings of this study also highlight significant challenges. Employment in the sector is largely informal, casual, and unregulated, with limited job security, social protection, or labour rights. Work is highly dependent on fluctuating demand, and occupational safety measures and grievance mechanisms are largely absent. Workers face serious welfare concerns, including inadequate access to clean water and sanitation, poor housing conditions, long working hours without overtime pay, and widespread health issues—particularly respiratory illnesses linked to dust exposure. Overall, while gypsum mining provides livelihoods for some, its benefits are unevenly distributed and accompanied by substantial labour and welfare risks.

Kenya has comprehensive legal provisions governing the mining sector; however, enforcement at county level has been weak. In Garissa, only one small-scale mining licence was registered (and had expired by August 2025), while an estimated 19 or more operators were reportedly operating illegally. These operators often circumvented licensing requirements by using permits held by others or entering into informal arrangements with local gatekeepers, thereby excluding both communities and county authorities. Local communities allege that the authorities were aware of these illegal operations and regulatory loopholes, highlighting significant governance and oversight challenges in the sector.

The largely informal and weakly regulated nature of the gypsum mining sector constraints government revenue collection and reduces the benefits accruing to local communities. Community members report inadequate consultation and minimal sharing of mining royalties. While gypsum mining has provided alternative livelihood opportunities beyond pastoralism—such as casual labour, food vending, and small-scale logistics—these gains have been uneven and limited. Increased mechanization and external control have displaced local workers and marginalized communities. In addition, promised benefits under Community Development Agreements (CDAs) or other corporate social responsibilities (CSR), including financial contributions, infrastructure development, and skilled employment, have largely been undelivered or underdelivered, contributing to declining community trust.

In lifting the gypsum mining ban, persistent challenges, such as informality and inter-clan conflicts, cannot be overlooked.

Unlike counties such as Kajiado and Narok, where land is formally registered, Garissa operates under a communal land tenure system without official registration, which further exacerbates governance and development challenges. Tana River County follows a similar tenure model. Since 2012, the Garissa County Government has held community land in trust, yet this arrangement has yielded few tangible benefits for residents.

The resumption of gypsum mining in Garissa is constrained by several other interconnected challenges, including limited formalization and inconsistent implementation of small-scale mining regulations; inadequate enforcement of mine closures, leading to environmental degradation, loss of rangeland, and threats to livelihoods; and persistent inter-clan conflicts that restrict access to gypsum resources and suppress economic potential. While the Mining Act and Community Development Agreements (CDAs) align with international standards, significant implementation gaps, weak supervision, and low awareness among communities and miners undermine their effectiveness.

Addressing these challenges requires stronger enforcement of existing laws, clearer benefit-sharing mechanisms within communal land systems robust licensing and supervision to curb illegal mining, and stricter land-use zoning to prevent degradation. As part of their response to the situation, National and County Governments established multi-sectoral teams by the third quarter of 2025, alongside a task force led by the County Commissioner, mandated to address security, environmental, legal, and community issues and to support the eventual lifting of the gypsum mining ban.

Large corporate investment, accompanied by reinforced corporate social responsibility, may provide an opportunity to reopen mining sites in Garissa.

Local investment in gypsum mining within Garissa is primarily driven by Kenyan-owned enterprises engaged in small- to medium-scale extraction. These companies contribute significantly to local employment, supply raw gypsum to domestic industries—particularly cement and construction—and stimulate regional economic activity through logistics, trade, and, in theory, community development initiatives. Their operations are closely integrated with local markets, ensuring a consistent supply of gypsum for key industrial sectors.

The Garissa County Government has outlined plans to strengthen public investment in the gypsum sector and attract large-scale and foreign investors. The sector demonstrates substantial potential for economic growth and improved livelihoods. Increased value addition, including the establishment of processing facilities, could facilitate the transition from mining to manufacturing, enhance competitiveness, and generate inclusive employment opportunities. Modern processing technologies and global market linkages are expected to further position Kenya as a regional leader in the gypsum industry.

Finally, international investors can play a pivotal role in expanding production and processing capacity, improving quality standards, and opening export channels. Their involvement often aligns with responsible mining practices under Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks, which include progressive

land rehabilitation measures such as backfilling, re-vegetation, and biodiversity restoration to ensure sustainable post-mining land use.

Can the ILO support the resumption of the Gypsum mining industry in Garissa County?

The mining ban was lifted in February 2026, subject to a set of conditions that mining companies must fulfil before a mining permit can be issued. These conditions include the establishment of community-level mining committees, the submission of land restoration plans, and a commitment to employ local labour.

Mining permits are currently being issued to small-scale mining companies, each granting access to up to 50 acres of land and typically allows for an extraction period of approximately six months. Companies are required to rehabilitate and restore the land before their permits can be renewed, thereby promoting environmental sustainability and accountability. To date, only one company has met the stipulated requirements and been granted a permit. In parallel, the Government of Kenya has seconded a geologist to Garissa County to provide technical oversight and support to the sector.

The sustainable resumption of mining activities in Garissa is critical to sustaining livelihoods and supporting local communities whose livelihoods are anchored in the sector. However, achieving this objective will require integrated solutions that address land tenure challenges, illegal mining practices, occupational safety and health, social protection gaps, skills deficits, and equitable benefit sharing with local communities. Only through a comprehensive and coordinated approach can the long-term sustainability of gypsum mining in Garissa be ensured. This transition may necessitate technical support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) to promote formalization and decent work standards.

Résumé exécutif

L'exploitation minière du gypse à Garissa a subi un revers important en 2023, lorsque la montée des tensions locales a entraîné la suspension des activités minières.

Le secteur de l'exploitation du gypse joue un rôle central dans l'emploi et le développement communautaire, en fournissant des emplois tant aux travailleurs qualifiés qu'aux travailleurs non qualifiés. L'extraction, le transport et la transformation du gypse nécessitent une main-d'œuvre diversifiée, créant ainsi des opportunités d'emploi dans des zones où les alternatives d'emploi sont limitées, en particulier dans le comté de Garissa, une région historiquement marginalisée du Kenya (PNUD, 2014).

Cependant, les activités minières dans le comté de Garissa ont été suspendues en août 2023 à la suite d'une décision du Comité régional de sécurité et du gouvernement du comté de Garissa, principalement en réponse à l'insécurité croissante et aux affrontements violents sur les sites miniers, déclenchés par des litiges fonciers et des conflits interclaniques. Ces incidents ont entraîné la mort d'au moins six jeunes hommes. D'autres préoccupations concernent la présence généralisée de mineurs illégaux, la dégradation de pâturages de première qualité, la défiguration grave du paysage, des dommages environnementaux étendus et des risques accrus tant pour le bétail que pour les populations humaines. L'interdiction de l'exploitation du gypse a considérablement perturbé les moyens de subsistance des personnes dont les revenus dépendaient, directement ou indirectement, d'activités liées à l'exploitation minière, tout en entraînant simultanément un manque à gagner annuel estimé à environ 8 millions de shillings kényans (KSh) pour le gouvernement du comté de Garissa.

L'exploitation minière du gypse peut-elle créer des emplois et offrir des moyens de subsistance, tout en améliorant les conditions de vie des communautés du comté de Garissa ?

L'exploitation minière du gypse a donné un élan considérable à l'économie locale, suscitant l'optimisme quant à sa capacité à contribuer davantage au développement régional. Les responsables communautaires soulignent les avantages socio-économiques plus larges de l'exploitation minière du gypse, à condition qu'elle soit menée de manière appropriée, notamment le soutien financier aux services publics, le développement des infrastructures et les initiatives éducatives. Sur le plan stratégique, Kenya Vision 2030 – le plan de développement à long terme du pays – identifie l'exploitation minière comme un secteur clé pour accélérer la croissance économique et réduire la pauvreté.

L'exploitation minière du gypse est reconnue comme une source de moyens de subsistance, de développement des compétences et d'avantages socio-économiques plus larges, notamment une meilleure employabilité, des services publics améliorés, le développement des infrastructures et des opportunités éducatives.

D'après les informations limitées recueillies lors de l'étude de terrain menée en juillet 2025, pendant la période d'interdiction de l'exploitation minière, on estime que les activités d'extraction de gypse à Garissa ont fourni un emploi direct à environ 240 personnes avant l'interdiction de 2023, dont la majorité travaillait dans le cadre de contrats informels. En outre, le secteur génère des opportunités d'emploi indirectes dans les secteurs du transport, de la transformation et des services connexes à Garissa et dans d'autres régions du Kenya, représentant environ 1 860 emplois par an. Avant la suspension des activités d'extraction de gypse en 2023, le secteur générait environ 800 millions de shillings kényans de chiffre d'affaires annuel et contribuait à hauteur d'environ 8 millions de shillings kényans par an en redevances et taxes. De plus, le plâtre et le ciment produits à partir du gypse extrait localement réduisent la dépendance vis-à-vis des matériaux importés et abaissent les coûts de construction grâce à une utilisation accrue de ces produits nationaux. Si le taux de croissance annuel de 20 % prévu, tel que rapporté par les entreprises minières locales, est atteint, le secteur pourrait créer 360 emplois directs supplémentaires et environ 2 760 emplois indirects d'ici cinq ans.

Cette étude a utilisé à la fois une modélisation macroéconomique basée sur une approche entrées-sorties (analyse des multiplicateurs de la matrice de comptabilité sociale) pour estimer les impacts sur l'emploi, et des méthodes de collecte de données ascendantes pour traiter les questions socio-économiques. L'objectif de cette étude était de générer des données factuelles pour éclairer les décisions politiques post-interdiction et soutenir la planification au niveau des comtés et au niveau national.

Jusqu'à présent, l'exploitation du gypse n'a pas permis d'assurer une transition vers un emploi formel et décent, et n'apporte que peu de bénéfices aux communautés, dans un cadre juridique mal appliqué.

L'exploitation minière du gypse à Garissa a débuté en 2014 sous la forme d'une activité artisanale menée par des membres de la communauté locale, bien qu'aucune donnée officielle ne soit disponible sur le nombre de personnes impliquées. En 2023, l'exploitation artisanale avait largement disparu, remplacée par des entreprises d'extraction à petite échelle opérant dans les comtés de Tana River et de Garissa. À la suite de l'interdiction, la plupart des petits exploitants ont délocalisé leurs activités vers le comté voisin de Tana River.

Avant l'interdiction, l'exploitation du gypse employait directement environ 240 travailleurs, souvent à des niveaux de salaire supérieurs au minimum national. Alors que certains anciens mineurs artisanaux ont trouvé un emploi dans des entreprises ou ont créé leur propre petite entreprise, les membres des communautés locales occupaient principalement des postes manuels peu qualifiés. En revanche, les postes plus qualifiés et la plupart des retombées économiques se concentraient largement en dehors de Garissa.

Les conclusions de cette étude mettent également en évidence des défis majeurs. L'emploi dans ce secteur est en grande partie informel, précaire et non réglementé, avec une sécurité de l'emploi, une protection sociale et des droits du travail limités. Le travail dépend fortement des fluctuations de la demande, et les mesures de sécurité au travail ainsi que les mécanismes de recours font largement défaut. Les travailleurs sont confrontés à de graves problèmes sociaux, notamment un accès insuffisant à l'eau potable et à l'assainissement, de mauvaises conditions de logement, de longues heures de travail sans rémunération des heures supplémentaires, ainsi que des problèmes de santé généralisés, en particulier des maladies respiratoires liées à l'exposition à la poussière. Dans l'ensemble, si l'exploitation minière du gypse assure des moyens de subsistance à certains, ses bénéfices sont répartis de manière inégale et s'accompagnent de risques importants en matière de travail et de bien-être.

Le Kenya dispose de dispositions légales complètes régissant le secteur minier ; cependant, leur application au niveau des comtés a été insuffisante. À Garissa, une seule licence d'exploitation minière à petite échelle a été enregistrée (et avait expiré en août 2025), tandis qu'au moins 19 exploitants auraient opéré illégalement. Ces exploitants contournaient souvent les exigences en matière de licence en utilisant des permis détenus par d'autres ou en concluant des accords informels avec les responsables locaux, excluant ainsi tant les communautés que les autorités du comté. Les communautés locales affirment que les autorités avaient connaissance de ces opérations illégales et des lacunes réglementaires, soulignant les défis importants en matière de gouvernance et de contrôle dans ce secteur.

Le caractère largement informel et peu réglementé du secteur de l'exploitation du gypse entrave la perception des recettes publiques et réduit les retombées pour les communautés locales. Les membres des communautés dénoncent un manque de consultation et un partage minimal des redevances minières. Si l'exploitation du gypse a offert des moyens de subsistance alternatifs au-delà du pastoralisme - tels que le travail occasionnel, la vente de denrées alimentaires et la logistique à petite échelle -, ces avantages ont été inégaux et limités. La mécanisation accrue et le contrôle externe ont entraîné le déplacement des travailleurs locaux et la marginalisation des communautés. De plus, les avantages promis dans le cadre des accords de développement communautaire (CDAs) ou d'autres initiatives de responsabilité sociale des entreprises (RSE), notamment les contributions financières, le développement des infrastructures et la création d'emplois qualifiés, n'ont pour la plupart pas été tenus ou l'ont été de manière insuffisante, ce qui a contribué à éroder la confiance des communautés.

La levée de l'interdiction d'exploitation du gypse ne doit pas faire oublier les défis persistants, tels que l'économie informelle et les conflits interclaniques.

Contrairement à des comtés tels que Kajiado et Narok, où les terres sont officiellement enregistrées, Garissa fonctionne selon un système foncier communautaire sans enregistrement officiel, ce qui aggrave encore les défis en matière de gouvernance et de développement. Le comté de Tana River suit un modèle foncier similaire. Depuis 2012, le gouvernement du comté de Garissa gère les terres communautaires en fiducie, mais cet arrangement n'a apporté que peu d'avantages concrets aux habitants.

La reprise de l'exploitation minière du gypse à Garissa est entravée par plusieurs autres défis interdépendants, notamment la formalisation limitée et la mise en œuvre inégale de la réglementation relative à l'exploitation minière à petite échelle ; l'application insuffisante des fermetures de mines, entraînant une dégradation de l'environnement, la perte de pâturages et des menaces pour les moyens de subsistance ; et les conflits interclaniques persistants qui restreignent l'accès aux ressources en gypse et freinent le potentiel économique. Bien que la loi sur les mines et les accords de développement communautaire (CDA) soient conformes aux normes internationales, d'importantes lacunes dans leur mise en œuvre, une supervision insuffisante et une faible sensibilisation des communautés et des mineurs compromettent leur efficacité.

Pour relever ces défis, il est nécessaire de renforcer l'application des lois existantes, de mettre en place des mécanismes plus clairs de partage des bénéfices au sein des systèmes fonciers communaux, d'instaurer un système solide d'octroi de licences et de contrôle afin d'endiguer l'exploitation minière illégale, et d'appliquer un zonage foncier plus strict pour prévenir la dégradation des sols. Dans le cadre de leur réponse à cette situation, les gouvernements national et des comtés ont mis en place, d'ici le troisième trimestre 2025, des équipes multisectorielles ainsi qu'un groupe de travail dirigé par le commissaire du comté, chargé de traiter les questions de sécurité, d'environnement, de droit et communautaires, et de soutenir la levée éventuelle de l'interdiction de l'exploitation minière du gypse.

Des investissements importants de la part des entreprises, accompagnés d'une responsabilité sociale renforcée, pourraient offrir une opportunité de rouvrir les sites miniers à Garissa.

Les investissements locaux dans l'exploitation minière du gypse à Garissa sont principalement le fait d'entreprises kenyanes pratiquant une extraction à petite ou moyenne échelle. Ces sociétés contribuent de manière significative à l'emploi local, fournissent du gypse brut aux industries nationales – en particulier celles du ciment et de la construction – et stimulent l'activité économique régionale par le biais de la logistique, du commerce et, en théorie, d'initiatives de développement communautaire. Leurs activités sont étroitement intégrées aux marchés locaux, garantissant un approvisionnement régulier en gypse pour les principaux secteurs industriels.

Le gouvernement du comté de Garissa a présenté des plans visant à renforcer les investissements publics dans le secteur du gypse et à attirer des investisseurs étrangers et à grande échelle. Ce secteur présente un potentiel considérable en termes de croissance économique et d'amélioration des moyens de subsistance. Une valeur ajoutée accrue, notamment grâce à la mise en place d'installations de transformation, pourrait faciliter la transition de l'exploitation minière vers la transformation, renforcer la compétitivité et générer des opportunités d'emploi inclusives. Les technologies de transformation modernes et les liens avec les marchés mondiaux devraient permettre au Kenya de se positionner davantage comme un leader régional dans l'industrie du gypse.

Enfin, les investisseurs internationaux peuvent jouer un rôle déterminant dans l'expansion des capacités de production et de transformation, l'amélioration des normes de qualité et l'ouverture de débouchés à l'exportation. Leur implication s'inscrit souvent dans le cadre de pratiques minières responsables, conformément aux principes environnementaux, sociaux et de gouvernance (ESG), qui comprennent des mesures progressives de remise en état des sols telles que le remblayage, la revégétalisation et la restauration de la biodiversité, afin de garantir une utilisation durable des terres après l'exploitation minière.

L'OIT peut-elle soutenir la reprise de l'industrie minière du gypse dans le comté de Garissa ?

L'interdiction d'exploitation minière a été levée en février 2026, sous réserve d'une série de conditions que les sociétés minières doivent remplir avant qu'un permis d'exploitation puisse être délivré. Ces conditions comprennent la mise en place de comités miniers au niveau communautaire, la soumission de plans de restauration des terres et l'engagement à employer de la main-d'œuvre locale.

Des permis d'exploitation sont actuellement délivrés à des petites sociétés minières, chacun accordant l'accès à un maximum de 50 acres de terrain et autorisant généralement une période d'extraction d'environ six mois. Les sociétés sont tenues de réhabiliter et de restaurer les terres avant que leurs permis puissent être renouvelés, ce qui favorise la durabilité environnementale et la responsabilité. À ce jour, une seule société a satisfait aux exigences stipulées et s'est vu octroyer un permis. Parallèlement, le gouvernement du Kenya a détaché un géologue dans le comté de Garissa afin d'assurer la supervision technique et d'apporter un soutien au secteur.

La reprise durable des activités minières à Garissa est essentielle pour préserver les moyens de subsistance et soutenir les communautés locales dont les moyens de subsistance dépendent de ce secteur. Toutefois, la réalisation de cet objectif nécessitera des solutions intégrées qui s'attaquent aux problèmes liés au régime foncier, aux pratiques minières illégales, à la sécurité et à la santé au travail, aux lacunes en matière de protection sociale, au manque de compétences et au partage équitable des bénéfices avec les communautés locales. Seule une approche globale et coordonnée permettra d'assurer la viabilité à long terme de l'exploitation du gypse à Garissa. Cette transition pourrait nécessiter un soutien technique de l'Organisation internationale du travail (OIT) afin de promouvoir la formalisation et les normes de travail décent.

1. Introduction

1.1. Study context and rationale

Mining activities in Garissa were suspended in August 2023 following a decision by the Regional Security Committee and the Garissa County Government, primarily in response to heightened insecurity at mining sites and violent clashes that resulted in the deaths of at least six young men—an incident that remains unresolved to date. Other compounding factors include widespread infiltration by many illegal miners, the degradation of pastureland and landscape scarring, which have exposed livestock and people from local communities to safety risks, environmental concerns, land-related conflicts and inter-clan disputes. The suspension has not only disrupted the livelihoods of approximately 240 workers, but has also brought an important revenue stream for the Garissa County government to a halt. Moreover, the sector's largely informal and weakly regulated nature had already constrained the government's capacity to generate revenue and limited the extent to which local communities could benefit from mining activities. These technical and governance challenges have been further exacerbated by political rivalries among local leaders from different clans in Garissa County.

The County therefore requested the ILO's PROSPECTS¹ and STRENGTHEN2 programmes to undertake a study assessing the employment and business potential of the gypsum mining sector and to recommend measures required to ensure productive and sustainable gypsum mining. The findings of the study are expected to inform the planning and regulatory processes of the Garissa County Government with respect to gypsum mining, while also documenting key lessons and supporting the County's efforts to become investor-ready in the gypsum mining sector.

This study focuses on conducting an Employment Impact Assessment (EmplA) of the gypsum mining sector in Garissa County, wherever feasible. However, due to the mining ban, most activities had relocated to neighbouring counties, such as Tana River. Consequently, the analysis was supplemented with comparative data collected from gypsum mining operations in Tana River County, which served as a basis for estimating employment potential in the sector. The study covered the gypsum mining sector and its supply chain in Kenya, with a focus on activities in Garissa and Tana River Counties.

1.2. Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to generate an evidence base to inform policymaking and to develop estimates of employment potential in the gypsum mining sector in Garissa County. The findings are intended to inform the next steps to be undertaken by the County Government following the lifting of the 2023 gypsum mining ban. The specific objectives are to:

- Provide a comprehensive overview of the gypsum mining sector's employment situation, including recent developments, growth prospects, key stakeholders, and the degree of compliance with industry standards.
- Identify real and potential socio-economic and environmental impacts of the gypsum mining sector in Garissa.
- Review available data, reports, and evaluations to estimate direct employment figures and assess employment quality (e.g., productivity, earnings, working conditions, informality levels, and the demographic characteristics of workers).
- Identify key activities and sub-sectors related to gypsum mining, such as transportation, processing, and export, and estimate their contributions to employment.
- Document the policy and regulatory frameworks guiding the gypsum sector in Garissa County, identifying opportunities (enablers) and gaps.

¹ The Partnership on Inclusive Jobs and Education for Host Communities, Refugees and other Forcibly Displaced Persons, known as the PROSPECTS Partnership, is a multi-year programme funded by the Government of the Netherlands. The programme has brought together five agencies (ILO, World Bank, IFC, UNICEF, UNHCR) to devise collaborative and innovative approaches for inclusive job creation and education in contexts characterized by forced displacement. STRENGTHEN2 is a joint initiative of the European Union (EU) and the ILO that aims at leveraging employment impact assessments (EmplAs) to promote the creation of more and better jobs in sub-Saharan African countries.

1.3. Scope and methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and exploratory design, reflecting the limited availability of data in Garissa County as a result of the mining ban. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were employed, using a combination of the following research methods:

Desk Review: analysis of available literature, reports, relevant policies and studies on the gypsum mining sector. Review of reports from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs and other international organizations and research institutions.

Stakeholder consultations/interviews: 20 interviews with key stakeholders, including national and county government officials, mining companies, community representatives (chiefs), community gatekeepers and industry experts (refer to Annex 1 for a complete list of Key Informant Interview respondents).

Survey and field visits: field visits to 4 mining sites (Abdisamit in the Laago Area and Kora Kora sites, both in Garissa County, and Charidande and Areri sites in Tana River County) to examine mining operations and associated environmental effects; a survey of 64 workers spread across the 4 gypsum mining sites; 4 focus group discussions (FDGs) (10 respondents each) with workers and community members (2 in Garissa and 2 in Tana River—refer to Annex 1 for a full list of participants); interviews with 3 mining companies in Tana River County; and several informal interviews with key gypsum mining supply chain actors, including transporters, brokers/intermediaries and distributors. These were conducted to gather data on job creation, employment practices, working conditions, social and environmental effects and community impact.

Non-direct jobs estimation: modelling of non-direct temporary jobs created in the gypsum mining sector, using an Input-Output approach.

Data Analyses: quantitative and qualitative analyses of the field data, and examination of relevant data from government sources, surveys, and other databases including satellite images to look at the scope of mining activities, how they have changed over time and their environmental impact.

This study is organized into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 (the Introduction) introduced the study, setting out the background and rationale, the study objectives and scope, and the overall methodological and analytical approach that guides the assessment. Chapter 2 provides an overview of mining activities in Garissa County, with a particular focus on gypsum mining. Chapter 3 examines employment and decent work dimensions, drawing on findings from worker and employer surveys. Chapter 4 explores the economic potential of gypsum mining in Garissa County, with a special emphasis on projected employment outcomes. Chapter 5 assesses the social and environmental impacts of gypsum mining activities. Chapter 6 identifies key challenges facing the sector, while Chapter 7 presents concluding remarks, outlining a path towards sustainable reopening of the gypsum mining sites in Garissa.

2. Overview of gypsum mining in Garissa

2.1. Garissa County context

Garissa County, situated in northeastern Kenya, presents unique demographic characteristics shaped by its predominantly rural setting, cultural practices, and socio-economic dynamics. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Garissa has a population of 841,353 individuals, with approximately 73.3 per cent living in rural areas (KNBS, 2019). With 141,394 households and an average household size of 5.9 persons, Garissa exceeds the national average of 3.9 persons per household, reflecting its larger family structures (KNBS, 2022). The sex ratio is estimated at 1.2:1 male to female.

The region has served as a major refugee-hosting area for over three decades, primarily through the Dadaab Refugee Complex. As of February 2025, the Dadaab complex accommodated approximately 426,822 registered refugees and asylum seekers, making it one of the largest refugee settlements globally (UNHCR, 2025). The refugee population in Dadaab is predominantly Somali, accounting for 96.8 per cent (410,241 individuals) of the total refugee population (UNHCR, 2025).

In 2024, Garissa reported a nominal Gross County Product (GCP) of approximately US\$ 588 million, ranking it 41st among Kenya's 47 counties. The per capita GCP stood at around US\$ 649, reflecting the County's relatively modest economic output compared to national figures (KNBS, 2024). The local economy is predominantly driven by livestock and pastoralism, with supplementary contributions from agriculture, trade, mining and public administration. However, recurrent droughts, floods, and infrastructural constraints have hindered consistent economic growth.

Situated in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands, Garissa grapples with pronounced poverty levels. The Human Development Index (HDI) in 2023 was reported at 0.494, placing Garissa among Kenya's lower-ranking counties in terms of human development outcomes (StatsKenya, 2022). In 2022, Garissa's overall poverty rate was 67.8 per cent, placing it among the top five most impoverished counties nationally (KNBS, 2023). The hardcore poverty rate (defined as the inability to meet basic food needs) stood at 21.1 per cent, reflecting severe deprivation in the region (KNBS, 2023). Contributing factors include recurrent droughts, limited infrastructure, and a heavy reliance on subsistence livestock farming, which is highly vulnerable to climate shocks.

According to Naeku and Irungu (2024), Garissa recorded the lowest employment-to-population ratio in Kenya at 37.1 per cent, reflecting limited formal employment opportunities. The services sector employs the majority (51.7 per cent) of the workforce, followed by agriculture (45.2 per cent) (KNBS 2021- Kenya Continuous Household Survey, KIPPRA Policy Brief 2023-2024). The industrial sector remains small, employing just 3.1 per cent of workers. Labour productivity in Garissa is slightly below the national average, constrained by factors such as low literacy rates, inadequate infrastructure, and a high incidence of child labour among 5-17-year-olds, which limits opportunities for formal skills development.

2.2. Mining activities in Garissa County

2.2.1. Current contribution of mining and gypsum mining

The mining and quarrying sector plays a pivotal role in Kenya's economy. Cowling (2024) reports that the mining sector contributed approximately Kenyan shilling (KSh) 120.3 billion (around US\$ 908 million) to GDP in 2022, less than 1 per cent of Kenya's GDP but part of a steady upward trend since 2018. While gypsum-specific GDP data are not disaggregated, the mineral's significance is nonetheless widely recognized due to its extensive use in cement production and the wider construction industry. Gypsum extraction in Kenya was recorded in the early 2000s but has expanded substantially in recent years, driven by rising demand from the construction and agriculture sectors (CEIC, 2024; Kabarak Journal of Research & Innovation 2016; Omoti 2016). Significant gypsum deposits are found in several counties, including Garissa, Kajiado, Turkana, and Tana River.

According to the Garissa County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2018-2022, the county is endowed with a range of mineral resources, including gypsum, sand, ballast, murram, hardcore, limestone and clay. Sand mining is widespread along the Tana River banks, in areas such as Bura, and Garissa Township. Although largely informal, sand harvesting employs local youth and casual workers involved in excavation, loading, and transportation. Ballast and murram extraction is concentrated mainly in Garissa's Lagdera and Fafi sub-counties. Murram quarries in the Modogashe and Dadaab areas generate seasonal employment, especially during dry periods. Hardcore and building stones are quarried in small open-pit operations near Bura East and Ijara, contributing to both public and private building projects. Sand, ballast and hardcore are also mined in the Modika

and Kora Kora areas of Garissa, by artisanal miners. Clay deposits, especially in the Balambala and Hulugho areas, are used in traditional brickmaking. Local artisans and small-scale brick makers form a modest but important segment of the construction material value chain, offering employment to women and youth.

Meanwhile, gypsum mining in Garissa represents a notable component of the local economy, supplying an essential raw material for construction and manufacturing. Gypsum deposits in the county are found in areas such as Abdisamit, Laago, Balambala, Kora Kora, Diiso, Ramei, Libahley, and Alinjukur. In total, eight villages in Garissa are reported to engage in gypsum mining. The high quality of Garissa's gypsum is considered suitable for industrial applications, particularly in cement manufacturing.

Despite their contribution to local livelihoods, detailed and up-to-date data on production volumes or market value remain limited. Most mining activities remain informal, unregulated, and characterized by casual and seasonal employment. As a result, the economic value of these resources remains largely underexploited due to limited research and low levels of investment in the mining sector.

In 2023, Kenya exported US\$ 7.4 million worth of gypsum, accounting for 0.1 per cent of the country's total exports (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2023; KNBS, 2025a). The main importers of Kenyan gypsum are Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi (World Bank, 2022). Gypsum mining also generates employment, especially in producing regions such as Garissa County. Prior to the suspension of gypsum mining activities in 2023, the sector reportedly employed about 240 individuals directly in Garissa, with over 20 small-scale operational companies (Nation Africa, 2023). Key informant interviews (KIIs) with community leaders further highlight the sector's broader socio-economic contributions, including funding for public services, infrastructure projects, and support for educational initiatives.

2.2.2. Prospecting, extraction methods and technologies in gypsum mining

No comprehensive geological surveying and detailed geospatial mapping have been conducted for gypsum deposits in Garissa County. Instead, individual mining companies do their own prospecting and assessments. Gypsum in Garissa is found mainly in near-surface deposits, which are relatively easy to access and extract. As a result, surface mining techniques, such as open-pit mining, are commonly used, allowing for recovery of gypsum with minimal technological investment.

Artisanal miners typically rely on manual tools, such as hoes, axes, pickaxes, shovels, sledgehammers, and handheld drills for excavation, as well as hand crushers for processing. Materials are typically moved using wheelbarrows, buckets and animals-drawn carts. Meanwhile, small-scale mining companies use more mechanized equipment, including hydraulic excavators, sieves/screens for sorting, and trucks for transportation (see Plate 1). Bulldozers may also be used occasionally to backfill of open pits. Basic safety equipment includes dust masks, gloves, goggles, helmets, water sprays, boots, and overalls.

2.2.3. From labour-intensive methods to mechanized approaches

In Garissa, the ease of access to gypsum deposits attracts artisanal and small-scale miners/companies that often participate in extraction activities. By contrast, large-scale gypsum processing is undertaken by a few companies outside Garissa, including Kenjoro Enterprises Ltd. operating in the Konza area, Eastern Kenya, Erdemann Gypsum Limited (Mwingi), in Kitui County, Kitengela Gypsum Ltd (Nairobi), Maiyam International (Nairobi) and Nevira Minerals Company Ltd (Kajiado).

Initially, artisanal gypsum mining created job opportunities for local communities in Garissa and Tana River, albeit often under informal and less regulated conditions (Kenya Extractives Programme, 2020). The activity was community-driven, with primarily low-skilled youth manually excavating gypsum using hand tools. Remuneration was typically output-based, with miners typically paid per tonne of gypsum mined by intermediaries or companies. The introduction of mechanized gypsum mining using hydraulic excavators replaced this labour-intensive process. This shift reduced manual employment, displaced artisanal miners, and concentrated control of mining operations in the hands of brokers and companies. Mechanization was particularly attractive to off-takers because of its superior efficiency and capacity to generate revenue rapidly. For instance, an artisanal miner could extract one 28-MT truck in 30 days, while a hydraulic excavator could extract up to 10 truckloads per day, depending on site conditions.

Over time, local communities stopped artisanal mining, and either transitioned into mechanized mining activities in the small-scale mining operations as casual workers or returned to pastoralism. At the time of this study, no artisanal gypsum miners were reported in either of the counties studied (Garissa and Tana River²). Only informal small-scale miners and registered small companies were found to engage in gypsum mining (see Table 1 for the differences between artisanal miners, small-scale miners, and mining companies).

² It was noted that artisanal miners were involved in the extraction of other minerals including sand, ballast, murram, and hardcore.

► **Table 1. Key Differences between Artisanal Miners, Small-Scale Miners and Mining Companies**

Artisanal Miners	Small-Scale Miners	Mining Companies
Operate at a subsistence level, using manual labour and rudimentary tools like hoes, axes, pickaxes, shovels, sledgehammers and handheld drills.	Operate semi-mechanized or basic machinery, such as hydraulic excavators and sieves/screens.	Operate mechanized and heavy machinery, such as hydraulic excavators, sieves/screens, crushers, bull dozers etc.
Have low capital investment and often no access to financing.	Require moderate capital investment and may have access to financing.	May engage in some processing at the site e.g. crushing.
Work informally, often outside legal/regulatory frameworks.	Work informally, often outside legal/regulatory frameworks.	Require huge capital investment and have access to financing.
Have weak or no compliance with regulations.	Do not have permits and may not comply with regulations nor follow environmental and labour laws.	Often work formally within legal/regulatory frameworks, obtaining permits and following environmental and labour laws.
Often engage in individual or family-based mining activities (about 1-5 individuals).	Are often small individual businesses, which employ a small support workforce without formal structures (about 6-10 individuals).	Are registered businesses, which employ a substantial workforce with formal structures (more than 10 individuals).
Typically focus on minerals that require minimal processing.	Typically focus on minerals that require minimal processing.	Engage in mining for commercial purposes, often extracting a wider range of minerals.
Make no contribution to taxes.	Engage in mining for commercial purposes.	Make higher contribution to taxes.
	Make very little or no contribution to taxes.	

Source: Author's elaboration.

In both Garissa and Tana River, miners were generally characterised as informal small-scale operators, engaged in mechanized or semi-mechanized mining using hydraulic excavators. Their output cannot be equated to the low productivity of artisanal miners. They normally engage a support team for their mining activities (watchmen, guards, loaders, machine operators, drivers, cooks, etc.). Operationally, these miners function in a manner comparable to formal companies; however, companies are registered and operate within the formal sector, while small-scale miners are not registered, and operate informally and often illegally.

► **Figure 1. Current gypsum mining technologies in Tana River**

Source: Author's research (2025).

2.3. Mining regulatory and policy framework

Mining activities in Garissa County are primarily governed by Kenya's national legal and policy framework, since the county has yet to develop its own mining legislation. The key regulatory instruments include the Mining Act, 2016, the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA), 1999, and the Garissa County EMCA, 2018. Land access and local development issues related to gypsum mining are governed by the County Governments Act, 2012, integrated into CIDPs. Additional compliance requirements also include adherence to statutes such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), 2007, which mandates safe working conditions in gypsum quarries and processing facilities. Oversight is exercised by the State Department for Mining, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the National Land Commission, and the Mining Police.

The Mining Act, 2016 provides a comprehensive legal framework for the exploration, extraction, and management of mineral resources, including gypsum. It emphasizes sustainable and inclusive exploitation of mineral resources, requiring mining companies to secure appropriate licences and permits, and to conduct Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs), as required under the EMCA before operations begin. Furthermore, the Mining Act mandates mining companies to prioritise Kenyan citizens in employment and training, a provision aimed at maximizing job creation for local communities, while also obligating operators to enter into Community Development Agreements (CDAs)³ with host communities. These agreements outline commitments to infrastructure, health, education, and employment, ensuring that local populations directly benefit from mining operations. The Mining Act also requires mining companies to comply with a revenue-sharing mechanism, which stipulates that 70 per cent of mineral royalties go to the national government, 20 per cent to county governments, and 10 per cent to the local communities. This structure is designed to promote local economic development, support social programmes, and address inequalities in resource-rich areas. By ensuring a portion of mineral wealth remains within the local jurisdictions, the Mining Act aims to tackle poverty through enhanced public service delivery and community empowerment. Complementing the Mining Act are the 2018 Draft Mining (Local Content) Regulations, which seek to deepen Kenyan participation in the sector by requiring mining companies to prioritize Kenyan goods and services, employ local workers, and build technical and managerial capacities among Kenyans.

Gypsum mining in Kenya requires individual miners and companies to obtain the appropriate licenses beginning with prospecting or reconnaissance permits. Upon confirmation of viable deposits, a mining license for large-scale operations or a mining permit for small-scale operations must be obtained. Applications for large-scale operations must include a feasibility study, an approved ESIA from NEMA, and proof of land access, subsequently reviewed by the Mineral Rights Board—the statutory body established under the Mining Act of 2016 to oversee the management and allocation of mineral rights. Large-scale licenses are valid for up to 25 years, while small-scale permits may be issued for up to 5 years, subject to compliance with safety, reporting, and royalty requirements. To improve transparency and formalize artisanal mining, the government operates the Kenya Mining Cadastre Portal and provides training programmes that support safer, more productive, and

³ A Community Development Agreement (CDA) is developed when an investor intends to obtain a mining licence, which typically covers a larger area. Mining permits, however, do not require the development of a CDA but instead require a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plan intended to benefit community members.

financially inclusive small-scale mining (Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs, 2021). Further details regarding the regulatory and policy framework are available in Annex 3.

The national and county governments in Kenya play complementary roles in the mining sector. The national government, through the Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs and the State Department for Mining is responsible for policy formulation, licensing, regulation and oversight of mineral resources, as outlined in the Mining Act, 2016. It oversees large-scale mining operations, maintains the online mining cadastre, enforces compliance with environmental and labour regulations, and ensures equitable sharing of mineral revenues. Additionally, it negotiates mining agreements, manages geological surveys, and ensures that national interests are safeguarded in mining investments.

County governments enforce mining regulations at the local level. They facilitate community engagement, land-use planning, and monitoring of artisanal and small-scale mining activities within their jurisdictions. In addition, county governments ensure environmental conservation, public participation and management of CDAs. Working in collaboration with the national government, county governments ensure that mining operations align with the CIDPs and address the socio-economic needs of host communities.

3. Employment and decent work

At the time of the survey (2025), artisanal mining appeared to have given way to small-scale extraction companies and informal groups using semi-mechanized extraction methods (both in Tana River and Garissa). It was noted that some of the artisanal miners transitioned into employment with mining companies in various capacities. Before the 2023 suspension, Garissa witnessed increasing gypsum mining activities, reflecting the county's substantial deposits. Although the sector remained relatively underdeveloped, local communities benefited from formal and informal employment opportunities. Processing reported to take place outside Garissa, with only one processor located in Mwingi (which has since been shut down), and the rest located in Nairobi and environs (cement factories in Athi River).

Local community members within the mining areas were generally involved in various unskilled roles including manual cleaning and sorting of mined gypsum, loading, security duties, and logistical support. Across the mining companies, the most common role assigned to local community members appeared to be in security services as guards or watchmen. Skilled labour, including drivers and plant operators, was generally from outside Garissa. Due to the suspension of mining operations, most of the small-scale miners operating in Garissa before 2023 migrated their mining operations to Tana River.

3.1. Findings from individual miners survey

The Miners Survey targeted individuals involved in gypsum mining in both Garissa and Tana River Counties. Given the gypsum mining suspension, questions targeting respondents in Garissa were designed to elicit retrospective responses referring to their mining activities before the 2023 mining ban. Respondents in Tana River provided responses based on their ongoing mining activities at the time of the survey. Responses on payments received by gypsum miners in Garissa (reported in nominal terms) were converted to real 2025 values using Kenya's compounded inflation rate between 2023 and 2025. The sample size is very small and may not be representative of the full population of gypsum miners and companies that operated in Garissa prior to the ban, nor of those currently active in Tana River County. Consequently, the financial information collected from the limited number of miners and firms was extrapolated solely to provide a rough estimate of the potential size of the industry.

3.1.1. Demographic characteristics

Data were collected from 64 individual miners operating in Garissa (Kora Kora) and Tana River (Areri and Charidande). ⁴All respondents interviewed were male. The overall mean age was 39.7 years (standard deviation = 1.67), with a median age of 37.5 years (34 in Garissa and 38 in Tana River). Ages ranged from 19 to 74 years, with 78.1 per cent of respondents aged 49 years and below, indicating that the majority fall within the productive age bracket of 18–49 years. Garissa recorded a higher proportion of miners (85.7 per cent) in this age group compared to Tana River (76 per cent). Youth (defined as individuals below 35 years) accounted for 39.1 per cent of all respondents. The share of youth was higher in Garissa (50 per cent) than in Tana River (36 per cent). Educational attainment was generally low, with 85.7 per cent of respondents in Garissa and 54 per cent in Tana River reporting no formal education. Overall, more than 60 per cent of respondents were illiterate. The median household size was 7.5 in Garissa and 6.5 in Tana River among surveyed; both notably higher than the national average of 3.9 individuals per household and county averages at 5.9 and 4.6 respectively.

3.1.2. Structure of gypsum mining activities

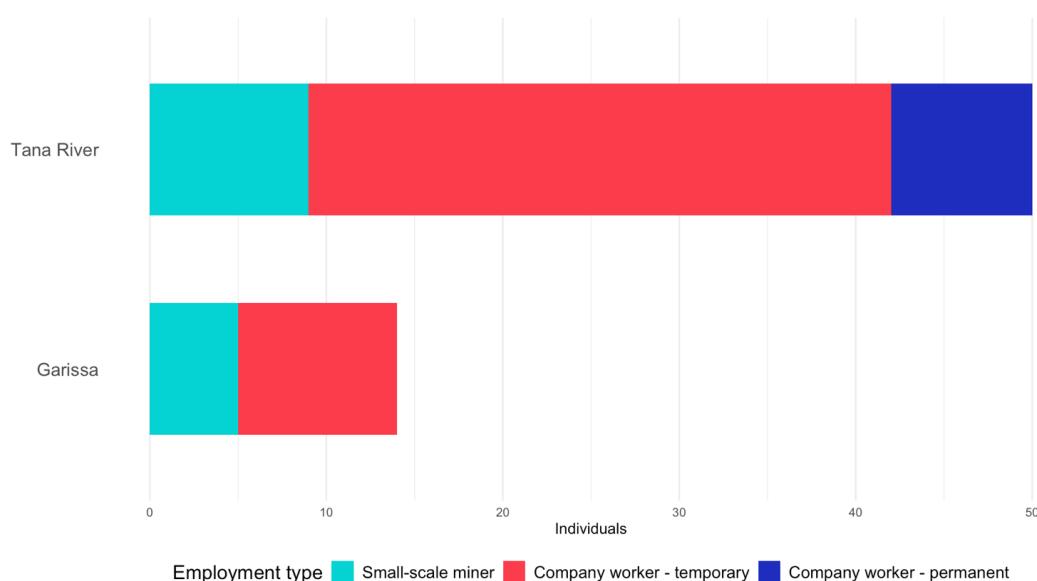
The individual miners surveyed could be categorized according to their scale of operation and legal status (registration) as either small-scale miner or company worker. In this study, small-scale miners are defined as individuals directly engaged in gypsum extraction using mechanized or semi-mechanized methods but operating informally, without official registration. Company workers, on the other hand, are individuals employed by registered small-scale mining companies (see Table 1 in Chapter 2). Of the 64 respondents surveyed, 14 were classified as small-scale miners and 50 as company workers (see Figure 2). ⁵However, inferences drawn from the findings among the company workers could also be applied to the workforce of small-scale miners, as their characteristics and operations were broadly comparable. No artisanal miners were identified in either Garissa or Tana River.

⁴ It is important to note that the sample in Garissa (n=14) was considerably smaller than in Tana River (n=50), and comparative findings should be treated with caution.

⁵ This does not constitute a fully representative sample of the total mining workforce in both counties, as individuals engaged in illegal mining activities are less likely to participate in or respond to the survey.

The majority of company workers were engaged under temporary contracts, mainly as casual or seasonal labour.⁶ In Garissa all respondents were employed on a temporary basis, whereas around one-fifth of respondents in Tana River reported being in permanent employment.

► **Figure 2. Employment types among individual miners**



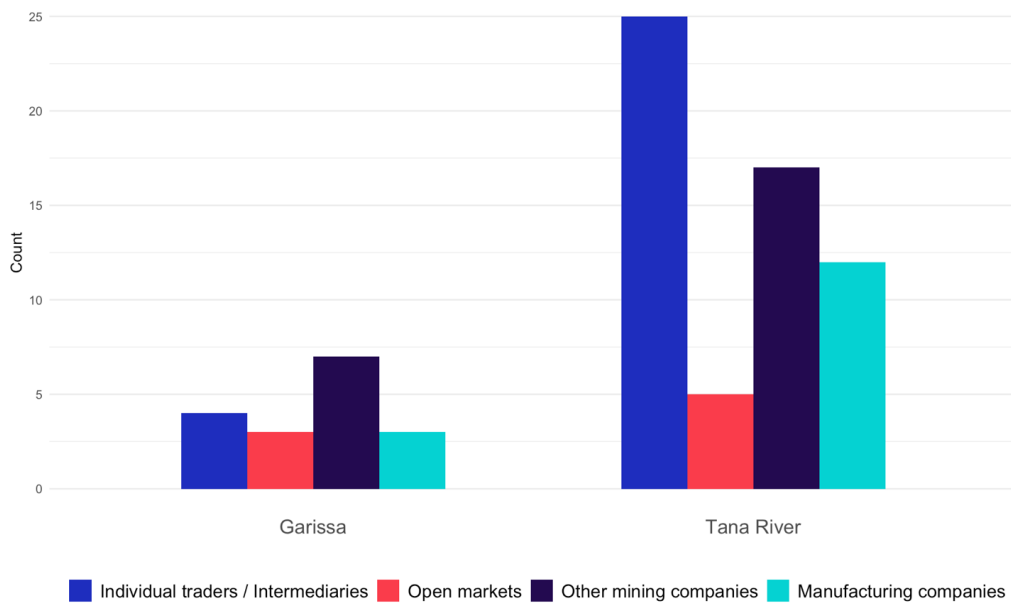
Source: Survey data (2025).

Mining activities in both Garissa and Tana River are predominantly informal. Almost 80 per cent of respondents reported that they did not know how to obtain a mining permit. Key constraints to acquiring permits include a lack of awareness regarding their importance or necessity, alongside financial limitations. Furthermore, only 14 per cent of miners reported belonging to any form of mining association. In Garissa, respondents affiliated with an association specifically mentioned the Kora Kora Gypsum Miners Association. In Tana River, respondents who reported belonging to an association appeared to be referring to community-based organizations (CBOs) established to oversee the activities of mining companies. Reported functions of these CBOs include ensuring that salaries and other financial benefits are appropriately distributed to the community and facilitating the resolution of conflicts between the community and mining companies.

Respondents most commonly sold raw gypsum to individual traders or intermediaries (45.3 per cent), who then supplied cement factories or other processors. Other major buyers included mining companies (37.5 per cent), manufacturing firms (23.4 per cent), and open markets (12.5 per cent).⁷ Sales patterns differed across the two counties: in Tana River, most miners relied on traders or intermediaries, whereas in Garissa, sales were more often directed towards other mining companies (Figure 3).

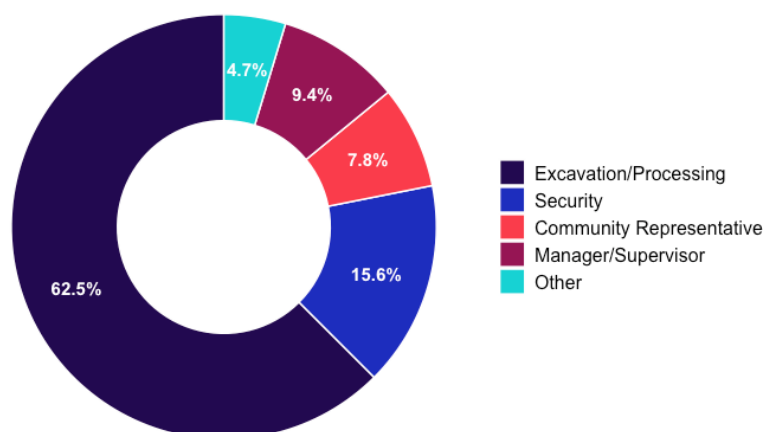
⁶ Casual employees have no guarantee of employment for a specified number of hours during a particular period but may have arrangements of an ongoing or recurring nature, while seasonal employment occurs only during certain periods of the year depending on demand or weather conditions (ILO, 2023).

⁷ Respondents may select more than one category; therefore, the total shares exceed 100 per cent.

► **Figure 3. Gypsum markets**

Source: Survey data (2025).

Across Garissa and Tana River, miners were primarily engaged in excavation or extraction (62.5 per cent, see Figure 4). Other activities, often carried out alongside excavation by the same person, included sorting, processing, transportation, and, in some cases, quality testing. However, quality testing was not common practice across most extraction sites, as the majority of gypsum mining operations focused mainly on raw extraction and the sale of unprocessed gypsum, often through intermediaries. Approximately 30 per cent of respondents occupied other roles, such as mechanics, security personnel, site managers, and supervisors. In addition, community representatives (identified as CBO representatives in Tana River and Village Elders in Garissa) were engaged as part of the casual workforce at mining sites. Their responsibilities included monitoring mining activities, communicating relevant issues and agreements to local committees or community members, representing community interests and rights in mining operations, facilitating the recruitment of local workers, and promoting environmental conservation measures such as backfilling. They were also expected to help ensure that communities received appropriate payments from mining operations and that locally recruited workers were paid fair wages.

► **Figure 4. Roles of miners**

Source: Survey data (2025).

Around one quarter (26.6 per cent) of miners reported having other family members engaged in gypsum mining activities (57.1 per cent in Garissa and 18 per cent in Tana River). On average, 3.4 family members were involved in mining (2.3 in Garissa and 4.4 in Tana River). None of the respondents reported being aware of any children (under 18 years) participating in gypsum mining within their communities. Gypsum mining in Garissa and Tana River appeared to be overwhelmingly male-dominated. The majority of respondents indicated that women were not directly engaged in mining activities in their communities. FGDs underscored the influence of entrenched patriarchal structures, with men retaining primary decision-making authority, particularly in economic and public spheres. Women were mainly confined to domestic responsibilities and had limited participation in mining-related employment. At the Tana River mining sites of Madogo and Charidende, some women engaged in food vending or occasional support roles near mining sites; however, these opportunities were typically informal, unstable, and short-term.

3.1.3. Working conditions and remuneration

Miners typically worked 8 hours per day, which represented the median working hours among respondents in both Garissa and Tana River. However, certain categories of workers, such as security guards, reported significantly longer shifts of up to 12 hours per day, with some even residing at the mining sites. The median number of working days per month, among those surveyed, was 23.5 in Garissa and 25.0 in Tana River, although some respondents reported working every day of the month. Approximately 70.3 per cent of miners confirmed that they also worked during public holidays. Gypsum mining activities took place throughout the year, with 85.9 per cent of respondents indicating that they worked in all months.

When assessing miners' income, it was essential to distinguish between small-scale miners and company-employed workers. Company workers typically received a fixed monthly wage, whereas the income of small-scale miners largely depended on the volume of gypsum extracted, reflecting the informal nature of their operations. The median monthly wage for company workers was approximately KSh 17,650 in Garissa and KSh 18,750 in Tana River. Earnings among company workers varied considerably by role within the gypsum mining operations. Workers engaged in excavation and processing reported the highest average income, with a mean monthly earning of KSh 29,710 (median: KSh 18,750). Site managers and supervisors earned a mean income of approximately KSh 21,750 (median: KSh 15,260), while community representatives reported an average income of KSh 19,570 (median: KSh 12,000). Workers in support functions, such as security personnel and those engaged in other auxiliary roles (including quality testing, transportation, mechanics, and loading), earned relatively lower wages, averaging KSh 16,170 and KSh 17,500 respectively (see Table 2). Overall, reported monthly incomes across all roles ranged from KSh 10,000 to KSh 100,000, with substantial variations both within and across roles, reflecting differences in employment arrangements and the informal nature of mining operations.

For small-scale miners, income was primarily determined by the quantity of gypsum extracted or produced. Small-scale mining operations usually involved a collective team operating a single hydraulic excavator, with an average daily extraction of around 149 metric tons (MT) of raw gypsum. The market price for raw gypsum typically ranges between KSh 1,500 and KSh 3,000 per MT. Production levels differed between the two counties, with Garissa recording higher median outputs (150 MT per day) compared to Tana River (111 MT per day).

► **Table 2. Wages and working time by role**

	Wage in KSh	Working hours/day	Working days/month
Excavation and processing	29,710	7.8	26.1
Site managers & supervisors	21,750	7.2	21.7
Community representatives	19,570	7.6	24.2
Support functions (quality testing, transportation, mechanics, and loading)	17,500	6.3	21.3
Security personnel	16,170	8	23.1

Source: Survey data (2025).

Note: Table reports mean values. Wage figures refer only to miners employed by registered companies. Reported wages for individuals working in Garissa County reflect earnings prior to the 2023 suspension and have been adjusted for inflation.

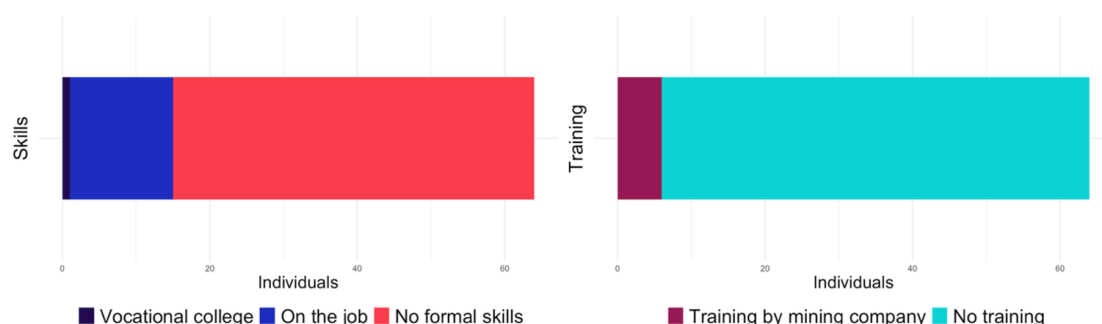
The majority of respondents (82.8 per cent) reported having access to potable water at the mining sites. The primary source was company provision, with 67.2 per cent of workers indicating that water was transported to the site by the mining company. Other sources included purchasing water from vendors or nearby households, using stored water within the mining sites, accessing nearby water dams, or receiving water in kind from community members. Nevertheless, some workers reported experiencing shortages when company deliveries

were delayed, forcing them to find alternative sources. By contrast, access to adequate sanitation facilities remained a serious concern: 93.8 per cent of respondents reported practicing open defecation in the surrounding environment due to the absence of toilet facilities at the mining sites.

3.1.4. Skills, social protection, occupational safety and health

Almost one quarter of respondents reported having acquired formal skills (21.4 per cent in Garissa and 24 per cent in Tana River). The majority indicated that their skills were developed through on-the-job experience rather than formal instruction. Only 9.4 per cent of respondents—none in Garissa and six individuals in Tana River—reported having ever participated in training provided by mining companies (Figure 5). The trainings offered focused on backfilling practices, extraction techniques, leadership, and occupational safety measures.

► **Figure 5. Skills and training**



Source: Survey data (2025).

About one-third of miners reported having experienced negative health effects related to mining activities. The most reported issues were respiratory problems resulting from exposure to dust, including persistent coughs, chest pain, breathing difficulties, and dust allergies. A smaller proportion (12.5 per cent) reported having suffered accidents associated with gypsum mining, mostly minor injuries such as cuts or blows from mining tools.

Access to insurance and social protection remained very limited. Only 10 per cent of respondents in Tana River were covered by accident insurance, while none in Garissa reported having such coverage. Overall, 72 per cent of miners lacked health or medical insurance, with the share being slightly higher in Garissa (78.6 per cent) than in Tana River (70 per cent). In addition, 84.4 per cent of respondents reported not being registered with any social security scheme (e.g. National Social Security Fund), and 85.9 per cent indicated being unaware of any benefits provided to workers or miners in their regions.

With respect to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), just over half of respondents (53 per cent) reported having access to protective clothing or devices. However, 34.4 per cent indicated that no OSH measures were in place at their worksites. Field observations further confirmed that the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) was not observed during mining operations.

3.2. Findings from mining company survey in Tana River

In light of the suspension of gypsum mining operations in Garissa, the study collected company-level data from Tana River, where gypsum mining activities remain active and comparable to those previously conducted in Garissa. This approach reflects the relocation of some small-scale miners and companies from Garissa to Tana River due to the mining restrictions in Garissa. A separate questionnaire was administered to companies, distinct from the survey used for individual miners. Three domestically owned companies in Tana River provided responses, which served as the basis for the employment estimates. These data were supplemented with information from individual small-scale miners and company workers both in Garissa and Tana River (see Chapter 3.1), as well as findings from four FGDs with local communities and workers.

3.2.1. Gypsum mining companies and related activities

All three companies surveyed exclusively engaged in gypsum extraction and reported an annual turnover of between KSh 120 - 300 million, with an average of approximately KSh 200 million. One of the mining companies estimated its capital expenditure at approximately KSh 40 million, with a monthly operational cost KSh 20 million and a monthly maintenance cost of KSh 300,000. Moreover, it was reported that only 25 per cent of the capital expenditure originated from domestic sources.⁸

The total number of employees per company appeared to range from 6 to 20, all males, with no expatriates involved. Locally recruited employees (from the local communities) ranged between 40-60 per cent, with the rest from outside the Tana River County. There appeared to be two types of workers: Permanent and Casual. One company reported to have only permanent employees and worked for 5 months in a year, 20 days per month and 8 hours per day. The other two companies reported to have only casual employees and reported working for 8 months in a year, 15 to 24 days per month and 8 hours per day. Notably, both permanent and casual employees might work throughout the year, but move from one site to another, and/or switch to different companies.

The majority of the employees were youth (18-35), with no workers under 18 being reported. Skilled workers were difficult to source, leading companies to rely heavily on unskilled labour drawn from family networks. Companies and workers shared similar views on the employment potential of gypsum mining within local communities. For instance, FGDs suggested that a sizable company could employ up to 80 individuals, with a substantial number of skilled labourers, mostly youth. It was also reported that a small-scale company with one hydraulic excavator can employ up to 10 people. This means that if a company operates 5 different hydraulic excavators, it has the capacity to employ up to 50 workers. Transportation was provided by third-party contractors, often from outside Garissa or Tana River.

3.2.2. Production, incomes, wages and working conditions

Small-scale mining companies reported excavating approximately 2-6 truckloads of gypsum per day (each truck with a capacity of 28 MT), depending on various factors, such as site conditions, excavator capacity, operator skill, the number of excavators deployed, and hours worked. This production range corresponds to an estimated 56-168 MT of gypsum per day. Anecdotal reports also suggest that mining activities were conducted both day and night in Garissa.

One company reported only having permanent employees with average wages reported at KSh 60,000 per month, while the other two companies reported employing only casual employees with average wages ranging from KSh 15,000 - 30,000. The FGDs, however, suggested that casual wage rates may be lower than those reported by the companies. The FGDs further revealed that there were no formal agreements or contracts for employees, and that in most cases, agreements were made verbally. Although companies reported that all workers had rest periods between shifts, some employees reported working during weekends and public holidays. Security guards, in particular, were reported to have no scheduled days off, and no overtime pay was provided to any employees. In addition, workers were not offered social security coverage or health insurance.

According to the survey, the main benefit the companies provided to employees was food and water. One company offered on-job training. There was no decent housing nor tents/shelter provided. Instead, some companies arranged accommodation in bush/open air settings. There were no sanitation facilities. No PPE use was observed during field visits, although companies claimed they provided gloves, dust masks and gumboots. Respiratory and eye infections were identified as the main occupational health risks. Only one company of the three surveyed reported being aware of any government-provided benefits available to miners in the region. Some company workers appeared to have transitioned into permanent/better jobs, while others reportedly accumulated capital to start their own small-scale mining businesses.

In terms of corporate responsibility, all surveyed companies reported that they undertake backfilling as part of mine closure practices; however, the situation on the ground may differ from these reported claims.

3.3. Breakdown of direct employment and workforce in Garissa

Prior to the moratorium, more than 20 small-scale mining companies appeared to be operating in Garissa, although only one (AfroPride Ltd., the pioneer of gypsum mining in Garissa) seemed to have obtained the required mining permit. Afropride Ltd. reported employing a total of 156 workers before the mining ban. Another company, HopePlus Ltd., appeared to have acquired the necessary permit, but did not engage in gypsum mining at scale. In addition, Mazera Agencies had been granted a prospecting permit (2024-2027) at the time of the survey. The remaining small-scale companies were operating without the required permits and were therefore

⁸ It is important to note that the companies did not have accurate or detailed records for estimating these costs, and it appears the reported annual turnover was the estimated net revenue received after the sales of raw gypsum. Maintenance costs mainly included repairs/servicing for machine/vehicle damages including purchasing spare parts, and greasing/oiling of the machines/vehicles.

classified as illegal miners. These illegal operators seemed to avoid obtaining formal licensing by relying on licenses held by legally registered permit holders. There were indications that a legal permit holder may have allowed a few proxy operators to extract gypsum under its licence. Many of these operators appeared to circumvent regulatory requirements altogether, approaching village elders and other local gatekeepers directly to secure informal land-use agreements before commencing gypsum extraction. As a result, gypsum mining in Garissa became dominated by numerous individual small-scale operators, working outside the regulatory framework and without adhering to environmental standards. Notwithstanding their illegal status, these operators still provided employment opportunities to skilled, and mostly unskilled local labour. Gypsum mining was reported to occur across eight villages in Garissa, with anecdotal information suggesting that about 240 local community members engaged in gypsum mining before the moratorium. However, no official records of the mining companies or individual workers were available and none of the workplaces had been registered, despite this being a requirement under the OSHA 2007.

Based on findings from the surveys, FGDs and KIIs, a typical small-scale mining company operating a single hydraulic excavator appeared to employ around 12 workers on average. The workforce generally included a site manager or supervisor, a machine operator, a site mechanic, and a driver – that were typically engaged on permanent terms. In addition, companies commonly hired four casual labourers (loaders and assistants), three security guards, and one community representative.

Findings from the individual miners' survey suggest that both permanent and casual workers typically worked 8 hours per day, 24 days per month and throughout the year. These parameters were therefore used to estimate the annual full-time equivalent (FTE) employment generated by a typical small-scale mining company operating a single excavator (Table 3). Based on an estimated 20 small-scale mining companies operating in Garissa prior to the 2023 suspension, direct employment was approximated at more than 240 jobs (20 x 12 workers per small-scale company), corresponding to about 222 FTE (20 x 11.1 FTE per small-scale company). Actual employment levels may have been higher, given the high degree of informality, the presence of unlicensed operators, limited documentation, and weak county-level regulatory oversight.

► **Table 3. Direct jobs created by a typical small-scale mining company (operating one excavator)**

Employee Position	No. of Staff	Type of Contract	Hours	Days	Months	Total Hours	Annual FTE
Site Manager/Supervisor	1	Permanent	8	24	12	2,304	0.9
Machine Operator	1	Permanent	8	24	12	2,304	0.9
Site Mechanic	1	Permanent	8	24	12	2,304	0.9
Driver**	1	Permanent	8	24	12	2,304	0.9
Loaders	2	Casual*	8	24	12	4,608	1.8
Assistants	2	Casual*	8	24	12	4,608	1.8
Security Guards	3	Casual*	8	24	12	6,912	2.8
Community Representative	1	Casual*	8	24	12	2,304	0.9
Total	12						11.1

Source: Survey data (2025).

Note: FTE was calculated based on 8 hours/day, 6 working days/week for 52 weeks a year ($8 \times 6 \times 52 = 2,496$)

*Positions are filled locally and are full-time (i.e. 8 hours per day, 24 days per month and 12 months).

**Drivers' roles differ from those of machine operators and mechanics. Drivers provide transportation services to owners, and carry out errands like delivering water and food, transporting required materials and spare parts, among others, to mining sites, typically using a company or owners' vehicle.

3.4. Indirect and induced employment losses resulting from the mining ban

Gypsum mining in Kenya contributes to indirect and induced employment across a range of sectors that support mining operations, especially in counties like Garissa, Turkana, and Kajiado. Beyond direct extraction, the industry stimulates job creation along the supply chain and in sectors such as transport and logistics, where truck drivers and loaders facilitate the movement of raw gypsum to processing sites or markets. Gypsum mining also benefits local food vendors, small businesses, security personnel, and suppliers of mining tools and safety equipment.

To estimate the non-direct employment impacts arising from the gypsum mining ban, capital expenditure data were collected from firms operating in Tana River County through structured surveys. It is assumed that the small-scale gypsum mining operations in Garissa County would have been comparable in scale and structure to those currently operating in Tana River County.

Based on the limited financial information provided by the surveyed firms, it is further assumed that each of the 20 small-scale mining enterprises operating in Garissa would have incurred annual expenditures of approximately KSh 160 million, resulting in total annual expenditure of KSh 3.2 billion across the gypsum mining sector. The expenditure profiles of these enterprises were assumed to be broadly similar: on average, 50 per cent of total expenditure was allocated to the recruitment of additional workers, 30 per cent to the acquisition of mining equipment, and the remaining 20 per cent to processing and refining equipment, as well as other raw materials and fuels.

The modelling draws on data from the Kenya Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) and national employment statistics. The 2021 Kenya SAM was obtained from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), while employment data were sourced from ILOSTAT. Employment headcount data were processed and cleaned following the methodology outlined in Miao and Chen (2025). The resulting employment estimates were then mapped to the economic activities represented in the SAM by sector, with further disaggregation by age, sex, skill level, and employment formality. The reference year for the employment data is 2021.

The SAM multiplier analysis estimates that, if gypsum mining businesses were operational, a total of 1,857 jobs would be sustained through non-direct employment effects. This total comprises an estimated 895 indirect and 962 induced jobs. Slightly more than half of these jobs are attributable to induced effects, with women benefiting indirectly more than their male counterparts from gypsum mining activities in Garissa County (Table 4). At the same time, formal, high-skilled and youth employment participation were low—at less than 20 per cent—largely reflecting the prevailing employment structure of the Kenyan economy.

► **Table 4. Non-direct jobs sustained by gypsum mining in Garissa County before the ban**

Category	Total	Of which			
		Female	Formal	High-Skilled	Youth
Indirect	895	449	121	140	158
Induced	962	491	127	141	166
Total	1857	940	248	280	324
Of which, total	-	51%	13%	15%	17%

Source: Survey data (2025).

Note: 'High-skilled' is a definition based on occupation, which includes managers, professionals, and technicians and associate professionals. 'Youth' refers to 15-24-year-olds.

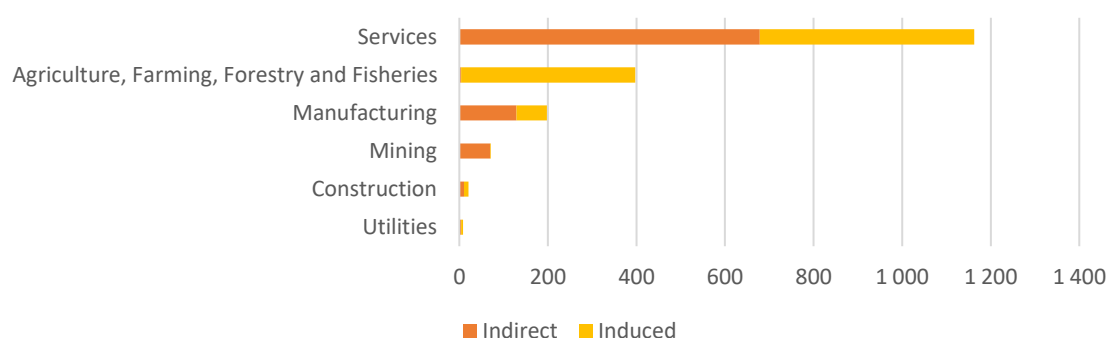
A more detailed sectoral assessment of the employment data highlights notable differences across sectors (Table 5). Indirect employment was mainly concentrated in the mining, manufacturing, and services sectors, whereas induced employment was generated predominantly in the services and agriculture sectors. Female workers benefited most from these induced employment effects, largely through increased household income (see Figure 6).

► **Table 5. Non-direct jobs sustained by gypsum mining in Garissa County before the ban, by sector**

Sector	Total	Of which			
		Female	Formal	High-skilled	Youth
Agriculture, Farming, Forestry and Fisheries	397	207	11	5	73
Construction	20	5	1	1	3
Manufacturing	197	69	80	13	37
Mining	71	27	2	0	13
Services	1163	629	151	259	198
Utilities	8	4	2	2	2
Total	1857	940	248	280	324

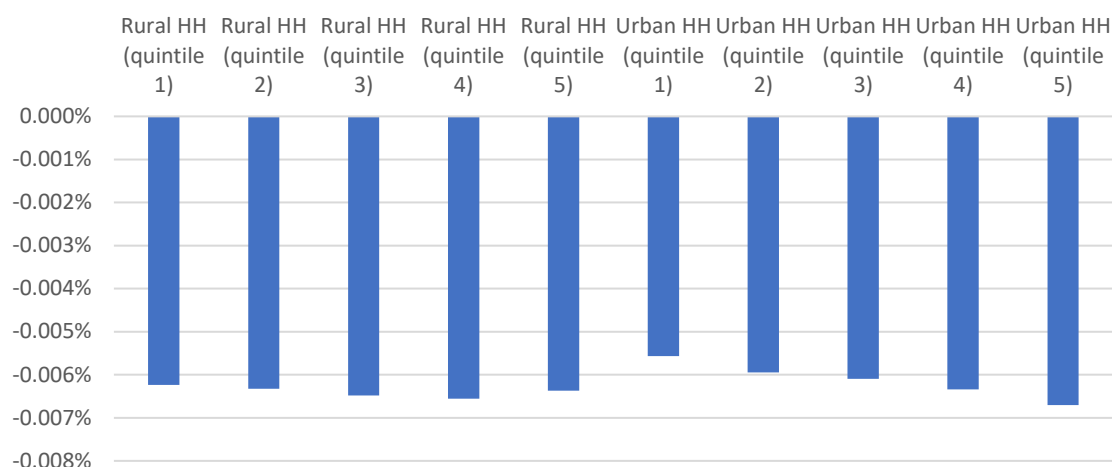
Source: Survey data (2025).

Note: 'High-skilled' is a definition based on occupation, which includes managers, professionals, and technicians and associate professionals. 'Youth' refers to 15-24-year-olds.

► **Figure 6. Non-direct employment effects by sector before the mining ban**

Source: Authors' estimates.

Macroeconomic-level data were used to estimate the effects of the mining suspension on real household income. In the first year following the implementation of the mining ban, household income losses were estimated at KSh 709 million. Figure 6 illustrates the potential impacts of the mining ban on real income losses for rural and urban households during the first year, disaggregated by income quintile. The results indicate that rural households generally experience larger income losses than urban households, with the exception of the highest income quintile. In this quintile, urban households are estimated to lose about 0.007 per cent of their income, compared with income losses of approximately 0.006 per cent among the highest-income rural households (Figure 7).

► **Figure 7. Income losses resulting from the mining ban, by household (HH) type and income quintile**

Source: Authors' estimates.

3.5. Potential for job creation through restoration

To complement qualitative evidence, a rapid satellite-based analysis of gypsum mining sites in Garissa County was conducted. These sites were selected to illustrate different stages of mining activity and abandonment. High-resolution satellite imagery was used to visually compare site conditions over time (2018-2024), while Sentinel-2 multispectral imagery was used to derive the Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) as a proxy for vegetation cover and land productivity. NDVI values close to zero or negative indicate bare or highly disturbed surfaces with little vegetation cover, while higher NDVI values reflect greater vegetation presence and higher land productivity. For each site, changes in surface condition were assessed by comparing imagery from different time points and by examining spatial patterns in NDVI values within and around the mining footprints. Six sites were analysed, ranging in area from approximately 1.5 to 3.2 hectares, providing an indicative estimate of the scale of land disturbance associated with gypsum extraction in the area.

The imagery reveals contrasts between sites, two of which are illustrated below. At the site shown in Figure 8.a, which was active in 2022 and visibly reworked by 2024, excavation activity has expanded and altered pit morphology, with exposed mineral surfaces and access tracks becoming more pronounced. NDVI values within the pit remained very low in 2024, indicating minimal vegetation cover and reduced biological productivity relative to surrounding rangeland. The second site in Figure 8.b, which started as a single pit and subsequently expanded to a second, now appears to have been inactive for several years. Imagery from 2018 to 2024 shows the formation of internal depressions and moisture-retaining areas, alongside partial vegetation colonization. This is reflected in higher NDVI values within parts of the abandoned pit, where vegetation has regenerated, while surrounding zones continue to exhibit a low NDVI. Together, these patterns indicate that while limited natural regeneration of vegetation can occur in older pits, recovery is uneven.

Interpreted in the arid context of Garissa County, where baseline vegetation cover and land productivity were low even prior to mining, the satellite evidence suggests that limited greening within some older pits is driven primarily by water accumulation in excavated depressions rather than by broader ecological recovery. This suggests that the primary objective of post-mining interventions may not lead to full restoration of land productivity. The initial focus should be on rehabilitation and risk reduction, including improved safety, stabilization of exposed surfaces, and controlled management of water retention. In this context, systematic backfilling and reshaping of open pits could reduce hazards to people and livestock, limit erosion, and prevent uncontrolled ponding. These activities could be implemented through Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP)-based restoration programmes, generating short-term employment (see Box on page 31 for an example of backfilling best practice). Complementary measures such as compensation for environmental damage, loss of grazing land and livestock impacts, could further help reduce tensions between mining operators and local communities, while supporting safer and more resilient post-mining landscapes.

► **Figure 8a. Gypsum mining site from 2022 to 2024, including the NDVI (third image) as a measure of land productivity**



► **Figure 8b. Gypsum mining site from 2018 to 2024, including the NDVI (third image) as a measure of land productivity**



Source: Author's research (2025). Data: Esri, Vantor, Earthstar Graphics, MODIS.

Box

Case Study: Base titanium restoration practices

Base Titanium is the local Kenyan subsidiary of the Base Resources group, an Australian-based, mineral sands producer. It applies a systematic and progressive approach to land restoration, focusing on the rehabilitation of mined-out areas and establishing sustainable post-mining land uses. The process begins with reshaping mined areas into dune-like formations that replicate pre-mining landscapes to maintain natural drainage patterns. Topsoil is then spread across these areas, followed by manuring and mulching to improve soil organic matter. Fast-growing grass species sourced from local communities are sown, while indigenous trees from the company's nursery are planted among the pioneer grasses to support long-term ecological recovery.

In addition to land rehabilitation, the company promotes environmental education within local schools and communities. Training encompasses tree growing, the ecological importance of native species, and techniques for native grass cultivation and seed harvesting. The company further supports these initiatives by purchasing tree and grass seeds from the community for use in rehabilitation activities.

Environmental monitoring is also a core component of the company's practices and includes managing water, dust, noise, and radiation to ensure compliance with safety and environmental standards. Air quality is monitored through weather stations and other instruments strategically installed at mining sites to track gaseous emissions and particulate matter, including dust. Noise levels are measured at the boundaries of mining sites and compared against Kenya's Noise Regulations Guidelines to ensure compliance with permissible limits.

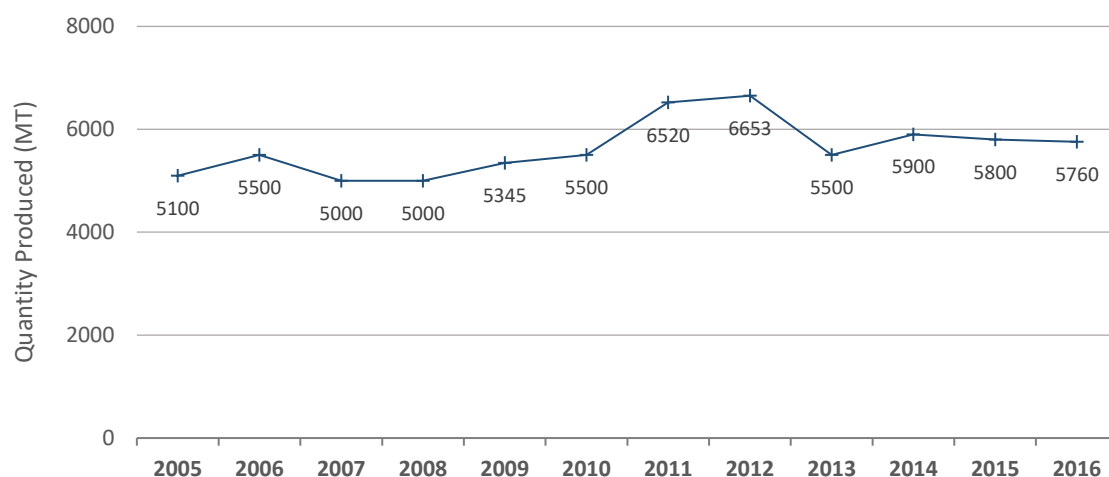
4. Economic analysis and outlook for market dynamics

4.1. Current production levels and trends

While recent data on Kenya's gypsum production is scarce, historical records indicate year-to-year fluctuations with modest growth between 2005 and 2016 (KNBS, 2017; CEIC, 2024). Production increased from 5,100 MT in 2005 to about 6,650 MT in 2012, before declining slightly to approximately 5,760 MT in 2016 (KNBS, 2017; CEIC, 2024; USGS, 2013; see Figure 9). Since 2016, no official production figures have been published. It is important to note that these official statistics are likely to understate actual production, given the high degree of informality in Kenya's gypsum sector and the extent to which production remains outside formal reporting channels. In addition, these figures exclude gypsum used in cement production, which may account for the largest share of total production.

Kenya's gypsum production is projected to grow, driven by expansion in the construction sector and increasing demand for gypsum-based products locally and regionally. In addition, ongoing policy reforms by the State Department for Mining are anticipated to encourage investment in the sector and stimulate domestic production levels.

► Figure 9. Quantity of gypsum produced in Kenya (2005-2016)



Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. (2017). Economic Survey (2017).

Note: The above figures are only partial and exclude gypsum used in cement.

At the county level, no official gypsum production statistics are available for Garissa. However, estimates based on movement permits and receipts issued by the mining department suggest that approximately 50 trucks of gypsum (each with a 28 MT capacity) were produced per day before the moratorium in Garissa, according to KILs with Garissa Regional Mining Office. This corresponds to about 1,400 MT of daily output. Extrapolating from the estimated daily output, the annual production of gypsum in Garissa County (including both formal and informal operations) is estimated at approximately 364,000 MT, assuming 260 operating days per year and a daily output of 1,400 MT. At prevailing prices, this production volume corresponds to an estimated annual production value of approximately KSh 800 million (approximately US\$ 6 million).

The discrepancy between county and national figures is likely attributable to the high degree of informality within the sector. Since national statistics capture only formal output and exclude cement production, they may fail to reflect the sector's full scale and significance.

4.2. The market demand for gypsum

The Kenyan gypsum market is witnessing steady growth driven by rising demand for gypsum-based products in the construction sector, including plaster, drywall, and cement production. The availability of gypsum deposits in various regions of Kenya, coupled with expanding infrastructure projects and a growing population, continue to underpin market expansion. Government initiatives promoting affordable housing and sustainable construction practices are expected to further boost domestic demand. Additionally, increasing awareness about the benefits of gypsum, such as its fire resistance and soundproofing properties, has also contributed to greater market demand. While comprehensive market size data remains limited, industry analyses point to a positive growth trajectory (IMARC Group, 2024 and Deep, 2025).

Kenya's gypsum sector is demonstrating notable signs of progress in export performance. In 2024, the country exported US\$ 8.11 million of gypsum, representing nearly 1 per cent of global gypsum exports, placing Kenya as the 30th largest gypsum exporter among 129 countries (OEC, 2024). This represents a significant regional footprint, particularly given the modest scale of the sector in Kenya's overall export profile. According to data by OEC (2024), Uganda was the primary export destination (US\$ 6.05 million), followed by Rwanda (US\$ 1.96 million), Burundi (US\$ 40.2 thousand,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (US\$17.3 thousand), and South Sudan (US\$ 16.7 thousand). Gypsum demand across East Africa is supported by rising infrastructure investment and urbanization, while the expansion of cement production facilities in Kenya and neighbouring countries such as Rwanda is further increasing regional demand.

On the import side, Kenya sourced US\$ 5.52 million worth of gypsum in 2024, with Thailand, Egypt and China emerging as the fastest-growing sources, increasing their supply to Kenya by US\$ 1.19 million between 2023 and 2024 collectively. Overall, Kenya recorded a gypsum trade balance of US\$ 2.59 million, thereby contributing to the accumulations of foreign exchange reserves in the country.

4.3. The gypsum supply chain

The gypsum supply chain encompasses several key activities, including extraction, processing, quality testing, and transportation (Arasa, Achuora & Okello, 2020). After extraction, gypsum is typically crushed and milled to produce material suitable for construction and industrial applications, such as cement and plasterboard manufacturing. The processed product is then subjected to stringent quality testing to ensure compliance with the required standards.

Transportation and distribution play a vital role in the supply chain, as processed gypsum must be moved from mining sites to manufacturing facilities or directly to end markets. This creates substantial demand within the logistics sector, supporting companies and workers involved in trucking and freight handling. Distribution networks also connect Kenya's gypsum sector with the broader East African region, including Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan, where construction activity is expanding. These regional linkages strengthen trade integration and highlight the importance of efficient logistics infrastructure in supporting the mining industry.

Beyond extraction and processing, gypsum mining stimulates activity in other related sectors, including construction and environmental management. In the construction industry, gypsum-based products are essential inputs generating demand for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) involved in the production of plasterboards, wall panels, and other gypsum-based products (see Figure 10 as an illustration).

4.4. The role of local and international investors and employment projection

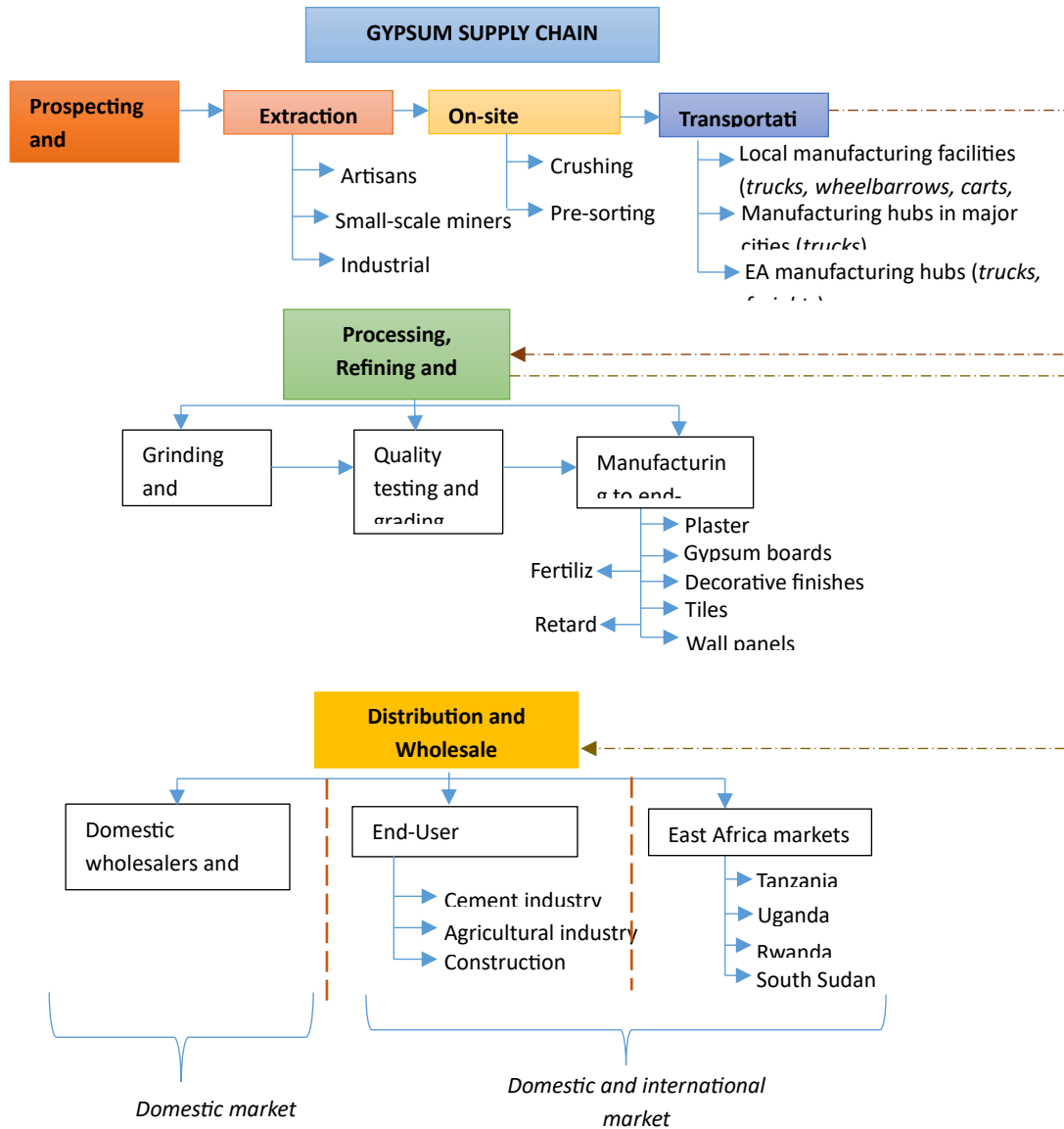
In Garissa, local investors in gypsum mining are primarily Kenyan-owned companies that drive small to medium-scale extraction. Their operations are closely embedded in local markets and livelihoods, ensuring a steady supply of gypsum to cement manufacturers and other firms in the construction sector.

At the time of the study, no international investors were operating in Garissa's gypsum mining sector. Nevertheless, international companies such as Saint-Gobain have acquired a gypsum plant in Nairobi, Kenya in 2021 and could play an important role in Kenya's broader gypsum industry by bringing large-scale capital, advanced technology, and value-addition capabilities. Their investments help establish processing plants, introduce modern production techniques, and integrate Kenya's gypsum sector into global markets. While local investors anchor community-based economic activity and domestic supply chains, the entry of international investors into Garissa could further expand production and processing capacity, generate employment, enhance quality standards and open up export opportunities. The Garissa County Government is further pursuing public investments and aims to attract additional large-scale and foreign investment in the gypsum mining sector.

Findings from field interviews suggest that, if additional financing were available, small-scale gypsum mining companies in Tana River would prioritise expanding their workforce, followed by investing in mining equipment. Companies reported plans to scale up operations over the next 5 years, with planned investment representing

an average of 20 per cent of their total capital. If this projected capital growth rate of 20 per cent reported by local companies is achieved, the sector could create 360 direct jobs and approximately 2,760 indirect jobs in five years.

► **Figure 10. The gypsum supply chain in Kenya**



Source: Authors' research.

5. Social and environmental impacts

5.1. Impact on local communities and livelihoods in mining regions

Prior to the government-imposed suspension of gypsum mining in Garissa, the activity served as a significant source of livelihood for local communities, who predominantly engage in pastoralism. Many community members benefited directly by being employed in mining operations, while others gained indirectly through trade and service provision. The sector also created induced income effects by stimulating the local economy and supporting small enterprises. The mining ban led to job losses, plunging many households back into poverty. When mining halted, incomes associated with both formal and informal employment and trade declined drastically.

The communal land tenure system in the region complicates benefit-sharing arrangements. Unlike counties such as Kajiado and Narok where land is registered, Garissa operates under communal land tenure without formal registration. Since 2012, community land has been held in trust by the county government, but this arrangement has provided little to no tangible benefit to residents. Tana River County maintains the same land tenure system. However, over time, land registration and demarcation among communities have become increasingly common practice. Mining in Garissa has also become a highly sensitive topic among locals due to perceived exclusion, a lack of transparency, and unmet expectations. Tensions have escalated within and among communities, driven by limited awareness of rights, inadequate consultation processes, and a growing sense of marginalization. This has led to a generally negative perception of mining operations in the region.

Although the Garissa County government collected levies and fees from gypsum mining activities, only a small or delayed portion of these funds reached the community. The disbursement process was often opaque, and communities felt disconnected from the revenues generated from their land. CDAs were not consistently implemented or adhered to. Many community members expressed frustration that their priorities were overlooked during planning and implementation. This undermined trust in both local authorities and mining operators.

In summary, gypsum mining in Garissa had mixed impacts on livelihoods, offering both economic opportunities and deepening structural vulnerabilities. The sector introduced an alternative income stream beyond pastoralism through casual labour, in the form of food vending, and small-scale logistics. However, the benefits were unevenly distributed, with mechanization and external control displacing local workers and marginalizing community members. In addition, promised community benefits/CDAs, such as payments, infrastructure, and skilled employment were largely unmet, eroding community trust.

5.2. Community engagement and corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Study findings reveal that CSR initiatives undertaken by mining companies in Garissa were marked by inconsistency, limited transparency and growing community disillusionment. Across all focus group sites, residents reported that mining companies made numerous promises related to monthly payments, employment opportunities, and the provision of social infrastructure such as schools and improved water access. However, these commitments were often delayed, poorly implemented, or abandoned altogether. Engagement processes were described as largely informal, dominated by brokers and intermediaries who undermined genuine community representation and excluded key stakeholders. However, some positive impacts were observed in Tana River, where CBOs have played a more proactive role in facilitating local employment and basic training. Some mining companies in Garissa have made notable contributions by constructing classrooms and mosques, and by providing water and sanitation facilities. For example, Afropride Ltd. built two school classrooms, a madrassa, and water and sanitation facilities, and also supported local hospitals prior to the suspension of operations (see Figure 11).

► **Figure 11. Water access points for local communities in Garissa as part of CSR**

Source: Authors' research.

5.3. Environmental consequences

Environmental degradation remains a significant concern, as unregulated gypsum extraction has been associated with reduced water quality and ecosystem damage. Weak regulatory oversight and environmental risks continue to limit the sector's potential to support sustainable livelihoods, job creation and regional development.

Some of the environmental consequences of mining activities in Garissa include loss of vegetation and habitat degradation, soil erosion and land instability, air and dust pollution, water contamination, biodiversity loss, and inadequate waste management leading to toxin exposure. There appears to have been extensive degradation of grazing land without compensation to local communities. In a pastoralist region with a communal land tenure system, such reductions in grazing land have the potential to fuel conflicts.

In Garissa, there was little evidence of compliance with environmental regulations among small-scale miners and mining companies. Limited backfilling activities have been carried out to date and were cited as a key factor underlying the suspension of mining activities (see Figure 12). Field visits revealed numerous open pits and severe land degradation. These pits have reportedly caused livestock deaths (camels, goats, sheep), especially when they fill with water during the rainy season, and in some cases, have been associated with child fatalities. In addition, mining activities have placed further pressure on the area's already scarce water resources, which remains a major concern.

FGD findings in Garissa reaffirm the prevalence of these issues, including land degradation and water contamination, which have disrupted both ecological balance and traditional livelihoods. Across the four mining sites discussed, participants reported that open excavation pits posed safety hazards, leading to reported livestock deaths, while uncontrolled dust emissions and gypsum runoff were said to have polluted local water sources. Vegetation loss around mining zones have further exacerbated the degradation of rangelands that are essential for pastoralism. Despite these impacts, there is limited compliance with the EMCA. Communities also reported weak enforcement by regulatory bodies such as NEMA, inadequate environmental monitoring, and an absence of mitigation measures by mining companies.

By contrast, Tana River has demonstrated stronger adherence to mine-closure regulations. Miners reported awareness of the requirements they must meet, including the preparation of mine-closure plans, implementation of environmental protection measures and community engagement. Mining pits in Tana River are backfilled by the responsible operators, who typically engage with the local communities through established CBO committees. These committees, working alongside mining company owners, oversee compliance with environmental regulations. Community members may halt operations where backfilling is not undertaken.

► **Figure 12a. Degraded land and unfilled pits in Laago area (Abidisamit)**



► **Figure 12b. Backfilling of mining sites in Kora Kora, Garissa**



Source: Authors' research (2025).

6. Challenges facing the gypsum mining sector

6.1. Informality and lack of job security

Kenya's gypsum mining sector is characterized by both formal and informal operations. While some companies operate under official licenses, a significant portion of gypsum extraction occurs informally. In 2025, the Kenyan government intensified efforts to curb illegal gypsum mining, noting that approximately 3,000 unlicensed mines had been closed since 2022 (Global Gypsum, 2025). The Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs further highlights the lack of records on production, tax payments, or community programmes among illegal operations, emphasizing the need for regulation and oversight. To promote sustainable and community-inclusive mining practices, some regions such as Turkana and Tana River Counties have since initiated community consent forums. These forums aim to ensure that local populations benefit from mining activities through improved working conditions, fair wages, and access to better equipment.

FGD findings reveal that many workers are engaged in casual, unregulated roles without formal contracts, stable incomes, or social protection. This informality is most evident in tasks such as manual excavation, loading, and support services like security and cooking or vending near mining sites, where employment is often short-term and dependent on the fluctuating demands of brokers or external companies. Findings also suggest that as it stands, employment in gypsum mining is unreliable, not long-term and lacks job security. The absence of labour rights, occupational safety measures, and grievance mechanisms compounds vulnerability, leaving workers exposed to health risks, and job and financial insecurity.

6.2. Skills gaps and training deficiencies

The development of local skills and capacities remains limited and uneven, with most communities reporting minimal long-term investment in workforce development. While gypsum mining has created some employment opportunities, these are largely low-skilled roles such as loaders, watchmen, and cooks, while better-paying technical positions, like machine operators, drivers, and other skilled roles, are often filled by workers from outside the counties.

Access to formal training or certification in machine operation, logistics, and safety compliance is scarce, and companies have not prioritized apprenticeships or structured capacity-building programmes. Findings from FGD suggest a lack of structured vocational training programmes or partnerships with training institutions for mining operations. As a result, many local individuals rely on informal learning, such as observing mining activities to acquire basic skills in driving or operating excavators. However, these abilities rarely translate into formal employment. While CBOs, such as those in Madogo (Tana River), have made modest efforts to bridge skills gaps, these initiatives are limited scale and lack sustainability.

6.3. Occupational safety and health (OSH) concerns

OSH concerns were a major issue in gypsum mining across Garissa County, with workers frequently exposed to hazardous conditions in the absence of adequate protective measures. FGD findings highlighted a widespread lack of PPE, both in Garissa and Tana River, where workers (excavators, loaders and other casualls) operated without gloves, helmets, dust masks, or boots. This has led to physical injuries, respiratory complications from dust exposure, and long-term health risks. Injured workers often bear the burden of medical expenses, as there are no formal insurance schemes or compensation mechanisms in place. Moreover, there is very minimal training on safety protocols, and neither companies nor regulatory bodies appear to enforce basic OSH standards. The absence of labour inspections and weak institutional oversight further compounds these risks.

6.4. Limited employment opportunities in value addition and processing

Gypsum mining in Garissa offered no employment opportunities in local value addition and processing, restricting the sector's potential to drive inclusive economic growth and local industrialization. Before the ban, most mining activities were confined to raw gypsum extraction, with minimal local investment in downstream processing such as crushing, drying, or manufacturing of gypsum-based products like plasterboards or cement additives. This literally meant giving away jobs and business opportunities to other counties. As a result, the bulk of economic benefits, including skilled jobs and higher-value returns, were captured outside Garissa. FGD

findings indicated strong community interest in expanding local value addition, but progress is constrained by limited infrastructure, inadequate technical expertise, and a lack of supportive policies. The absence of local processing facilities also limits knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, and supply chain development that could stimulate employment, especially for youth and women. In terms of gypsum trade, Garissa town, the county's administrative centre, could serve as a crucial hub.

6.5. Gender disparity in mining jobs

Gender disparities in gypsum mining jobs were pronounced in Garissa County, with women largely excluded from meaningful participation in the sector. FGD findings indicated that mining in Garissa was a male-dominated activity, shaped by strong patriarchal norms that confined women to unpaid domestic roles or informal, low-paying tasks such as food vending and casual support near mining sites. Even in areas like Madogo and Charidende (in Tana River), where women have made some inroads, their involvement is often temporary, unstable, and lacks protection or recognition. Reported barriers include cultural restrictions on mobility and decision-making, limited access to training, and a lack of targeted recruitment or inclusion strategies by mining companies.

6.6. Regulatory and operational bottlenecks

The gypsum mining sector in Garissa faces a range of regulatory and operational challenges. These include a lack of coordination between national government agencies and between these agencies and the county government, limited enforcement of mining regulations and labour laws, bureaucratic hurdles that create lengthy and complex permitting procedures. Additional constraints reported by stakeholders include limited recognition of enforcement authorities, dysfunctional artisanal mining committees, and perceptions that regulatory practice favours commercial operators over artisanal miners. The main reported challenge in enforcing mining regulations in Garissa appears to be the lack of county-level mining regulations. Financial barriers and inadequate operating budgets also appear to underpin regulatory and operational challenges. In addition, there are no zoning provisions for different categories of miners, and there is no specific policy on mining zones for artisanal and small-scale miners. Land governance issues also remain a persistent challenge for the county authorities.

On the other hand, enforcement at county level appears to have been weak, with limited supervision on mining activities. Prior to the ban, mining companies reportedly negotiated informal land-access arrangements directly with village gatekeepers at the mining sites, without involving the community or engagement the County Government, and proceeded to mine without meeting the required mining regulations. It was also reported that CDAs were not implemented in practice. In addition, local residents alleged that the local authorities were aware of all the mining sites that were associated with illegal mining activities and the exploited loopholes.

As is clear from the field surveys, there continues to be a lack of proper awareness on the part of local and mining communities of the various issues related to gypsum mining, including environmental regulations, community's rights and entitlement, and efficient resource utilization (specifically land). Local communities complain they are not properly engaged and get relatively little benefit from gypsum mining royalties.

6.7. Limited technological capacity and infrastructure

Garissa's gypsum sector is constrained by limited technological capacity and inadequate infrastructure, which undermine its potential to drive production and expand employment opportunities in the region. These technological deficiencies also restrict workers' exposure to modern equipment, specialized techniques, and structured capacity building and vocational training needed for higher-value roles in the gypsum value chain.

In addition, the poor road network exacerbates the sector's overreliance on raw material extraction, restricts market access and curtails opportunities for job creation. For example, the poor road infrastructure has impeded efficient transportation of raw materials from the mining sites to potential processing facilities and manufacturing centres, such as Mwingi or Nairobi. Many mining areas are in remote locations served by unpaved, uneven, and seasonally impassable roads, resulting in delays and higher transportation expenses. Long distances, reliance on truck transport, high fuel prices and frequent vehicles wear contribute to the overall cost of gypsum production. In addition, most of the access roads to the mining sites are developed by individual small-scale mining companies, further increasing their operating costs and reducing their market competitiveness. However, the recently tarmacked Garissa-Nairobi highway could ease transportation demand for the Garissa gypsum mining businesses once the ban is lifted.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Gypsum is a highly sought after, widely used mineral, and mining activities have expanded rapidly in recent years in response to rising market demand. While the 2017 survey estimated national annual production at 5,760 metric tonnes (excluding gypsum used in cement manufacturing), alternative data sources that capture illicit production indicate that a comparable volume was being extracted in Garissa County within a single week alone in 2023, prior to the suspension of mining activities. The gypsum mining sector holds significant untapped potential to generate employment and stimulate local economic development. This potential remains largely unrealized due to limited research, underinvestment, and weak integration of the sector into broader development strategies.

After two and a half years of suspension, gypsum mining resumed in February 2026, subject to a set of conditions. Mining permits are currently being issued to only one small-scale mining company, although the County's authorities remain optimistic that additional companies will comply in due course.

This study has brought to light the complex realities surrounding gypsum mining in Garissa County before and during the ban. Overall, mining in the area has focused almost exclusively on extracting and selling raw gypsum, with minimal value addition. Despite the existence of a regulatory and policy framework on paper, weak enforcement has enabled individuals and informal groups to dominate the trade, resulting in negligible revenue gains for the county. In some cases, the increasing mechanization of small-scale operations has further displaced artisanal miners, constraining their already limited livelihood opportunities. Furthermore, gaps in labour rights protections and occupational safety measures heighten workers' vulnerability, exposing them to health risks and economic insecurity. Mining activities have also led to the degradation of prime land and visible scarring of the landscape, creating hazards for both people and livestock. Beyond these challenges, the mining sector in Garissa remains constrained by inadequate infrastructure, environmental concerns, and limited uptake of modern mining technologies. Finally, the absence of enforced Community Development Agreements (CDAs) and meaningful corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives has left communities feeling worse off rather than benefiting from mining activities.

In addition to advocating for the resumption of mining activities, this report calls for support to legalize small-scale mining practices and to provide structured government oversight of these activities. Improving labour standards in the mining sector and formalizing illicit gypsum mining activities lies in the effective enforcement of existing mining policies and regulations, which should be regarded as a critical foundation for addressing inter-community conflicts in Garissa. Crucially, these policy measures must be supported by strong enforcement at mining sites, including adequate inspection capacity, clear institutional mandates, and effective penalties for non-compliance, in order to close regulatory loopholes and prevent illegal or exploitative practices. This process is likely to be lengthy and complex, particularly in ensuring that individuals, communities, the county, and the national government derive equitable and sustainable benefits from the sector. This study identifies the following priority recommendations for the gypsum mining sector in Garissa.

Improving mining practices governance

- Conduct a comprehensive, accurate, and up to date geological survey and detailed geospatial resource mapping for gypsum in Garissa and implement continuous monitoring and compliance checks for improved resource management.
- Develop a Garissa County gypsum mining plan as part of the County Integrated Development Plan. Comments from the validation workshop (see Annex 2) also recommend the constitution of a mining secretariat/steering committee to oversee mining activities in Garissa.
- Consider adopting a mixed or hybrid system of mining that allows for multiple levels of participation (artisanal, small-scale, and large-scale mining) through appropriate zoning. For example, where there is demonstrable commercial value in sustaining their activities, artisanal miners could be allocated clearly delineated zones that are separated from those designated for small- and large-scale mining operations. Address the need for rehabilitating the current open pits through backfilling. The county could deliver restoration through community-based contracts or by designating qualified contractors, potentially implemented under EIIP projects.
- Consider compensation for environmental damage, loss of grazing land and livestock, which could help reduce tensions between local communities.
- Harmonize working relations between the national government, the county administration, the labour office, NEMA, the mining department, the police and the local administration.

Enhancing the policy and legal framework

- Formalize land ownership among communities by implementing legal mechanisms to clarify land rights and protect against encroachment and disputes. Sensitize and engage political leaders in addressing land issues/disputes and mining-related conflicts.
- Establish clear and short licensing processes for small-scale gypsum miners, develop policy guidelines for artisanal gypsum mining, including operational standards, and facilitate their regulation and coordination with the relevant departments of Mining, Environment, Health.
- Strengthen regulatory frameworks and oversight, where government agencies should play an active role in monitoring compliance and ensuring miners (including companies) adhere to labour and environmental standards. Ensure enforcement of compliance with labour laws, improved working conditions, mining regulations, NEMA and EMCA environmental standards (as per the mandates of NEMA, mining department and labour office, national and county administration). Such frameworks should also enforce transparency, community inclusion and participation, contract/agreement transparency, and environmental safeguards.

Providing the right technical support

- Support small-scale miners and facilitate their market access, value chain development, and formalization of incentives. While recruiting workers, priority should be given to locals, especially youth and women.
- Support and facilitate small-scale mining businesses to transition to formal business practices. The ILO is well positioned to support the transition to formality given its normative mandate, technical expertise, and long-standing engagement in promoting decent work in informal and small-scale economic activities.
- Support youth with technological capacity-building including establishing vocational training centres in Garissa. This will enable youth to secure better-paying jobs (e.g. machine operation). In addition, county policy should ensure priority in hiring local youth and women at all levels of operation.
- Support entrepreneurship in gypsum-related value chains, promote value addition and local processing. Garissa Town, the county's administrative centre, could serve as a crucial hub for gypsum trade and processing.
- Increase awareness of labour rights and benefits among miners. Educate local communities on sustainable mining, and undertake continuous community sensitization on their rights, benefits entitlements, and environmental responsibilities.

Both the national and county governments have taken active steps to address concerns brought to light by intercommunal conflicts over gypsum mining and have signalled a willingness to resolve these issues. Multi-sector teams—encompassing security, political affairs, environmental management, and community engagement—were established, alongside a task force led by the County Commissioner, to address the requirements for lifting the suspension. These efforts have since contributed to more positive dynamics on the ground. The sustainable reopening of gypsum mining in Garissa requires the County Government to take firmer control of the challenges identified in this report, including insecurity at mining sites, land restoration and systematic backfilling, the establishment of an appropriate legal and institutional framework, routine monitoring and evaluation of gypsum mining activities, sustainability and community development, and effective enforcement of mining regulations.

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Annex 1. Key informants

► Table A.1. List of key informants interviewed

Name	Position
Issa Kuno	Owner Afropride Ltd. (a gypsum mining company)
Mohammed R. Mwabudzo	County Commissioner - Garissa County
Abdirahman Abdulahi	Chief Officer Mining - Garissa County
Ahmed Abdirahman	CEC Environment - Garissa County
Hon. Mustafa	Deputy Speaker - Garissa County
Dekow Khalif	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) - Garissa
Isaac Kimitei	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) - Garissa
Danstan Lwangu Siringi	Regional Mining Officer - North Eastern
Walter Obuya	Mining Officer - North Eastern
Job Onyancha	Previous Regional Mining Officer - North Eastern
Rono Duncan	Assistant County Commissioner - Garissa
Paul O. Omondi	Assistant County Commissioner - Garissa
Konini Junior Simei	Assistant County Commissioner - Tana River Balambala
Vincent Otieno	Assistant County Commissioner - Tana River Bura
Yusuf Dualle	Chief - Garissa - Abdisamit
Khalif Hassan Gure	Chief - Garissa - Kora Kora
Ahmed Momamed Rabe	Chief - Garissa - Eldert
Kolosho Wolly	Chief - Tana River - Charidende
Mohamednoor Funani	Chief - Tana River – Areri
Mr. Gulat	Peace Chairman - Abdisamit

Source: Authors' research.

► **Table A.2. List of interviewed FGD participants**

Name	Mining Site / Area
Mohamed Gedi Adow	Abdisamit
Idle Abdulahi Labos	Abdisamit
Sahal Bare Sarare	Abdisamit
Adan Olat Ahmed	Abdisamit
Aden Abdullahi	Abdisamit
Sarrow Mahat	Abdisamit
Magow Aden Bilal	Abdisamit
Jamal Abdi	Abdisamit
Omar Bare Shalle	Abdisamit
Salat Hassan	Abdisamit
Mshamed Rage	Kora Kora
Osman Abdulahi	Kora Kora
Mahat Ishus Adan	Kora Kora
Moulid Rage	Kora Kora
Osman Adow Abdulahi	Kora Kora
Muktar Adow	Kora Kora
Idris Ibrahim	Kora Kora
Khadija Osman	Kora Kora
Fardosa Noor	Kora Kora
Abdifalah Ibrahim	Kora Kora
Rashid Kolosho	Charidende
Siyat Hashim	Charidende
Nimo Mohamed	Charidende
Joshua Mwenzi	Charidende
John Mutemi	Charidende
Isack Simiyu	Charidende
Emmanuel Chengoli	Charidende
Madhina Ismail Roble	Charidende
Ismail Yussuf Gorod	Charidende

Abdiwali Abdiwali	Charidende
Mohamed Shora	Madogo
Hassan Sula	Madogo
Abdullahi Halgalo	Madogo
Ibrahim Muhamed	Madogo
Mohamud Gulnsge	Madogo
Yusuf Osman	Madogo
Adow Mohamed	Madogo
Abajila Hassan	Madogo
Yussuf Adan	Madogo
Hassan Kanchofu	Madogo

Source: Authors' research.

Annex 2. Validation workshop

A stakeholder validation workshop was held on 12 August 2025 at Nomad Hotel in Garissa Town. The workshop helped to bring together all the relevant stakeholders in the gypsum mining sector in Garissa, including representatives from the national and county governments, the private sector, CSOs, and local communities. This approach strengthened stakeholder participation and fostered ownership of the project. The workshop also provided a structured forum to consolidate the study's findings, integrate additional feedback, and deliberate on feasible pathways forward, including priority recommendations.

► **Table A.3. Validation workshop: 12 August 2025**

Name	Organization/Department
Abdirahman Abdulahi	County Government of Garissa: Co. Energy, Natural Resource & Wildlife
Ibrahim Omar	County Government of Garissa: Director Energy, Natural Resource & Wildlife
Dekow Khalif	County Government of Garissa: As. Director Energy Natural Resources & Wildlife
Mohamud Garat	County Government of Garissa: Conservancy Manager
Ibrahim Farah Mowlid	County Government of Garissa: Environment
Halima Mohamed	County Government of Garissa: Bolargy Giraffe Center
Hussein Dunto	County Government of Garissa: Internal Auditor
Ahmed Siyat Mohamed	County Government of Garissa: Rep. Persons With Disabilities (PWD)
Hassan M. Yarow	County Government of Garissa: Sub-County Director (Township)
Habon Hajir	County Government of Garissa: County Affairs
Yunis Mowlid	County Government of Garissa: Trade
Abdirahman Mohamed	County Government of Garissa: County Assembly
Abdi Mohamed	County Government of Garissa: County Assembly
Abdi Mohamed Dakane	County Government of Garissa: County Assembly
Danstan Lwangu	Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs: Regional Mining Officer
Samuel Kimondo	Director National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
Deka Mohamed	Kenya Chamber of Commerce
Abdi Ibrahim Aden	Garissa Ecotourism Conservancy Association
Haliman Abdi	Garissa Ecotourism Conservancy Association
Aden Ahmed Olat	Community Rep. Chairman: Aragudhud Village
Jacob I. Orahle	National Government: Kenya Wildlife Service
Siyat Muhamud	Community Rep. Chairman: Waju Village
Abdi Yussuf Kassim	Community Rep. Chairman: Diiso Village

Name	Organization/Department
Feisal Issa	Mining Company: Afropride Ltd.
Harun Issack	Mining Company: Deqsan Ltd.
Mohamud Mohamed	Mining Company: Easy Way Genaral Ltd.
Ibrahim Gedi	Mining Company: Hayl Construction Ltd.
Sebastian Okiring	National Government: Deputy County Commissioner
Dekow Muhamud	National Government: Senior Chief - Iftin East Location
Suleiman A. Olat	National Government: Assistant Chief-Lago Sub-Location (Balambala)
Gagalo Boru	Kenya Police Service: OCS Iftin
Ali Ahmed	Community Representative
Mohamed Khalif Nunde	Civil Society Organization (CSO)
Kusow Ahmed	Community Representative
Abdirahaman A. Issack	
Abdiaziz Omar	Community Representative
Mohamed Ahmednoor	Community Representative
Dekow Adow	
Elyas Hassa	National Government: Kenya Forestry Research Institute

Source: Authors' research.

Annex 3. Regulatory and policy framework

Employment Related Provisions in Kenya's Mining Act, 2016

- + Section 46 requires that every mineral right holder must submit a detailed programmes for the recruitment and training of Kenyan citizens, as a condition for grant of the license. This includes plans for skills transfer and capacity building (Mining Act 2016, s. 46).
- + Section 47 mandates employment preference for Kenyan nationals and local community members in large scale operations, obliges licensees to:
 - Conduct training programmes for the benefit of employees.
 - Progressively replace expatriate technical staff with Kenyan nationals.
 - Only engage non citizen technical experts in accordance with such local standards for registration as may be prescribed by the relevant law.
 - Establish university linkages and community investment/agreements (Mining Act 2016, S. 47).

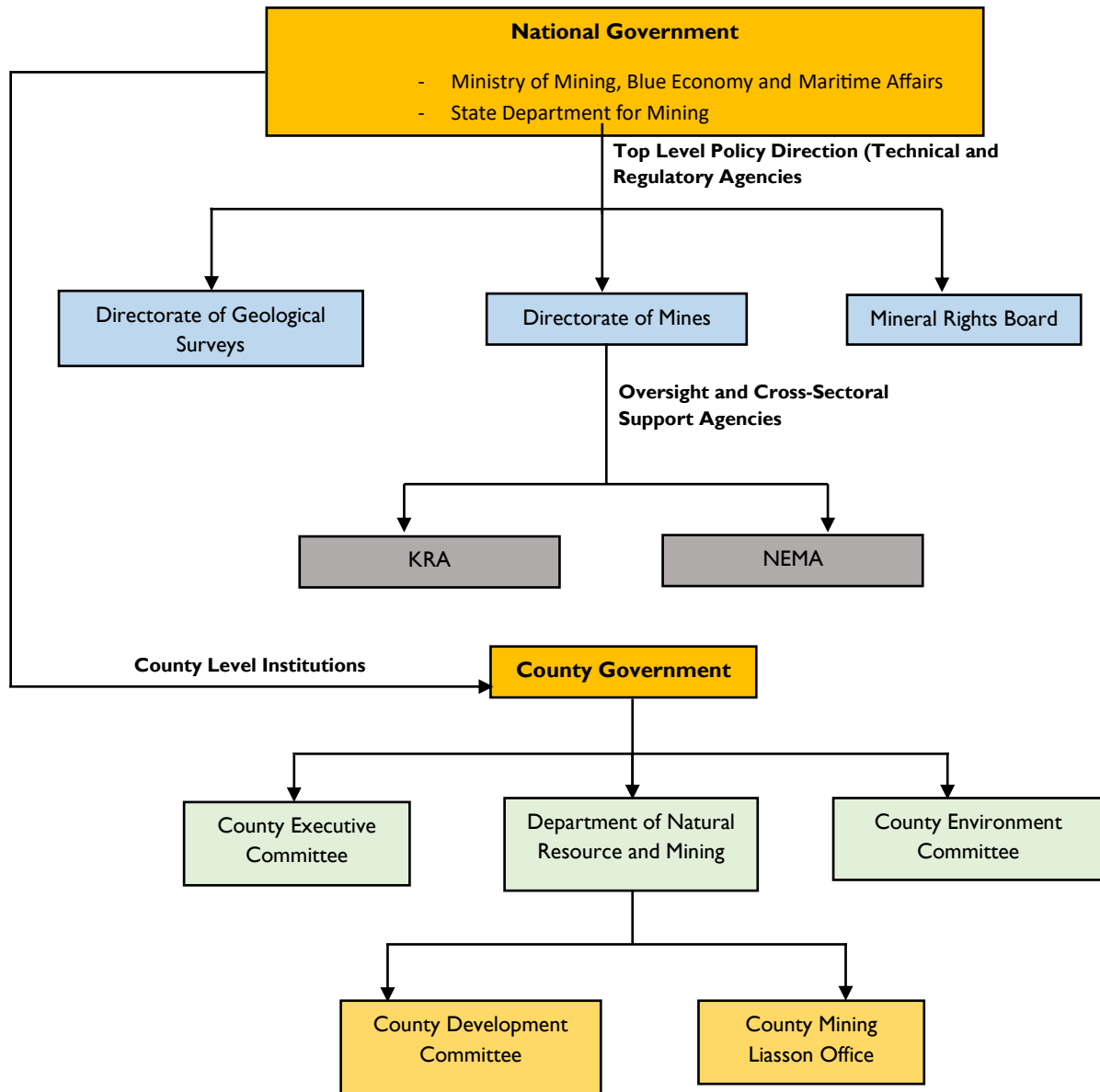
Policies Supporting Local Employment & Community Benefits-Sharing

- + Mining (Employment and Training) Regulations, 2017 (Legal Notice 82 of 2017):
 - Regulation 5 spells out that no mining license is granted unless the applicant submits an employment and training plan.
 - Regulation 6 imposes reporting obligations on employment and training plans, total employees (Kenyans Vs Expatriates) and training activities.
 - Regulation 7 stipulates that junior and middle level roles (e.g. foreman, supervisor) must be filled only by Kenyan nationals, except where an expatriate is justified by a lack of local expertise and approved by the Director.
- + Section 50-51 of Mining Act 2016: Mandates Community Development Agreements (CDAs) for large-scale mining operations. These must specify:
 - Employment opportunities.
 - Local procurement.
 - Infrastructure development.
 - Community projects (e.g., schools, clinics etc.).
 - Benefit-sharing mechanisms.
- + Section 183-185 of the mining Act 2016: Establishes a royalty-sharing formula:
 - National Government - 70%
 - County Government - 20%
 - Local community - 10%

Policies Promoting Local & Foreign Investment

The Mining Act 2016 is the primary legal framework that promotes local and foreign investments through the following sections.

- + Section 9 - 25 provides for clear licensing process, outlining a structured and transparent mineral rights licensing system.
- + Section 43 provides for security of tenure. It recognizes and protects legal titles to mineral rights once issued and provides for the transferability of such rights, allowing investors to transfer or assign them subject to approval by Cabinet Secretary.
- + Section 2013 provides for international arbitration by allowing eligible disputes to be referred to an international arbitral forum, thereby strengthening foreign investor confidence.
- + Section 117 provides for stability clauses that allows parties to enter into mining agreements with fiscal stability terms.
- + Section 9 establishes a Mining cadastre, an online portal designed to streamline licensing and application processes.

► **Figure A.1. Institutional and governance structures of the mining sector**

Source: Authors' research.

Role of Trade Unions and Labour Rights Organizations

Trade unions and labour rights organizations, including the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Association of Kenya (ASMAK), play a crucial role in advocating for fair labour practices, improved working conditions, and the protection of miners' rights within Kenya's mining sector. These organizations engage in collective bargaining, lobby for the enforcement of occupational safety standards, and promote access to social protections such as health insurance and pension schemes for miners, particularly those in informal or small-scale operations. ASMAK specifically represents the interests of Artisanal and Small-scale Miners (ASMs), working to formalize their operations, secure legal recognition, and ensure they benefit from government support and investment incentives. By raising awareness of labour rights, offering legal aid, and pushing for the inclusion of miners in national policy dialogues, these organizations serve as a vital bridge between mining communities, government regulators, and private sector actors, ultimately helping ensure that the mining sector operates in a just, inclusive, and sustainable manner.

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