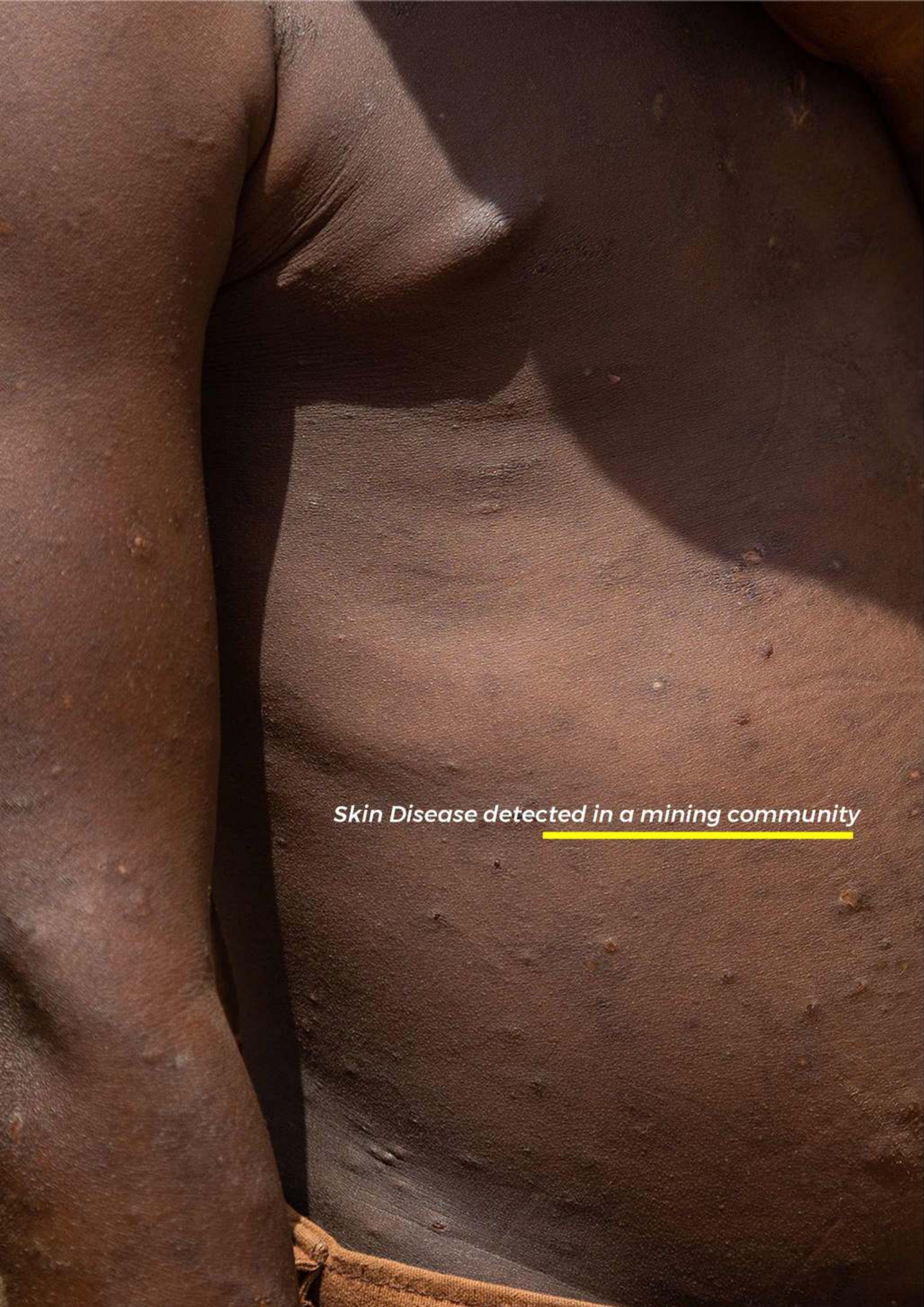




KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TRAINING MATERIAL ON

**EVIDENCE GATHERING,
PERSONAL SAFETY AND
ORGANISATIONAL SECURITY**

A close-up photograph of dark skin, likely from a person of African descent, showing numerous small, raised, reddish-brown lesions. These lesions are scattered across the skin, particularly concentrated on the upper arm and shoulder area. The skin has a natural texture, and the lighting highlights the bumps of the lesions. A yellow underline is present under the text below.

Skin Disease detected in a mining community

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Mining activities play crucial role in our economy, but they also pose significant environmental challenges. To ensure compliance with environmental standards, constant monitoring and oversight are essential. Responsible Mining is not just a regulatory obligation; it is a commitment to sustainable practices that protect our natural resources and communities.

Active community involvement is vital in this endeavor. We all share the responsibility of promoting safe mining practices and advocating for environmental stewardship. Together, we can create a culture of accountability and transparency that benefits both the industry and the communities it serves.

This manual will guide you through effective techniques for collecting evidence, ensuring personal safety, and enhancing digital security while gathering information. Additionally, we will explore organizational risk management strategies to safeguard not only individuals but also the integrity of mining operations. Join us in fostering a safer and more responsible mining industry.

EFFECTS OF IRRESPONSIBLE AND ILLEGAL MINING

Irresponsible and Illegal mining has exposed us to many hazardous effects as it has significant ecological consequences.

1. Water pollution by toxic chemicals etc.
2. Soil degradation
3. Deforestation
4. Habitat destruction
5. Erosion
6. Climate change (destruction of the ozone layer)
7. Noise Pollution

All these impacts are reasons why there is a need to fight against the practice of illegal mining. This is why we should know how to gather evidence, teach techniques for evidence gathering, personal and organizational safety when doing so to promote the fight against illegal and irresponsible mining and all activities against the laws safeguarding our environment.

WHAT IS EVIDENCE?

According to the Evidence Act, 1975 (NRCD 323), Evidence means testimony, writings, material objects or things presented to the senses that are offered to prove the existence or non-existence of a fact.

It is used to prove or disprove something. When one makes a claim the only way to show if the claims are true or false is by producing evidence.



MODULE 1

SOURCES AND TYPES OF EVIDENCE

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Communities | 2. Government |
| 3. Mining Companies | 4. Online sources |

TESTIMONIAL EVIDENCE

Testimonial Evidence comes from the word TESTIMONY. When someone makes a statement as a form of evidence this becomes testimonial evidence. For example, the oral statement given by a witness during an interview. It includes all statements made by a witness in court to prove the non-existence or the existence of something.

- EXAMPLE

Manu is accused of engaging in galmsey and has denied all allegations. Ama, who is his neighbor, is said to have seen him in the act, Ama is then named as a witness, all statements she makes against Manu and to Prove that he engages in such acts will be termed as testimonial evidence.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

This type of evidence refers to writings on paper as well as any media by which information can be preserved, such as photographs; a medium that needs a mechanical device to be viewed such as a tape recording or film and a printed form of digital evidence such as emails or excel spreadsheets.

- **EXAMPLE** - TExample, there is reasonable suspicion that a mining company is operating with an expired license, an example of documentary evidence can be the license itself which will state how long they were to operate, and all terms agreed on and practices affecting it.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

It is a term of evidence used where there is no direct evidence. For this type of evidence, a fact is proven by the use of surrounding facts that lead us to conclude that it is more likely than not that the fact likely exists. Whereas direct evidence points to the existence or non-existence of a fact, circumstantial evidence shows that based on the happenings or the circumstances presented the fact alleged is true or false. However, it is worth noting that the evidence presented under this type must lead to a logical and irresistible conclusion thus that the alleged crime or fact existed.

-**EXAMPLE** - it is rumored that Kwesi is the leader of the team of galamsey boys, where in this case it will be hard to obtain direct evidence. Circumstantial evidence can be that; transactions showing that he pays all the galamsey boys at the end of a mining activity, his house is where all the boys meet to discuss the next action to be taken, and all the boys report directly to him all the activities happening on site.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

This type of evidence refers to any physical thing that has a direct connection to the fact alleged. It can be used to establish relevant facts and not the main fact alleged.

-**EXAMPLE** - People claim a piece of land was being used as a galamsey site, upon your visit the land has been covered. A dispute over whether a plot of land has been used as a galamsey site can be settled using physical or real evidence in the form of a sample of the soil and stones on the said plot of land.

DIGITAL EVIDENCE

This type of evidence refers to information shared or transmitted in an electronic form that may be relied on in court.

-**EXAMPLE** - Example, where Yaw provides a video recording of illegal miners dumping chemical waste from their mining sites in a river or where voice recording of a phone call between a chief and an illegal miner interested in buying lands even without the correct license and without informing the public.

GEOGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

Geographical evidence refers to data collected from the physical characteristics of a location that can inform conclusions about natural or human activities in that area.

- **EXAMPLE** - Acquiring maps can prove that areas within which illegal mining activities are taking place are forest reserves or no mining zones.

EXPERT EVIDENCE

Expert evidence refers information or analysis provided by a person who has specialized knowledge, skills, or experience in a particular field more than the average person.

- **EXAMPLE** - The environmental expert from EPA can assess the environmental impact of the mining activities, such as soil erosion, water contamination, or air pollution and provide information that the mining activities taking place in the area are a serious detriment to the area. Geologists can provide information on the nature of the lands used for the illegal activities and whether they are appropriate for the activities.



ADMISSIBILITY OF EVIDENCE

Admissibility is basically the quality of a thing; whether it can be accepted as valid or not. Generally, every kind of evidence is admissible.

However, The Evidence Act provides that; “No evidence is admissible except relevant evidence”. Thus, for evidence presented to be used it must satisfy certain requirements before it is deemed to be admitted hence the concept admissibility of evidence.

To prevent such occurrences where evidence is rejected, the law states that the evidence must satisfy two grounds to be deemed as admissible; thus, the evidence is in connection to the fact in issue and not unrelated (evidence must be material/ relevant). The evidence has sufficient value to prove or disprove a fact (evidence must be probable).

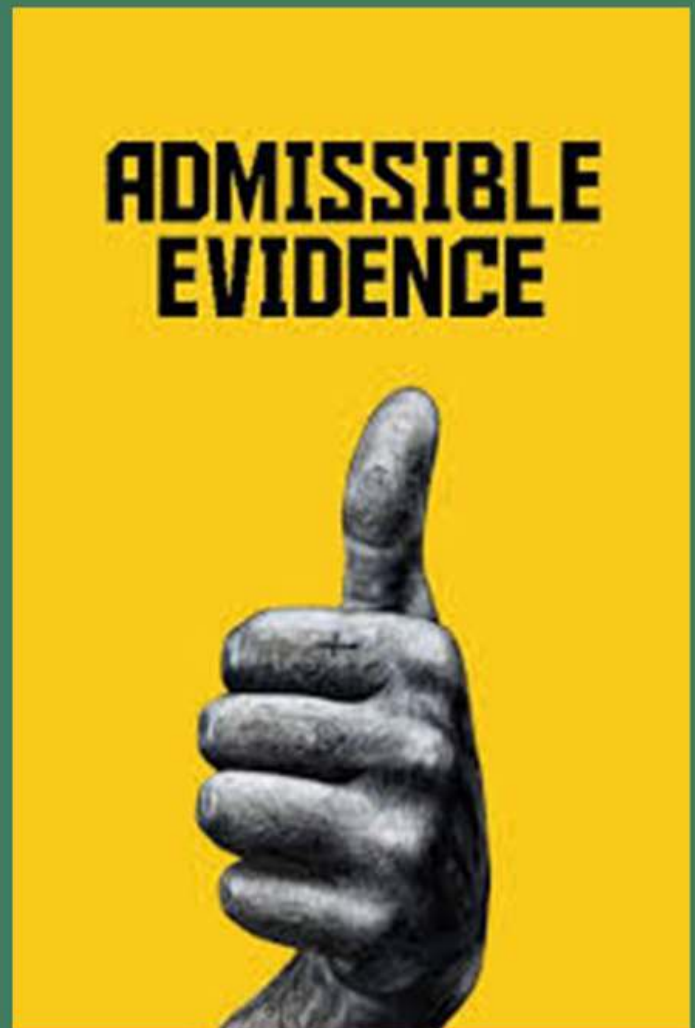
Practically, this is to say that all evidence to be collected must be relevant to the cause and purpose of gathering which is to expose the harm and damage being done to the communities and the degradation of the environment to show non-compliance with the laws regulating mining activities in Ghana.

Example, to show that Appiah is involved in galamsey, evidence needed could include pictures or videos of him in the act, a confessional statement that he is included in such activities among several others.

This evidence presented will be admitted as it has direct connection with the issue at hand and can prove that the alleged action is true.

However, information or evidence such as pictures of him cheating on his wife, videos of him fighting with his father will not be admissible as it does not relate or connect to the matter to be proved. Gathering evidence is heavily regulated by law, the law generally frowns on methods that do not conform to its rules and procedures.

Evidence may not necessarily be obtained using acceptable approaches in all situations hence why the discussion on illegally obtained evidence.



ILLEGALLY OBTAINED EVIDENCE

Illegal obtained evidence is any evidence that is collected in violation of a person's constitutional rights. The constitution under Article 18 grants each person their right to privacy as such secretly recording a person without their prior consent violates their constitutional guaranteed right. Such evidence will then be said to have been illegally obtained.

However, knowing about illegally obtained evidence helps one to know whether evidence obtained through such means would be admitted. The Ghanaian courts have ruled that if evidence obtained by the violation of human rights is sought to be given in court, the court must exercise a discretion as to whether to admit it.

The court determines this on the following factors: Public Policy and Interest of the individual. Considering the impact Galamsey has both on the economy of the country, the environment and health of the indigenes, evidence gathered even though through illegal means should be admitted.

The position of the law is such that where evidence is collected in line with public policy and the interest of the state it is probable that the material will be admitted.



TECHNIQUES FOR COLLECTING EVIDENCE

PHYSICAL & DIGITAL EVIDENCE

Preparation and Planning

- Assess the Situation: Understand the context and nature of the digital environment you will be investigating.
- Ensure you are aware of the surroundings before to ascertain the type of equipment to use.
- Identify Tools and Resources Needed: Select appropriate software, hardware, and other tools based on the type of evidence.

Ensure Legal Compliance

- Obtain Necessary Permissions: Make sure you have legal authorization to collect evidence. For example, seek approval from the relevant authorities such as Ghana Civil Aviation Authority for drone operations.

Document Everything

- Chain of Custody: Maintain a detailed record of who collected the evidence, how it was collected, and how it has been handled.
- Detailed Notes: Record every step of the process, including the date, time, location, and method of collection

Report Writing

- Clear and Concise: Document the findings in a clear and concise manner, ensuring that the report is understandable to nontechnical stakeholders.
- Include All Relevant Details: Provide a comprehensive overview of the evidence, the methods used for collection, and any conclusions drawn from the analysis.

HOW TO MANAGE EVIDENCE

Preserve the Evidence

- Create Forensic Images: Make an exact, bit-by-bit copy of the digital media to preserve the original evidence.
- Store Originals Securely: Keep the original media in a secure location, ensuring it is tamper-proof and accessible only to authorized personnel. eg google photos, drop box
- Avoid Making Changes: Refrain from interacting with the system in ways that might modify or delete potential evidence.

Use Encryption and Secure Storage

- Encrypt Sensitive Data: Ensure that the collected evidence is encrypted and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.
- Secure Backups: Create and securely store multiple copies of the evidence in different locations.



PREPARING PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Understand the Legal Framework

- *Know the Laws:* Be aware of the local laws regarding photography, especially in private spaces. Unauthorized photography could be illegal and jeopardize the investigation.

- *Admissibility:* Ensure that the photos are taken in a manner that makes them admissible in court. This means no tampering, and the chain of custody must be maintained.

Discreet Photography

- *Use Covert Equipment:* Utilize covert cameras or devices that blend in with the environment. Examples include cameras hidden in pens, buttons, or glasses. Also avoid phone cases that have vibrant colors. Always charge phones or recording devices.

- *Minimize Flash and Noise:* Avoid using a flash or any noisemaking camera functions. Set your camera to silent mode.

- *Angle and Positioning:* Choose angles that allow you to capture the necessary details without drawing attention. Take the photo quickly and move on to avoid suspicion. Position the camera in an area you can take a time lapse video without being detected.

Capture Essential Details

- *Focus on Key Evidence:* Capture images of crucial evidence, such as documents, people, or activities that are central/relevant to the investigation.

- *Ensure Clarity:* Make sure the photos are clear and in focus. Blurry or poorly lit images might not be useful.

- *Context Matters:* Whenever possible, include context in the photos to provide a better understanding of the situation. For example, wide shots can

Documentation

- Ensure that the camera's date and time settings are accurate. This metadata is often crucial for establishing timelines. If safe, jot down notes about the circumstances under which each photo was taken. This could be vital for explaining the evidence later.

Safety First

- *Assess the Risks:* Always prioritize your safety. If taking a photo could expose you or put you in danger, it might be better to avoid it.

Know When to Back Off:

- *Know When to Back Off:* If the situation becomes too risky, it's better to retreat and maintain/protect your life than to capture a photo.

Secure Storage

- *Encryption:* Store images securely using encryption to protect sensitive information. E.g., Sending pictures to a trusted group page after taking shots.

- *Backup:* Regularly back up images to a secure location to prevent loss or tampering. Using apps such as Open Camera which is an Open-Source Camera app for Android phones and tablets.

- *Features:* Option to auto-level so your pictures are perfectly level no matter what, Google Keep for note keeping

Practice and Preparation

- *Familiarize Yourself with Equipment:* Practice using your covert camera in different scenarios to ensure you can operate it quickly and without error.

- *Simulate Situations:* Conduct drills in environments like where you'll be working to become accustomed to the challenges you might face.

- *Use unassuming Apps:* Apps that have icons that do not look like camera applications such as Calculator.



CHEMICAL/ GEOGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

SOIL SAMPLING

Tools Needed: Stainless steel or plastic shovel, soil auger, gloves, sample bags.

Procedure:

- Collect soil samples from multiple locations around the suspected mining site, including areas where waste is dumped.
- Take samples from various depths (e.g., surface, 10 cm, 30 cm) to assess contamination levels.
- Place soil in sterile bags, label them with location, date, and time, and store them in a cool, dry place.
- Ensure that the sampling tools are cleaned between each sample to avoid cross contamination.

WATER SAMPLING

Tools Needed: Sterilized glass or plastic containers, gloves, pH meter, GPS device (Phone).

Procedure:

- Collect water samples from rivers, streams, or wells near mining sites, especially downstream.
- Wear gloves and avoid touching the inside of containers or caps.
- Record the location, date, and time of each sample.

BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

- Obtain a Medical Report: Secure a detailed medical report from a healthcare professional that documents the prevalence and impact of a specific illness within the community, which is suspected to be linked to illegal mining activities.
- Conduct Community Health Screenings: Carry out health screenings on a representative sample of the community to identify common health traits or conditions that may have been caused by exposure to environmental hazards from illegal mining.
- Collect Personal Testimonials: Gather firsthand accounts from community members who have experienced health issues they believe are related to illegal mining operations. These testimonials can provide valuable insights and personal perspectives on the health impacts.
- Acquire Medical Records and Visual Evidence: Request and compile medical records from local hospitals that treat patients for conditions linked to illegal mining. Additionally, ask patients for permission to obtain and use photographs of any visible symptoms or injuries for documentation purposes.

Plant and Vegetation Sampling:

- Collect samples of plants or vegetation showing signs of chemical damage, such as discoloration, stunted growth, or death.
- Cut samples using shears and place them in labelled bags.
- Record the exact location and environmental conditions where the samples were taken.

BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE contd_

Identify Key Species:

- Determine which fish and wildlife species are most likely to be impacted by mining activities. Focus on species that are integral to the local ecosystem or are commonly consumed by the community.

Conduct Baseline Sampling:

- Collect samples of fish and wildlife from various locations within the community, including areas close to and farther from mining sites.

This will help establish baseline data on the health and population levels of these species.



TESTAMENTARY EVIDENCE

-*Prepare to Testify*: Be prepared to explain the methods and tools used during evidence collection in a court of law or other formal setting.

-*Understand the Evidence*: Be thoroughly familiar with the evidence and the techniques used to collect it to confidently answer questions during legal proceedings or under any setting where it is required that you defend the evidence collected.

Community Engagement

Interact with residents in areas affected by galamsey. They can provide firsthand accounts, valuable information, and sometimes even photographs or videos documenting illegal activities.

Arrange interviews with community members, focusing on those who have witnessed or been impacted by galamsey operations.

Ensure anonymity and confidentiality to protect the interviewees from potential retaliation.

Use audio or video recording devices with the interviewee's consent or take detailed notes to accurately capture their testimonies.

Provide a safe environment for the interview, preferably in a neutral location where the interviewee feels comfortable speaking freely.

REPORTING MECHANISMS

Collaboration with media houses to report findings even before it gets to the police to prevent distortion of information and corruption.

- To ensure an added layer of protection, we suggest evidence gathered should be directed to trustworthy media personnel who can disseminate the information in a timely manner.
- To safeguard the information.
- To protect persons involved in gathering information.
- This will also raise awareness and pressure authorities to act.
- Social media platforms can be used to disseminate information and mobilize public support.
- Create online petitions to gather signatures and exert pressure on decision-makers.

Secure Digital Storage:

Cloud-based storage: Use encrypted cloud services like Google Drive, Dropbox, or OneDrive to store evidence securely.

External hard drive: store evidence on encrypted external hard to prevent unauthorized access.

Secure digital cards: Use high-quality secure digital cards for cameras and other devices.

Chain of Custody:

Establish a strict chain of custody (people who have access to file)

Document transfer: Keep a detailed record of who has accessed or handled evidence.

Secure storage: store evidence in a locked located with restricted access.

Evidence tags: label evidence with unique identifiers and timestamps.

Anonymous Reporting: introduce non-disclosures when reporting

Hotlines: Establish anonymous hotlines for community members to report incidents and provide evidence.

Online platforms: Create secure online platforms where individuals can submit evidence anonymously e.g.: locked WhatsApp chats, access to chats requiring admin approval.

Community intermediaries: Train community leaders or representatives to collect evidence anonymously on behalf of others.

Legal Channels:

Report to environmental Agencies such as the EPA, Minerals and Mining Commission, Lands Commission. Forestry Commission.

Law enforcement: Report incidents only to trusted local law enforcement agencies and provide evidence as needed.

Human rights organizations: Contact human rights organizations that work on environmental and social justice issues. Taking the samples (soil and water samples) to experts who will test and give a report on their findings. These stakeholders include NGOs who in turn take it to geologists, hydrologists etc. for expert findings.

Legal aid: seek legal aid to understand legal rights and options for pursuing legal action.

Instituting a class action (suing individuals found groups responsible for such acts; reporting to firms to start such actions like Merton & Everett LLP.

SAFEGUARDING LIFE WHILE COLLECTING INFORMATION

Personal safety refers to the measures and precautions individuals take to protect themselves from harm, danger, or injury in various environments and situations. This includes being aware of one's surroundings, making informed decisions, and adopting behaviors that minimize risk to physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. Personal safety also involves using tools, strategies, and resources to prevent accidents, avoid unsafe situations, and respond effectively in emergencies. Whenever possible, work in pairs. This ensures that someone is available to provide support, watch for dangers and validate the evidence collected. Establish clear communication methods with your partner (e.g., hand signals/code words) immediate store evidence in secure, encrypted formats (digital and physical) to prevent tampering or unauthorized access.



- Assess the environment for dangers, such as poorly lit areas, isolated locations, or high crime zones. Avoid high-risk situations and stay in well-populated areas. Trust your instincts if a situation feels dangerous.
- Avoid risky situations such as traveling alone or dealing with confrontational individuals (or a protest). If a situation feels off, take steps to remove yourself from the situation example if you have a discussion with a uber or taxi, get out of the car.

- Carry some basic personal safety tools (e.g., whistle, pepper spray, alarm).
- Always have a charged phone and emergency contacts readily accessible. You can also share your location with trusted contacts.
- Make sure that you keep a secure grip on your valuables and never let them out of sight especially in public areas

DIGITAL SECURITY

Avoid clicking on unverified links or webpages you don't know. Use strong and complex passwords and consider a two-factor authentication (2FA) (second verification).

SECURITY MEASURES

- Keep your software, antivirus programs and systems up to date.
- Check the phone number or the email address before clicking on a link or opening another webpage.

PERSONAL TIPS

- Keep software updated: keep your software, antivirus programs and systems up to date.
- Training programs: teach how individuals protect their digital footprint, safe browsing habits, secure password and recognizing phishing attempts.

RISK MANAGEMENT / TIPS

There are security awareness trainings for example phishing simulations. Educate users about safe browsing habits, secure password management and the importance of reporting suspicious activities.

Use pages with a necessary permission based on roles within the organization. Ensuring users have only the access necessary to their job function.

DANGERS OF VISITING MINES

THERMAL HAZARDS

Mines can experience extreme temperatures either very hot or very cold, which can lead to physical damages.

- Dress appropriately: wear clothing suitable for the temperature conditions and work with layer clothing.
- Take breaks: regularly take breaks in a controlled environment to avoid overheating or freezing.

RISK OF ATTACK

Potential threat of violence, aggression, or other harmful actions directed at individuals or groups, often in the context of conflict over resources, territory or authority.

Illegal miners, operating outside of the law, may resort to attacks to protect their operations, intimidate others, or retaliate against perceived threats.

This risk is particularly high in remote areas where law enforcement is limited, and such attacks can lead to severe injuries, loss of life, or property damage.



HAZARDS - cont'd

Chemical hazards

Mines often contain various chemicals used in extraction processes. Some can be highly toxic or reactive. Accidental exposure or interaction with these chemicals can lead to severe health issues or environmental contamination.

- Do not tamper with unknown chemical: avoid touching, moving or disturbing any containers or substances you encounter on site.
- Avoid bringing flammables: do not carry flammable materials near the pits or any area where chemicals are stored or used, as they could ignite and cause a fire or explosion.

Respiratory hazards

Respiratory hazards: dust, fumes, and other airborne particles common in mining environments can cause respiratory issues, especially in poorly ventilated areas. Prolonged exposure can lead to serious lung conditions.

- Wear a respiratory or dust mask: use appropriate respiratory protection, to filter out harmful particles and fumes.
- Limit time spent on site: minimize your exposure by not staying longer than necessary. Reduce the risk of inhaling harmful substances. Because of the poor ventilation in mines, it can lead to the buildup of harmful gases which can be dangerous. Check for a ventilated areas and use a portable gas detector to monitor the air quality and detect harmful gases.

Geotechnical hazards

The physical environment of a mine can be unstable, with risks such as rockfalls, landslides or collapsing ground. These hazards can cause injuries or fatalities if protective measures are not in place.

- Wear personal protective gear: Protective equipment including helmets, face shields, steel-toed boots to protect against falling debris and other physical hazards.
- Be aware of surroundings: stay vigilant for signs of instability in the ground or walls, such as cracks or shifting materials.
- Wear proper footwear: boots with good traction and ankle support to navigate uneven terrain safely.
- Use handrails: when available, use handrails and other support structures to stabilize yourself on steep or uneven ground.



Biological Hazards



Chemical Hazards



Physical Hazards



Safety Hazards



Ergonomic Hazards



Psychosocial Hazards

EXPLOSION

Explosion risks: mines can contain explosive gases or materials, and improper handling or environmental conditions can lead to explosions, posing a significant danger to anyone nearby. Evacuate immediately when there is any sign of an explosive (e.g., unusual sound, gas smell). To protect yourself from explosion, follow these steps:

- Wear wet clothes: this can help protect your skin from burns caused by heat or flames.
- Call for help: whenever you are safe, contact emergency services or sites management to report the incident and get assistance.



UNCOVERED PITS

Uncovered pits: uncovered or open pits pose a risk of falls, injuries from sharp edges or being trapped. To protect yourself from this hazard, be mindful of the following:

- Be careful where you step: be aware of your surroundings and avoid stepping too close to the edges of uncovered pits. Use caution and keep a safe distance.
- Take pictures and videos safely: don't get too close to the edges. Use zooms features on your camera to capture images or videos from a safe distance.



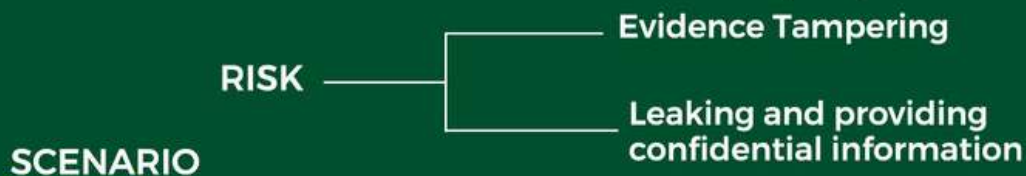
ORGANIZATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Organizational Risk Management is a process that involves identifying, assessing, and dealing with possible risks that could negatively impact an organization's operations, assets, or objectives. In this case, the individuals, groups present for the workshop may need to form organizations in their various communities with the purpose of gathering evidence on galamsey operators to show noncompliance with mining laws and the damage done to the environment by these illegal mining activities. Considering this, it would be crucial for the organization to identify potential risks and try to come up with ways by which these identified potential risks can be addressed.

RISK MANAGEMENT

This involves recognizing potential risks that could affect the organization. These risks could be internal or external.

Operational inefficiencies may be detrimental to the group when gathering evidence of illegal mining activities. This could be inability to properly obtain the evidence or even to store such data safely to prevent loss or erasure.



EXAMPLE	DANGERS/ RISKS
Kofi may be tasked by the organization to go and get pictures of illegal mining operations in an area. Kofi whilst performing this task may be found out and engaged by the illegal miners to provide them with information about the organization's progress in gathering evidence against them. Kofi will be paid a huge sum of money for his services to the illegal miners and may be inclined to accept the offer.	-Visiting mining sites -Regulatory issues -Financial issues

RISKS

Losing data after months of gathering evidence can bring everything to a stand still and this is a very probable occurrence. This is a need to control, mitigate or eliminate risks if organizations are to effectively and efficiently gather evidence to show noncompliance with mining laws and the damage done to the environment by these illegal mining activities.

MANAGEMENT OF RISKS

Individuals of the organization who have received training can train other members of the organization on how to safely gather evidence in compliance with the law and on how to safely store data.

MANAGING RISK

To keep the data, the organization can liaise with trusted NGOs or external bodies to have a backup of such data with limited access. For example, a general WhatsApp group consisting of community members together with other stakeholders such as NGOs etc. Pictures or information found is then delivered to the group and the raw information is processed and kept by these institutions.

MANAGING RISK

To eliminate or control misconduct by organization members, each member can be assigned an accountability partner to ensure transparency and compliance. There can also be organizational supervision of activities and tasks assigned to each member.

Membership of the organization can be mainly individuals considered trustworthy, passionate about and dedicated to the organization's purpose which would be to gather evidence to show noncompliance with mining laws and the damage done to the environment by these illegal mining activities.

MITIGATING RISKS

To mitigate the issue of organization members being in danger when gathering evidence to show noncompliance with mining laws and the damage done to the environment by these illegal mining activities, it would be helpful to sensitize members on physical security and safety measures and if possible, provide them with safety equipment.

The organization can also develop code names and terminologies to conceal certain information and communicate among themselves. For example, code names such as Odum, Mahogany, Sapele (names of trees) etc. can be given to each member to conceal their identities when communicating or there can be color codes such as red to communicate that one is in danger.

Example, Naa and Esi are members of the organization and accountability partners. They both do daily check-ups on each other to make sure all is well. In addition, Naa informs Esi of her daily activities regarding the evidence gathering process and progress. Esi does same. Naa's code name is Ginger and Esi's is Abele. If Naa is ever in danger, she can text RED to the organization's page or even to esi to communicate that she needs help.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this manual has provided a comprehensive overview of evidence, types of evidence, techniques for collecting evidence, how to manage evidence, preparing photographic evidence, chemical /geographical evidence, biological evidence, testamentary evidence, reporting mechanisms, personal safety and organization risk management, detailing essential procedures, safety measures and troubleshooting tips.

By following the guidelines outlined, you can effectively achieve specific outcomes.

About **NDF**

NDF is a non-governmental organization in Ghana with partners across West Africa. NDF's mission is to create a society where human development and nature conservation complement each other.

As a result, NDF collaborates with governments, local communities, the private sector, industry associations, and other civil society bodies in delivering innovative solutions to meet the needs of people while ensuring the conservation of natural resources.

For ten years and more, NDF has been running projects geared towards curbing illegal logging by restricting the market for illegally sourced wood, promoting food security, livelihood development, climate change mitigation, and wildlife protection.

NDF's efforts are contributing to alleviating poverty, halting further degradation of forests and loss of biodiversity in Ghana and across West Africa.

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