



News Release

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From: Diamond Development Initiative
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DDI RELEASES DRAFT DEVELOPMENT DIAMOND STANDARDS™ FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The [Diamond Development Initiative](http://www.ddiglobal.org) (DDI) today released the [draft standards](#) for its Development Diamonds™ ethical certification project. The 60-day public comment period is open for all interested parties until July 31, 2012.

The Development Diamond Standards™ (DDS) project is a collaborative effort with support from civil society organisations (CSOs), governments, and industry. It will help ensure that the over 1.5 million artisanal and small-scale diamond miners in Africa and South America, who produce an estimated 15% of global gem diamonds and constitute the most vulnerable part of the jewelry supply chain, become a part of broader efforts to promote responsible business practices. Historically, this sector has been the most affected by adverse social and environmental impacts.

Until now, most responsible practices certification schemes have been unable to cover artisanal and small-scale mining, because the miners largely operate informally and cannot realistically access standards designed primarily for formal entities. The Development Diamond Standards will ensure that artisanal diamond miners have achievable, realistic, and rigorous standards for their special needs. Ultimately, however, the goal is to integrate various initiatives so that all segments of the industry are covered by credible, independently verifiable ethical standards. This collaborative approach will help ensure cohesion and clarity for consumers.

The *Tiffany & Co Foundation* has provided major support for the DDS project since its inception. Additional funding has been received from *Brilliant Earth*, *Cartier International*, the *German Government* (GIZ) and the *JCK Industry Fund*. As one of DDI's key projects, the Development Diamond Standards™ also build upon the general support provided to DDI by individual jewelry consumers, the public, industry members in Europe and in North America, CSOs, and governments.

"At this stage, the main goal is to demonstrate proof-of-concept by piloting the Development Diamond Standards™ on a small scale—and then tracing the diamonds produced from the mining site through to the retail end of the market," says Ian Smillie, chair of DDI's Board of Directors. "This is a very complex process and a lot of work still needs to be done, but the benefits to some of the world's poorest people could be enormous."

About DDI: The Diamond Development Initiative International (DDI International) works to improve the lives of artisanal diamond diggers and their families through systemic developmental change at the industry's grassroots. DDI is registered as in the United States as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, in the District of Columbia. EIN/tax ID number: 51-0616171. DDI's executive office is located in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada where the organization is also registered as a nonprofit.



The standards are now being field tested on the ground in Sierra Leone, with planned expansion to other countries. The goal is to refine the draft standards by testing their substantive provisions in environments that reflect actual conditions on the ground, with independent third-party verification and a supply chain traceability process from mine-to-market that is credible and practical for the diamond and jewelry industry as well.

“Over the development of this project, we’ve stressed the importance of a standards system that is credible, achievable by artisanal diamond miners, and viable for downstream actors in the global diamond pipeline as well,” says Dorothee Gizenga, executive director of DDI. “This means that the input we receive from the DDS consultation will complement the feedback DDI is getting from the practical application and testing of the standards on the ground.”

The draft standards have been developed in consultation with governments of artisanal and alluvial diamond producing countries, members of the global diamond industry, civil society organisations, and most notably, in direct consultation with artisanal diamond miners in Sierra Leone, Brazil, Central African Republic, and Congo (DRC). “We will be working hard to apply Development Diamond Standards™ provisions during our mining activities, with guidance from DDI,” says Karefa Koroma, an artisanal diamond miner in Sierra Leone. “As an artisanal diamond mining licence holder, I’m happy to be one of the site operators taking the initiative in piloting this project—and I look forward to seeing how it makes a difference.”

Learn more about the standards at the JCK Show Las Vegas, [DDI Booth # L16, Bayside, Level 1, Lobby, Mandalay Bay.](#)

Links:

- *To download the draft standards document, please visit:*
<http://www.ddiglobal.org/dds/reference-documents.php>
- *Further details on the Development Diamond Standards™ project can be found at:*
<http://www.ddiglobal.org/dds/>

For feedback and questions, please contact:

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Using any Smartphone, please scan this QR Code for quick access to the Development Diamonds™ microsite.



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