Pimpong & Co.

ISSUE 02 · JUNE 14–28, 2026

Ground*work*

A brief for companies and executives in the African mining industry.

SUBSCRIBE ON WHATSAPP →

EDITOR'S NOTE

I keep circling two questions. Where does innovation in mining actually come from? And why does Africa still struggle to reach low-cost capital when it sits on so much of what the world says it wants?

Let's start with innovation. We imagine it living in a lab or a major's R&D budget. Some of it does. What if the most useful innovation lives at the mine site, with the services companies who see the bottlenecks and failures up close? A drilling contractor or survey crew has deep understanding of the customer's pain because they live inside it. That makes a well-run services platform a natural engine of innovation: notice a problem, capture it, quantify what it costs the mine, test a fix safely on site, and iterate until it works. The larger version is that the end users of minerals are racing to cut their dependence on any single metal through substitution, efficiency, and alternative chemistries. I'm not sure how much of the intellectual property from that R&D is accruing to Africa. Moving further along the value chain into processing, and developing the technologies that will be part of the materials future is critical.

This is why R&D belongs as a core line item in African government budgets, and why I would tie it directly to the local content push. Local content is too often reduced to ownership percentages and hiring quotas, mandated and then hoped for. R&D is what makes it holistic and de-risks it: if you want more of the value chain built locally, you have to systematically drive the innovation that lets local firms do the work competitively, not just by rule. This sets the stage to discover exponential returns, so that we are building the materials future rather than only feeding it.

That brings me to capital, and to a reflection from Isaac Marshall at TLG Capital. He paints a stark picture of how SpaceX raised roughly fifteen times more last year than all of Africa's frontier markets combined. Africa's mineral resources alone are about fifteen times the entire market the SpaceX S-1 outlines for outer space, before you count healthcare, agriculture, telecom, energy, or consumer. Dangote alone did twice SpaceX's Q1 revenue at a higher three-year growth rate, yet is valued at roughly two percent of its market cap. Isaac's quarrel isn't with SpaceX being valued the way it is. He is dumbfounded that Africa is.

Exits are hard, regulation is challenging, currency and governance are not imaginary risks. But the same markets have grown entirely comfortable underwriting all of that, and a future where the currency is matter and energy on Mars. If we can build that conviction for a colony planned for a million people by 2050, surely we can build it for a continent that will house thirty percent of humanity in the same window. The asymmetry has to be about which stories folks have learned to believe.

So storytelling is at the center of the capital question. Capital follows conviction, and conviction follows narrative. And storytelling is not foreign to Africa. The griot in West Africa is the holder of culture and memory, carrying a people's narrative across generations, with versions of that role all across the continent. Africans did not lose the gift. Africans have just not yet pointed it at capital markets.

When Africans do, two things matter. The first is transparency. Reading Tidjane Thiam's memoir, Without Prejudice, one line has stuck with me: imagination can be worse than reality. In 2008, with mortgage-backed securities at the center of the panic, he chose to open the kimono with his investors and show them exactly what he held rather than leave anything to their imagination. Opacity would have let people fill the silence with assumptions worse than the truth. Where Africa is concerned, that imagination is already running, and running worse than the reality. The discipline is not spin; it is putting the real numbers, the real performance, and the real risks on the table, so the story people tell themselves about the continent is finally anchored to what is actually there.

The second is ambition in the telling. Silicon Valley venture capital firm, Andreessen Horowitz, writing about what they call New Media, make a point I keep coming back to: the most compelling builders do not narrate themselves inside-out, leading with their own milestones, risks, and asks. They find the most important thing happening in the world and place themselves inside it, so when that story breaks, they are the first call. I think that instinct is exactly right for Africa, and the larger story here is not hard to find. It is the defining growth story of the century: thirty percent of humanity, the resource base underwriting the energy transition, the builders already compounding cash. Africa does not have to invent it. Africa has to be even louder in telling the larger story it is unavoidably at the center of.

Isaac's reflection lands closest to home, because it is also my key learning as I build Pimpong & Company. It would be easy to read his numbers as an indictment of the market. *I read them as a challenge to me.* The work is not to wait for sentiment to turn; it is to build something that earns the conviction and to design the strategy so it answers the doubts directly. If governance and macro are the problem, I have to tackle them inside the structure itself, not lean on traditional asset classes while quietly declining to publish how they actually performed. I have to innovate the capital structure to fit the realities of the continent, the same way a good services firm innovates to fit the realities of the mine. Return capital. Deliver growth. Generate cash. Tell a better story, and then make it true. That is the bar I am holding myself to.

Africa's weight is not in question. *What remains is whether we will do the work to make the market finally feel it.*

---

01 / GHANA JUN 17

The Tarkwa moment: Ghana's most consequential lease decision in a generation

A lease decision on Africa's sixth-largest gold mine could set the template for indigenized ownership at scale, and rewrite the procurement calculus for everyone who supplies it.

Ghana's government is weighing whether to transfer control of Gold Fields' Tarkwa mine, Africa's sixth-largest gold mine and the source of a fifth of Gold Fields' total global output, to local companies when the lease expires in April 2027. Bloomberg first reported that Ghanaian miners could be invited to bid if the government proceeds. Gold Fields says it has submitted an early renewal application and that talks are ongoing. The government has not ruled out renewal.

WHY IT MATTERS

Tarkwa produced approximately 530,000 ounces last year. With gold at ~$4,300/oz, its revenue profile is enormous. At the same time, the government just awarded the adjacent Damang mine to Engineers and Planners (E&P), which has committed $250 million to fleet expansion. Damang seems to be functioning as a proof of concept for indigenization at scale. Tarkwa would be an order of magnitude larger.

Whether the government extends, transfers, or negotiates a hybrid structure, the outcome will set the template for how Ghana's mining royalty and fiscal terms interact with local ownership going forward. For services operators, a locally controlled Tarkwa changes the procurement calculus immediately. Any potential new owner will build their supply chains differently than Gold Fields did.

---

02 / GHANA JUN 24

Ghana tightens its claim on its own gold

From July 1 the state takes a bigger cut at the source, and a Local Content Bill could make Ghanaian services firms the only compliant option, not the nice-to-have.

From July 1, large-scale miners must sell 30% of output to the Ghana Gold Board, up from 20%, paid in cedis at a 0.55% discount to the Bank of Ghana reference price. It sits on top of March's sliding-scale royalty, 5% at lower prices, rising to 12% above $4,500/oz, pushing Ghana's effective total tax burden on mining to an estimated 54–58%, among the highest globally.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is value capture by the state at the revenue layer. It squeezes the majors' margins, and any service contract indexed to a major's revenue along with them. But the headline for our readers is the Local Content Bill, flagged by President Mahama, which would make subcontracting to Ghanaian firms a legal requirement rather than a preference. In that world, a well-run Ghanaian services firm becomes the compliant option, not just a nice-to-have.

---

03 / ACROSS AFRICA — JUN 25

Nigeria aims to build Africa's largest rare-earth processing plant

An indigenous firm building the continent's largest critical-minerals processing plant is the value-capture thesis made literal.

A Nigerian Federal Government delegation visited the site of Hasetins Commodities' $400M rare-earth and critical-minerals processing plant under construction in Nasarawa State, slated to be Africa's largest such facility, targeting roughly 10,000 jobs. Officials from the Mining Inspectorate and the Mines Environmental Compliance directorate pressed on construction safety and environmental standards during the visit.

WHY IT MATTERS

An indigenous African firm building the continent's largest critical-minerals processing plant is exactly the "produce-and-process, don't just export raw" story, moving up the value chain rather than shipping ore, and tying directly into the minerals-to-advanced-tech supply chain that feeds AI compute, magnets, and EVs. The government's emphasis on compliance and safety is its own signal: the institutional scaffolding around African critical-minerals build-out is maturing, and compliance is becoming table stakes rather than an afterthought. For Ghana, it is a template for what indigenous-led downstream processing could look like at home.

A $400M mining-services benchmark: KEFI and BCM at Tulu Kapi

A nine-year, $400M contract-mining deal is the kind of long-duration partnership that shows African services firms maturing into institutions.

In Ethiopia, KEFI Gold and Copper and Ghana-based BCM Group announced a US$400 million, nine-year mining-services agreement for the Tulu Kapi Gold Project, one of the largest long-term services contracts in African frontier-market mining. BCM, a specialist contract miner, takes on drilling, haulage, and mining operations across the project's life.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is the second long-term nine-figure deal secured by Ghana-based firms in the first half of the year. Rabotec announced a four-year, $400M deal with Asanko Gold in March. These are the kind of deals that shine a light on the extent to which African services companies are building institutions.

---

05 / ACROSS AFRICA JUN 26

Zimbabwe's missing 250 tonnes: the case for drilling where no one has

The value Ghana is fighting to keep is value Zimbabwe hasn't even unlocked yet — and that gap is future drilling and geophysics demand.

Zimbabwe produces ~46 tonnes of gold a year from geology that yields ~300 tonnes in comparable Western Australian terrain. Geological Survey Director Forbes Mugumbate calls the gap billions in lost opportunity, the product of decades of underexploration. Meanwhile Kavango Resources raised ~$14M on the Victoria Falls Stock Exchange (VFEX) — mostly from local pension funds — to advance its Hillside gold project in the Filabusi Greenstone Belt.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is the growth side of the same coin: the value Ghana is fighting to keep is value Zimbabwe hasn't even unlocked. Two takeaways — underexplored ground is future drilling and geophysics demand exactly where a services platform wants to be early; and the VFEX local-pension-fund model is worth studying as a path to local financing that reduces reliance on offshore capital.

---

06 / ACROSS AFRICA JUN 16

The G7's critical minerals alliance: a 'consumer club' or a real opening?

A new consumer-country club on critical minerals, and the open question of whether African producers get a seat or just a supply role.

At the G7 Évian Summit, leaders formally established a critical minerals alliance and launched a new IEA-linked coordination platform, targeting reduced dependence on China beginning with lithium and nickel. Kenya's President Ruto, present as a partner country, announced his country is close to a critical minerals deal with the U.S. that would include domestic processing in Kenya. African civil society was more pointed: Claude Kabemba of Southern Africa Resource Watch warned that the declaration "says nothing about transferring industrial capacity to previously exploited regions such as Africa," and called for African producers to build their own coalition.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR GHANA

G7 supply-chain frameworks, if designed without meaningful African input, could perpetuate producer countries slogging through a raw-material-supplier role in a new economic order they did not help design. This affects the terms on which Ghanaian firms access international capital, technology, and offtake agreements. The Natural Resource Governance Institute has called for African producers to engage the G7's Critical Minerals Framework through the G20. I look forward to seeing Ghana's Minerals Commission at that table.

THE THROUGH-LINE

Whether the play is capturing more of what's already mined, refining instead of exporting, or unlocking ground that was never drilled, the constant is the same: someone has to drill, survey, haul, and maintain.

And increasingly, that someone is expected, or required, to be African-owned and operating at a major's standard. The state is writing that expectation into law, the majors are pricing it into their supply chains, and the next decade of exploration will widen the map well beyond a single country.

That is the seam Pimpong & Company is built into.

WHO I'M LOOKING TO MEET

Pimpong & Company is acquiring established mining-services businesses in Ghana: contract drilling, geophysical surveying, haulage and logistics, maintenance, and the suppliers around them.

If you own one of these businesses, or know an owner who might be open to a conversation about a sale, I would welcome an introduction.

START A CONVERSATION

Or reach me directly at kwame@pimponggroup.com.

Not a fit yourself? Groundwork travels by introduction. Please forward this to an operator who should be reading it.

Pimpong & Company

pimpong.co

Get Groundwork every week - subscribe on WhatsApp.

Groundwork is published by Pimpong & Company.