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Weekly Newsletter

**In this newsletter :**

Africa's top 10 mining projects to watch in 2026 include major milestones like Kamo-a-Kakula stabilising and targeting 380,000–420,000 tonnes of copper production.

Top 10 Mining Projects to Watch in Africa in 2026

This week, we break down the Top 10 Mining Projects to Watch in Africa in 2026 — not just the headline names, but the assets hitting real milestones this year.

Across copper, lithium, gold, iron ore and strategic infrastructure, several projects are transitioning from development to production, while others are expanding capacity in ways that could materially impact global supply.

These are the operations that matter for investors, policymakers, suppliers, and anyone tracking Africa's growing influence in critical minerals and energy transition metals.

Top 10 Mining Projects to Watch in Africa in 2026

1. Kamoakakula Copper Complex — Democratic Republic of Congo (Copper)

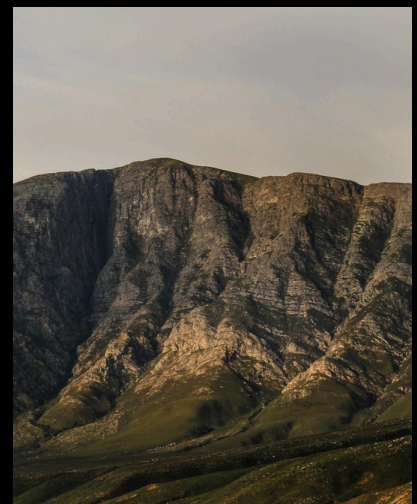
Asset Overview: One of the richest copper deposits in the world, operated as a joint venture led by Ivanhoe Mines with Zijin Mining participation. **Production & Scale:** Targeting 380,000–420,000 tonnes of copper in 2026, with plans to increase to 500,000–550,000 tonnes annually once phased expansions are complete. Updated life-of-mine studies are scheduled for release in early 2026. **2026 Milestones:**

- Restarting and stabilising production after operational challenges.
- Implementation of “Project 95” — an initiative to boost copper recovery rates in key concentrators, expected to be completed around Q2. As a cornerstone copper project, it will shape global supply in a metal critical for electric infrastructure and renewable technologies.
 - Its production profile and integration with regional transport corridors (like the Lobito Corridor) could lower freight costs for Congo copper.

2. Manono Lithium Project — Democratic Republic of Congo (Lithium)

Asset Overview: A world-scale hard-rock lithium deposit being developed as one of the largest global lithium mining operations. **Production & Scale:** Facility designed to process ~5 Mt of ore annually, producing roughly 95,000 t of lithium sulphate once at full capacity. **2026 Milestones:**

- Commissioning and first commercial exports expected in early 2026.
- Completion of key infrastructure, including processing facilities and a solar power component to reduce operating costs. With global EV battery demand expanding and supply constraints tightening, Manono positions Africa as a significant future lithium supplier.



3. Qala Shallows Gold Mine — South Africa (Gold)

Asset Overview: Historic new gold project in the Witwatersrand Basin, operated by West Wits Mining, marking South Africa's first new underground gold mine in 15 years. Production & Scale: Targeting ~70,000 ounces of gold per year with a life of about 17–18 years from a reserve of ~384,000 ounces.

2026 Milestones:

- First gold pour expected in Q1 2026.
- Transition from ramp-up mining to steady underground output. Signals renewed investor interest in South African gold mining, a long-time pillar of the African mining sector.

4. Goulamina Lithium Project — Mali (Lithium)

Asset Overview: Joint venture between Ganfeng Lithium and the Malian government. One of Africa's most advanced lithium operations. Production & Scale: Already producing ~506,000 t of spodumene concentrate annually, with plans to expand toward 1 Mt sustainable output.

2026 Milestones:

- Expansion of processing capacity and ramp-up of shipments to global buyers. Mali continues to house rising critical mineral capacity, directly feeding global battery supply chains. - Enhances West Africa's role in lithium supply diversification — a strategic counterweight to supply from Australia and South America.

5. Bougouni Lithium Project — Mali (Lithium)

Asset Overview: Newly commissioned lithium operation developed by Kodal Mining and partners. Production & Scale: Stage-1 production currently delivering high-grade spodumene. Stage-2 expansion aims to reach ~125,000 t of finished concentrate annually.

2026 Milestones:

- Moving from commissioning into full-scale commercial output.
- Initial export flows of lithium concentrate to global markets. With Mali's lithium production strengthening, Bougouni offers investors insight into emerging mid-tier producers.

5. Fekola Expansion – Mali (Gold)

Asset Overview: An existing high-performing gold mine owned by B2Gold, now entering an expansion phase.

Production & Scale: The Fekola Regional project is expected to contribute ~180,000 oz annually in its first five years, extending mine life into the 2030s.

2026 Milestones:

- Integration of underground mining outputs with regional processing facilities.
- Life-of-mine extension planning and ongoing metallurgical optimisation. A key asset in West Africa's gold sector, enhancing production visibility and reinforcing Mali's standing as a top gold exporter.

6. Otjikoto Antelope Deposit — Namibia (Gold)

Asset Overview: Underground gold deposit slated to complement existing output from B2Gold's Otjikoto Mine.

2026 Milestones:

- Progression through permitting and technical studies following positive Preliminary Economic Assessment.
- Early planning work establishing guidelines for eventual underground development. Offers insight into mid-tier project pipelines in politically stable jurisdictions with established mining infrastructure.

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transformation
in 2026.**

7. Fekola Expansion – Mali (Gold)

Asset Overview: One of the world's largest high-grade iron ore deposits (est. ~2.4 billion tonnes of ore grading ~65% Fe) developed near the Guinea-Liberia border.

Production & Scale: Commercial exports began late in 2025, ramping up in 2026.

2026 Milestones:

- Operational scaling of rail and port logistics infrastructure essential for long-range exports.
- Stabilisation of export volumes and supply contracts with steelmakers. With iron ore central to global steel production, Simandou's operational scale shifts Africa's profile among major iron suppliers.



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9. Lobito Corridor Rail & Export Route — Angola / Zambia / DRC (Infrastructure)

Project Scope: A strategic rail and logistics corridor linking the Central African Copperbelt to Atlantic ports, enabling cost-effective mineral export flows.

2026 Milestones:

- Operation of key sections, cutting transport times and creating export alternatives beyond traditional corridors. Infrastructure remains a hidden multiplier in mining economics — efficient logistics can drastically improve project NPV and attract investment.

10. Tulu Kapi Gold Project — Ethiopia (Gold)

Asset Overview: One of Ethiopia's first large-scale gold mines, currently in development after financing and construction phase delays.

2026 Milestones:

- Advancing construction targets toward first output and supporting Ethiopia's broader mining growth strategy. Represents an emerging market opportunity outside traditional gold jurisdictions, with potential multiplier effects on domestic investment and foreign participation.

Bonus Hidden Gem

Luele Diamond Mine — Angola (Diamonds)

Asset Overview: One of the largest diamond mines in the world, located ~35 km from Saurimo with an estimated **628 million carats** in resources and **~60-year lifespan**. As a global diamond source with long mine life, Luele strengthens Angola's mining portfolio and offers high-value commodity upside.



Why These Matter in 2026

What makes these projects particularly worth watching this year:

- Production scale and first outputs (Manono, Qala Shallows, Simandou)
- Expansion into critical minerals (lithium and copper)
- Strategic infrastructure enabling exports (Lobito Corridor)
- Diversification beyond classic gold and diamonds

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