In 2007, the Belgian Royal Museum for Central Africa (MRAC) and the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (IRScNB) created a centre for scientific research and expertise in Earth Sciences. In its pilot phase, the project, called GECO for “Geology for an economically sustainable development” focused its activities on the Katanga Province (DRC). One of the main outcomes of this phase was the development of a cartographic server system hosting an extensive georesources database over Katanga.

The Katanga Province and more specifically its mining sector have a long industrial history of nearly a century, marked by numerous milestones and stakeholders. This background has generated a significant mass of information uneven in quality and sometimes difficult to assess. One of the main goals of the pilot phase of GECO was to collect and edit this information to be able to draw an overview of the future research priorities.

Accessibility to this information for scientists, and political or economic entities was achieved through the development of a cartographic webGIS that is freely available through the Internet. The GECO centre has already created georesources thematic databases covering over 400 deposits, metallogenesis (300 deposits) and mineralogy (1200 occurrences), all described and edited in an open-source software.

As a fast and efficient analysis and consultation tool for information scattered over the whole Katanga Province, the GECO georesources thematic databases cover mining and mineralogical databases, made by the GECO Project can be accessed through the webGIS interface, making it probably the most complete source of mineralogical spatial information over Katanga.

The natural resource information is published in thematic databases, each with its own legend. These databases are processed from the different information sources available over the Katanga province as well as for the whole DRC.

A geological map at a scale of 1/500,000 covering the southern part of Katanga was produced during the GECO-project from existing documents and completed by analysis of satellite images. Completion of this document needed standardization and synthesis of information sources and in particular the establishment of stratigraphic correlations between the different sources of information.

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