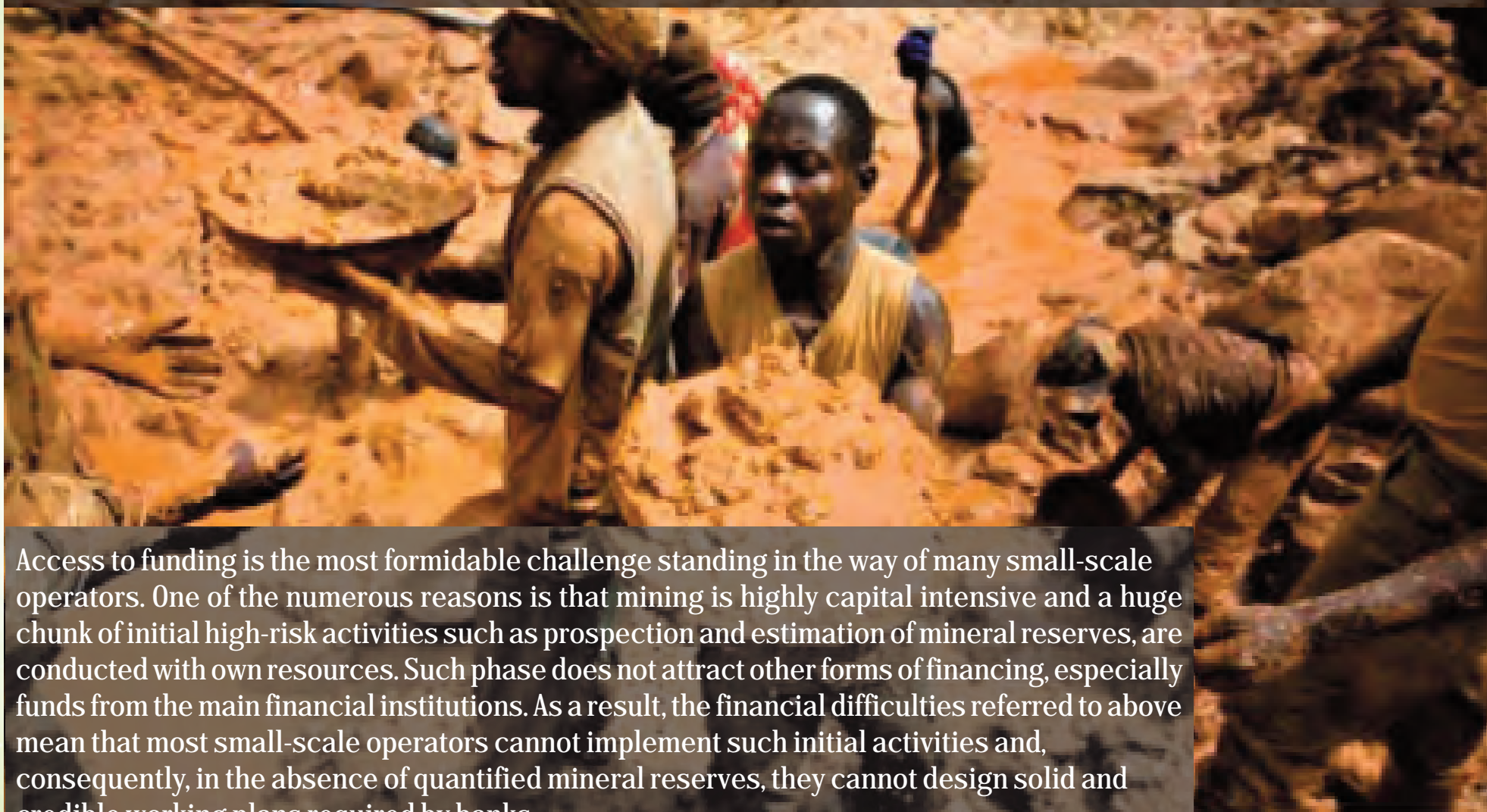


Artisanal and small-scale mining in Africa: challenges (c)



Access to funding is the most formidable challenge standing in the way of many small-scale operators. One of the numerous reasons is that mining is highly capital intensive and a huge chunk of initial high-risk activities such as prospecting and estimation of mineral reserves, are conducted with own resources. Such phase does not attract other forms of financing, especially funds from the main financial institutions. As a result, the financial difficulties referred to above mean that most small-scale operators cannot implement such initial activities and, consequently, in the absence of quantified mineral reserves, they cannot design solid and credible working plans required by banks.