Blockchain for Good: Why the WinstantGold experiment is of interest to the global debate today

From Bangui and Kinshasa to Paris: the trajectory of WinstantGold

WinstantGold

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Long version

Introduction — When an African perspective meets the global debate

Blockchain for Good: the meeting of two trajectories — On June 4th and 8th, 2026, Hervé Lacorne, CEO of Winstant Ltd and co-founder of WinstantGold, participated in the Blockchain for Good conference in Paris. At first glance, this participation might seem to illustrate a now-classic evolution in the blockchain world: the gradual shift from speculative cryptocurrencies to uses geared towards the common good, sustainable development, and social innovation. However, the experience led by WinstantGold presents a unique characteristic. Unlike many projects born within the blockchain ecosystem before seeking concrete applications, WinstantGold follows the opposite trajectory. The project initially stemmed from a reflection on African development, the valorization of natural resources, and economic sovereignty. Blockchain only emerged later, as a tool capable of strengthening an architecture already conceived over several years.

WinstantGold at the moment of international recognition — Participation in the Blockchain for Good conference comes at a pivotal moment in the project's evolution. WinstantGold is no longer just a concept or a theoretical experiment. It is now the first pilot project of the national AXIS program developed in the Democratic Republic of Congo by the DRC Social Fund in partnership with Phoenix Capital and under the patronage of President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo. This evolution gives the project new visibility. What was, just a few years ago, a discussion among development specialists, policymakers, and digital entrepreneurs is gradually becoming a full-scale laboratory exploring the relationships between natural resources, digital assets, trusted infrastructure, and territorial development. This recognition explains the growing interest it is now attracting from various international players.

An innovation with deep roots — To understand this interest, however, one must go back well beyond the current blockchain trend. WinstantGold's roots lie in a history that began in the early 2000s with the Millennium Development Goals, the Sport for Development and Peace movement, and the initial discussions on the sustainable financing of infrastructure for grassroots communities in Africa. The experiences gained in Burundi, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo gradually led to a more fundamental question: why do countries with vast natural resources remain dependent on external financing mechanisms to ensure their development? This question gave rise to the Presidential Development Programs (PPV), then to the Sustainable Development Programs for Natural Resources (PPV2R), before encountering the opportunities offered by blockchain, tokenization, and new digital infrastructures. It is also this historical depth that distinguishes WinstantGold today from many technological initiatives that have emerged more recently on the international scene.

1. Africa facing the question of value

The paradox of rich territories and poor populations — Africa occupies a central place in the major global commodity chains. Its subsoil provides gold, cobalt, copper, coltan, manganese, lithium, and even diamonds. Its forests, agricultural lands, and water resources play a strategic role in global climate, food, and energy balances. Yet, in many producing regions, populations continue to face poverty, a lack of infrastructure, inadequate public services, and fragile economic prospects. This paradox is not merely moral. It reveals a problem of value capture and organization.

The difficulty of financing local development — For several decades, African states have sought to finance essential needs: roads, schools, health centers, electricity grids, agricultural infrastructure, sports facilities, and youth integration programs. These projects are often indispensable for the development of grassroots communities, but their funding remains precarious. National budgets are constrained, international aid is targeted, external loans create new dependencies, and private partnerships remain difficult to structure sustainably. The problem, therefore, does not lie solely in the absence of projects. It stems primarily from the difficulty of building stable financial mechanisms capable of linking local resources to the concrete needs of the population.

The limitations of traditional models — Traditional development financing models rely mainly on international aid, debt, foreign direct investment, or revenues from raw material exports. Each of these mechanisms can produce useful effects, but none fully resolves the issue of economic sovereignty. Aid remains dependent on donor priorities. Debt reduces decision-making power. Foreign investment can capture a significant portion of the value. Gross exports expose states to the fluctuations of global markets. These limitations explain why progress often remains fragmented, reversible, or insufficiently rooted in local communities.

The emergence of new approaches — Faced with these limitations, new approaches are gradually emerging. They seek to leverage the real assets already present in territories rather than relying exclusively on external financing. Mineral resources, forests, agricultural land, energy, carbon credits, and precious metals can become drivers of development, provided they are identified, certified, governed, and valued transparently. This evolution marks a shift in perspective. Natural resources are no longer seen solely as export commodities but as potential sources of financing, infrastructure, sovereignty, and local development. It is in this context that digital technologies and blockchain are becoming increasingly relevant.

Why the issue remains relevant — This issue remains central today because contemporary transitions further reinforce the strategic importance of African resources. The energy transition depends on critical minerals. The digital transition relies on rare metals and data infrastructure. The fight against climate change is restoring value to forests, soils, and environmental services. At the same time, the needs of African communities remain immense. The challenge, therefore, is not simply to produce more raw materials. It is about determining who controls the value created, who certifies it, who finances it, and who benefits from it. It is precisely at this point that the WinstantGold experience joins the global debate on Blockchain for Good.

2. From WinstantGold to AXIS

WinstantGold as a pilot project — When WinstantGold was selected as the first pilot project of the AXIS national program, a decisive step was taken. For the first time, the concepts developed over the years around PPV2RN moved from the realm of theoretical reflection to that of institutional experimentation. WinstantGold was no longer just an analytical framework or an innovation lab. It became a tool for concretely testing how natural resources, digital assets, and trusted infrastructures can contribute to territorial development. This evolution gave the project a new dimension and attracted the attention of stakeholders far beyond the African continent.

The DRC Social Fund's decision — The integration of WinstantGold into AXIS would not have been possible without the intervention and decision of the Social Fund of the Democratic Republic of Congo. For several years, this institution has been committed to programs aimed at improving living conditions and strengthening local development. The discussions initiated by Phoenix Capital around the PPV2RN principle quickly revealed a convergence of concerns. On the one hand, there is the search for new mechanisms to enhance the value of natural resources. On the other, there is the need to sustainably finance projects that benefit grassroots communities. This meeting bridges the gap between long-term strategic thinking and operational needs directly rooted in local communities.

The partnership with Phoenix — The development of AXIS relies on mobilizing partners capable of providing the technological, organizational, and operational skills necessary for program implementation. In this context, the partnership with Phoenix plays a structuring role. It helps transform a strategic vision into an operational architecture and creates the conditions for linking digital innovation, asset governance, and territorial development. This cooperation illustrates one of the project's key characteristics: the desire to build ecosystems that bring together public actors, development experts, and specialists in emerging technologies around common objectives.

The High Patronage of President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo — The institutional dimension of the program is strengthened by its placement under the high patronage of President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo. This involvement gives the project a scope that extends far beyond a technological experiment. The issues addressed directly concern economic sovereignty, the development of natural resources, and national development strategies. By placing AXIS within a presidential perspective, the Congolese authorities emphasize that the discussions undertaken concern the economic future of the country as a whole, and not just a particular sector of the digital economy.

AXIS as a national program — AXIS is distinguished precisely by its national ambition. The program is not limited to the creation of a digital tool or the management of a specific asset. It aims to build a framework for linking natural resources, technological innovation, local development, and economic sovereignty. In this context, WinstantGold appears as one of the instruments likely to contribute to this comprehensive architecture. The objective is less to develop a particular technology than to create an environment in which different strategic assets can be identified, valued, certified and mobilized to serve the country's development.

The logic of territorial ecosystems — One of AXIS's unique features lies in its approach through territorial ecosystems. Development is not viewed as a simple

accumulation of independent projects. It is conceived as the interconnectedness of natural resources, infrastructure, economic actors, public institutions, and local communities within a single value creation system. This approach directly aligns with lessons learned from previous experiences. Infrastructure only produces lasting effects when it is embedded in a coherent economic environment capable of ensuring its operation and sustainability.

The role of grassroots communities — Despite the increasing sophistication of the tools used, grassroots communities remain at the heart of the approach. This continuity is particularly important. From the initial experiences conducted within the framework of Sport for Development and Peace to the reflections on PPV2RN and WinstantGold, the central question has never changed: how can we sustainably improve the living conditions of populations? Natural resources, digital assets, blockchain, and tokenization are not end in themselves. They are mobilized because they can contribute to financing infrastructure, supporting local economic activity, and strengthening the capacity of regions to build their own development.

Initial lessons learned — The initial stages of the program have already yielded several key lessons. First, they confirm that digital technologies can play a useful role when integrated into a clear strategic vision. Second, they demonstrate that the development of natural resources requires sound governance and robust institutional partnerships. Finally, they reiterate that the central issue remains the creation and sharing of value. It is precisely because it seeks to address this question that the WinstantGold project now extends beyond the Congolese context and can attract the interest of stakeholders within the Blockchain for Good movement.

3. What blockchain actually brings

Beyond cryptocurrencies — For a long time, the term blockchain was almost exclusively associated with cryptocurrencies and the speculative phenomena that accompanied their development. This perception helped to obscure a deeper reality. Blockchain is first and foremost an infrastructure for recording, certifying, and sharing information. Its value lies not only in the creation of digital assets but also in its ability to foster trust between actors who may not know each other. In projects like WinstantGold within AXIS, the goal is therefore not to create a new currency but to have tools capable of securing the management of strategic assets and strengthening the transparency of valuation mechanisms.

Resource traceability — One of the most obvious benefits of blockchain concerns traceability. Natural resources generally go through numerous stages before reaching international markets: extraction, transport, processing, certification, financing, marketing, and export. At each of these stages, essential information can be lost, altered, or difficult to verify. Distributed ledgers enable the maintenance of a shared memory of operations performed throughout the value chain. This capability is particularly important for mineral, forestry, and environmental resources, whose value often depends on the quality of information associated with their origin and history.

Digital trust — Value creation relies heavily on trust. Investors must have confidence in the assets they finance. Institutions must have confidence in certification mechanisms. Publics must have confidence in the governance of national resources. However, trust is often difficult to build in complex environments involving numerous stakeholders. Blockchain does not replace institutions, but it can help strengthen their credibility by offering shared verification mechanisms. It thus becomes a trusted infrastructure capable of supporting projects involving multiple levels of public and private actors.

Flow governance — Natural resources generate information flows, financial flows, and physical flows that must be coordinated coherently. One of the major challenges is ensuring consistency between these different value flows. Blockchain technologies improve the visibility of operations and strengthen process control capabilities. This function is particularly relevant when multiple institutions participate in the management of the same assets. The governance of these flows then becomes an essential element of economic sovereignty, as it determines the ability to track, understand, and manage the mechanisms that create value.

Financial inclusion — Decentralized technologies also open new perspectives for financial inclusion. In many regions of the world, and particularly in Africa, a significant portion of the population remains excluded from traditional financial systems. Digital infrastructures can facilitate access to certain financial services and reduce the costs associated with intermediation. However, within WinstantGold at AXIS, financial inclusion is not an isolated objective. It is part of a broader approach aimed at linking value creation mechanisms to the needs of local territories and communities so that the benefits of development can be shared more widely.

Digital security — Any strategy based on digital assets requires a high level of security. Resource certification, digital asset representation, and the management of innovative financial mechanisms require infrastructures capable of withstanding manipulation, errors, and fraud attempts. Blockchain provides useful guarantees

regarding data integrity and transaction traceability. However, security never depends solely on technology. It also relies on the quality of governance, the robustness of procedures, and the ability of institutions to protect the systems they use. Technology enhances security, but it does not replace human responsibility.

Thoughtful tokenization — Among the most promising applications is the tokenization of real assets. This approach involves creating a digital representation of a physical asset or economic right to facilitate its management, traceability, or financing. Within the WinstantGold framework, tokenization is not considered a speculative tool but rather a mechanism for the reasoned representation and valuation of natural resources. The goal is not to artificially create value but to make visible, certifiable, and mobilizable a value that already exists in the real world. This distinction is fundamental because it differentiates this approach from the numerous experiments based solely on financial logic.

The necessary limitations and precautions — However, it would be illusory to consider blockchain as a universal solution. No technology can compensate for the absence of governance, a legal framework, or political will. A blockchain does not automatically certify the quality of a resource. It does not prevent management errors. It does not, on its own, guarantee economic sovereignty. Projects based on these technologies must therefore be approached with caution and realism. True innovation lies less in the technical tool itself than in how it is integrated into a coherent development strategy. It is precisely this interplay between technology, governance, and sovereignty that explains the current interest in the WinstantGold experience within international debates on Blockchain for Good.

4. Why Blockchain for Good might be interested in these experiments

Technology serving a social purpose — For several years, the Blockchain for Good movement has sought to demonstrate that decentralized technologies can address challenges far beyond purely financial applications. Transparency, inclusion, traceability, governance, and sustainable development are now the main areas of experimentation. In this context, the interest in initiatives like WinstantGold is understandable. The project does not use blockchain as a technological end in itself. It leverages it to answer a concrete question: how can we enable natural resources to contribute more effectively to the development of populations and territories? This approach directly aligns with the philosophy that inspires the Blockchain for Good movement.

The link between development and sovereignty — One of the distinctive features of the WinstantGold experiment lies in the close link between development and sovereignty. In many Blockchain for Good initiatives, the objective is to improve access to services, strengthen trust, or facilitate certain forms of economic inclusion. The Congolese project adds a further dimension. He believes that a state's ability to control the development of its natural resources is also a matter of social impact. Economic sovereignty is no longer seen as an abstract concept reserved for geopolitical specialists. It is becoming a concrete factor in development capable of having a lasting influence on people's living conditions.

The importance of pilot projects — Major innovations are rarely built on general theories. They most often emerge through experiments that can test ideas against real-world conditions. This is precisely the role played by pilot projects. They allow for the identification of operational difficulties, the testing of governance mechanisms, and the evaluation of the relevance of proposed solutions. WinstantGold's value lies largely in this experimental dimension. The project provides a framework in which the interactions between natural resources, digital infrastructure, public institutions, and territorial development can be observed. This capacity to produce concrete lessons explains the attention it is attracting in the field of impact innovation.

The need for public governance — The Congolese experience also highlights a reality often underestimated in technological debates: no sustainable innovation can develop without governance. The natural resources in question are strategic assets whose management determines the country's economic future. Their development therefore requires institutions capable of defining the rules, protecting the public interest, and ensuring the coherence of public policies. Blockchain for Good is increasingly interested in this issue because the most promising projects are often those that manage to combine technological innovation and institutional responsibility. From this perspective, the role of the State appears not as an obstacle to innovation but as one of the conditions for its success.

The role of partnerships — The most ambitious projects generally rely on collaborations involving several categories of actors. Governments, public institutions, technology companies, investors, international organizations, and local communities each possess specific skills that must be coordinated. The development of WinstantGold within the AXIS framework illustrates this partnership approach. The valorization of natural resources, the governance of digital assets, and territorial development require complementary expertise that no single actor possesses alone. This ability to build alliances around a common goal is one of the project's most important lessons.

The contribution of the African experience — The interest generated by WinstantGold also stems from its African origin. For a long time, technological innovations were analyzed primarily through experiences conducted in North America, Europe, or Asia. The experience developed around PPV2RN and AXIS offers a different perspective. It places the issues of natural resources, territorial development, economic sovereignty, and local value creation at the heart of the debate. This approach enriches international discussion by demonstrating that emerging technologies can be mobilized to address specific challenges faced by resource-rich countries that also have significant development needs.

What the world can learn from these experiments — Beyond the Congolese case, the experiments conducted around WinstantGold raise questions relevant to many countries. How can real assets be certified in complex environments? How can natural resources be linked to sustainable development goals? How can trusted infrastructures be built to strengthen economic sovereignty? How can technology be made a tool for governance rather than simply a financial instrument? These questions extend far beyond the African context. They resonate with major international debates on the energy transition, the management of strategic resources, data governance, and the future of sustainable development. This is why the WinstantGold experience is now attracting interest far beyond those who witnessed its inception.

5. Why WinstantGold can become a reference for Blockchain for Good

Beyond financial blockchain — Many blockchain projects that have emerged over the past fifteen years have focused on cryptocurrencies, exchange platforms, or digital financial instruments. This focus has contributed to the lasting association of blockchain with speculation. WinstantGold takes a different approach. Its primary objective is neither the creation of a private currency nor the organization of speculative markets. Here, blockchain is presented as a trusted infrastructure designed to document, certify, and value real resources in service of economic development. This difference largely explains the interest it is currently generating in impact innovation circles.

Real assets serving the common good — One of the fundamental characteristics of the Blockchain for Good movement is to consider technology as a tool serving collective goals. This principle is at the very heart of WinstantGold. The digital assets envisioned within the program do not derive their value from independent speculative dynamics but from their backing by identified, certified, and governed real resources. Gold, environmental assets, or the natural resources in question are not abstract technical supports. They represent the foundations of a strategy designed to strengthen development financing capacity, local value creation, and the economic autonomy of territories.

An innovation of sovereignty — The experience led by WinstantGold introduces a relatively new dimension to the Blockchain for Good universe. Most known initiatives are geared towards financial inclusion, transparency, or community management of local projects. PPV2RN adds another perspective: that of economic sovereignty. The question is no longer simply how blockchain can help a community or organization. It becomes: how can this technology contribute to strengthening a state's capacity to value its own resources and finance its own development? This evolution opens up a new field of inquiry.

Why the world is looking to the DRC today — If the Congolese experience is attracting attention today, it's not just because it's using innovative technologies. It's because it seeks to answer a question many countries are now asking: how to transform real resources into instruments of sustainable development, trust, and sovereignty? The AXIS program and the WinstantGold pilot project constitute a particularly interesting laboratory in this regard. They allow us to observe how trust technologies can be linked to public policies, strategic resources, and territorial development objectives. This convergence explains the now natural fit between WinstantGold and Blockchain for Good.

Conclusion — From technological innovation to economic sovereignty

From Bangui and Kinshasa to Blockchain for Good — Between the foundational conversations in Bangui and the Blockchain for Good conference held in Paris in June 2026, more than a decade passed. During this time, reflections on local development, the valorization of natural resources, and economic sovereignty gradually intersected with the opportunities offered by digital technologies. This journey underscores a crucial reality: WinstantGold was not born from blockchain. On the contrary, it is a long-standing reflection on African development that ultimately intersected with blockchain when it emerged as a tool capable of strengthening mechanisms already envisioned for several years. The technology joined an existing vision; it did not create it.

A collective adventure — The story recounted in this article also demonstrates that the most sustainable innovations are rarely the product of a single actor. Behind WinstantGold lie years of work involving policymakers, development experts, public institutions, practitioners on the ground, and digital entrepreneurs. The contributions of Élie Doté, Hervé Lacorne, Philippe Ngwala Malemba, Alain Lemieux, the teams involved in the PPV2RN (Partnerships for the Promotion of the Development of the National Network), institutional partners, and stakeholders engaged in the AXIS program attest to this collective dimension. Each step added another piece to a structure whose full implications no single participant could grasp at the time of its development.

The journey – The path taken is now clearer. Initial reflections focused on financing infrastructure for grassroots communities within the framework of the Sport for Development and Peace movement. These reflections led to questioning the limitations of traditional development financing mechanisms. This questioning then shifted the focus to natural resources, then to economic sovereignty, before culminating in PPVs (Partnerships for the Promotion of the Development of the National Network), PPV2RN, and finally, the integration of digital technologies through WinstantGold. The AXIS program now represents one of the most successful expressions of this evolution. It illustrates how an idea born from the ground up can gradually become a national development framework.

The remaining challenges — However, nothing is yet definitively settled. Many challenges remain. The governance of natural resources, asset certification, control of digital infrastructure, training of local skills, system security, and mobilization of financing still require considerable effort. More broadly, the question of economic sovereignty remains open in a world characterized by a strong interdependence of markets, technologies, and financial flows. It is precisely for this reason that experiments like WinstantGold and AXIS are of particular importance. They do not claim to provide a definitive solution. They explore new paths. And this is undoubtedly their main contribution to the Blockchain for Good movement: to show that technology can help build mechanisms of trust, development, and sovereignty when it is placed at the service of a coherent political and economic vision.