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Canadian investors have earmarked mining investment worth \$17 billion for Africa over the next five years, with the bulk of this sum destined for SA.

This is according to Bruce Shapiro, principal of MineAfrica, a Toronto-based business development company focusing on promoting mining investment in Africa.

The company has been in operation for the last six years, hosting the highly successful yearly Investing in African Mining seminar series in Toronto.

Shapiro tells Mining Weekly that MineAfrica will be hosting an Investing in African Mining seminar in London, in November.

"We chose to expand to London for several reasons," explains Shapiro.

"A number of our clients expressed interest in an Africa-focused promotional platform, similar to what we currently provide in Toronto.

"In addition, London is a key mining financial centre and it has a strong affinity for Africa."

Toronto and London are considered the capitals of global mining investment and an expansion from one to the other makes business sense.

The seminar series has been an important platform for North American mining investors to network with existing or potential partners, suppliers and customers from Africa, particularly SA.

MineAfrica has undertaken to promote SA's black economic-empowerment (BEE) policy by inviting and seeking sponsorship for BEE companies to be represented at its high-profile seminars, where they get an opportunity to rub shoulders with some of the big names in the mining world.

This year, MineAfrica organised a BEE seminar in Toronto, which turned out to be a huge success in terms of attendance and business networking.

The London trip will also feature a BEE seminar, on November 20, a day after the Investing in Africa Mining seminar.

"The purpose of the seminar on BEE in SA's mining industry is to explain BEE in detail, [including] its legal, financial and operating impact on foreign mining investors interested in investing, or currently operating, in SA," says Shapiro.

MineAfrica seminars feature presentations by mining companies, financial, legal and engineering experts, and African, Canadian and other government representatives on specific projects and investment opportunities on the continent.

The seminar in London will feature expert presentations on doing business in Africa's mining industry, followed by company and government presentations on specific investment opportunities.

The opening session will cover the following topics: country risk, operating security, financing projects, public-listing options, and African mining hotspots.

The organisers and their sponsors hope that a double onslaught of these seminars, in Toronto in March, and in London, in November, will become a permanent feature on the mining calendar.