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New Standard for Responsible Mining Released

Multi-sector effort to certify social and environmental performance at mine sites globally

Today, the [Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance \(IRMA\)](#) released the [Standard for Responsible Mining](#), a precedent-setting global certification program for industrial-scale mine sites. With growing awareness and demand for ecologically and socially-responsible products, jewelers, electronics businesses, auto makers and others have sought assurances that the minerals they purchase are mined responsibly. The *Standard* seeks to emulate for industrial-scale mine sites what has been done with certification programs in organic agriculture, responsible forestry and sustainable fisheries. An online [Responsible Mining Map](#) was also launched today that will allow responsible producers and purchasers of minerals to demonstrate their commitment to a responsible minerals value chain and enable business relationships to develop.

The *Standard for Responsible Mining* reflects the input from over 100 companies, organizations and individuals worldwide and has support from leading companies like Anglo American, ArcelorMittal, Microsoft and Tiffany & Co. IRMA has also worked with mines and technical experts to conduct two field tests of the [Standard for Responsible Mining](#) to ground-truth the *Standard* through simulated mine audits in the United States and in Zimbabwe. Auditors hired by IRMA reviewed company documentation, made first-hand observations at the mine sites, and conducted interviews with company representatives and other stakeholders to verify the requirements in the *Standard* are clear, practicable, and measurable.

“As interest in the responsible sourcing of metals and minerals grows it is important to have standards that meet the needs of the wide variety of customers that mining serves, and address the expectations of society as a whole,” said Jon Samuel, Group Head of Social Performance and Engagement at Anglo American. “We look forward to trialling the IRMA Self-Assessment Tool and to continuing to contribute to the development of IRMA as a demonstration of our commitment to responsible mining.”

“Microsoft believes that fairly-applied global mining standards such as those outlined in the *Standard for Responsible Mining* are essential to helping solve labor, human rights, and environmental issues at the far reaches of industry’s supply chains,” said Joan Krajewski, General Manager, Compliance and Safety, Microsoft. “Making progress on these important and challenging issues will require the efforts and engagements of many, which is why we play an active role in collaborative initiatives like the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance.”

The *Standard for Responsible Mining* is the result of more than ten years of collaboration between groups from the mining industry, organized labor, nongovernmental organizations, impacted communities, and businesses. The Standard offers shared value for mining industry participants, while addressing purchaser demand for greater options in sourcing responsibly mined materials, and civil society desire for transparency and independent verification.

“The *Standard for Responsible Mining* is a welcome initiative, moving us forward in establishing verifiable human rights standards for communities and workers at mine sites around the world,” said Dewa Mavhinga, Southern Africa Director at Human Rights Watch.

The *Standard for Responsible Mining’s* best practice requirements for mining include elements such as health and safety for workers, human rights, community engagement, pollution control, mining in conflict-affected areas, rights of indigenous peoples, transparency in revenue payments from companies to governments, and land reclamation once mining is done. The Standard is not simply a pass/fail system, instead focused on transparency, where different levels of performance are recognized and continuous improvement is encouraged, but where certification is still available for those industrial-scale mine sites meeting all major best practice requirements.

“IndustriALL Global Union represents over 50 million workers in mining and manufacturing in 140 countries. We have worked hard to ensure that the interests of working miners and communities are fully represented in the development of this multi-stakeholder certification and assurance reporting system for the mining industry,” said Glen Mpufane, Mining, Gems Ornaments and Jewellery Production Director at IndustriALL Global Union and a former miner and member of the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa.”

“The *Standard for Responsible Mining* responds to the power of markets to create greater incentive and leverage for protection of the environment and the communities who live closest to mines,” said Aimee Boulanger, Coordinator of the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA). “The *Standard for Responsible Mining* will offer shared value to corporations who seek to make a profit, while also offering an ethical value chain to their customers.”

“As a member of a community directly impacted by mining pollution, I applaud the new *Standard for Responsible Mining*,” said Jacinda Mack, co-founder of Stand for Water, a project of the First Nations Women Advocating Responsible Mining in Canada. “People of First Nations need our community rights honored and our clean water protected from irresponsible mining practices.”

Background:

Quotes above are from current or recent members of the IRMA Steering Committee. Additional current Steering Committee members include Mark Rowlinson of United Steelworkers, Anisa Kamadoli Costa of Tiffany & Co., Payal Sampat of Earthworks, and Alan Knight of ArcelorMittal.

The *Standard for Responsible Mining* is for mine sites, not mining companies, and will not certify energy fuels (e.g. uranium, thermal coal, oil or gas). In addition to full certification, IRMA will offer an entry “Candidate” status for mines meeting core requirements, and a scoring tool to measure continuing improvement for mines at all levels. Achievement will be measured through independent third-party verification and seeks compliance with ISEAL Alliance’s Code of Good Practice for standard-setting. Full certification will be offered in late 2019, based on the learning from mines engaged in self-assessment and auditor-verified scoring in 2018 and early 2019.

IRMA is committed to working collaboratively with colleague standard systems seeking similar solutions, including ResponsibleSteel, Responsible Jewellery Council, Alliance for Responsible Mining, Forest Stewardship Council, Responsible Business Alliance, US Green Building Council, Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council and others.

Email Aimee Boulanger at aboulanger@responsiblemining.net for interviews. High-resolution photos available.

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