

According to the International Labour Organisation, mining remains one of the top three most hazardous sectors. During the two years since the last RMI assessment, several large-scale mining companies have been at the centre of major controversies as mine tailings failures have claimed scores of lives, devastated whole communities and caused major

environmental disasters. "Such tragedies reflect very poorly on the sector as a whole and put into stark perspective companies' claims of responsible mining. The industry must redouble its efforts to prove that it prioritises broader EESG responsibilities over short-term considerations," says Afshin Mehrpouya, associate professor at HEC Paris and RMF board member.

Disconnect

The RMI Report 2020 highlights a disconnect between company-wide policies and standards versus on-the-ground actions at mine sites, where the impacts of mining are most evident. Companies often show little or no evidence of sharing mine-site-level information on issues of strong public interest for neighbouring communities, workers, governments and investors. Likewise, there is scant evidence of companies engaging with local stakeholders on these issues, which include for example local procurement, grievance mechanisms or air and water quality. Of the 180 individual mine sites assessed, only one site scores more than 50%, while 145 sites score less than 20% and 45 sites score zero on all 10 indicators. None of the companies shows consistent performance across the mine sites they own or operate.

As with the 2018 assessment, the RMI Report 2020 shows that it can be done: mining can meet society's expectations. If one company were to achieve all the highest scores recorded in each of the 71 indicators, it would reach more than 70% of the maximum achievable score. Similarly, if one mine site were to achieve all the highest scores seen for the asset-level indicators, it would score over 80%. All companies are encouraged to adopt more systematically the good practices already being demonstrated across the sector.

Stakeholder pressure

The RMI Report 2020 shows that requirements set by home or producing countries or by investors drive stronger company action and transparency on EESG issues. For example, investor-led demands for disclosure of the location and safety of mine tailings storage facilities have prompted more complete and more publicly available data of critical interest to share- and bondholders, insurers and governments.

"While the trust-deficit with society is recognised as the number one risk for mining companies, by proactively making EESG data available – starting at individual mine sites and in open data formats companies can help to build trust, limit risk, and show respect. In fact, more proactive data disclosure will reduce the demand for companies' reporting," says Piaget.

Companies assessed in RMI 2020 Anglo American, AngloGold Ashanti, Antofagasta, ArcelorMittal, Banpu, Barrick Gold Corp, BHP, Buenaventura, Bumi Resources, China Shenhua, Coal India, CODELCO, ERG, Evraz, Exxaro Resources, First Quantum Minerals, Fortescue, Freeport-McMoRan, Glencore, Gold Fields, Grupo México, Industrias Peñoles, MMG, Navoi MMC, Newcrest Mining, Newmont, NMDC, Nordgold, Orano, Peabody Energy, Polymetal, Rio Tinto, RUSAL, Sibanye-Stillwater, Teck, Vale, Vedanta Resources, Zijin.

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