



IRMA Certification Body Requirements

Version 1.0

November 2019

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RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE REQUIREMENTS

The IRMA Secretariat holds responsibility for this document and its content.

Versions Issued

Version No.	Date	Description of Amendment
1.0	9 November 2019	First publication

ABOUT IRMA

IRMA is the acronym for ‘Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance’, an independent not for profit organization. IRMA was founded in 2006 by a coalition of nongovernment organizations, businesses purchasing minerals and metals for resale in other products, affected communities, mining companies, and trade unions.

IRMA seeks to improve the environmental and social performance of mining operations through the multi-stakeholder development of a set of best practice standards, as well as a system to independently verify implementation of those standards.

See www.responsiblemining.net for more information.

INTRODUCTION TO THIS DOCUMENT

The purposes of the IRMA Certification Body Requirements [this document] are:

- To enable all certification bodies to operate in a consistent and controlled manner
- To enable oversight of certification bodies by IRMA in a consistent and controlled manner
- To provide the transparency that is required of an international certification scheme for it to have credibility with stakeholders
- To provide documentation for continuity and consistency of the delivery of IRMA certification.

To help achieve the above, IRMA uses the consensus-based globally recognized requirements of ISO/IEC 17021 as a basis for certification of mining projects against the IRMA *Standard for Responsible Mining* (“IRMA Standard”). ISO/IEC 17021 is published by the International Organization for Standardization and the International Electrotechnical Commission. IRMA adopts and applies the technical language of the ISO/IEC 17021 requirements to the greatest extent practicable. Informative Annexes to ISO/IEC 17021 are also informative for the IRMA program, unless stated otherwise.

In many circumstances, it is necessary for IRMA to add to the ISO/IEC 17021 requirements or to provide more detailed interpretation of the ISO/IEC language to ensure that certification to the IRMA Standard meets its intended principles and objectives. Such changes and additions to ISO/IEC 17021 requirements are detailed in this document. Where requirements have been added to an ISO/IEC 17021 section, or where they differ from ISO requirements, these requirements are listed under *Additional IRMA Requirements*. Consequently, to fully understand and implement the IRMA Certification Body Requirements, it is necessary for the reader to have access to the applicable version of ISO/IEC 17021. **For ease of reading, the major headings in this document, beginning on page 17, are the same as the respective headings of ISO/IEC 17021.**

The requirements for certification also apply to “verified achievement levels” (i.e., IRMA 50 or 75) and to scoring against the IRMA Standard (i.e., IRMA Transparency), unless specifically stated otherwise. (See [Annex C](#))

This document has been written to align with the “ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards” (the Assurance Code). More information is available on the [ISEAL Alliance website](#).

IRMA would like to recognize Accreditation Services International, for creating the initial draft of this document, and SCS Global Services for assisting in the production of this final document. ERM also provided review and comment on early drafts. In drafting this document, IRMA looked to other voluntary sustainability certification systems such as ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council), EO (Equitable Origin), FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), MSC (Marine Stewardship Council), RJC (Responsible Jewellery Council), and SAI/SAAS (Social Accountability Accreditation Services). IRMA gratefully acknowledges the work of these other systems, which have helped to inform IRMA’s Certification Body Requirements.

This document is specifically written for the Launch Phase of the IRMA certification program and is anticipated to be valid for a period of up to three years from the time of publication. During this phase, IRMA will collect and analyze feedback from participants and stakeholders and subsequently review this document to ensure that the requirements are fit for purpose. Critical feedback may lead to an earlier revision of the document. All planned reviews and revisions of this document will be published on the IRMA website together with relevant documents to invite feedback from stakeholders. During the Launch Phase, IRMA reserves the right to grant exceptions to any CB requirements as necessary.

SCOPE

The IRMA Certification Body Requirements set out the activities that all certification bodies shall undertake when assessing mining projects that wish to become certified to the IRMA Standard, obtain a verified level of achievement, or undergo surveillance or recertification.

The scope of certification applies to a specific operational mining project usually owned by an operating company. In this document, the operating company is referred to as “the client”. A mining project, or unit of certification, includes all activities serving the purpose of extracting mineral resources under the control of the legal entity applying for certification or verified level of achievement. Activities include but are not limited to construction, ore removal, ore processing, waste management, and reclamation during any phase of the mine life cycle. Activities may occur on the mine site or at associated facilities or infrastructure that are off-site but integral to the project (e.g. housing facilities, maintenance and mechanics facilities, transportation infrastructure).

While ultimate responsibility for compliance rests with the operating company that holds the certificate, compliance with some IRMA Standard requirements may require conformity by others working on the mining project. The operating company is responsible for ensuring that contractors or subcontractors carrying out work related to the mining project (hereafter referred to as “related activities”) are in full compliance with relevant sections of the IRMA Standard. This applies, for example, to employment agencies or security service providers.

To be able to apply to become an IRMA-approved Certification Body (CB) the CB shall be able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of ISO17021 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.

Acceptable evidence of compliance with ISO 17021 is:

- An ISO 17021 accreditation certificate for a similar scope issued by an accreditation body who is an IAF member, OR
- Documented results of an assessment of CB’s policies and procedures against ISO 17021 requirements by a third-party verifier.

NORMATIVE REFERENCES

The following documents are part of the IRMA Certification Body Requirements:

- IRMA Certification Body Requirements [this document], including normative annexes;
- Approved IRMA Standard (see www.responsiblemining.net);
- ISO/IEC 17021 Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems;
- ISO 19011 Guidelines for auditing management systems.

For references without dates or version numbers, the latest edition of the referenced document applies. In the case of a conflict with relevant ISO documents, certification bodies shall conform to the IRMA requirements.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The table below introduces the reader to important terms used in this document. In addition, it repeats relevant terms and definitions from the IRMA Standard. The reader should have access to the latest version of the approved IRMA Standard to have a complete overview of terms and definitions used in the IRMA system. The table does not repeat terms and definitions contained in ISO/IEC 17021 unless they have been changed to fit the IRMA context.

Table 1: Terms and definitions

Term	Definition
Appeal	Request by a client or a stakeholder for reconsideration of a decision made by the certification body or IRMA (Adapted from ISO/IEC 17000:2005).
Applicant (also Client)	Legal entity applying for certification for one or more of its mining projects (the operating company).
Application phase	Period from the client and certification body agreeing to the scope of the assessment to the start date of the Certificate or Verification Statement, covering activities such as the review of the application form and stage 1 and 2 of audits.
Assessment timeline	Time from the announcement of the audit to the publication of the final audit report. The assessment timeline identifies steps in the certification process that are critical to decision making, such as periods for

	stakeholder engagement. The assessment timeline is applicable to stage 2 of an audit only.
Audit	Systematic, independent, documented process for obtaining records, statements of fact or other relevant information and assessing them objectively to determine the extent to which specified requirements are fulfilled (ISO/IEC 17000:2005).
Associated facility	Any facility owned by the operating company that is located on or near to the mine lease/property and is related to the mining project (including ore processing facilities, stationary physical property such as power plants, roads, railroads, borrow areas, fuel production or preparation facilities, parking areas, shops, offices, housing facilities, storage facilities and others).
Audit evidence	Records, statements of fact or other information which are relevant to the audit criteria and verifiable. Note: Audit evidence can be qualitative or quantitative (ISO 19011:2011).
Audit Management System (AMS)	IRMA's online audit management system. Using the AMS is mandatory for certification bodies. They are requested to enter and keep client profiles up- to-date, including audit and certification processes and results, and to produce audit reports.
Audit plan	A document that forms the basis for agreement regarding the conduct and scheduling of audit activities and is prepared prior to each audit.
Audit program	Covers the full certification cycle. It identifies the required audit activities and covers the initial audit or recertification audit (whichever is applicable) and at least one (1) surveillance audit.
Audit team	One or more auditors conducting the audit, supported by technical experts as necessary
Can	Indicates a possibility or a capability.
Cancellation of certification	Voluntary cancellation of a certification contract by any party to it, per the contractual arrangements.

Cause (or root cause) analysis	A wide range of approaches, tools and techniques used to identify the underlying cause(s) of a nonconformity, rather than to simply address a direct cause or its symptoms. Focusing on the cause aims to prevent recurrence of the problem and to identify the most effective solution to it. A cause analysis of detected nonconformities may identify potential nonconformities on a wider scale in other areas, which must be addressed in the corrective action
Certificate holder	The operating company that applies for IRMA certification of a specific mine site, and, if the application is successful, is issued with a certificate of compliance for that site. The certificate holder is responsible for ensuring that all the requirements of certification for the certified mine site are met on an ongoing basis, and for demonstrating this to the satisfaction of its certification body. (IRMA Standard, v.1.0)
Certification	Third-party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons (Adapted from ISO/IEC 17000:2005).
Certification body	See conformity assessment body.
Certification cycle	Period covered by the certification document, including a start and expiration date.
Certification body personnel	Includes committee members, contractors, or individuals acting on behalf of the certification body.
Certificate	A document issued by a certification body under the rules of IRMA, indicating that adequate confidence is provided that a mining project is in conformity with the IRMA standard (adapted from (ISO/IEC Guide 2:1991 paragraph 14.8 and ISO/CASCO 193 paragraph 4.5).
Client (also Applicant)	Legal entity applying for certification for one or more of its mining projects (the operating company).
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, by any person or organization, relating to the activities or lack of activities of a certificate holder, a certification body, or an accreditation body, where a response is expected (Adapted from ISO/IEC 17000:2005).

Confidential business information	Material that contains trade secrets or commercial or financial information that has been claimed as confidential by its source. The information must be secret in the sense that it is not, as a body or in the precise configuration and assembly of its components, generally known among or readily accessible to persons within the circles that normally deal with the kind of information in question; it must have commercial value because it is secret; and it must have been subject to reasonable steps under the circumstances, by the person lawfully in control of the information, to keep it secret. (IRMA Standard, v.1.0)
Conflict of Interest (COI)	Situation in which the impartiality and professional responsibilities of an individual are, could be or may appear to be compromised due to individual interests, other activities, or relationships. This can include actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.
Conformity	The fulfillment of a requirement (ISO 9000:2015).
Conformity assessment	Demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled (ISO/IEC 17000:2004).
Certification body	Body that performs conformity assessment services
Correction	An action to eliminate a detected nonconformity (ISO 9000:2015).
Corrective action	An action to eliminate the cause of a nonconformity and to prevent recurrence. There can be more than one cause for a nonconformity (ISO 9000:2015).
Days	Calendar days.
Evaluation	Combination of the selection and determination functions of conformity assessment activities. Note: The selection and determination functions are specified in ISO/IEC 17000:2004, Clauses A.2 and A.3.
IRMA criteria	Subdivisions or main headings of each IRMA Standard chapter, which are supported by one or more requirements.
IRMA Policy on Association	A policy that identifies select norms and requirements, including serious human rights abuses, which, if breached, may be grounds for IRMA to

	refuse certification, decertify a mine or end its association with an operating company and/or its corporate owner.
Major nonconformity	Any nonconformity that corresponds to a rating of “partially meets” or “does not meet”.
Means of Verification	Non-normative guidance for auditors, mining companies and stakeholders on the sources of information and the activities that an auditor might review and undertake, respectively, in order to verify a mine site’s conformity with a requirement (IRMA Standard, v.1.0).
Minor nonconformity	Any nonconformity with an IRMA requirement that does not meet the criteria of a major nonconformity. Minor nonconformities correspond to a rating of “substantially meets”.
May	Indicates a permission.
Mine site	Mining project proposed by its operating company for certification.
Mining concession	Confers its holders the exclusive right to carry out all kinds of prospecting and development of deposits of minerals substances for which the concession is granted, within the limits of its perimeter, and without limits of depth.
Mining project	Any set of activities undertaken for the purpose of extracting mineral resources, and the infrastructure required to support these activities. Mining projects may include exploration, mine construction, mining, mine closure, post-closure and related activities either as separately or in combination. (IRMA Standard, v.1.0)
Mining related activities	Physical activities (e.g., land disturbance and clearing, road building, sampling, airborne surveys, facility construction, ore removal, ore processing, waste management, reclamation, etc.) carried out during any phase of the mine life cycle (planning, impact assessment, exploration, mine construction, mining, mine closure, post-closure). (IRMA Standard, v.1.0)
Nonconformity	The non-fulfillment of a requirement (ISO 9000:2015).

Objective evidence	Verifiable information or records pertaining to the quality of an item or service or to the existence and implementation of a quality system element, which is based on visual observation, measurement or test. Data supporting the existence or verity of something (ISO 9000:2015).
Operating company	Operating entity, effectively in control of managing a mine site, or close agglomeration of sites within one operating entity, especially if there are shared facilities. (IRMA Standard, v.1.0)
Opportunity for improvement (OFI)	Audit finding that, whilst it cannot be directly referenced to the non-fulfillment of a Standard requirement, can be object of an action intended to improve the performance or prevent potential nonconformities. An OFI is a situation where the evidence observed indicates a requirement has been effectively implemented, but based on auditor experience and knowledge, additional effectiveness or robustness might be achieved with a modified approach. It can be, but is not necessarily, an item that will lead to a future nonconformity if not addressed.
Organization	Designates any company or other organization owning a management system subject to audit and certification.
Record	Recorded information stating results achieved, providing evidence of activities performed, events occurred, or statements made.
Root cause analysis	See cause analysis above.
Shall	Denotes a requirement.
Shall not	Indicates a prohibition (IRMA Standard v.1.0).
Should	Denotes a provision that is recommended but not required.
Stage 1 of an audit	First stage of the audit conducted as part of the initial certification process. This stage determines the client's readiness for stage 2 of the audit. Stage 1 can either be conducted on-site or remotely.
Stage 2 of an audit	Second stage of the audit conducted as part of the initial certification process. This stage evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of

	the client’s performance with regard to the IRMA Standard. Stage 2 of the audit is conducted on-site.
Stakeholder (also interested party)	Person or group of people who are directly or indirectly affected by a project, such as rights holders, as well as those who may have interest in a project and/or the ability to influence its outcome, either positively or negatively (IRMA Standard v.1.0).
Stakeholder list	Detailed list of all relevant stakeholders to be contacted for input during the application process and certification cycles. The list helps define: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) who the stakeholders are (name and type of organization, name and contact details of individual, most appropriate means for contacting individual and most appropriate format for consultation); b) how they are organized and represented; c) their positions and concerns with regards to mining and the client; d) their relationship with the client; e) their willingness and likelihood to engage in the assessment process.
Subcontractors	Entities offering services to the operating company for a specific mining project.
Sub-requirements	The components that make up a single IRMA Standard requirement and enumerate the specific details of what is needed to meet that requirement.
Succeeding certification body	Certification body that takes over a client from a current certification body. Prior to the transfer process, the succeeding certification body must establish a new contract and become the new contracting party of the certificate holder.
Suspension of certification	Temporary invalidation by the certification body of all or part of the certificate holder’s scope of certification pending corrective action by the certificate holder.
Unit of certification	Mining project covered by a certificate.

Verification statement	A formal written declaration that provides assurance that a mining project has been awarded the stated level of achievement in compliance with the applicable requirements of IRMA standard.
Withdrawal of certification	Irrevocable removal by the certification body of all or part of a certificate holder’s certification as a result of noncompliance with certification requirements or contractual commitments.
Worker	All non-management personnel (IRMA Standard v.1.0).
Workers’ representatives	Worker chosen to facilitate communication with senior management on matters related to working conditions, occupational health and safety or other workers’ concerns. This is undertaken by the recognized trade union(s) in unionized facilities and, elsewhere, by a worker elected by non- management personnel for that purpose (Source: Based on definition in SA8000 Guidance) (IRMA Standard Draft Version 2.0).

4 PRINCIPLES

This section of ISO 17021 describes general principles of certification, impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality, responsiveness to complaints, risk-based approach and identifies parties interested in certification.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to parties listed in section 4.1.2 of ISO 17021, the following parties are relevant:

- labor unions;
- affected communities;
- indigenous peoples;
- artisanal and small-scale miners;
- academics;
- IRMA.

5 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Legal and contractual matters

Section 5.1 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for Certification Body's (CB) legal status, necessitates presence of a contractual agreement between CB and a client, and places responsibility for certification decision on a CB.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 5.1 of ISO 17021, the CB shall:

1. Comply with relevant legal requirements in the countries in which they operate.
2. Where clients seek certification for multiple mining projects, specify in the certification agreement that each mining project will be audited separately and that no sampling will take place.
3. Prior to signing an agreement with a client, verify that:
 - a. The client has been accepted into the IRMA program by the IRMA Secretariat;
 - b. The client's mining project applying for certification/verification of achievement levels is not currently certified and/or does not have a valid agreement with a different certification body for the same scope of work;
 - c. The client's mining project applying for certification has not had an IRMA certificate or candidate status withdrawn or has not failed an IRMA certification audit within the previous twelve (12) months;
 - d. Based on a consultation with the IRMA Secretariat, there is no indication of a violation of the IRMA Policy on Association.
4. The agreement with a client shall be signed prior to the commencement of stage 1 of an audit. The agreement shall specify that the client:
 - a. Makes all necessary arrangements for:
 - i. The conduct of evaluation, including providing documentation and records, and access to relevant facilities, equipment, location(s), area(s), personnel, and client's subcontractors;
 - ii. The investigation of complaints or other stakeholder comments;
 - b. Makes claims regarding certification consistent with the scope of certification, or claims of verified achievement levels consistent with the scope and outcomes of an audit;

- c. Discontinues its use of all advertising material that contains any reference to or claims regarding IRMA certification, or verification of achievement levels, or the IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining upon cancellation or withdrawal of certification;
- d. Complies with the requirements specified by IRMA when referencing its certification or verified achievement levels in communication media such as documents, brochures, or advertising;
- e. Complies with the requirements specified by IRMA on the use of marks of conformity and on information related to the certified mining project or the mining project with a verified achievement level;
- f. Keeps records of all complaints communicated to them that relate to compliance with certification requirements;
- g. Informs the certification body and IRMA within seven (7) days upon receipt of a complaint related to certification/verified achievement level;
- h. Makes all related records available to the certification body and IRMA on request;
- i. Takes appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies found that affect compliance with the requirements of certification or verified achievement level;
- j. Documents actions taken;
- k. Informs the certification body, without delay, of changes that may affect its ability to conform with the certification requirements. Examples of changes can include the following:
 - i. legal, commercial, organizational status, or ownership;
 - ii. organization and management (e.g. key managerial, decision making, or technical staff);
 - iii. contact address;
 - iv. scope of operations under the certified/verified management system;
 - v. major changes to the management system and processes;
 - vi. the environmental and social impact of the certified client or client with a verified achievement level caused by incidents or events;
- l. Accepts IRMA's right to change the IRMA Standard and certification requirements and that certification and verification of achievement levels is conditional on conforming to a new or revised version of the Standard and new or revised certification requirements within the timeframes established by IRMA;

- m. Consents to IRMA Secretariat having the right to observe audits conducted by the certification body;
 - n. Agrees that the IRMA Director of Standards and Assurance is given full access to client data, documents, evidence, stakeholder input and other sources taken into account and produced during the audit and certification process, excluding information expressly marked as confidential, on the premise that the Director has signed a confidentiality agreement and conflict of interest declaration with the IRMA Secretariat;
 - o. Consents to summaries of audit results and summaries of certification body appeal and complaint investigation reports albeit respecting confidentiality as described in 8.4, being made publicly available by IRMA; and
 - p. Accepts that the IRMA Secretariat may become engaged in the case that a complaint or appeal escalates beyond the certification body's authority.
5. Only certification bodies approved by the IRMA shall be entitled to conduct audit and certification activities against the IRMA Standard.
 6. The certification body shall be approved by IRMA before starting to undertake certification and verification of achievement level services against the IRMA Standard.
 7. The certification body shall only award certificates and issue verification statements of achievement level once it is approved by IRMA.
 8. The certification body shall accept that mining projects that have been fully certified or verified as meeting other achievement levels by other IRMA-approved CBs comply with the IRMA Standard.
 9. The certification body shall authorize IRMA to publish, including on its website, the certification body's legally registered name, full address, contact person's details and the validity and status of accreditation.

5.2 Management of impartiality

Section 5.2 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for management of impartiality, establishes rules around consulting and conflict of interest.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 5.1 of ISO 17021:

10. All certification body personnel, internal and external, and the IRMA Director of Standards and Assurance, shall sign declarations of conflicts of interest applying the following approach:

- Historical conflicts of interest that occurred in the previous five (5) years shall be declared at the start of the engagement with the certification body (i.e., employment or contract).
 - Current conflicts of interests shall be declared as they arise.
11. Project-specific conflicts of interest shall be declared before each audit or assigned work activity and shall cover the previous three (3) years related to the specific auditee (applicant or certified).
 12. A declared conflict of interest does not necessarily prevent or ban an individual from undertaking IRMA-related work. Where a conflict of interest is declared, the certification body shall review the case and determine if the declared interest represents an actual conflict and thus constitutes a risk to impartiality. Any outcome, mitigation measures, and applicable conditions shall be recorded.

5.3 Liability and financing

Section 5.3 of ISO 17021 establishes requirement for liability coverage and finances.

5.4 Communication with IRMA

Additional IRMA Requirements

13. All certification body communication with IRMA shall be in English.
14. Certification bodies shall use the IRMA Audit Management System (AMS) to register clients and document the audit and certification process once AMS becomes available.
15. The certification body shall ensure that clients agree in writing to publicly disclosing specific information submitted to IRMA prior to its publication.

5.5 IRMA Administration Fee for Mines

16. IRMA will charge a fee to all mines that undergo independent assessment. The purpose of the IRMA Administration Fee (IAF) is to help pay for costs to administer and maintain the IRMA standards system, including, but not limited to, standards development, monitoring and evaluation of impacts, market development, maintaining the traceability system and certification database, purchaser and investor awareness building.
17. The IRMA Administration Fee will be levied through the certification body. CBs will follow IRMA's guidance on calculating the IAF. The CB will share the IRMA Administration Fee on each client invoice as a separate line and attach or provide a link to the IRMA policy that will state current rates, how the rates are calculated, and what the fee is used for in the IRMA standards system.

18. CBs will pay to IRMA the fee collected from each mine site that has undergone assessment. If information is found to be lacking or in error, IRMA will send the CB a correction and the CB will be accountable for paying any difference in the IAF than what was levied from the mine site.

6 STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 6 of ISO 17021 lists requirements for organizational structure, responsibilities of top management, as well as rules for various committees and operations control requirements.

7 RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Competence of personnel

Section 7.1 of ISO 17021 contains requirements for personnel competence, including determination of competence criteria and competence evaluation process.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 7.1 of ISO 17021:

19. The certification body shall apply the minimum qualification criteria defined by IRMA in [Annex A](#) of this document to audit team members, those involved in certification decision making, and to staff and contract technical experts.
20. The certification body shall, at a minimum, apply the following methods described in Annex B of ISO 17021 to evaluate competence of personnel:
 - a. Review of records: All of the listed methods for all personnel involved in managing and conducting IRMA audit and certification activities.
 - b. Feedback: At least one (1) of the described methods for all personnel.
 - c. Interviews: Employment interview for all personnel, plus one (1) of the other described methods for auditors.
 - d. Observations: For auditors before they begin to carry out IRMA audit and certification activities. (Observations should be conducted during a management system audit (e.g., ISO 14001, ISO 9001, FSC Forest Management, RSPO Principles and Criteria).
 - e. Examinations: Two (2) of the described methods for auditors.

7.2 Personnel involved in the certification activities

Section 7.2 of ISO 17021 contains requirements for selecting and managing personnel involved in certification activities, required processes for selecting, training, formally authorizing auditors and technical experts, performance monitoring and assessment.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 7.2 of ISO 17021:

21. Auditors shall meet the minimum qualification requirements outlined in [Annex A](#) of this document. In addition, and prior to taking up IRMA audit and certification activities, all auditors shall be approved by IRMA.
22. The certification body should evaluate the performance of each auditor on-site during his or her first stage 2 of an IRMA audit whenever possible. If a witness assessment during the auditor's first stage 2 of an IRMA audit is not feasible, a witness assessment conducted at another management system audit carried out within the previous year is acceptable, e.g., ISO 14001, ISO 9001, FSC Forest Management, RSPO Principles and Criteria (See also 17.d). Auditor performance shall be evaluated during stage 2 of an IRMA audit by the certification body periodically after that, but at least once every three (3) years.
23. The certification body shall pay to the IRMA Secretariat the fees for the induction training and any refresher trainings to the IRMA Secretariat for all auditors and technical experts that participate in training sessions on their behalf.

7.3 Use of individual contract auditors and contract technical experts

Section 7.3 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for agreements a CB must execute with contract auditors and experts.

7.4 Personnel records

Section 7.3 of ISO 17021 defines requirements for maintenance of personnel records.

8 INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Public information

Section 8.1 of ISO 17021 defines documents that CBs must maintain publicly and those that must be made available upon request.

8.2 Certification documents and verification statements

Section 8.2 of ISO 17021 lists requirements to be included on certification documents, and, for IRMA purposes, verification statements or letters of recognition.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 8.2 of ISO 17021:

24. If a certification body verifies that a mine site meets the conditions of IRMA 100, the CB shall issue a certificate to the operating company.
25. If a certification body verifies that a mine site meets the conditions for IRMA 75 or IRMA 50, the CB shall issue a verification statement to the operating company.
26. If a mine does not reach an achievement level but agrees to publicly release a summary of its audit results, the certification body shall issue a letter of recognition to the operating company that verifies that the mine site has undergone third-party assessment and acknowledges that the mine has met the requirements for IRMA Transparency.
27. A certificate/verification statement/letter of recognition must include:
 - a. The name of the operating company;
 - b. The name of the mine site, and its geographical location (i.e., country/region and description of concession boundaries);
 - c. A unique certification/verification identification code based on IRMA's referencing system (See [Annex H](#));
 - d. The applicable version of the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*;
 - e. The achievement level verified by the certification body (e.g., IRMA 100, IRMA 75, IRMA 50) and a narrative explanation of the achievement level; or for IRMA Transparency, a narrative explanation and a list of verified scores by chapter assessed;
 - f. The IRMA logo, which shall be no smaller than the logo of the certification body;
 - g. A clear statement to the effect that the certificate/verification statement/letter of recognition shall remain the property of the certification body that issued it, and that the certificate/verification statement/letter of recognition and all copies or reproductions shall be returned or destroyed if requested by the certification body;
 - h. The signature of the individual(s) to whom the certification body assigned this responsibility.

NOTE: See [Annex I](#) for examples of a certificate, a verification statement and a letter of recognition.

8.3 Reference to certification/verification of achievement levels and use of marks

Section 8.3 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for use of certification marks, contractual arrangements for use of those marks, as well as matters of control and ownership.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 8.3 of ISO 17021:

28. The certification body's rules shall include provisions for pre-publication review and authorization by the certification body of:
 - a. All uses of the IRMA logo, achievement level logos, and claims by clients;
 - b. All public claims made by clients referring to their IRMA certification or verified achievement level.

29. The certification body shall:
 - a. Through legally enforceable arrangements require that the certified client submit to the certification body all uses of the certification body's logo and all public claims referring to the client's certification for pre-publication review and authorization by the certification body.
 - b. Within seven (7) days of an incorrect reference being detected, inform the IRMA Secretariat in writing, including the corresponding action taken by the certification body.

8.4 Confidentiality

Section 8.4 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for use of confidential information, parties that must be covered by confidentiality agreements, and process for handling confidential information.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 8.4 of ISO 17021:

30. The certification body shall inform the client of the information that IRMA and the certification body intend to place in the public domain.

8.5 Information exchange between a certification body and its clients

Section 8.5 of ISO 17021 lists requirements for types of information to be disseminated by certification bodies to clients, as well as requirements for notification of changes by certification bodies and clients.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 8.5 of ISO 17021:

31. Information and updates provided to the certified client shall be documented by the certification body.
32. Notice of changes by a certification body: The certification body shall give its clients, both certified and applying for certification, due notice (e.g., at least three (3) months, whenever possible) of any changes to its requirements for certification. The certification body shall verify that each certified client complies with the new requirements.
33. Notice of changes by a client holding a certificate/verification statement of achievement level: The client shall inform the certification body and the IRMA Secretariat of incidents or events at the certified/verified site that result in significant environmental or social impacts, and/or are likely to negatively affect the mine's conformance with any of the critical requirements in the IRMA Standard (see [Annex D](#) for a list of critical requirements) or its ability to maintain performance at its current certified/verified achievement level. Notification should occur as soon as possible after an event or incident.
34. The certification body shall consider these and other changes that may affect the capability of the client to continue to fulfill the requirements of the IRMA Standard, including changes initiated by the client, and shall take appropriate action. Such action could include conducting desk reviews of relevant documentation, unscheduled off-site or on-site audits, etc.
35. When IRMA introduces new or revised standard requirements that affect the client, the certification body shall communicate these changes to all its clients within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the changes. The certification body shall verify the implementation of the changes by its clients and shall take action as required by the scheme.
36. As soon as the electronic Audit Management System (AMS) becomes operational, the certification body shall use the AMS to:
 - a. Record all client details;
 - b. Plan, record, and handle all audit and certification activities;
 - c. Produce all audit reports;

d. Communicate to its clients.

37. The certification body shall ensure that its data entries in the AMS are up to date and accurate.

9 PROCESS REQUIREMENTS

9.1 Pre-certification activities

Section 9.1 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for content of the application, items to be included in the application review, and steps to be completed post-review. The section also defines the rules for audit program and determination of audit time.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.1 of ISO 17021:

38. After the IRMA Secretariat has accepted the applicant organization (the client) into the program, the certification body shall review the client application form ([Annex B](#) of this document) to establish whether or not there are any previous, current or pending legal disputes related to the mine site.

In the event of any unresolved or a pending legal disputes, the certification body shall inform the IRMA Secretariat and, in consultation with the IRMA Secretariat, accept or decline the application.

39. Following the review of the application, the certification body shall either accept or decline an application for mine site assessment. When the certification body declines an application for assessment as a result of the review of application, the reasons for declining an application shall be documented and communicated to the applicant and IRMA.

40. The certification body shall notify the IRMA Secretariat as soon as possible (but no more than 5 business days) after signing an agreement for services with a mine applicant.

41. The audit program for the initial certification shall include a two-stage initial audit and one (1) surveillance audit. The first surveillance audit shall be carried out twelve to eighteen (12 to 18) months after certification. The recertification process shall commence early in the third year after certification to ensure there is sufficient time for carrying out audit and certification activities prior to expiration of certification. The IRMA certification cycle covers three (3) years from the initial certification or recertification date.

42. In determining the audit time, the certification body shall consider, among other things, the following aspects:

- a. Size of the mining project, including all type(s) of activities and related activities, and number of workers, including subcontracted workers;
- b. The need for activities performed in shifts to be audited during the respective shift;
- c. The extent of required stakeholder consultation (noting the stakeholder engagement guidance in [Annex F](#) of this document) and stakeholder comments received;
- d. Complaints received between the current and previous audit;
- e. Presence of local communities;
- f. The need for off-site worker interviews to be conducted;
- g. Corruption Perceptions Index score: any client located in a country with a score below 41 shall be allocated more on-site time (<http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>);
- h. Environmental Performance Index score: any client located in a country with a score below 60 shall be allocated more on-site time (<https://epi.envirocenter.yale.edu/epi-topline>).

NOTE: IRMA field tests indicate that at least half (1/2) day per IRMA Standard chapter is needed to assess client performance, though depending on the complexity of the mine site some may require considerably more time. As a general rule, the presence of one or more factors listed in 40 a to k should result in an increase of on-site audit time. The Launch Phase will provide better insight into how much time is needed to adequately assess clients against the various chapters of the IRMA Standard and the requirements in this clause will be reviewed following the Launch Phase.

43. A reduction of on-site audit time may be justified if not all chapters or requirements in the IRMA Standard are applicable to the client's operations.
44. Multi-site certification is **NOT** applicable to clients applying for IRMA certification.
45. The certification body shall **NOT** offer multiple management system standards certification to an applicant during the Launch Phase, unless agreed by IRMA.

9.2 Planning audits

Section 9.2 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for determining audit objectives, scope, and criteria, as well as selection and assignment of audit teams, and defines rules for involvement of observers, guides, and technical experts. The section also identifies requirements surrounding preparation of an audit plan and its communication to clients, as well as communication of audit team tasks and communication about audit team members.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.2 of ISO 17021:

46. At least fourteen (14) days prior to commencement of stage 1 of the audit the certification body shall share with the IRMA Secretariat the names and biographies of proposed members of the audit team. IRMA has the right to reject proposed team members.
47. Any technical experts used during audits shall be adequately briefed by the audit team leader on the responsibilities of each audit team member. The audit team leader shall ensure that the technical expert has received the necessary background documentation well in advance, and that a meeting has been arranged to provide a detailed briefing prior to the audit itself
48. If a guide influences or interferes with the audit process or the outcome of the audit, the audit team leader shall ask the guide to stop doing so. If the request is not respected, the audit team leader shall request the guide to leave the audit. If any conflict arises from this situation and agreement cannot be reached, the audit team leader may have to terminate the audit at the expense of the client. If an audit is terminated due to an unresolved conflict, an additional audit shall be scheduled once the conflict has been settled.
49. The audit announcement, assessment timeline and audit plan, including the names of all audit team members, shall be communicated to the client, and the dates of the audit and timing of audit announcement shall be agreed with the client.
50. The certification body shall ensure that an audit plan is established prior to each audit identified in the audit program to provide the basis for agreement regarding the conduct and planning of the audit activities.
51. The audit plan shall include or refer to preliminary dates and sites where stakeholder interviews will be conducted.
52. The certification body shall prepare an audit announcement for each audit;
 - a. The audit announcement shall be posted on the certification body website, shared with relevant stakeholders and provided to the IRMA Secretariat for distribution and posting on the IRMA website (or uploaded in the AMS once AMS becomes operational) at least thirty (30) days prior to the first day of stage 2 of the audit (for initial and recertification audits), and 30 days prior to the commencement of surveillance audits.
 - b. When the AMS becomes operational, short-notice audits shall be recorded in the AMS, but the publication function shall be disabled so that the audit is not publicly announced.
 - c. The announcement shall provide a general timeline for the audit process, and clearly state that stakeholders interested in providing input on mine site performance may contact the certification

body prior to or during the audit. Contact information for an appropriate certification body staff member shall be provided

- d. The audit announcement shall be in the local language(s) and in English.

NOTE: See [Annex G](#) for an example of a stakeholder notification announcement.

53. The **certification** body shall prepare and share with the client an assessment timeline for stage 2 of an audit that contains the activities and corresponding timelines detailed in [Table 2](#).
54. Allowable timeframes for completing certain tasks may vary from those in [Table 2](#) if there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., observance of national/cultural holidays), as long as there is agreement between the CB and client;
55. When the assessment timeline for stage 2 is finalized the certification body shall share this information with IRMA Secretariat and stakeholders.
56. The assessment timeline shall be in local language(s) and in English. The certification body shall notify individuals on its stakeholder list (see section 9.10) of the upcoming audit, and invite them to:
- a. Submit to the certification body any information they deem relevant for establishing whether or not the client's mining project conforms with the IRMA Standard's requirements;
 - b. Submit to the certification body suggestions for additional stakeholders that could be invited for input to the audit;
 - c. Register their interest in being interviewed by the certification body during the audit, either on-site or remotely.
 - d. Where appropriate and for the purpose of collecting all relevant information, the certification body may choose to notify none, some or all of the potential stakeholders and interested parties prior to a short-notice audit.
57. Where identified stakeholders have no access or limited access to the internet that might prevent interested stakeholders from providing input or participating in the audit process (e.g., in remote or less developed areas), the certification body shall provide them with the information listed in this section through means that are suitable for them.
58. The certification body shall acknowledge receipt of all stakeholder submissions.
59. Prior to publication of any audit report, the certification body shall respond in writing to each stakeholder that provided comments to explain how their comments were considered by the audit team.

NOTE: Information disclosed to stakeholders shall not include any confidential information or detailed information about the particular finding(s) of the audit.

60. In preparation of the audit, the audit team leader or an appointed team member shall:
- a. Obtain a comprehensive understanding of the client’s systems, structure, operations, and related activities through the review of documentation;
 - b. Review any outstanding nonconformities, if applicable;
 - c. Review stakeholder comments and assign team members responsible for interviewing stakeholders;
 - d. Research presence of local communities and plan interviews;
 - e. Ensure that the required facilities, equipment, location(s), area(s), personnel, and client’s contractors or subcontractors are accessible and present at the time of the audit;
 - f. Ensure that a guide has been proposed by the client and is available throughout the duration of the audit; and
 - g. Prepare work documents such as the Audit Finding Report for recording audit evidence.

Table 2: Assessment timeline for stage 2 of an audit

Activity	Time	Example Dates	Stakeholder Engagement
a) Publish audit announcement.	At least 30 days prior to stage 2 of the audit	15 April	Gauge interest in audit
b) Conduct stage 2 of the audit (including opening and closing meeting)	Variable duration	15 May – 22 May	Interviews, written input
c) Communicate draft nonconformities and opportunities for improvement to client	5 business days from closing meeting	22 May – 29 May	
d) Draft audit report	30 days from closing meeting	22 May – 22 June	
e) Submit draft audit report to client for correction plan and to check for errors of fact	Grant client 30 days	22 June – 22 July	
f) Reflect client feedback in draft audit report and include correction plan (potential for extension, as necessary, if corrective action plan insufficient).	Within 15 days	22 July – 7 August	

g) Send draft audit plan to IRMA Director of Standards and Assurance for review and comment (if requested by IRMA)	15 days	7 August – 22 August	
h) Take certification decision and prepare final audit report	Within 7 days of receipt of comments from IRMA or 30 days of receipt of client comments (if no IRMA review).	29 August	
i) Summary audit report made public.	Within 15 days of certification decision.	13 Sept	Results shared with stakeholders

9.3 Initial certification

Section 9.3 of ISO 17021 describes the requirements for the purpose and necessary steps for stage 1 and stage 2 of the initial audit.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.3 of ISO 17021:

61. The certification body shall only commence stage 1 of the audit after the client has been accepted into the IRMA program by the IRMA Secretariat and a certification agreement has been signed between the certification body and the client.

NOTE: CBs can encourage clients to use the IRMA online Self-Assessment Tool (Mine Measure, available at: tools.responsiblemining.net) to help them prepare for stage 1 of the audit.

62. The certification body together with the client shall decide whether stage 1 of the audit is to be conducted on-site, partially on-site or entirely remotely. The decision shall be based on an assessment considering:
- a. Size
 - b. Location
 - c. Complexity of operation;
 - d. Stakeholder input received;
 - e. Complaints received;

- f. Feedback from IRMA Secretariat;
- g. Other risk factors to be determined by the certification body.

The decision shall be documented, and the client informed.

NOTE: An audit plan shall be developed for stage 1 of the audit and be sent to the client as described in section 9.2. All of the steps included in stage 1 of the audit are required during initial certification. Some stage 1 steps will be necessary for recertification audits. See also requirement 100, below.

- 63. Stage 1 of the audit shall include an opening and a closing meeting.
- 64. In addition to the objectives of a stage 1 audit listed in 9.3.1.2.2 of ISO 17021, the following steps shall be completed:
 - a. Review any unresolved matters from the application process;
 - b. Verify any IRMA-related claims the client wishes to make;
 - c. Determine the client's awareness and recognition of relevant local norms and regulatory and legal requirements;
 - d. Agree on the information that must be made available by the client for stage 2 of the audit;
 - e. Review the proposed allocation of resources for stage 2 against the draft audit plan and agree with the client on the details of stage 2 of the audit. If the client wishes to proceed with a particular schedule stage 2 schedule despite concerns expressed by the certification body regarding the mine's readiness, the certification body may require the client to sign a waiver acknowledging that concerns have been raised by the CB (see [Annex J](#));
 - f. Review information received by stakeholders to identify potential challenges regarding the client's conformity with the IRMA Standard;
 - g. Make the client aware of concerns raised by stakeholders that will need to be addressed during stage 2 of the audit.
- 65. The identification of any areas of concern that could be classified as a nonconformity shall be recorded by the certification body and sent to the client within five (5) business days of the closing meeting of stage 1 of the audit. When the AMS becomes operational, this information shall also be entered into that system with five (5) business days of the closing meeting of stage 1 of the audit.
- 66. If at any time during an audit the certification body obtains information on any unresolved or pending legal disputes, the certification body shall inform the IRMA Secretariat.

67. No more than twelve (12) months shall be allowed to pass between the closing meeting of stage 1 of the audit and the opening meeting of stage 2 of the audit unless there are unavoidable extenuating circumstances. If more time is required, the certification body shall consider the need to repeat all or part of stage 1. If a decision is made to not repeat stage 1 of the audit, the certification body shall require the client to provide a written attestation stating that no material changes in the management system have occurred between stages 1 and 2 of the audit.
68. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, stage 1 of the audit shall be performed by or under the guidance of the proposed stage 2 audit team leader.
69. The assessment shall include information and evidence to support any statements made by the client during the application process that one or more IRMA Standard chapters or requirements are not applicable at the mine site under review.
70. In extreme circumstances, an audit shall be terminated for lack of adequate system implementation. In this case, a report shall be produced that covers the activities performed until the audit was terminated. If the audit is terminated during stage 2, and the client continues to seek certification or verification of achievement levels, the audit shall be repeated from the very beginning of the stage 2 process.

9.4 Conducting audits

Section 9.4 of ISO 17021 describes the requirements for conducting opening and closing meetings, communication and obtaining information during audits, identifying and recording audit findings, preparing audit conclusions and reports. The section also defines rules for conducting root cause analyses and addressing nonconformities.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.4 of ISO 17021:

71. Auditors must follow ISO 19011 requirements when conducting audits.

NOTE: “On-site” audits must include a site visit but may also include remote access to electronic site(s) that contain(s) information that is relevant to the audit of the management system.

72. The audit team should use IRMA Means of Verification as a guide when reviewing client documentation.
73. Interviews conducted as part of the stage 2 audit shall include the following:
 - a. Interviews with company management.

- b. Interviews with a representative number of mine workers, including contracted personnel, temporary and part-time workers, shall be chosen to be interviewed by the audit team. The certification body shall conduct a mix of individual and group interviews and shall follow [Table 3](#) for stage 2 of an audit. If the audit team has reason to deviate from the provisions in the table, this shall be documented and justified in the client file.
- i. Workers and their representatives shall be interviewed in a confidential setting without any supervision or management personnel present. If a trade union exists, a trade union representative shall be permitted to attend the interview at the request of the interviewee(s).
 - ii. If anecdotal or other information obtained during worker interviews does not corroborate significant testimony or evidence otherwise obtained (e.g., from mine site staff) or contradicts evidence otherwise obtained, the certification body shall gather additional evidence to determine if a nonconformity exists.
 - iii. The certification body shall maintain a list of interviewed individuals. This list shall not be shared with the client organization/management. The list shall be used to ensure that different individuals are interviewed during subsequent audits or to do follow-up interviews at future audits where appropriate. Lists of those interviewed at previous audits shall be provided to the audit team prior to each audit.
 - iv. The audit team shall provide workers with the audit team's contact information.
 - v. The audit team shall conduct worker interviews off-site where this is deemed appropriate due to confidentiality or comfort issues. Off-site interviews shall be held at a location where the interviewed workers feel comfortable to share their views and experiences with the auditors. Auditors may seek the support of local organizations trusted by workers for finding an adequate location.
 - vi. Interviews shall be held with individuals of contracted or subcontracted companies and suppliers. Where contractors or subcontractors use migrant, temporary, and contract laborers, they shall be sampled for interviews.
 - vii. The audit team shall ensure that a representative number of group interviews are held with minority workers and shall follow [Table 3](#) for stage 2 of an audit. Group interviews with minority workers shall be composed based on, for example, gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, social and indigenous origin, disability, age, marital status, worker status (e.g., local vs. migrant workers), union membership, or veteran status. If a worker prefers to be interviewed privately without the presence of other workers, the audit team shall accommodate his or her request.

- c. Interviews with external mine stakeholders, including, if relevant, those that have registered their interest in being interviewed.
- i. Interviews shall be in person, when possible.
 - ii. The number of interviews and length of time spent with community and other external stakeholders shall be commensurate with the number of relevant chapters and issues that require stakeholder input to verify the mine’s conformance. These chapters may include, but are not limited to: Chapter 1.2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement, Chapter 1.3 Human Rights Due Diligence, 1.4 Stakeholder Complaints Mechanism and Access to Remedy, Chapter 2.1 Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and Management, Chapter 2.2 Free, Prior and Informed Consent, Chapter 2.3 Obtaining Community Support and Delivering Benefits, Chapter 2.4 Resettlement, Chapter 2.5 Emergency Preparedness and Response, Chapter 2.6 Planning and Financing Reclamation and Closure, Chapter 3.3. Community Health and Safety, Chapter 3.6 Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining, Chapter 3.7 Cultural Heritage, Chapter 4.1 Waste and Materials Management, Chapter 4.2 Water Management, Chapter 4.4 Noise and Vibration and Chapter 4.5 Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Protected Areas.

Table 3: Number of worker interviews and time spent (for stage 2 and recertification audits).

# of workers (incl. contractors)	# of individual interviews	# of group interviews	Total workers interviewed	Total time spent on interviews (hours)**
1 - 10	*	*	*	0.75
11 - 25	2	1 x 3	5	1
26 - 100	3	(2 x 2) and (1 x 3)	10	3
101 - 250	6	3 x 3	15	4
251 - 500	10	(2 x 3) and (1 x 4)	20	5
501 - 800	15	(2 x 3) and (1 x 4)	25	7
801 - 1,200	15	(1 x 3) and (3 x 4)	30	7
1,201 - 2,000	20	(2 x 3) and (1 x 4) and (1 x 5)	35	9
2,001 - 3,000	20	(2 x 3) and (1 x 4) and (2 x 5)	40	9
3,001 - 6,000	25	(2 x 3) and (1 x 4) and (2 x 5)	45	11
6,001 - 10,000	25	(2 x 3) and (2 x 4) and (1 x 5) and (1 x 6)	50	11
10,001 - 15,000	30	(2 x 3) and (2 x 4) and (1 x 5) and (1 x 6)	55	13
15,000 - 20,000	30	(2 x 3) and (2 x 4) and (2 x 5) and (1 x 6)	60	14

> 20,000	35	(2 x 3) and (2 x 4) and (2 x 5) and (1 x 6)	65	16
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* As deemed appropriate by the certification body’s lead auditor

** Approximate time

- 74. Once the AMS becomes operational, the certification body shall download and use the Audit Finding Report from the AMS to record all audit evidence and findings and score the client.
- 75. Opportunities for improvement, if any, shall be identified and recorded.
- 76. The certification body shall classify and record nonconformities based on the ratings applied to each requirement (for more on IRMA’s rating system, see [Annex E](#)). Nonconformities correspond to ratings in the manner seen in [Table 4](#).

Table 4: Classification of Nonconformities.

Rating	Fully meets requirement	Substantially meets requirement	Partially meets requirement	Does not meet requirement
Level of Nonconformity	None	Minor	Major	Major

- 77. When there are IRMA requirements that have sub-requirements (e.g., a, b, c), any nonconformities from the sub-requirements shall be included in a single documented nonconformity for the overall requirement.
- 78. The certification body shall establish a system for identifying nonconformities that are repeatedly raised against the same requirement.
- 79. The certification body shall determine whether off-site or on-site verification is required to close a major nonconformity. Justification for on-site verification shall be recorded. This activity shall be conducted by a member of the audit team.
- 80. Root cause analysis of nonconformities and development of a corrective action plan shall be carried out by the client as part of the process to close nonconformities if a mine is applying for full IRMA certification (IRMA 100). If a mine is applying for IRMA 50 or IRMA 75 a root cause analysis of nonconformities and corrective action plan is only necessary to close nonconformities for critical requirements. (It is strongly recommended that mines at IRMA 50 and IRMA 75 also conduct root cause analysis and develop corrective action plans for non-critical requirements, but it is not a condition to maintain those achievement levels).
- 81. For mines seeking full IRMA certification (IRMA 100), timelines for closing nonconformities shall correspond to those outlined in [Table 5](#). For mines seeking IRMA 50 or IRMA 75 timelines for closing nonconformities shall correspond to those outlined in [Table 6](#).

Table 5. Timelines for Closing Nonconformities Identified in Certification (IRMA 100) Audits.

Timeframe for corrective actions		Failure to fulfill corrective actions in timeframe
Initial audit		
Critical Requirements	Major and minor nonconformities shall be satisfactorily addressed before certificate is issued.	A certificate will not be issued with any nonconformity (major or minor) with a critical requirement. If major or minor nonconformities with critical requirements not closed within 12 months of the closing meeting of stage 2 of the initial audit, another stage 2 audit must be conducted before a certificate can be issued.*
Non-Critical Requirements with Major Nonconformities	Major nonconformities shall be satisfactorily addressed (i.e., requirements are either fully met or substantially met) before a certificate is granted. If a major nonconformity with a non-critical requirement is only partially addressed (i.e., minor nonconformities remain) see row below.	A certificate will not be issued if there are any major nonconformities with non-critical requirements (i.e., they are not being met or are only partially being met). If major nonconformities with non-critical requirements are not closed within 12 months of the closing meeting of stage 2 of the initial audit, another stage 2 audit must be conducted before a certificate can be issued.*
Non-Critical Requirements with Minor Nonconformities	Minor nonconformities with non-critical requirements shall be satisfactorily addressed (i.e., mines must demonstrate that all non-critical requirements are being fully met) at the surveillance audit.	A certificate may be issued if there are only minor (no major) nonconformities with a critical requirement (as long as minor nonconformities do not exceed a certain number within any one principle – See Annex C).
Surveillance and recertification audits		
Critical Requirements	New nonconformity (major or minor): If a certificate was previously issued, but a new nonconformity with a critical requirement is found during a surveillance or recertification audit, the mine has 3 months to close the non-conformity.	If a new nonconformity is not closed within 3 months the certificate will be <u>suspended</u> . In the event of a suspension the certificate may be re-issued if the nonconformity is resolved within six (6) months of the suspension date. If the nonconformity is not resolved within 6 months the certificate will be <u>withdrawn</u> .
Non-Critical Requirements with Major Nonconformities	New major nonconformity: If a certificate was previously issued, but a new major NC with a non-critical requirement is found during a surveillance or	If a new major nonconformity is not addressed within 3 months (i.e., achieves at least a substantially met rating) the certificate will be <u>suspended</u> .

	recertification audit, the mine has 3 months to close the non-conformity.	In the event of a <u>suspension</u> the certificate may be reissued if the nonconformity is resolved within six (6) months of the suspension date. If not satisfactorily addressed within 6 months the certificate will be <u>withdrawn</u> .
Non-Critical Requirements with Minor Nonconformities	<p>Existing minor nonconformities:</p> <p>If there were minor nonconformities with noncritical requirements during the initial audit, mines must demonstrate at the surveillance audit that these requirements are being fully met.</p> <p>New minor nonconformities:</p> <p>If a certificate was previously issued, but a new minor NC is found with a non-critical requirement during a surveillance or recertification audit, the mine has until the next recertification or surveillance audit (whichever comes first) to correct the nonconformity.</p>	<p>Existing minor nonconformities:</p> <p>If existing minor NCs from the initial audit are not fully met by the surveillance audit the certificate will be suspended.</p> <p>New minor nonconformities:</p> <p>If the NC is not satisfactorily addressed (i.e., does not achieve a fully meets rating) by the next surveillance audit or recertification audit (whichever comes first) the certificate will be suspended.</p> <p>In all cases of suspension, the certificate may be reissued if the nonconformity is resolved within six (6) months of the suspension. If not satisfactorily addressed within 6 months the certificate will be <u>withdrawn</u>.</p>

Table 6. Timelines for Closing Nonconformities Identified in audits for mines seeking IRMA 50 and IRMA 75.

Timeframe for corrective actions		Failure to fulfill corrective actions in timeframe
Initial audit		
Critical Requirements	<p>Major nonconformities with critical requirements shall be satisfactorily addressed (i.e., requirements must achieve at least a substantially met rating) before an achievement level of IRMA 50 or IRMA 75 is granted.</p> <p>Minor nonconformities with critical requirements shall be satisfactorily addressed (i.e., mines must demonstrate that all critical requirements are being fully met) at the surveillance audit.</p>	<p>If major nonconformities with critical requirements are not addressed (i.e., so that the mine gets at least a substantially met rating) an achievement level will not be awarded.</p> <p>If major nonconformities with critical requirements are not satisfactorily addressed (i.e., closed or downgraded to a minor NC) within 12 months of the closing meeting of stage 2 of the initial audit, another stage 2 audit must be conducted before achievement level can be awarded.*</p>
Non-Critical Requirements	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

		Mines may voluntarily develop corrective action plans with timelines, but there is no penalty for not achieving their stated goals.
Surveillance and recertification audits		
Critical Requirements	<p>Existing minor nonconformities: If there were minor NCs with critical requirements during the initial audit, mines must demonstrate at the surveillance audit that these requirements are being fully met.</p> <p>New minor nonconformities: If new minor NCs with critical requirements are found during a surveillance or recertification audit mines will have until the next recertification or surveillance audit (whichever comes first) to demonstrate that the critical requirements are being fully met.</p> <p>New major nonconformities: If new major NCs with critical requirements are found the mine has 3 months to satisfactorily address the nonconformity addressed (i.e., requirements must achieve at least a substantially met rating) or the achievement rating will be suspended.</p>	<p>Existing minor nonconformities: If satisfactory corrective actions for existing minor nonconformities did not occur (i.e., minor nonconformities still exist with the requirements), the mine’s achievement level will be <u>suspended</u>.</p> <p>New minor nonconformities: If satisfactory corrective actions for new minor nonconformities do not occur in the appropriate timeframe, the mine’s achievement level will be <u>suspended</u>.</p> <p>New major nonconformities: If new major nonconformities are not closed within 3 months the achievement level will be <u>suspended</u>.</p> <p>In all cases, a suspended achievement level may be reinstated if the nonconformity is resolved within six (6) months of the suspension. If not satisfactorily addressed within 6 months the verification statement for the achievement level will be <u>withdrawn</u>.</p>
Non-Critical Requirements	Not applicable.	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>Mines may voluntarily develop corrective action plans with timelines, but there is no penalty for not achieving their stated goals.</p>

82. The certification body shall, for all types of audits:

- a. Prepare a draft audit report within thirty (30) days of the closing meeting;
- b. Send the draft audit report to the client and allow them thirty (30) days to point out errors of fact, conduct a root cause analysis and draft a plan for correction if needed (see also requirement 80); and
- c. Respond to each error of fact raised by the client, make necessary changes to the audit report and include the client’s corrective action plan (if one is necessary) within fifteen (15) days upon receipt of the client’s feedback.

- d. Where CB determines that the plan would not adequately address a nonconformity, CB advises the client of any deficiencies and requires the client to rectify the plan, prior to acceptance. If clients need additional time to correct deficiencies with the corrective action plan, the CB should define a timeline for resubmitting the plan.
83. If adjustments were made to the original audit plan, they shall be reflected in the draft and final audit report.
84. The audit team leader shall ensure that the draft audit report is prepared and shall be responsible for its content. The audit report shall provide an accurate, concise, and clear record of the audit to enable an informed certification decision to be made and shall include the following:
- a. Description of next steps in the process leading up to the certification decision, and any requirements and timelines for closing nonconformities (see [Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#));
 - b. A description of the client (operating company, mining project location (country/region and polygon of GPS coordinates), processes and operations, human and technical resources, functions, relationships, etc.);
 - c. List of scores by principle, chapter and requirement level; (see [Annex E](#) for rules on calculating scores)
 - d. List of consulted stakeholder organizations. Names of individuals shall not be recorded in the audit report;
 - e. Steps taken to solicit stakeholder input;
 - f. Explanation of how stakeholder input has been considered by the audit team and, in case of rejections, why issues were dismissed; and
 - g. List of objective evidence in support of issues raised by stakeholders.
85. All audit reports shall be written in English.
86. For the final audit report following stage 2 of the audit, the certification body shall:
- a. If requested by IRMA Secretariat (see note below), submit the audit report to the IRMA Director of Standards and Assurance for review and comment for a period of fifteen (15) days. This shall be done after the report has been revised, if necessary, based on the client's comments (see 85, above);
 - b. Consider the comments from the IRMA Director of Standards and Assurance and state the certification decision. Where the certification body deviates from any recommendations made by the Director, it shall include a justification in the audit report;

- c. Send the final report to the client and IRMA Secretariat within seven (7) days of receipt of comments from the IRMA Director of Standards and Assurance. If the Director does not review the audit report, the final report shall be sent within 30 days of receiving the client's comments on the draft audit report. When the AMS becomes operational the final report shall be uploaded into that system in lieu of sending to the IRMA Secretariat.

NOTE: During the Launch Phase, the types of situations when IRMA Director of Standards and Assurance reserves the right to review an audit report include, but are not limited to, the following:

- New auditors are being on-boarded;
- New aspects of the standard are being audited for the first time;
- New geographies, mined materials or mining methods are coming into the scheme/

87. For the final audit report on a surveillance or special audit, the certification body shall:
 - a. Include the client's plan for correction (if necessary), the certification decision, justification for the decision and conclusion in the audit report;
 - b. Send the final report on a surveillance or special audit to the client and IRMA Secretariat within thirty (30) days upon receipt of the client's comments on the draft audit report. When the AMS becomes operational the report on a surveillance or special audit shall be uploaded into that system in lieu of sending to the IRMA Secretariat.
88. For all audits, the certification body shall complete a summary audit report within fifteen (15) days of the certification decision and shall send it to the IRMA Secretariat for publication (when the AMS becomes operational the report on a surveillance or special audit shall be uploaded into that system in lieu of sending to the IRMA Secretariat). The summary shall contain:
 - a. The name and business address of the client;
 - b. The name of the Certification Body and the auditors;
 - c. The date of the audit;
 - d. The scope of the audit;
 - e. A unique certification/verification identification code based on IRMA referencing system (See [Annex H](#));
 - f. A description of the client (operating company), mine location (country/region), mined materials, environmental and social setting, mining-related processes, facilities and operations, human and technical resources/employment levels, etc.);
 - g. A list of scores by principle and chapter;

- h. A list of major and minor nonconformities;
- i. For audits resulting in full certification a list of implemented corrective actions taken to address minor nonconformities, and timelines for planned corrective actions for open minor nonconformities, in order to maintain full certification; (See [Table 5](#))
- j. For audits resulting in IRMA 50 or IRMA 75 a list of implemented corrective actions to address nonconformities with any critical requirements, and timelines for planned corrective actions for open nonconformities with critical requirements, in order to maintain the verified level of achievement; (See [Table 6](#))
- k. The decision on certification or verified level of achievement; and
- l. The certification body may include a description of changes that the client undertook prior to application to meet the IRMA Standard.

NOTE: IRMA encourages transparency and clients can choose to have their full audit report published.

9.5 Certification decision

Section 9.5 of ISO 17021 contains requirements around the authority for certification decision making, and actions that must be completed prior to initial or recertification decision being made.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.5 of ISO 17021:

- 89. The information provided by the audit team to the certification body for the certification decision shall include any comments from the IRMA Director of **Standards** and Assurance.
- 90. The certification body shall not issue or re-issue a certificate if there are any outstanding major nonconformities. Verification statements for achievement levels of IRMA 50 and IRMA 75 (see [Annex C](#)) may not be awarded if there are outstanding major nonconformities with critical requirements. Verification statements for IRMA 50 and 75 may be awarded if the only major nonconformities are with non-critical requirements, as long as the public summary report clearly lists all major nonconformities. (See [Tables 5 and 6](#))
- 91. For initial audits, if the certification body is not able to verify the implementation of corrective actions of a major nonconformity within 12 months of the closing meeting of stage 2 of the audit, the certification body shall conduct another stage 2 audit prior to recommending certification or verified achievement levels. Under extenuating circumstances, the certification body may grant an extension allowing the mine 18 months to close major findings. The certification body shall notify

the client of the impending deadline for closing major non-conformities ninety (90) days in advance. (See [Tables 5 and 6](#) for more details on timelines for closing nonconformities)

92. The maximum time allowed for closing new major nonconformities found in surveillance or recertification audits is 3 months. Failure to close major nonconformities within that timeframe will lead to a suspension of the certificate or verification statement. (See [Tables 5 and 6](#) for more details on timelines for closing nonconformities)
93. Transfer of certification shall **NOT** be allowed during the Launch Phase.
94. After the Launch Phase, the certification body (CB) transferring the client in shall request the latest report and information on any outstanding nonconformities from the CB transferring the client out. Transfers with open major nonconformities are not allowed. The new CB shall sign a new certification contract with the transfer client. The CB accepting a transfer shall inform IRMA Secretariat of any transfer requests no later than 7 days after the transfer was initiated.

9.6 Maintaining, suspending, withdrawing and downgrading levels

Section 9.6 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for surveillance and recertification activities and audits, scope expansion and short notice audits, as well as suspension, withdrawal and reduction of the certification scope.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.6 of ISO 17021:

95. The certification body shall maintain certification or verification of achievement levels based on demonstration that the client continues to satisfy the requirements of the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*.
96. The certification body shall carry out one (1) surveillance audit following initial or recertification to ensure the client's continued conformity with the IRMA Standard. The surveillance audits shall take place no more than eighteen (18) months after the initial or recertification audit.
97. Surveillance activities shall include on-site auditing of the client's management system's fulfilment of specified requirements with respect to the standard to which the certification or verification of an achievement level is granted.
98. Each surveillance audit shall include:
 - a. Chapter 1.1 of the IRMA Standard. This shall include any changes that have occurred in legislation or regulations since the previous audit;

- b. A review of IRMA Standard requirements for which stakeholder input related to potential nonconformities has been received since the previous audit;
 - c. A review of requirements that may be affected by any material changes in the mining operation that occurred between the time of the initial (or recertification) audit and the surveillance audit;
 - d. A review of requirements that are associated with issues identified by the company or stakeholders as being high risk (e.g., issues identified during the ESIA or other risk or impact assessments as having a high potential for causing significant social, environmental or health impacts if not managed well); and
 - e. If mines have achieved IRMA 50, 75 or 100, a review of conformity with all critical requirements (see [Annex D](#)).
99. The certification body shall commence the recertification process early in the third (3rd) year following certification. In doing so, they shall consult with the client to ensure that the timing of recertification activities is appropriate and to give them sufficient time to prepare for the audit.
100. The recertification audit shall include audit planning (section 9.2), and follow stage 2 requirements. During audit planning, the scope of a desktop review will be determined.

NOTE: If there have been changes or updates to policies, assessments, mine operational plans, management plans, mitigation plans, monitoring programs and data, or new documentation related to changes in legal compliance, suppliers, stakeholder engagement or stakeholder complaints, or other relevant documents, there will likely be the need for desktop review of these materials.

101. The certification body shall notify the client and IRMA of an impending lapse of certification sixty (60) days in advance of the certification expiration date. If the certification has lapsed, the certification shall be temporarily suspended, and when it becomes operational the status of the client shall be changed in the AMS within five (5) days of the certification expiration.
102. The certification body shall report any changes in scope to an existing certificate to IRMA Secretariat within five (5) days of the change in scope being issued. Once the AMS becomes operational, the change in scope shall be reported through the AMS.

NOTE: Short-notice audits may be necessary, for example, due to changes in mining processes, mine expansions or changes in a mine's operating context that lead to previously irrelevant IRMA Standard chapters or requirements becoming relevant.

103. The certification body may suspend or withdraw a certification or verification of achievement level for contractual, administrative or performance reasons.

104. Mines may appeal a suspension or withdrawal by contacting the CB within 14 days from the date that they were notified of the suspension or withdrawal. (See also section 9.7, below)
105. A suspension as a result of nonconformities with critical requirements must be addressed within six (6) months of the notification date. A suspension that occurs as a result of nonconformities with noncritical requirements must be addressed by the next surveillance or recertification audit, whichever is soonest. Suspensions may be extended for a period of no more than six months to allow the client more time to correct nonconformities (upon justification and at the discretion of the certification body and the IRMA Secretariat).
106. The certification body shall notify the IRMA Secretariat of a suspension or withdrawal within five (5) days of the decision (and update the client's status in the AMS, once the AMS becomes operational).
107. The date of suspension or withdrawal shall be the date the decision was taken by the certification body.
108. The client may voluntarily decide to cancel its certification. In such an event, the date of cancellation shall be the date the client informs the certification body of its decision to cancel.
109. When a certificate is suspended or withdrawn, a certification body may downgrade a mine's achievement level from IRMA 100 to IRMA 75 or IRMA 50, as long as all of the conditions of the verified achievement level are being met. When a verified statement for IRMA 75 or IRMA 50 is suspended or withdrawn, a certification body may downgrade a mine's achievement level to a lower level (e.g., IRMA 50 or IRMA Transparency) as long as all of the conditions of the lower verified achievement level are being met. A verification statement will be issued for any new, downgraded achievement level. The CB shall notify the IRMA Secretariat of any downgrading of achievement levels.
110. In the event of a suspension, withdrawal or downgrading of a certificate/achievement level mines must demonstrate to CBs that they have informed purchasers of the change in achievement status.

9.7 Appeals

Section 9.7 of ISO 17021 defines rules for required steps and timelines when dealing with appeals.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.7 of ISO 17021:

111. The certification body shall inform the IRMA Secretariat that an appeal has been filed within seven (7) days of its receipt. When the AMS becomes operational the certification body shall record an appeal in the AMS within seven (7) days of its receipt in lieu of informing the IRMA Secretariat.

112. The certification body shall send a summary report to the IRMA Secretariat documenting the outcome of the appeal. This summary report shall consider confidentiality. When the AMS becomes operational the summary report shall be uploaded into that system in lieu of sending to the IRMA Secretariat.

9.8 Complaints

Section 9.8 of ISO 17021 defines rules for required steps and timelines when dealing with complaints.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.8 of ISO 17021:

113. The certification body shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and shall provide the complainant with the result of the complaint investigation.
114. The certification body shall give formal notice of the end of the complaints-handling process to the complainant.
115. Together with the certified client, the IRMA Secretariat, and the complainant, the certification body shall determine whether and, if so, to what extent the subject of the complaint and its resolution shall be made public on the IRMA website.
116. The certification body shall appoint an independent member of the certification body's management who shall:
- a. Be responsible for ensuring that complaints procedures and processes are followed;
 - b. Report to senior management on the outcome of the complaints process.
117. The certification body shall inform the IRMA Secretariat that a complaint has been filed within seven (7) days of its receipt. When the AMS system becomes operational, the certification body shall record a complaint in the AMS within seven (7) days of receipt of the complaint.
118. The certification body shall send a summary report to the IRMA Secretariat documenting the outcome of the complaint. This summary report shall consider confidentiality. When the AMS becomes operational the summary report shall be uploaded into that system in lieu of sending to the IRMA Secretariat.

9.9 Client records

Section 9.9 of ISO 17021 sets requirements for types of records to be maintained and required procedures for record maintenance.

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 9.9 of ISO 17021:

119. Client records shall be maintained for at least 10 (ten) years.
120. Records of certified clients shall include:
 - a. Nonconformities and their classifications;
 - b. Stakeholder list, if applicable;
 - c. Efforts to engage stakeholders;
 - d. Stakeholder comments and the certification body's response;
 - e. Comments from the IRMA Director of Standards and Assurance.

9.10 Stakeholder engagement

This section is composed of IRMA requirements only.

121. Stakeholder engagement is a key component of the IRMA program. The requirements in this chapter describe how certification bodies shall engage stakeholders in the application process and subsequent certification cycles. In addition, certification bodies are advised to follow the guidance in [Annex F](#) of this document when seeking to engage stakeholders.
122. For each client, the certification body shall conduct a detailed stakeholder analysis covering all groups with an interest in the client. The analysis shall help the certification body understand the following:
 - a. Who the stakeholders are;
 - b. How they are organized and represented (do they have representatives that could speak for them?);
 - c. Are there stakeholder groups that need special attention to ensure their inclusion in the IRMA program? (e.g., women, marginalized and vulnerable groups);
 - d. Their positions and concerns with regards to mining and the client;
 - e. Their relationship with and interest in the client;
 - f. Their willingness and likelihood to engage in the certification process.

- iii. The output of the analysis shall be a stakeholder list for each client that the certification body reviews and updates at least annually. The stakeholder list shall be a detailed list on all relevant stakeholders to be contacted for input during the application process and subsequent certification cycles. The list shall outline the analysis results from a) to f) above and include stakeholder contact details as follows:
 - a. Name of organization (if any);
 - b. Type of organization (if any);
 - c. Name of individual;
 - d. Contact details of individual;
 - e. Most appropriate means for contacting individual and most appropriate format and language(s) for consultation.
123. The certification body may use a stakeholder inventory provided by the client as a starting point for the analysis and list but shall engage in further research activities to complement the inventory. Activities shall include researching published studies, articles, and data about the client.
124. The certification body shall send its stakeholder list to the IRMA Secretariat at least fourteen (14) days prior to the first day of stage 2 of the audit. In doing so, the certification body shall respect if a stakeholder wishes not to be publicly identified.
125. The certification body's efforts for engaging stakeholders shall reflect:
- a. The scale, scope, and complexity of the client;
 - b. The level and nature of any past, current, and anticipated conflicts with stakeholders;
 - c. The likelihood of controversy around the audit.
126. In reaching out to stakeholders, the certification body shall ensure that its communication and attitude is culturally appropriate and takes account of stakeholders' technological capabilities.
127. The certification body shall ensure that the ways for stakeholders to provide input and feedback are appropriate and responsive to their needs.
128. In planning and carrying out audits, the certification body shall be flexible to allow for adjustments of timelines and agendas to ensure that stakeholders can make best use of opportunities for input and feedback.

129. The certification body shall have a documented published mechanism that allows stakeholder comments to be submitted at any time during the validity of a certification, and that specifies how those comments are to be taken into consideration during the next audit.

10 MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

Section 10 of ISO 17021 outlines the options for compliance of certification body's management system:

- Option A: General management system requirements
- Option B: Management system requirements in accordance with ISO 9001

Additional IRMA Requirements

In addition to complying with this section 10 of ISO 17021:

130. The certification body's management system shall also be capable of supporting and demonstrating the consistent achievement of the IRMA certification requirements [this document].

ANNEXES

Annex A: Auditor, Certificate Decision-Makers and Expert Qualifications (Normative)

Minimum qualification requirements for auditors, certification decision-makers and technical experts.

The table below shall be used by certification bodies in conjunction with Annex A of ISO 17021 as it specifies some of the required knowledge and skills and adds to them where necessary.

1. Qualification requirements for all auditors and certification decision-makers	
Education and knowledge of client’s business sector	1. University degree (advanced degree preferred but not required) in a relevant discipline (see below); and
	2. Five (5) years of professional experience in a relevant field (see below)
	OR
	1. High school certificate; and
	2. Ten (10) years of professional experience in a relevant field (see below).
	AND
	3. Knowledge of relevant international agreements, conventions, treaties, guiding principles, industry standards, etc. (see below), and ability to research national legislation relevant to the locations of the mining operations to be audited.
Training and knowledge of audit principles, practices and techniques	4. Records of continued professional development as relevant for the types of conducted audits, e.g. through advanced courses at least every two (2) years.
	5. For auditors: Participation in three (3) on-site audits of mining operations or 3 consulting projects in the mining industry or operations in natural resource extraction sectors that may have comparable types and scales of impacts (such as Oil and Gas development, Large-Scale Hydro Power, or Large-Scale Forestry).
	6. For certification decision-makers: At least 2 years of experience working or consulting for natural resource extraction operations or

	working for a CAB or financial institution conducting due diligence to approve certification or financing to natural resource extraction and downstream manufacturing operations (Mining and Minerals, Metal Smelting and Refining, Oil and Gas, Forestry, Fisheries, Large-Scale Hydro Power)
Knowledge of IRMA standard and normative documents	7. Successful completion of an IRMA induction training for auditors as provided by IRMA or IRMA-approved training provider.
2. Additional qualification requirements for staff and contract social auditors	
Relevant university degree	1. Degree in one of the following disciplines or similar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sociology ▪ Psychology ▪ Health and Human Sciences ▪ Sustainable development ▪ Social science ▪ Law
Relevant professional experience	2. Experience in at least three (3) of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural Heritage ▪ Free, Prior and Informed Consent ▪ Human Rights Due Diligence ▪ Labor and Working Conditions ▪ Mining in Conflict-Affected Areas ▪ Occupational Health and Safety/Emergency Response ▪ Resettlement ▪ Revenue and Payments Transparency ▪ Security and Human Rights ▪ Stakeholder Engagement
Relevant laws, agreements, conventions, treaties, guidance, guiding	3. Familiarity with at least three (3) of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EITI and/or other transparency and anti-corruption schemes/laws such as Dodd-Frank Act, EU Accounting Directive, etc. ▪ IFC Performance Standard 2, ILO Core Conventions, employment laws, other labor standards

<p>principles, frameworks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ILO Occupational Health and Safety Conventions, UN APELL, OHS regulations, health and safety risk assessment, workplace monitoring ▪ UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, human rights impact assessment, rights-compatible grievance mechanisms ▪ Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, security risk assessments ▪ OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas, conflict risk assessment, other conflict-free mineral frameworks such as ICGLR, Kimberley Process, ITSCi ▪ Forest Stewardship Council FPIC criteria, IFC Performance Standard 7, indigenous peoples’ laws and rights ▪ IFC Performance Standard 1 or other stakeholder engagement standards and practices
<p>Training and knowledge of audit principles, practices and techniques</p>	<p>4. From the three (3) audits mentioned under Qualification requirements for all auditors (subsection 5), above, at least two (2) audits shall have been for a social auditing scheme (e.g., SA8000, OHSAS 18001, etc.) or for social components of ISEAL-compliant voluntary sustainability schemes (e.g., Forest Stewardship Council, Responsible Jewellery Council, etc).</p>
<p>3. Additional qualification requirements for internal and external environmental auditors</p>	
<p>Relevant university degree</p>	<p>1. Degree in one of the following disciplines or similar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mineral & mining engineering ▪ Geotechnical engineering ▪ Hydrogeology/Hydrology ▪ Process engineering ▪ Environmental or natural resources management ▪ Environmental science ▪ Sustainable development ▪ Natural resources ▪ Landscape planning
<p>Relevant professional experience</p>	<p>2. Experience in at least some of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cyanide management ▪ Environmental modeling, sampling and monitoring (air, noise, greenhouse gas emissions)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental protection ▪ Impact assessment ▪ Mine waste management ▪ Mining reclamation and closure ▪ Water resources management: Water quality / quantity modeling / sampling / monitoring, acid rock drainage / metals leaching testing / modeling, water treatment methods ▪ Stakeholder Engagement
Relevant laws, regulations, agreements, conventions, treaties, industry standards, industry best practices, methodologies	<p>3. Familiarity with at least some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laws and regulations related to water quality and quantity, air, mercury and greenhouse gas emissions, protected areas, biodiversity, cyanide, noise ▪ Minamata Convention on Mercury ▪ Water quality / quantity modeling / sampling / monitoring, acid rock drainage / metals leaching testing / modeling, noise monitoring ▪ Tailings and waste rock engineering and design standards such as the Canadian Dam Association Guidelines, Mining Association of Canada’s Tailings Guidance, etc. ▪ International Cyanide Code, cyanide management practices ▪ Reclamation practices (e.g., slope stabilization, revegetation), financial surety calculations ▪ Environmental and Social Impact Assessment methodologies ▪ IFC Performance Standard 1 or other stakeholder engagement standards and practices
Training and knowledge of audit principles, practices and techniques	<p>4. From the three (3) audits mentioned under Qualification requirements for all auditors and certification decision-makers (subsection 5), at least two (2) audits shall have been for an environmental scheme (e.g., ISO 14001, ISO 50001, etc.) or for environmental components of ISEAL-compliant voluntary sustainability schemes (e.g., Forest Stewardship Council, Responsible Jewellery Council, Alliance for Water Stewardship, etc.).</p>
4. Additional qualification requirements for staff and contract lead auditors	
	<p>1. Allocation of team resources; and</p>
	<p>2. Stakeholder engagement, including managing conflicts; and</p>

Audit-management skills	3. External team representation during audit process.
	4. Participation in three (3 on-site audits of mining operations or 3 consulting projects in the mining industry.
	5. Successful completion of a four to five (4 to 5) day recognized auditor training course, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ISO management standard (e.g. ISO 14001; ISO 50001; ISO 14064; ISO 31000) or ▪ ISO 190117
5. Qualification requirements for staff and contract technical experts	
Education and knowledge of client’s business sector	1. Advanced university degree in a relevant discipline (see above for social and environmental auditors); and
	2. Five (5) years of professional experience in a field relevant to the aspects the technical expert is supposed to cover during the audit.
	OR
	1. High school certificate; and
	2. Ten (10) years of professional experience in a field relevant to the aspects the technical expert is supposed to cover during the audit.
	AND
	3. Knowledge of international agreements, conventions, treaties, guiding principles, industry standards, etc. relevant to the aspects the technical expert is supposed to cover during the audit.
	4. Knowledge of national legislation relevant to the aspects the technical expert is supposed to advise on during the audit.

Annex B: IRMA Application Form for Certification/Verification Audits (Normative)

The client shall complete the IRMA Application Form for mining operation(s) applying for certification. The application form can be downloaded from the IRMA website.¹

The completed form shall be submitted to the IRMA Secretariat (info@responsiblemining.net) to seek acceptance into the IRMA program.

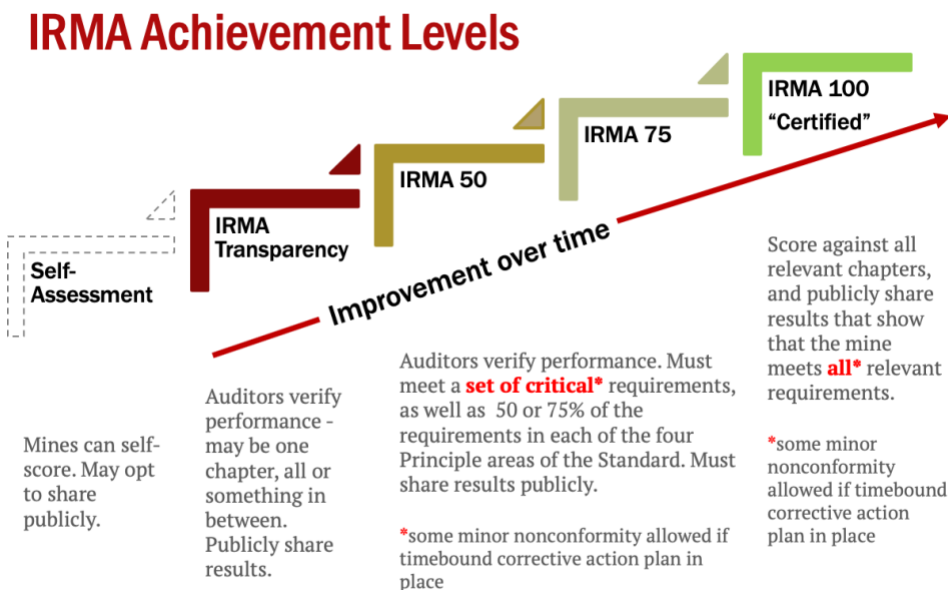
¹ http://responsiblemining.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Mine-Application-Form-for-Independent-Assessment_v.25-09-2019.docx

Annex C: Rules for IRMA Achievement levels (Normative)

Three levels of achievement will be recognized within the IRMA system.

- **IRMA 100 (Certification)** – Mines fully meet all critical requirements (see [Annex D](#)), at least substantially meet all non-critical requirements, and achieve a score of 90% in each of the four IRMA principles.* Where requirements are only substantially met there is a corrective action plan in place, approved by the certification body, to reach full conformance within allotted timeframes. Mines are required to publicly release audit summary.
- **IRMA 75 (Verified Achievement Level)** – Mines at least substantially meet all critical requirements (see [Annex D](#)), and have in place a corrective action plan to fully meet them. A score of 75% is achieved in each of the four IRMA principles.* Mines are required to publicly release audit summary.
- **IRMA 50 (Verified Achievement Level)** – Mines at least substantially meet all critical requirements (see [Annex D](#)), and have in place a corrective action plan to fully meet them. A score of 50% is achieved in each of the four IRMA principles.* Mines are required to publicly release audit summary.

* The “principle” score is based on total number of relevant requirements in the chapters in each principle, see example of scoring in [Annex E](#).



As seen in the diagram above, there is one other way for mines to be recognized in the IRMA system.

- **IRMA Transparency (Verified Score)** – be audited by IRMA-approved auditors and publicly release score and audit summary.

There is no achievement level awarded by IRMA, but through the IRMA Transparency program mines can publicly disclose their participation in the IRMA system and their auditor-verified results, and contextualize their performance, for example through a statement on the [Responsible Mining Map](#).

Basis for Certification (IRMA 100)

The highest level of achievement within the IRMA system is “certification” or IRMA 100. The basis for IRMA certification is that all critical requirements are fully met, and all other relevant requirements of the IRMA Standard are fully or substantially met (i.e., there are only minor nonconformities) by the applicant mine.

The number of requirements that may have minor nonconformities is limited,² and for those requirements it is expected that appropriate actions will be taken within specified timeframes to address problems and analyze issues contributing to the nonconformities so that they can be avoided in the future (see [Table 5](#) in the Certification Body Requirements).

IRMA is allowing certification even with some level of minor nonconformity because it is recognized that occasional, temporary failures of conformity are inevitable when managing large, complex mining operations. Consequently, and in line with other comparable voluntary certification schemes, IRMA is allowing certificates to be issued despite the existence of minor nonconformities with the requirements of the IRMA Standard.

Any failures to conform with IRMA Standard requirements identified by an auditor will be explicitly documented in the audit report, and the resulting decision to issue, re-issue, suspend or withdraw a certificate will be clearly and explicitly justified by the responsible certification body.

Prior to the CB’s decision on whether or not to grant certification or issue a verified statement related to other achievement levels, operating companies will have the opportunity to provide additional evidence if they believe any nonconformity ratings have been made in error.

Basis for Verified Achievement Levels (75 and 50)

The basis for IRMA 50 or IRMA 75 is that mines must demonstrate that they have reached a score of 75% or 50% of the total possible score, respectively, in each of the four IRMA Principle areas (i.e., Business Integrity, Positive Legacies, Social Responsibility and Environmental Responsibility). See [Annex E](#) for more details on the scoring system.

² Mines must achieve a score of at least 90% of the total possible score in each of the four IRMA Principle areas (i.e., Business Integrity, Positive Legacies, Social Responsibility and Environmental Responsibility), which limits the total number of minor nonconformities allowed.

The rationale for calculating the score for each Principle, rather than the Standard as a whole, is to ensure that a mine that receives an IRMA achievement level of 50 or 75 is able to demonstrate a level of competency across the four primary areas of the IRMA Standard, rather than performing strongly in one area at the expense of another.

Additionally, all critical requirements in the IRMA Standard must at least be substantially met (i.e., minor nonconformities are permissible but major nonconformities are not), and the mine must have in place a corrective action plan to fully meet those requirements by the following surveillance or recertification audit (whichever comes first). The critical requirements are listed in [Annex D](#) of this document.

Basis for Transparency and Demonstration of Improvement Over Time

The IRMA Standard is a high-bar standard, and for some mines the process of working toward meeting such a comprehensive set of best practices will take longer. While the IRMA System primarily aims to recognize and reward mines that are achieving best practices in social and environmental performance, IRMA leaders also recognize the value and importance of supporting mines wherever they happen to be on their journey to improve their practices.

Within IRMA, the act of transparency is recognized as a form of leadership in and of itself. Increased transparency can lead to more meaningful engagement and dialogue with a mine’s stakeholders about particular strengths and challenges with a mining project.

The IRMA Board of Directors has therefore decided that mines not yet meeting the critical requirements (see [Annex D](#)) and 50% of 75% of the requirements in each of the four IRMA principles can still be recognized by IRMA by setting a baseline of performance through a third-party audit and sharing their results (e.g., scores on a chapter basis, nonconformities) publicly. Through follow-up audits these mines can demonstrate publicly that they are improving over time. The mines may decide to set a goal to achieve a certain IRMA level with a certain timeframe, but this is not required by IRMA.

Table C1. Disclosure and Handling of Nonconformities for Different Achievement Levels

	SCORING/ Transparency	IRMA 50	IRMA 75	CERTIFIED IRMA 100
Major Nonconformities (i.e., requirements are not met or only partially met)	Allowed. Must be disclosed in public audit summary report.	Allowed for non-critical requirements only. Must be disclosed in public audit summary report.		Not allowed.
Minor Nonconformities (i.e., requirements are substantially met)	Allowed. Must be disclosed in public audit summary report.	Allowed for critical requirements. Must be disclosed in public audit summary report.		Not allowed for critical requirements. Allowed for non-critical requirements. For non-critical requirements, minor nonconformities must be disclosed in public audit summary report.

Corrective Action Plans required	Not required (optional, if, for example, a mine wants to quickly progress to a higher achievement level)	Required for critical requirements. Not required for non-critical requirements (optional, if, for example, a mine wants to quickly progress to a higher achievement level)	Yes, if there are any nonconformities. Must be disclosed in public audit summary report.
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Annex D: Critical Requirements in the IRMA Standard (Normative)

Critical requirements consist of a list of 30 issues that have been identified by the IRMA Board of Directors as being core requirements that must be met by any mine that is allowed to claim an achievement level in the IRMA System. Not all critical requirements will be relevant at all mine sites. For example, if there was no resettlement, or if mines are not located in conflict-affected or high-risk areas, those requirements do not apply. **Please note** that some of the critical requirements below reference more than one IRMA requirement. In total there are 40 requirements referenced in the table below.

Table D1. Critical Requirements in the IRMA Standard.

Principle 1 – Business Integrity
1. The operating company complies with host country laws that are applicable to the mining project (1.1.1.1)
2. The mine fosters two-way dialogue and meaningful engagement with stakeholders (1.2.2.2).
3. The operating company has a policy in place that acknowledges its responsibility to respect all internationally recognized human rights (1.3.1.1) and an ongoing process to identify and assess potential and actual human rights impacts from mining project activities and business relationships (1.3.2.1). The operating company is taking steps to remediate any known impacts on human rights caused by the mine (1.3.3.3).
4. Stakeholders have access to operational-level mechanisms that allows them to raise and seek resolution or remedy for complaints and grievances that may occur in relation to the mining operation (1.4.1.1).
5. The operating company has developed, documented and implemented policies and procedures that prohibit bribery and other forms of corruption by employees and contractors (1.5.5.1).
Principle 2 – Planning and Managing for Positive Legacies
6. The operating company has carried out a process to identify potential impacts (social and environmental) of the mining project (2.1.3.1).
7. New mine sites have obtained the FPIC of indigenous peoples, and existing mines either have obtained FPIC or can demonstrate that they are operating in a manner that supports positive relationships with affected indigenous peoples and provides remedies for past impacts on indigenous peoples’ rights and interests. (2.2.2.2 and scope of application)
8. If resettlement has occurred, the mine monitors and evaluates its implementation and takes corrective actions until the provisions of resettlement action plans and/or livelihood restoration plans have been met (2.4.7.1).
9. All operations related to the mining project shall have an emergency response plan (2.5.1.1) and there is community participation in emergency response planning exercises (2.5.2.1).
10. Reclamation and closure plans are compatible with protection of human health and the environment, and are available to stakeholders (2.6.2.1 and 2.6.2.6).
11. Financial surety instruments are in place for mine closure and post-closure (including reclamation, water treatment and monitoring) (2.6.4.1).
Principle 3 – Social Responsibility
12. Workers’ freedom of association is respected (3.1.2.1).

13. Measures are in place to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, and/or exploitation, especially in regard to female workers (3.1.3.3).
14. Workers have access to operational-level mechanisms that allows them to raise and seek resolution or remedy for complaints and grievances that may occur in relation to workplace-related issues (3.1.5.1).
15. No children (i.e., persons under the age of 18) are employed to do hazardous work (3.1.7.2) and no children under the age of 15 are employed to do non-hazardous work (3.1.7.3).
16. There is no forced labor at the mine site or used by the operating company (3.1.8.1).
17. Workers are informed of the hazards associated with their work, the health risks involved and relevant preventive and protective measures (3.2.4.1.a and b).
18. The risks to community health and safety posed by the mining operation are evaluated and mitigated (3.3.1.1).
19. If operating in a conflict-affected or high-risk area, the mine has committed to not support any parties that contribute to conflict or the infringement of human rights (3.4.2.1).
20. The mine has policy and procedures in place that align with best practices to limit the use of force and firearms by security personnel (3.5.1.2).
Principle 4 - Environmental Responsibility
21. A risk assessment has been done to identify chemical and physical risks associated with existing mine waste (including tailings) facilities (4.1.4.1). Mine waste facility design and mitigation of identified risks shall be consistent with best available technologies and best available/applicable practices (4.1.5.1).
22. The operating company regularly evaluates the performance of mine waste facilities to assess the effectiveness of risk management measures, including critical controls for high consequence facilities (4.1.5.6).
23. The mine does not use riverine, submarine or lake disposal for mine wastes (4.1.8.1)
24. Water quality and quantity are being monitored at the mine site (4.2.4.1.a through e) and adverse impacts resulting from the mining operation are being mitigated (4.2.4.4)
25. When significant potential impacts on air quality are identified, the mine develops measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on air quality, and documents them in an air quality management plan (4.3.2.1).
26. There is a policy being implemented that includes targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (4.5.1.1).
27. The mine has carried out screening to evaluate its potential impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem services and protected areas (4.6.2.1), and these impacts are being mitigated and minimized (4.6.4.1)
28. New mines are not located in or adversely affect World Heritage Sites (WHS), areas on a State Party's official Tentative List for WHS Inscription, IUCN protected area management categories I-III, or core areas of UNESCO biosphere reserves (4.6.5.2), and existing mines located in those areas ensure that activities during the remaining mine life cycle will not permanently and materially damage the integrity of the special values for which the area was designated or recognized (4.6.5.4).
29. Gold or silver mines using cyanide are certified as complying with the Cyanide Code (4.7.1.1).
30. Mercury wastes are not permanently stored on site without adequate safeguards (4.8.2.3), are not sold or given to artisanal or small-scale miners, and are otherwise sold only for end uses covered in the Minamata Convention or disposed of in regulated repositories (4.8.2.2).

Annex E: IRMA Rating System (Informative)

All requirements under assessment will be rated on their level of conformity. The following rating system will be used, and the general criteria for differentiating between ratings are as follows:

Fully meets:

- Relevant policies, procedures, methodologies, training programs, or work plans, etc. and performance meet the requirement as written or fully meet its intent.
- Stated performance for all elements or sub-requirements is evident with extremely rare exceptions (and exceptions do not affect consistency with the objective(s) of the chapter).

Substantially meets:

- Relevant policies, procedures, methodologies, training programs, or work plans, etc. have sufficient detail or require only minor augmentation. For example:
 - Many, but perhaps not all relevant personnel are informed of policies and procedures. Work plans are developed and implementation is under way.
 - Training programs are being implemented, though perhaps not fully or to maximum efficacy.
- Where requirements are performance-based, mine has implemented appropriate actions to meet the performance measure, but is not fully meeting it. Some augmentation or modification required.
- Where sub-requirements exist, the majority of the sub-requirements are being met, but one or a few factors need clarification, augmentation or complete implementation.

Partially meets:

- Relevant procedures, methodologies, training programs, or work plans, etc. are under development; or policies, procedures, etc. are in place but do not have sufficient detail and need significant augmentation; or they are in place but are not being implemented or are inconsistently applied; or implementation is in early stages so difficult to gauge its effectiveness/successful implementation.
- Where requirements are performance-based, mine has taken some actions to meet the performance measure, but there is considerable additional work necessary.
- Where sub-requirements exist, the majority or all of the sub-requirements need clarification, augmentation or implementation.

Does not meet:

- Relevant policies, procedures not developed, actions have not been taken to meet performance measures, or requirements are not being met despite efforts being made by the company.

Not relevant

- Requirements are not applicable at the mine site. Mines will be expected to provide rationale for why requirements are not relevant.

Not assessed

- Mines choose to exclude certain requirements from the assessment.

IRMA Scoring System

All requirements, except for those deemed “not relevant,” will be scored. The following scoring system will be used:

Table E1. Relationship between Assessed Ratings and Scores.

Rating	Score
Fully meets	2
Substantially meets	1.5
Partially meets	1
Does not meet	0
Not assessed	0

As mentioned above, mines may opt to exclude requirements from an assessment in order to reduce audit costs, e.g., when they know for sure that they are not meeting the requirement. Mines should be aware, however, that all relevant requirements factor into the score for a particular chapter.

Consequently, if a mine chooses to not have a relevant requirement assessed it will receive a score of zero (0) for that requirement (because if a requirement is not assessed there is no evidence that the mine is partially, substantially or fully meeting the requirement).

Table E2. How Major and Minor Nonconformities Relate to Ratings and Scores.

Fully meets (2 pts)	Substantially Meets (1.5 pts)	Partially meets (1 pt)	Does not meet (0 pt)
No nonconformity with the requirement.	Minor nonconformity with the requirement.	Major nonconformity with the requirement.	Major nonconformity with the requirement.

Rules for Calculating Scores

A simple method is being employed for calculating audit scores.

1. Requirements will receive a score as in Table E1, above:
2. Chapters will be scored by:

- Determining if the chapter is relevant at the mine site
- Determining the maximum possible score for the chapter (= total number of relevant requirements in the chapter x 2 points if all requirements were fully met)
- Determining the actual scores achieved by the mine for all of the relevant requirements in the chapter
- Creating a numerical score (= total actual score achieved for a relevant chapter and requirements ÷ maximum possible score for the chapter)
- Creating a percentage score (= total actual score achieved ÷ maximum possible score x 100)

3. Each of the four Principles (i.e., Business Integrity, Planning for Positive Legacies, Social Responsibility and Environmental Responsibility) in the IRMA Standard will receive a score as follows:

- Determining the relevant chapters within that principle that apply at the mine
- Determining the maximum possible score for each relevant chapter (based on the relevant requirements within each relevant chapter)
- Determining the total maximum score for the principle (based on adding up the scores for all relevant chapters)
- Determining the total actual scores achieved in the relevant chapters of the principle
- Creating a numerical score (= total actual score for all relevant chapters in the principle ÷ maximum possible score for relevant chapters in the principle)
- Creating a percentage score (= total actual score achieved for all relevant chapters in the principle ÷ maximum possible score x 100)

Example of Scoring

- Principle 2 of the IRMA Standard is Planning for Positive Legacies. The 6 chapters included in that principle are: 2.1. Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and Management; 2.2. Free, Prior and Informed Consent; 2.3. Obtaining Community Support and Delivering Benefits; 2.4. Resettlement; 2.5. Emergency Preparedness and Response; 2.6. Planning and Financing Reclamation and Closure.
- In this example, we are assuming there is no resettlement associated with mine development, so only 5 of the 6 chapters in principle 2 are relevant at the site.
- There are 91 requirements in the 5 relevant chapters. In this example, all 91 requirements are relevant at the mine site.
- According to IRMA’s scoring system, if the site fully meets a requirement it scores 2 points, for substantially meeting it scores 1.5, for partially meeting it scores 1, and if the mine does not meet a requirement it scores 0. Consequently, the maximum possible score for the site, if all requirements are fully met, is: 91 requirements x 2 points = 182 points
- In this example, the mine site fully meets 45 requirements, substantially meets 18, partially meets 22 and does not meet 6 requirements. As a result, its score for the relevant chapters in Principle 2 is: $(45 \times 2) + (18 \times 1.5) + (22 \times 1) + (6 \times 0) = 90 + 27 + 22 + 0 = 139$ points.
- The percentage score for Principle 2 is: $\frac{\text{Total Score Achieved}}{\text{Max. Possible Score}} \times 100 = \frac{139 \times 100}{182} = 76.4\%$
- Because the mine exceeded 75% in this Principle, it is eligible for IRMA 75, as long as the site also scores 75% or higher in the other three Principle areas of the Standard, and also at least substantially meets all critical requirements.

# of relevant chapters in Principle 2	# of relevant requirements	Total possible score for Principle 2	# of relevant requirements fully met	# of relevant requirements substantially met	# of relevant requirements partially met	Total score for requirements fully met	Total score for requirements substantially met	Total score for requirements partially met	Total score for Principle 2	% achieved for Principle 2
5	91	182	45	18	22	90	27	22	139	76.4 %

Annex F: Guidance on Stakeholder Engagement (Informative)

A stakeholder (or interested party) is “a person or group of people who are directly or indirectly affected by a project, such as rights holders, as well as those who may have interests in a project and/or the ability to influence its outcome, either positively or negatively” (extracted from the IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining).

Apart from the client, stakeholders are the richest and most substantive source of information for a certification body. Stakeholder consultation serves to collect the information needed to conduct a robust audit. Successful consultation will instill confidence in stakeholders that the audit was informed by a balanced, accessible, and equitable process to which they could meaningfully contribute.

The earlier the certification body is aware of stakeholder concerns, conflicting perspectives and potential controversies, the better the audit and consultation process can be planned. Having clarity about consultation needs will also enable the certification body to better calculate the auditing costs - something the client will certainly appreciate.

The following guidance summarizes important principles of good stakeholder engagement and should be respected by certification bodies.

The effort required for successful and meaningful stakeholder consultation will vary depending on several factors. The most important ones are:

- Scale, scope, and complexity of the client and their impacts, and the resulting likely number and range of potentially interested stakeholders;
- The past and current level and nature of a conflict and the potential for controversy around the client in the future;
- The ability and/or willingness of key stakeholders to engage constructively in the audit process.

Certification bodies should note that there are a number of reasons why stakeholders might show a lack of willingness to engage in the audit process. It is very important to discover what the reasons might be. Among them are:

- They believe the mining project is fine. In this case, the certification body should get confirmation (in writing, if at all possible) that this is what they think;
- They don't know enough about the process and don't have the time, resources, or expertise to get informed and provide quality input. In this case, it could be helpful to ask what other group might be more involved or help them get up to speed with the process;
- They cannot read English well enough to appreciate what is being requested. In that case, the certification body should consider translation of relevant documents;
- The wrong person at an organization was contacted. If so, the certification body should go back and find the right person to engage;
- They don't want to go on record. In this case, the certification body should explain that they will not attribute comments or concerns;
- They don't trust the certification body, IRMA, or don't like the idea of certification;
- IRMA certification might undermine current vested interests (e.g., a particular campaign, law suit, or related action);

As a general rule, reluctance by key stakeholders to engage should result in more intensive outreach by the certification body.

Certification bodies should actively seek input from stakeholders and should allot sufficient time for their engagement. An unrealistic timeframe will lead to frustrated and disenfranchised stakeholders, poor stakeholder input, and erosion of the audit's credibility. It takes time to contact stakeholders and to arrange and conduct consultation. Where there is confusion about provided input or conflicting information, follow-up needs to happen to meet both certification body and stakeholder needs. Additional key stakeholders may be identified as the process unfolds and will need to be consulted. Some stakeholder groups have limited resources and may not be able to respond quickly. Or certification bodies might need to adjust meeting times or locations to suit stakeholder schedules.

Transparency is key. Certification bodies should communicate regularly and clearly with stakeholders and should be responsive to stakeholder questions. To avoid uncertainty and confusion, certification bodies should communicate:

- Where they are in the audit process;
- What they are going to do to engage stakeholders;
- What they are going to do with stakeholder input;
- Which issues and concerns were raised during the process;
- How these were addressed by the certification body.

Methods, behaviors, languages, terminology, technology and formats used for consultation should be appropriate, also from a cultural perspective. Examples include:

- In some cultures, it is disrespectful to look directly into a person's eyes;
- There may be stakeholders that are not literate and need information conveyed in a form other than written (e.g. face-to-face meetings, video, audio);
- Some stakeholders may prefer to receive information verbally;
- Some stakeholders may not have reliable access to the internet or computers, and will need written information in hard copy, for example signage in village shops, at the church, or in the central square.

When consulting with stakeholders, a safe environment is needed for honest and open exchange of information, perspectives, and concerns. For example, workers may be hesitant to speak frankly about working conditions or developments at a client if their superior is present. Some stakeholders may prefer to be interviewed individually rather than in a group. Stakeholders should be assured that any reference to or characterization of their input (written or verbal) can be done without attribution. Stakeholders should be encouraged to be open and transparent in providing objective and verifiable information that may have a bearing on the client's audit. Interactions with stakeholders should always be respectful, unbiased, and non-judgmental to create trust in both the certification body, the audit team, and the IRMA program.

For successful consultation, it is also important that individuals leading the consultation are experienced in engaging stakeholders and have appropriate expertise. At least two (2) audit team members should participate in the interviews to make sure that minutes are accurate. If audit teams feel they need support from a stakeholder engagement specialist, they may ask a neutral expert to assist with the consultation process. If a highly technical issue is discussed with stakeholders, at least one of the present audit team members should possess relevant expertise. In addition, careful preparation will ensure that the consultation interviews truly benefit the assessment. A generic stakeholder interview questionnaire can be found below. It may be used and adapted by certification bodies to suit the respective audit and client.

When consulting with stakeholders, certification bodies should carefully assess all their inputs by asking themselves whether the raised issues and concerns have substantive standing and are relevant to the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*. The following answers are possible:

1. The issue/concern is substantive but is not relevant to any IRMA Standard requirements. In this case, it will be important to articulate the rationale for declaring the issue/concern 'not relevant' to demonstrate to stakeholders that they were heard and why their input was 'rejected'.
2. The issue/concern is substantive and is relevant to IRMA Standard requirements. The certification body needs to identify to which requirement(s) the concern applies and adequately reflect it in the assessment of the client.
3. The issue/concern does not have substantive standing, nor is it directly relevant to IRMA Standard requirements. The issue/concern may be a result of history, relationships, dissatisfaction with process, politics, etc. This is a difficult and delicate judgment to make, and should be considered very

carefully. The certification body should clearly and objectively articulate their rationale for ‘rejecting’ the issue/concern in the audit reports and should work to avoid appeals where feasible.

Generic stakeholder interview questionnaire

The questionnaire below is of generic nature. Certification bodies may use it as a template that they adapt to the specific stakeholder(s) that will be interviewed and/or to specific issues or concerns that have been raised and need further analysis and investigation. Phrases in italics are meant to help the audit team conduct the interview.

General information:

Name of person(s) interviewed:

Organization:

Stakeholder category: (personnel, non-governmental organization, governmental authority, academic, community, customer, etc.)

Date of Interview:

Mode of Interview: (in-person meeting, telephone, written (email, fax, mail))

Name of interviewer(s):

Name of other attendee(s) (if applicable): (labor union representative, etc.)

Name of translator and affiliation (if applicable):

Questions:

1. Introduction (Introduce self/organization; review proposed consultation process, including certification body role, purpose of consultation, what will be done with information provided, reminder of no attribution, etc. Ask if any questions about the process. Finally, point out that you will be taking notes and that they are for your own use and that of the audit team, to help when it comes to writing up the audit report and might be used to inform scoring decisions about the client during the assessment)
2. What is the nature of your (your organization’s) interest in the client (past, current, anticipated)?
3. What, if any, specific substantive issues or concerns do you have regarding the client? (First, solicit answers without prompting. If no specific issues or concerns or as an addition, walk through the key areas of the IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining and specifically request any issues and concerns on each)

4. For each issue of concern noted, do you have recommendations for how they can be addressed? (If so, what are they? If not, do you know of anyone else who does?)
5. For each issue of concern, what or who is (are) the best source(s) of data or evidence to support your (your organization's) position? (Explain that, ideally, sources should be documented information (reports, photos, videos, etc.). But recognize that anecdotal information, especially if a stakeholder is relating a direct experience, may not have any documentary support. In such cases, ask if there are others who can corroborate the information.)
6. Are there other sources of information or data that you know of, consistent or not with your position? (e.g. data others may be using to counter your position or to support a conflicting position?)
7. Who do you believe are the most credible experts regarding this client and regarding the issues important to you?
8. What other individuals or organizations are actively interested in this client or the issues of concern to you? Please name those in support of your position and those taking a different position.
9. What other individuals or organizations would you recommend that we consult in our efforts to get as much information as possible for the assessment of this client?
10. Would you like time to consult with others in your organization, or other like-minded organizations to ensure that we have the full input of your organization and its constituents or partners? (If so, how much time do you think you need, and can we schedule a follow-up meeting or call to discuss any additional input you would like to provide? If not, note the timeline, mechanism, and contact information for further input if something else comes up.)
11. Let me summarize the key points that I have understood you to make in this interview thus far. (Summarize the key points of the input received from this interview to check for accuracy and to demonstrate that you have been listening carefully.)
12. It would be extremely useful if you (your organization) could put your concerns in writing for consideration by the audit team. Would you (your organization) be willing to do this? If so, when can we expect to receive it (review the timeline and relevant milestones)? If not, do you feel confident that I have captured your input (based on the verbal summary above), or, if I summarize my notes in writing and send them to you, would you be willing to review them for completeness and accuracy?
13. As we document the input we receive from stakeholders, you may or may not wish to have us attribute issues or concerns to individual stakeholders or stakeholder groups. Do you have a preference one way or the other? (Urge openness and transparency.)
14. Briefly highlight key points of opportunity for stakeholder input and expected timing of the process.

15. Unless you prefer that we not do so, we will keep you informed of the ongoing process (and any changes in the assessment process). What is the best mechanism for providing you with this information (email, regular post, other)?
16. Do you have any questions? If any questions or additional concerns come to you after we have completed this interview, please contact us and let us know (again, review timeline and any deadlines).
17. If we have additional questions as the assessment process proceeds, may I contact you again with specific questions?
18. Thank you very much for your time and effort.

Source: Adapted from MSC (Fishery Process Annex GPX - Guidance to CABs on Stakeholder Consultation – Informative)

Annex G: Sample Audit Announcement (Informative)

Announcement of IRMA Mine Site Assessment

(Day, Month, 2019)

Today, name of the CB announces the commencement of a third-party independent assessment of the mine site name commodity(ies) mine against the [Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance \(IRMA\) Standard for Responsible Mining](#). The mine, located in name of country, is operated by name of operating company.

(Name of the CB) is an IRMA-approved certification body, and will be carrying out the assessment, which includes a desk audit (stage 1) and an onsite audit (stage 2).

Stakeholder Engagement

Interested stakeholders are encouraged to sign up to be notified as more information about the mine site name mine assessment becomes available (e.g., the timing of the stage 2 onsite visit).

Click here to add your name to the stakeholder notification list [Link here to an email address or online form, or IRMA's online form to collection stakeholder names for the mine site].

Mine site stakeholders are invited to submit comments to the certification body on the social and environmental performance of the mine site name mine (in particular, how the performance of the mine site compares with the IRMA [Standard for Responsible Mining](#)).

Stakeholders may also contact name of the CB if they are interested in being interviewed as part of the assessment process. Interviews with local stakeholders will be scheduled to take place during the dates of the stage 2 (onsite) portion of the audit. Interviews with non-local stakeholders may occur outside of that timeframe.

Stakeholder comments and expressions of interest in being interviewed as part of the audit process should be submitted directly to:

Name of certification body

Email address here

Mailing address here

Please forward this announcement, and feel free to contact name of the CB directly to provide names and contact information for other mine site stakeholders who may be interested in knowing about and participating in the mine site assessment process.

For more information on the IRMA mine site certification process, see:

<https://responsiblemining.net/what-we-do/certification/>. If you have concerns about the IRMA mine site assessment process, or the requirements in the IRMA Standard, you may access IRMA's Issues Resolution System on the IRMA website: <https://responsiblemining.net/>.

Annex H: IRMA Reference Number System (Informative)

There will be a unique identification code associated with every certificate/verification statement and letter of recognition issued by a CB. The numbers shall be assigned by CBs in the following manner:

IRMA	-STD	- XXX	- XXX	- X	- XXXXX
Identifies that this is an IRMA-system-related certificate, statement or letter.	Three letters to identify if the assessment was related to the IRMA Standard or the IRMA chain of custody. STD = Standard COC = Chain of Custody	Up to three letters to identify the Certification Body that carried out the assessment	Three numerals to identify the Certification Body. NOTE: This is assigned by IRMA). CBs should contact IRMA to receive their assigned code.	A letter to indicate if it is a certificate, statement or letter that is being issued. C = certificate V = Verified Statement L = Letter of Recognition	Five digits to identify the certificate, statement or letter issued. NOTE: This is assigned by the CB. Use zeroes (0) as placeholders, e.g., for certificate number 2, identify it as 00002.

Annex I: Sample Certificate, Verified Statement and Letter of Recognition Templates

Sample Certificate

MINE SITE NAME

Operating Company Name

Location (Address, Country, or just Country)



Certification Body Name certifies that the aforementioned mine site has been independently assessed and is fully compliant with, or has a timebound plan to fully meet, all relevant requirements in the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance’s **Standard for Responsible Mining(v.1.0)**

Period of Validity: **3 years**

Valid from: Date of Certificate Issuance to 3 years from the date of Certificate Issuance

IRMA Reference Number: IRMA--STD-XXX-XXX-X-XXXXX

Sample label. Contact IRMA Secretariat for final version.



MINING ASSURANCE
IRMA CERTIFIED 100

For more information regarding the scope of this certificate and the environmental and social performance of the certificate holder, please refer to the publicly accessible audit summary report located at: www.responsiblemining.net. This certificate remains property of CB Name and can be withdrawn for reasons mentioned in the contract or in cases of changes or deviations in mine site performance. Only an original and signed certificate is valid.

CB Logo HERE

CB Officer’s Signature

CB Officer’s Name

CB Name

CB Address

Sample Verification Statement



Sample label. Contact IRMA Secretariat for final version.

This verification statement documents that **Certification Body Name** has carried out an independent assessment of the **MINE NAME** against the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance’s *Standard for Responsible Mining* (v.1.0) and has verified that the mine has achieved a level of IRMA 50.



This means the mine has met, or has a timebound plan to fully meet, a set of critical requirements covering a range of environmental and social issues, and also that the mine has achieved a score of at least 50% out of 100% in each of the four principle areas of the IRMA Standard (i.e., Business Integrity, Planning for Positive Legacies, Social Responsibility and Environmental Responsibility).

The IRMA system supports a path towards improved environmental and social performance at industrial-scale mines.

Period of Validity: 3 years

Valid from: **Date of Statement Issuance to 3 years from the date of Issuance**

IRMA Reference Number: IRMA--STD-**XXX-XXX-X-XXXXX**

For more information regarding the scope of the assessment and the performance of the mine please refer to the publicly accessible audit summary report located at: www.responsiblemining.net. This verification statement remains property of **CB Name** and can be withdrawn for reasons mentioned in the contract or in cases of changes or deviations in mine site performance. Only an original and signed verification statement is valid.

CB Logo HERE

CB Officer’s Signature
CB Officer’s Name
CB Name
CB Address

Sample Letter of Recognition



Contact IRMA Secretariat for
version of Transparency
label.

This letter documents that **Certification Body Name** has carried out an independent assessment of the **MINE NAME** against the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance’s *Standard for Responsible Mining* (v.1.0).

No achievement level was reached, but **Certification Body Name** verifies that the mine obtained the following scores in the chapters that were assessed:

List the chapters with % after them.

IRMA recognizes that being transparent about a mine’s social and environmental performance is an important step in creating positive change in the mining industry, and the IRMA system the supports a path towards improved environmental and social performance at industrial-scale mines.

Period of Validity: 3 years

Valid from: **Date of Letter Issuance to 3 years from the date of Issuance**

IRMA Reference Number: **IRMA--STD-XXX-XXX-X-XXXXX**

For more information regarding the scope of the assessment and the performance of the mine please refer to the publicly accessible audit summary report located at: www.responsiblemining.net. This letter of recognition remains property of **CB Name** and can be withdrawn for reasons mentioned in the contract or in cases of changes or deviations in mine site performance. Only an original and signed letter of recognition is valid.

CB Logo HERE

CB Officer’s Signature

CB Officer’s Name
CB Name
CB Address

Annex J: Waiver related to audit schedule/timeline (Informative)

This is to acknowledge that we _____ (company name) were provided with the results of Stage 1 of the _____ (mine site name) audit conducted by _____ (name of Certification Body) and understand the concerns raised by the auditors. We were made aware by our auditors that unresolved concerns from Stage 1 of the audit may have an adverse impact on the duration and outcome of the assessment, and choose to continue with scheduling Stage 2 of the audit for _____ (audit dates) despite the concerns raised.

_____ Date

_____ Signature

_____ Title