

The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) and The Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) sign an agreement to promote collaborative approaches between large-scale and artisanal and small-scale mining.

Promoting the win-win coexistence of large-scale and artisanal and small-scale mining

Who are IRMA and ARM?

The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA), envisions a world where the mining industry respects the human rights and aspirations of affected communities; provides safe, healthy and supportive workplaces; minimizes harm to the environment, and leaves positive legacies. Founded in 2006, IRMA offers objective, independent third-party verification of industrial-scale mine sites against a comprehensive definition of responsible mining agreed to through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process. This definition, which forms the basis of IRMA's Standard for Responsible Mining, covers the full range of issues related to the impacts of mining.

The Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM), a global NGO supporting the artisanal and small-scale mining sector (ASM), was created in 2004. ARM is a leader in ASM standards and certification, with the Fairmined Standard and the CRAFT Code (developed with RESOLVE). With its Sustainable Mines Program, ARM offers miners and markets a progressive improvement path to become part of a transformation of the ASM sector into a socially and environmentally responsible activity, while improving the quality of life of miners, their families and communities.

Why work together?

Together, **artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) and large-scale mining (LSM)** (and thus IRMA's and ARM's respective standards) **can produce a positive outcome in the long-term sustainability of communities**, workers and landscapes. Given mineral products from both sectors flow into industries as wide-ranging as electronics, cars, jewelry, building materials, energy, and many others, leading purchasers and consumer-facing retailers procure raw materials originating from both LSM and ASM.

Through this agreement, signed in 2020, IRMA and ARM want to provide consistency and clarity for those sourcing from responsible ASM and LSM, and to maximize the potential contribution of the mining industry to sustainable development. Both organizations will focus on the following lines of work:

- 1. STANDARDS.** To utilize the substantial knowledge, expertise and gained insights of both organizations in their respective fields to inform the continuous development and application of ARM's and IRMA's standards and certification systems, serving the needs of ASM and LSM stakeholders.

2. **MARKET FOR RESPONSIBLY-PRODUCED MINERALS.** To ensure investors and purchasers seeking more consistent responsibility standards can satisfy their sourcing needs through ARM's and IRMA's initiatives, promoting a just balance of sourcing from ASM and LSM.
3. **ASM and LSM COEXISTENCE.** To promote the win-win, sustainable coexistence relationship between LSM and ASM, with the aim to facilitate the formalization of the ASM and to improve the social, environmental practices and labor practices of all miners.

A challenging adventure with opportunities for both mining sub-sectors

IRMA and ARM realize that the ASM-LSM interface has been a challenging area in the past. Through their work together, these organizations seek to reduce harm and provide **more positive impacts in the livelihoods of communities and miners, including artisanal miners**, through their respective work and pilot projects together.

Both organizations acknowledge the importance of including LSM and ASM in equitable terms in policies and supply chains, while recognizing the differentiated potential of both segments of the mining sector for sustainable development.

Between them, the multi-stakeholder standards and certifications governed by ARM and IRMA represent the most comprehensive certification options for purchasers, covering the full range of issues relevant to the mining sector, and promoting best practice for progressive improvement.

ASM and LSM - Ground Rules for Collaboration

Over the last 20 years, many countries have granted mining concessions to medium- or large-scale mining companies, individuals or junior prospectors (usually foreigners) without considering the presence of traditional ASM in these areas. This situation has led to serious conflicts and competition for mining resources. In some territories contractual rights of legal companies are opposed to the customary rights of rural communities and there is impact to the economic and social rights (e.g., right to work) of people in these traditional territories.

As a result, there has been a significant increase in the use of mining coexistence agreements and the actual possibility of developing ASM in titled areas. As such, it is necessary to identify the practices and lessons learnt from their implementation to mitigate the aforementioned conflicts between mining titleholders and ASM miners.

IRMA has devoted a specific Chapter (3.6) of their standard to Artisanal Mining and ARM is including recommendations on ASM-LSM collaboration in the new version of the Fairmined Standard.

“ASM continues to play an important role in many economies and holds the potential to provide decent livelihoods for millions of people when done responsibly. At IRMA, we are pleased to be collaborating closely with ARM, working together to promote market value for

environmental and social responsibility in both the LSM and ASM sectors,” said Aimee Boulanger, Executive Director of IRMA.

“The legitimacy of ASM existing at or near large mining titles is increasingly difficult to question, and all best practice guidance promotes collaborative win-win agreements that can benefit both community miners and the conventional mining company. With the IRMA and ARM agreement we want to strengthen this message and provide a practical framework for such collaborations through our standards,” says Marcin Piersiak, the Executive Director of ARM.

ARM has developed **a set of basic principles and guidelines that may guide the relationship between the above parties:**

[Principles of Peaceful Coexistence between Mining Titleholders and ASM Miners](#)

[Public Position Summary](#)

[Full Public Position](#)

Contacts

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