

# What is IRMA?

September 2021

## IRMA Community Toolkit

**IRMA**  Initiative for Responsible  
Mining Assurance

## What is IRMA?



- IRMA is a coalition of NGOs, affected communities, purchasers, investors, mining companies, and labor unions. Each sector has equal voice in IRMA governance.
- IRMA is a high-bar standard to drive responsible mining, defined through the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*
- IRMA is a global organization managing IRMA standards and the system for independent third-party audits against those standards



# The IRMA Community Toolkit

This is one of multiple modules in the IRMA community toolkit created to help you better understand IRMA and how it can be utilized to serve directly impacted communities.

Access materials introducing IRMA and covering other topics at <https://responsiblemining.net/>.

Leave feedback, suggest new tools and materials, or request a presentation for your community at [info@responsiblemining.net](mailto:info@responsiblemining.net).

## What is the IRMA Standard for **Responsible Mining?**



The IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining is the world's most comprehensive and rigorous definition of best practices for industrial scale mining and is a higher bar than any country's laws.

# What is “responsible mining?”

*You may be skeptical of the term “responsible mining.” What does IRMA mean by this?*

- Many communities live near mines. Responsible mining respects the rights of affected communities, protects the environment, and upholds the rights of workers.
- Responsible mining provides access to information on environmental and social impacts.
- The IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining defines “responsible mining” through over 400 requirements, enabling a holistic view of a mine that brings performance on all requirements to light.
  - Requirements include community engagement; transparency and access to information; protection of water, air, indigenous rights, biodiversity, human rights, cultural resources, worker rights, community health and safety; and many others.

# The IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining

Comprehensive coverage of mining issues in 26 chapters under four principles

## Business Integrity

- Legal compliance
- Stakeholder engagement
- Stakeholder grievance mechanism
- Human rights due diligence
- Revenue transparency / anti-corruption

## Social Responsibility

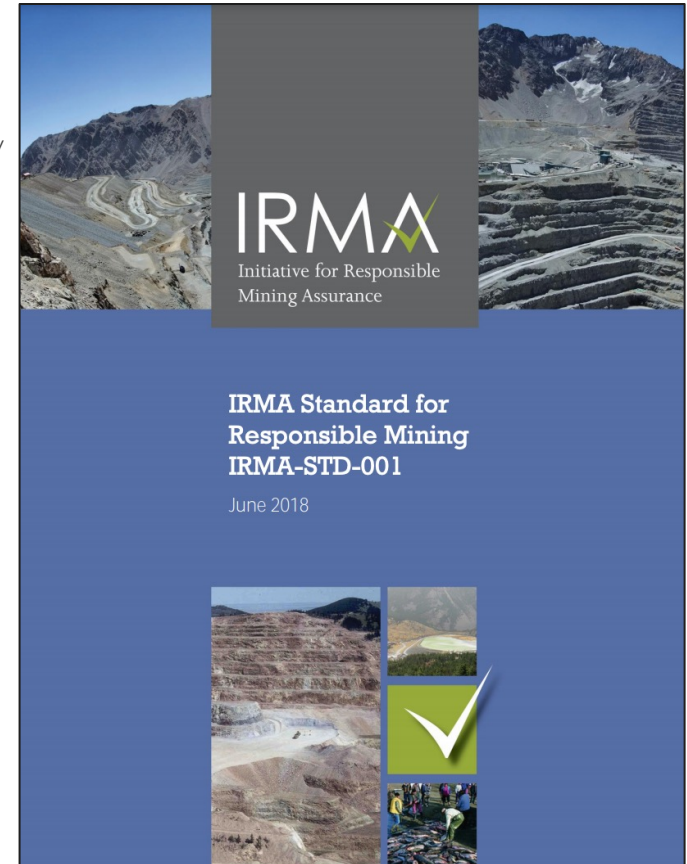
- Labor rights
- Worker health & safety
- Community health and safety
- Conflict affected areas
- Security arrangements
- Cultural heritage protection
- Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM)

## Planning for Positive Legacies

- Environmental and social impact assessment and management
- Free, Prior and Informed Consent
- Community support and benefits
- Resettlement
- Emergency preparedness and response
- Planning and financing reclamation and closure

## Environmental Responsibility

- Water management
- Water (tailings) management
- Air quality
- Greenhouse gases emissions
- Noise management
- Biodiversity, ecosystem services, protected areas
- Cyanide management
- Mercury management



## What is an IRMA audit?



IRMA audits are robust, independent third-party assessments against the IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining.

- Audits are **publicly announced** in advance; stakeholders invited to provide input into the verification
- Audits include **desk review and an on-site visit**
- Audits include input from workers, communities, other stakeholders

Audit reports are made public at no cost and contain over 100 pages of **detailed information** (scores and an explanation each rating)—important information for communities and others working for improved mine performance.

Access reports at:

<https://responsiblemining.net/what-we-do/certification/mines-under-assessment/>.



# How does IRMA prevent “greenwashing?”

The IRMA system prevents greenwashing through:

- ✓ publicly noticed, independent third-party audits conducted by IRMA-approved Certification Bodies
- ✓ open access to detailed audit reports at the mine site level
- ✓ the most rigorous set of requirements for responsible mining available
- ✓ an Issue Resolution System to address complaints
- ✓ driving progressive improvement in environmental and social performance

IRMA audits are an opportunity to gain access to information and a platform to improve environmental and social performance of mine sites.

# What makes IRMA different from other mining standards and audits?

1

## Applicability

A comprehensive standard covering over 400 requirements—the full range of social and environmental impacts of industrial-scale mining, all geographies and all mined materials

2

## Transparency

Public notice of audits before they begin, so any stakeholder may participate; public release of detailed audit reports; IRMA's Issue Resolution System to address complaints

3

## Equity

Equitable multi-stakeholder governance, by community, NGO, labor, mining, purchasing, and finance sectors; engagement of diverse stakeholders in each audit

4

## Credibility

Gained through setting best practice requirements and measuring against them through independent third-party verification

# How can communities use IRMA?

Use IRMA to increase access to information, transparency, accountability and improved laws / regulations

- Ask mines/mining companies to undergo an IRMA audit
- Encourage purchasers/investors to use IRMA as a comprehensive best practice measure
- Use as a template to inform improvements in laws / regulations
- Use in support of community groups and complement other strategies for improving social and environmental responsibility and improving trust in communications between mining companies and civil society groups

## Become an IRMA member

- NGOs, community groups, and unions can become IRMA members at **no cost**, and help to inform changes to the IRMA Standard and system through participation in working groups

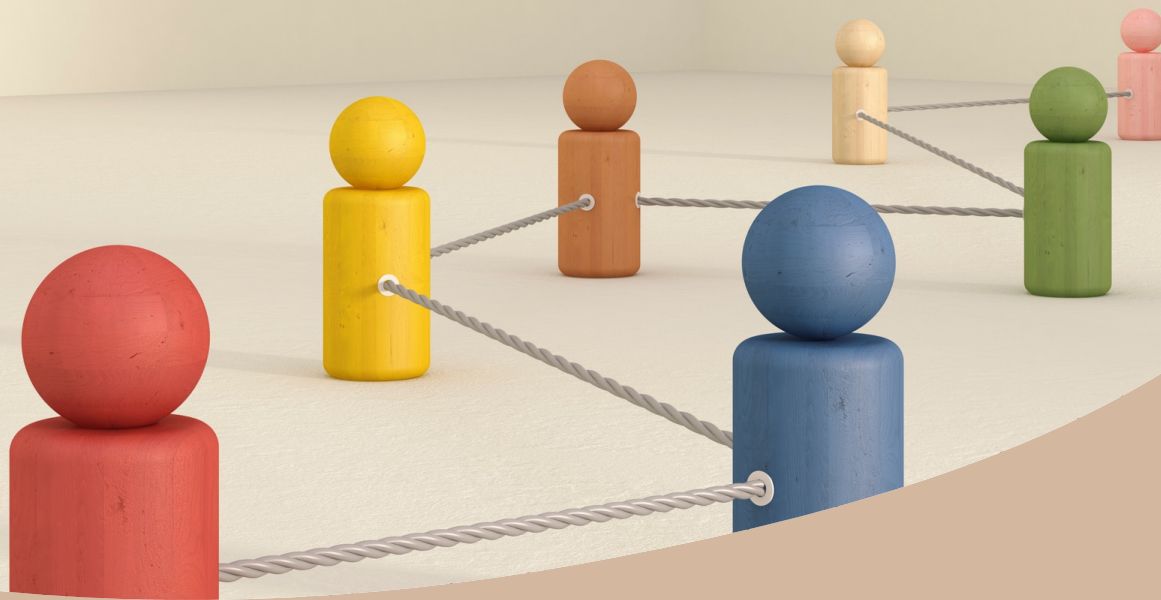
# What do other community groups say about IRMA?

Several segments in civil society have referred to IRMA as the type of standard they wish to see adopted by the mining sector.

In March 2020, the Sierra Club issued its first mining policy, stating that “where mining is necessary, it must be compliant with high-bar environmental and human rights standards such as IRMA’s Standard for Responsible Mining.”

In September 2020, OKT Law Firm, a team of lawyers dedicated to advocating for Indigenous communities in Canada, noted “IRMA’s standards are a pioneering example of how best to address environmental and social issues in mining.”

In July 2021, the Save Odzi Network Trust, a community-based organization in Zimbabwe, stated “there are a number of benefits associated with IRMA, that community-based organizations can benefit from” as the IRMA Standard “promotes access to information and public participation in the extractive sector.”



Contact us

[info@responsiblemining.net](mailto:info@responsiblemining.net)

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