IRMA Overview

Mining is a complex and intensive process that causes environmental and social change no matter where it occurs. The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) envisions a world in which the mining industry respects human rights and the aspirations of affected communities; provides safe, healthy and respectful workplaces; avoids or minimizes harm to the environment; and leaves positive legacies.

Founded in 2006 by a coalition of nongovernmental organizations, affected communities, mining companies, trade unions, and businesses using minerals and metals in their products, IRMA has developed a set of standards and a third-party independent verification system to measure social and environmental performance at mine sites.

In June 2018, following two global public consultation periods on earlier drafts, IRMA released the Standard for Responsible Mining. The IRMA Mining Standard is a comprehensive document with 26 chapters covering issues under the broad categories of business integrity, planning for positive legacies, and social and environmental responsibility.

In late 2019 and early 2020, IRMA-approved independent auditors carried out the first assessments of mines against the IRMA Mining Standard.

Terms of Reference

IRMA is seeking to add consulting support of an individual with expertise in industrial-scale mining, awareness of the impacts and harm associated with mining, understanding of the challenges and barriers for mining companies to improve practices, and sensitivity to the concerns of directly affected communities and mine workers. Fundamental in IRMA’s work is accountability to diverse stakeholders and particular service to those most directly, and at times disproportionately, impacted.

With this position, specifically, we seek to connect with mining companies with these intentions: 1) to share with mining companies the opportunity and specific ways to use the IRMA system as a tool/strategy to improve social and environmental performance, 2) to connect value (financial and reputational) with improved practices, 3) to provide to mining companies interested in IRMA information and insights on how/why to engage, 4) to ensure that IRMA’s programs are informed by the challenges faced by mining companies and are accountable and responsive to mining companies who want to improve practices without
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changing IRMA’s fundamental commitment of accountability to civil society as well, 5) to connect mining companies with other stakeholders, encouraging multistakeholder collaboration to support shared solutions (including affected communities, labor unions, NGOs, purchasers, investors, governments, academics, media and others), and 6) other program work based on the expertise of the consultant.

IRMA’s program includes a range of projects such as testing the application of the IRMA Standard in particular geographic regions and materials, developing materials and adaptations to make the Standard more accessible to a wide range of stakeholders, and expanding the application and principles in the IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining to other stages of the minerals and metals supply chain.

IRMA recently initiated a process to revise the Standard for Responsible Mining, active outreach to mining companies to seek input is a priority.

IRMA’s Assurance Program (auditing of mine performance) is already evolving based on experiences and lessons learned from the first independent, third-party assessments and the global COVID-19 pandemic (which has presented challenges to the implementation of voluntary audits and certification). Over the coming year, IRMA is also updating its auditing/assessment procedures and systems, where needed, to reflect new learnings and ensure that the system is fair and credible to all IRMA stakeholders. Also, IRMA will be developing more detailed and robust training materials to provide added confidence that IRMA’s certification bodies are able to carry out their work to a high standard now and in the future.

The public notice of audits so that community members are offered opportunity to engage and understand the value/logistics to do so is a core tenet in IRMA. Just as IRMA works to support mining companies to engage in independent review against the IRMA Standard, IRMA also seeks to support and train community-based groups and NGOs to improve the IRMA Standard, engage in the audit process, and inform IRMA’s multistakeholder governance.

A priority for 2022-23 is to engage more mining companies actively preparing for independent audit, creating value for their engagement, improving IRMA systems to increase efficiency and service to mining companies engaging, and revising programs/expectations based on the feedback of mining companies using the system without compromising the quality and confidence of all stakeholders. In 2022, we will develop and host a series of training sessions to educate, receive feedback and encourage engagement with the mining sector (both mining companies and their expert consultants).

Scope of Work

Specifically, IRMA is seeking an individual to assist the Executive Director and other staff. Responsibilities will include:

— Communicating with mining companies to share how the IRMA Mining Standard and system can be used to increase environmental and social
responsibility, and how this creates multiple types of value for mining companies

— Provide support to mining companies in their effort to understand how the IRMA Standard supports their internal efforts to improve practices, increase transparency on performance (areas of challenge as well as areas of strength), better meet expectations of civil society and labor unions to improve relationships and reduce conflict, and increase access to markets

— Introduce mining companies to IRMA tools supporting engagement in the process, including the self-assessment tool, trainings for mining staff using the tools, confidentiality, auditing, and continuing improvement over time

— Coordinate the development of materials for mining companies for better outreach and engagement; host presentations and trainings for mining companies using these tools and improving based on feedback

— Work with Senior Policy Advisor, Director of Standards and Assurance and Executive Director to develop and host a training series to share the perspectives and materials described above for mining companies and industry consultants

— Consider ways the requirements in the IRMA Standard can be improved to better clarify expectations, to simplify requirements/metrics wherever possible, and create pathways for improvement, and effective ways to drive that improvement; work with Director of Standards and Assurance to recommend associated updates/improvements to the IRMA Standard that support mining company engagement and use

— Work with Director of Standards and Assurance to identify ways to improve the audit process and the structure/content of audit reports to make them meaningful for mining company improvement and also useful for needs of affected communities, labor unions, NGOs, investors and purchasers

— Assist senior staff in translating/connecting the concerns of mining affected communities, labor unions and NGOs to mining companies engaged in IRMA and beyond

— Public speaking in webinars, one-on-one meetings, in-person conferences (as public health limits allow) describing IRMA’s programs, and addressing the concerns/interests of mining companies as they engage in multistakeholder opportunities in IRMA and beyond

— Other work as appropriate, opportune and of interest to consultant and IRMA staff

Qualifications
It is desired that this consultant will have these attributes and expertise:

— Experience working in the mining and extractive industries
— Knowledge of mining-related standards, laws, regulations and policies
— Experience in standards development and/or work with certification systems and understanding of voluntary initiatives like IRMA as one tool to drive positive change
— Experience with applying the IRMA Standard at mine sites a bonus
— Comfort with public speaking, delivering presentations
— Proficiency in English (additional languages appreciated)
— Comfort using technology (email, Zoom, Word processing, PowerPoint; training provided to support consultant if needed)

Scope of work

The position will start as a part-time expert consultant contract position, averaging 10-20 hours per week, targeted to begin in mid-2022 (depending on available start timing of selected consultant) with the potential for extension of the contract and expansion of hours if mutually agreeable to consultant and IRMA and as funding supports. Consultant and IRMA Executive Director will schedule regular check-in meetings to evaluate how the work is progressing and make improvements as needed.

The IRMA staff and consultant team are globally based. IRMA is a global organization, and there are no restrictions on geographic location for this position.

At this time, COVID-related health restrictions continue to influence international travel, so the consultant will not be asked to travel during this initial contract phase unless unique opportunities arise and consultant is comfortable with the safety and timing. Once public health allows, if the contract is extended, this is a position that will involve some travel. Resuming travel will be decided across the organization with caution to protect consultant, staff and the wellbeing of communities and colleagues with whom we work. As travel resumes, all related travel costs will be covered.

Remuneration

This position will be compensated as a part-time temporary contract position to start, with opportunity to evaluate terms at key points during the contract. We envision this is approximately 20 hours/week average (appropriately flexed for more/less each week as needed to balance IRMA needs and the consultant’s outside responsibilities). Terms will be reevaluated in six months as the overall position is considered for changes to improve its service to the goals intended. Consultant may take unpaid leave during this period, and is encouraged to plan ahead and remain in close communication with IRMA Executive Director on timing.
to ensure that work is covered during times away. There is a high likelihood this position could be extended, based on the learnings in this first phase, and the consultant’s insights as well as IRMA learning will inform these next steps forward.

To apply

Submit cover letter, resume or CV, by 15 June 2022 and the names and emails of two or more references to Kristen Vissers and Aimee Boulanger at: kvissers@responsiblemining.net and aboulanger@responsiblemining.net.