

How IRMA Benefits Governments and Policymakers

Incentivizing Responsible Supply Chains While Enhancing Trade Competitiveness

The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) seeks to be a collaborative partner with governments. We view government actors, from intergovernmental bodies to tribal governments and national and subnational government bodies, as key partners in accomplishing IRMA's mission and vision for responsible mining. As a voluntary initiative, IRMA complements, but can never replace, the important role of governments to create and implement robust laws and regulations.

Governments, policymakers, and advocates use the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*, based on over a decade of global multi-stakeholder dialogue, as **a benchmark for internationally recognized best practices** and the IRMA system as an avenue to **provide market recognition for responsible actors**. Governments and policymakers increasingly work with IRMA to incentivize responsible supply chains and enhance trade competitiveness.

About IRMA

IRMA is a voluntary international standard and site-level third-party assurance system for industrial-scale mining. Trust in IRMA is based on **equal governance** of the standard and system by mining companies, affected communities and Indigenous rights holders, labor, non-governmental organizations, investors, and purchasing companies.

The ***IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*** is a best-practice standard providing holistic coverage of all key issues for industrial-scale mining, informed by over a decade of robust global multi-stakeholder dialogue. The ***IRMA Chain of Custody Standard for Responsibly Mined Materials*** provides requirements for tracking IRMA-audited materials from the mine site to the end user, linking market value to IRMA-audited material and recycled content.

IRMA's Mission

Our mission is to protect people and the environment directly affected by mining. We do this by creating financial value for mines independently verified to achieve best practices and share this value with the businesses that purchase material from these mines.

IRMA's Vision

We envision 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.

10 Key Benefits of IRMA for Governments and Policymakers

1. Market support for compliance with domestic legal frameworks, protecting environmental and social values alongside economic value. Out of over 420 requirements in the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*, the first requirement is to comply with the domestic legal framework. Sites undergo independent third-party assessment and reporting against this and all other applicable requirements in the IRMA Standard, providing added market support to protect environmental and social values alongside economic value.

2. An indication of national commitment to responsible mining practices that can attract investment. Engagement in IRMA can send a strong market signal of national commitment to responsible mining practices when supported by government actions to promote and implement the best practices described in the IRMA Standards and system. Governments can point to mine sites in their country that have engaged in independent third-party IRMA audits, and in some cases even an entire sector or type of mineral in their country covered by IRMA audits. This may have a positive impact on attracting investments in the mining sector.

3. Enhanced revenue and beneficial ownership transparency. IRMA requires companies to publish payments made to host governments and to support the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Companies are also required to disclose material terms of agreements with government entities as well as beneficial ownership of the operating company. These terms help ensure that governments can access all benefits due to them.

4. A roadmap for industrial-scale mines of all sizes. The *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining* and related guidance serve as a roadmap for industrial-scale mines of all sizes to implement best international practices at the mine site level. This IRMA Standard is a useful roadmap for private and publicly-listed companies, state-owned enterprises, and joint ventures of all types.

5. A tool for reducing conflict and increasing access to environmental and social information at the mine site level. Requirements for companies to engage with stakeholders and rights holders and share independently verified site-level environmental and social data can build trust, reduce conflict, and support mitigating negative impacts of industrial-scale mining while optimizing socio-economic development benefits.

6. Amplify benefits at the mine site level. Company contributions to community development and benefit sharing include planning with input from local stakeholders and rights holders, including government, promoting opportunities to amplify benefits at the mine site level while aligning with other local development planning efforts.

7. A benchmark to improve national law and policy and align with international frameworks. Governments, policymakers, and advocates use the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining* to develop, evaluate, and improve legislation. Integrating the best practices in this IRMA Standard into national strategies, policies, and legal frameworks can support alignment with the wide range of international frameworks referenced in the Standard and may support alignment with regional frameworks and strategic visions.

8. A tool to incentivize mines to meet stakeholder and market expectations. The IRMA Standards and system are responsive to the expectations of affected communities, labor unions, and civil society, and may also enhance the positioning of a jurisdiction to investors and purchasers as a hub for responsibly mined materials.

9. A measurement of mining indicators. Governments can use conformance with IRMA Standards as a key metric in national mining indicators.

10. A source for training and capacity-building. The IRMA Secretariat offers trainings for governments and other sectors on the wide range of topics addressed in IRMA Standards. Contact the IRMA Secretariat at info@responsiblemining.net to request a training today!

Government References to IRMA

In 2025 the International Energy Agency (IEA) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published *The Role of Traceability in Critical Mineral Supply Chains*, stating, **“Some chain of custody standards, such as those by the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance ... go beyond traceability by integrating performance requirements that ensure responsible practices at the mine or processor of origin. The reliability of this information is crucial, with growing attention on these initiatives’ governance systems, oversight models, and approaches to information and external accountability.”**

“Mining done right.” – Britain’s Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Pete Vowles, after a 2025 visit to Anglo American’s IRMA 75 achieving Unki Mine, the first mining operation in Africa to be independently audited against the IRMA Standard.

The 2025 publication *Voluntary Sustainability Standards and Mineral Sector Governance: Synergies and Practices* by Levin Sources, commissioned by the German Organisation for International Cooperation (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development states that, **“[V]oluntary standards can engage in partnerships with governments and a range of stakeholders and rightsholders to improve responsible practices in the mining sector. IRMA’s engagement in Indonesia revolves around this concept.”** The report repeatedly highlights that IRMA stands apart from other voluntary standards in how it actively engages with and informs government authorities, before, during, and after audits. The report uses IRMA’s interaction with Indonesian authorities as a case study.

The 2024 British Columbia Assembly of First Nations resolution *Support for the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) Mining Standard* states, **“Be it resolved that: The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly endorse the IRMA Mining Standard and call on the government of British Columbia to support and adopt the IRMA mining standard, ensuring that it includes the right of free, prior and informed consent to our traditional and unceded territories, respecting the territorial boundaries that we confirm through working together Nation to Nation.”**

The 2024 British Columbia First Nations Energy and Mining Council (FNEMC) *BC First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy* states, **“First Nations, in their sole and absolute discretion, may require all mineral projects, including critical minerals projects, be assessed and audited by the world’s leading mining standard created by the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (“IRMA”). The IRMA audit process is transparent, independent, and voluntary.”**

In 2024, Chile’s Ministry of Mining and Chilean Copper Commission published *Levantamiento de Iniciativas ESG en la Minería*. The report describes IRMA audits, stating, **“The results of the audits provide credible information to buyers, satisfying civil society’s desire to know whether a mining company is taking steps to reduce potential harm and making continuous improvements. ... This rigorous approach, along with the fact that the standard was developed over 10 years in consultation with 100 companies and organizations, covering all minerals (except fuels), distinguishes IRMA from other standards in several key ways, including applicability, transparency, fairness, and credibility.”**

In 2023, Chile's *National Lithium Strategy* listed IRMA as **a reference framework for stakeholder relations in mining to support the government's strategic milestone to "initiate a dialogue and participation process across diverse actors that includes representatives of communities and Indigenous Peoples, regional governments, academia, productive companies, civil society, as well as the central government and other public bodies."**

In 2023, the UN Working Group on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises published *The Extractive Sector, Just Transition and Human Rights*. **The report highlights three examples of responsible mining practices, including only one voluntary mining standard: IRMA.**

In 2023, the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy published *Resilience for the Future: the UK's Critical Minerals Strategy*, listing IRMA as a **globally recognized framework which could contribute to "role model standards for sustainable development of resources in the UK" and "protect the interests of communities and our natural environment."**

The European Union Batteries Regulation (2023) noted that **"A number of voluntary efforts from actors in the battery supply chain are already in place in order to encourage adherence to sustainable sourcing practices, including the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance ..."** The regulation goes on to say, *"However, it is not certain that voluntary efforts to set up due diligence schemes will ensure that all economic operators placing batteries in the Union market abide by the same set of minimum rules,"* aligning with IRMA's position that voluntary standards complement, but do not replace, the important role of governments and rule of law.

Euractiv interviewed Philippe Varin, commissioned by the French Ministries of Ecological Transition and Industry to produce a 2022 report on securing energy transition minerals for French industry. In stressing that **"mines should be responsible by complying with the 'clearest and most binding standards possible,' he included "the standard proposed by the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance, comprising environmental impacts, workers' health, respect for human rights, and financial transparency in the mining sector."**

In 2022, Germany's Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) published *Sustainability Standard Systems for Mineral Resources: A Comparative Overview*. **The report gave IRMA the most high-level ratings compared to other standard systems, noting that "IRMA [has] a stronger focus on social aspects which might be also a result of the strong multi-stakeholder approach."**

Re-Sourcing, a three-year project funded by the European Commission, highlighted IRMA as one of four good practices cases in the mobility sector. Their 2022 report *Responsible Procurement of Minerals Using a Strong Standard* featured **unique elements which make IRMA a strong standard and noted how companies can use IRMA to assess supply chains.**

The 2021 European Parliament *Resolution on a European Strategy for Critical Raw Materials* **"welcomes the EU's commitment to responsible and sustainable sourcing and encourages the Commission to take the Standard for Responsible Mining Developed by the Initiative for**

Responsible Mining Assurance as a starting point, ... stressing the need to mobilise more state and private actors to also subscribe to and implement sustainability standards.”

Sustainable Management in Extractive Industries (SUMEX), a three-year project funded by the European Commission, released a 2021 report describing sustainability considerations for European extractive industries, with a focus on carbon neutrality and circular economy. The report noted, ***“the project suggests one common standard to describe what responsible extraction should mean in the EU and suggests to use the IRMA Standard to describe the criteria that a responsible extractive operation should fulfill today.”***

In 2021, The White House published *Building Resilient Supply Chains, Revitalizing American Manufacturing, and Fostering Broad-Based Growth*. In the report, ***the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Defense reference the IRMA Standard as a roadmap for best practices in mining, saying “IRMA may provide a method for U.S. companies and the Federal Government to ensure that minerals are being sourced from mines with robust environmental, social, and financial responsibility policies, and also could provide a model for responsible development of additional mines in the United States.”***

On behalf of the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, the University of Technology Sydney Institute for Sustainable Futures and the University of Melbourne published the 2020 study, *Certification and LCA of Australian Battery Materials – Drivers and Options*, assessing the merits of voluntary schemes in efforts to demonstrate Australian materials are produced in accordance with best practices. The report states, ***“Several interviewees noted the advantages of the IRMA scheme. These included that they considered the IRMA [assessment] process to be ‘most thorough’ and ‘best standard and process,’ and ‘the most comprehensive of existing schemes.’ One noted that the ‘standard is very high, in terms of social and environmental impacts; integrity really shows.’”*** The report called IRMA ***“a no-regrets approach.”***

Use of IRMA Standards as a Benchmark to Improve Legal Frameworks

Both State and Non-State actors use IRMA Standards as a benchmark to assess and improve legal frameworks. Examples of how IRMA Standards have been used in this way include:

- * The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned the project “Regional Cooperation for the Sustainable Management of Mineral Resources in the Andean Region” (MinSus) implemented by GIZ. MinSus compared Chilean and Peruvian mining regulations to the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining* in their 2024 report *Estudio Comparativo Entre la Normativa Chilena y Peruana con los Requerimientos Auditados por el Estándar de Minería Responsable IRMA*. The Spanish language report concludes ***“the IRMA Standard audit is an opportunity to improve mining processes, strengthening socio-environmental and governance management.”***
- * In 2023, the Indonesian civil society organization Aksi Ekologi & Emansipasi Rakyat (AEER) conducted an assessment of Indonesian legislation on a range of topics compared to related requirements in the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*. Topics included requirements for economic and social

development, environmental impact assessment, wages, air, and water. The outcomes of the assessment are published in the AEER Report *Halmahera Dilemma in the Midst of Nickel Industry*.

- * In 2022, the law firm Olthius Kleer Townshend LLP (OKT) published *Raising the Stakes – A Comparative Review of Canadian Mining Laws and Responsible Mining Standards*. The report conducts a comprehensive review of mining laws of five Canadian jurisdictions: British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, against requirements in the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*.
- * In 2022, Indonesia's Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources conducted an internal assessment of the alignment of Indonesia's legal framework for the mining sector compared to the *IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining*. An overview of the unpublished assessment results was discussed in a September 2023 government-hosted public forum *Introducing the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IMRA) to Indonesian Mining Companies* held in Jakarta.
- * In 2019 BC Mining Law Reform issued a series of reports summarizing recommendations to improve British Columbia's mining regulatory landscape. *Waste Disposal and Management: BC Mining Law Reform* recommends adopting IRMA waste management standards. *Water Protection: BC Mining Law Reform* recommends the adoption of IRMA water management standards, including consultation with communities and stakeholders on critical water-related issues, with third-party reviews. BC Mining Law Reform's *A Plan of Action for Change: Summary Recommendations* propose IRMA standards as a baseline for reclamation, water management, and waste and materials management. In 2022, *Bridging the Gap: Towards Best International Standards on Mine Waste Safety in British Columbia* states that "Relevant best practices and international standards include ... the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) Standard for Responsible Mining." The 2022 report conducts a comprehensive assessment of BC legislation against IRMA and other best practices and international standards.

IRMA is Here to Help

Want to learn more about IRMA and opportunities to engage? We offer free, confidential meetings to share more information about IRMA's standards, audits, programs, tools, and value to you. Reach out to IRMA at info@responsiblemining.net to request an introductory meeting.

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