



IGF

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM
on Mining, Minerals, Metals and
Sustainable Development

GENDER IN MINING GOVERNANCE: OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLICY-MAKERS

INTRODUCTION

Mining operations change societies in multifaceted ways, transforming people's livelihoods, ways of life, cultural traits, political systems, community structures, and power dynamics. These changes have different impacts on men and women. As in the world more generally, women represent half of the population in mine-hosting communities. Many are employed either formally or informally in the sector or its auxiliary sectors. However, in many countries mining laws and regulations neither fully mainstream the principle of gender equality nor acknowledge women as active participants in the sector. Accordingly, legislative frameworks often fail to include measures to promote women's participation in the formal mining workforce. They also fail to eliminate health hazards and risks associated with gender-based violence (GBV) that women in the informal workforce and mine-hosting communities face. Similarly, women's roles and rights as community members go unnoticed within the frameworks regulating environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs), environmental management guidelines,

or impact benefit agreements. This often results in women receiving only a minimal share of the benefits of the mining sector while being disproportionately affected by its environmental, social, economic, and cultural impacts. Governments need to act proactively to remedy gender inequalities exacerbated by the sector and implement mining policy frameworks that ensure the empowerment of women, girls, and others that are negatively impacted by mining operations. This publication is part of efforts aimed at optimizing the mining sector's contributions to poverty reduction, inclusive growth, social development, and environmental stewardship by showcasing key policy options that can help guide governments to take action to promote gender equality in the sector.

Since 2018, the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) has been partnering with the Environmental Governance Programme (EGP), which is implemented jointly by the United Nations Development Programme and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency to promote gender equality in the mining sector. As a part of this partnership, IGF analyzed the literature on gender



and mining governance with a focus on large-scale mining (LSM). The result of this partnership is the document [*Gender in Mining Governance: An Annotated Bibliography for Large-Scale Mining*](#), which provides a practical resource for governments, researchers, industry practitioners, civil society organizations, and the development community to locate and use existing data and resources. Also, as a part of this partnership, IGF and EGP have [developed a massive open online course \(MOOC\) on gender and mining governance](#). The MOOC's four themes promote many good practices, including supporting skill/knowledge development for women and girls in mining-related subjects to adopting policies that support women's equal representation in the sector's labour force. The first launch of the MOOC in 2020 reached 1,390 participants from 90 countries.

Based on these efforts, the following are policy options for governments to ensure their mining frameworks support the social and economic advancement of women while minimizing risks and negative impacts of mining operations in their countries. Governments can undertake a regulatory role to make sure that mining-related policy frameworks support gender equality—and they can be active agents driving change by investing in gender equality in the mining sector. Governments can also use this document to support their commitments to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 5 – Gender Equality.

You can access the IGF's publications on gender in mining [online](#).

LEGISLATION

1) Include human rights standards in national laws. There are many human rights frameworks, but the following ones are most applicable in the design of mining governance frameworks: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; and the SDGs.

2) Ensure that mining codes and laws do not discriminate against women and are inclusive of everyone. Governments are advised to establish human rights-based and gender-responsive policy and regulatory frameworks integrating gender equality and non-discrimination as core principles in all steps of mining activities, from exploration to post-closure. To this end, a recommended first step is to uncover gender roles, gendered division of labour, and main discrimination patterns via a gender analysis¹ that maps out the potential and ongoing impacts of mining operations on women in communities while outlining the barriers against women's equal participation into the mining labour force. Accordingly, policies related to licencing and supervision of mining contracts as well as those related to labour standards should be revised from a gender lens.

¹ For a sample methodology to see gender analysis in action see Canada's GBA+. <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acs/index-en.html>



3) Create national action plans that address gender equality in the mining sector.

In countries where the mining sector is a significant driver of the economy, specific action plans can be developed that target gender equality and women's empowerment in the mining sector. This way, actions needed to eliminate barriers and discrimination against women's equal participation in the mining sector can be properly reflected in national laws, regulations, policies, and procedures so as to mainstream gender equality at a legislative level. When and if a country already has an action plan to achieve a sustainable mining sector (or is preparing one), another good strategy could be to fully integrate targets, activities, and indicators on gender equality and women's economic and social empowerment in such plans. Alternatively, the mining sector can be dealt as a stand-alone chapter in gender equality national action plans. Independent of the strategy, governments are advised to make sure that women's voices are heard and included via meaningful participation of women's mining organizations, women's groups, and women practitioners during the preparation of the national action plans focusing on gender equality in the mining sector. Such plans need gender-responsive indicators to grasp the positive changes for women employed in the sector and for women residing in mine-hosting communities. National action plans—either specific to gender equality and mining governance or with a broader context—need to commit a specific budget and allocate human resources for their implementation. They also need to include monitoring and evaluation frameworks involving women's organizations as active agents.



4) Ensure that impact is tracked and analyzed.

Governments are advised to establish an ombudsperson or team dedicated to monitoring gender concerns in the sector and mainstreaming gender issues in mining frameworks and policies. It is advisable that this office or team possess sufficient decision-making authority to ensure their work leads to meaningful outcomes. Being located within the ministry responsible for natural resource development may result in optimal change. Alternatively, memoranda of understanding with ministries or public authorities tasked with gender equality and women's empowerment could be efficient tools to tap into existing know-how in such organizations.



5) Utilize tax incentives. Governments may consider creating tax incentives for mining companies that apply for gender-responsive programs. Those measures that can be promoted through tax incentives could include, for example, working with local women-owned businesses throughout their supply chains, providing technical training to women in host communities, sponsoring science, technology, engineering, and math education for women and girls, and providing an equitable work environment such as daycare facilities, sex-segregated and safe changing rooms and nursing rooms at mining sites, counselling services for employees surviving domestic violence, and easy-to-access complaint mechanisms for sexual harassment at work. Similarly, governments can support setting up specialized women's banks and provide incentives for women mine owners, entrepreneurs, and local suppliers, which could include tax and duties incentives to encourage property ownership so women can fulfill collateral requirements.

6) Collect, track, and analyze gender-disaggregated data. Governments and mining companies' ability to make informed decisions is greatly impaired when gender-disaggregated data is not available. This data is needed at corporate and community levels, and its collection, monitoring, and analysis should be embedded into company and state policies and procedures. As also stipulated in the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative standards](#), governments are advised to require, during licencing processes or through mining codes, that companies collect gender-disaggregated data on occupational outlook (i.e., number of women employed in technical and auxiliary positions, number of women in senior-level positions, number of women in decision-making bodies) and community involvement (i.e., number of women participating in consultation processes, number of women benefiting from

community development programs, number of local female suppliers) be collected, disclosed, and analyzed in a systematic manner. In addition, collecting gender-disaggregated data during a mining project's impact assessment phase will enable mining companies to uncover gender relationships and specific barriers against gender equality prior to project development.

STRONGER INSTITUTIONS

7) Invest in institutional capacities on gender equality and mining governance.

Governments are advised to invest in raising the awareness and increasing the knowledge of the staff working in mining ministries and affiliated institutions on gender equality and mining governance. Gender and GBV sensitization trainings are advised to be implemented at broader scales involving local and national staff. Governments can secure support from civil society organizations, ministries of women/gender equality, and international organizations to strengthen their technical capacities in these areas. When such knowledge is accumulated, governments can support companies or local governments in designing and managing gender-sensitive consultation and community outreach programs, and in designing community social programs targeting social and economic empowerment of local women.

8) Recruit, retain, and promote women in mining-related positions. Governments are advised to recruit more women in mining ministries and affiliated ministries. Recruitment requires support with active mentoring and career support that can help women gain access to decision-making positions because increasing the representation of women in public mining-related positions will set an example for the industry.



LAND ACQUISITION

9) Compensate fairly for land lost to mining. Most of the time, mining operations require land acquisition. Governments are advised to develop standards to equally compensate men and women for land lost to mining. Often, when compensation is awarded, it is granted to male heads of households who commonly hold land tenure. Given the significant role women play in food security, this gendered compensation process leaves women, particularly widows, divorcees, and abandoned women, extremely vulnerable. Governments are advised to ensure land compensation criteria provide women with sustainable livelihoods and the ability to sustain their customs and traditions. This includes spiritual bonding with land and environment, an important aspect of Indigenous women's lives. When there are government-endorsed committees negotiating land acquisition and resettlement decisions, governments need to ensure both gender parity in group composition and measures for women's meaningful participation.

10) Consult women on land sales. Men tend to sell land for short-term financial gains, whereas women often focus on the long-term benefits of land ownership, such as the livelihoods of future generations. In addition, men are more likely to ignore the loss of subsistence crops or other critical resources attached to land in the face of imminent cash income. Standards and legislation dealing with fair compensation should include requirements to consult women in land sale decision making to ensure they benefit equally from the sale.

11) Protect collective rights. Collective rights are those that are held by a group rather than an individual. They have typically been a focus for Indigenous peoples and other

groups whose rights are threatened and include many rights, including the right to speak one's native language to the right to cultural preservation. Collective rights that are typically critical in the mining context are the rights of Indigenous and local people to land and natural resources that are not owned individually but used/owned by community members or lands held by family groupings within communities. Women's unequal representation within bodies and structures that are in charge of negotiation with mining companies or governments put them in a disadvantageous position because they lack control over—and in some cases access to—resources that are critical to their livelihoods as well as their spiritual and physical well-being. It is therefore advised that relevant legislation ensures collective rights are not violated during the land acquisition process for mining development since collective rights safeguard women's interests. Such measures could include quotas for women in negotiation structures or compulsory consultations with community women before any decisions are made regarding collective resources.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

12) Integrate gender into the impact assessment process. The introduction of a mining operation near a community can result in series of economic, social, and environmental changes that transform societies. It is also important to note how these impacts affect men and women differently, from not benefiting from the financial gains of resettlement requests to increased risk of exposure to GBV. It is crucial to ensure changes do not exacerbate gender inequality and discrimination but instead support women in reaping the benefits and opportunities the sector can provide. Accordingly, national and provincial/



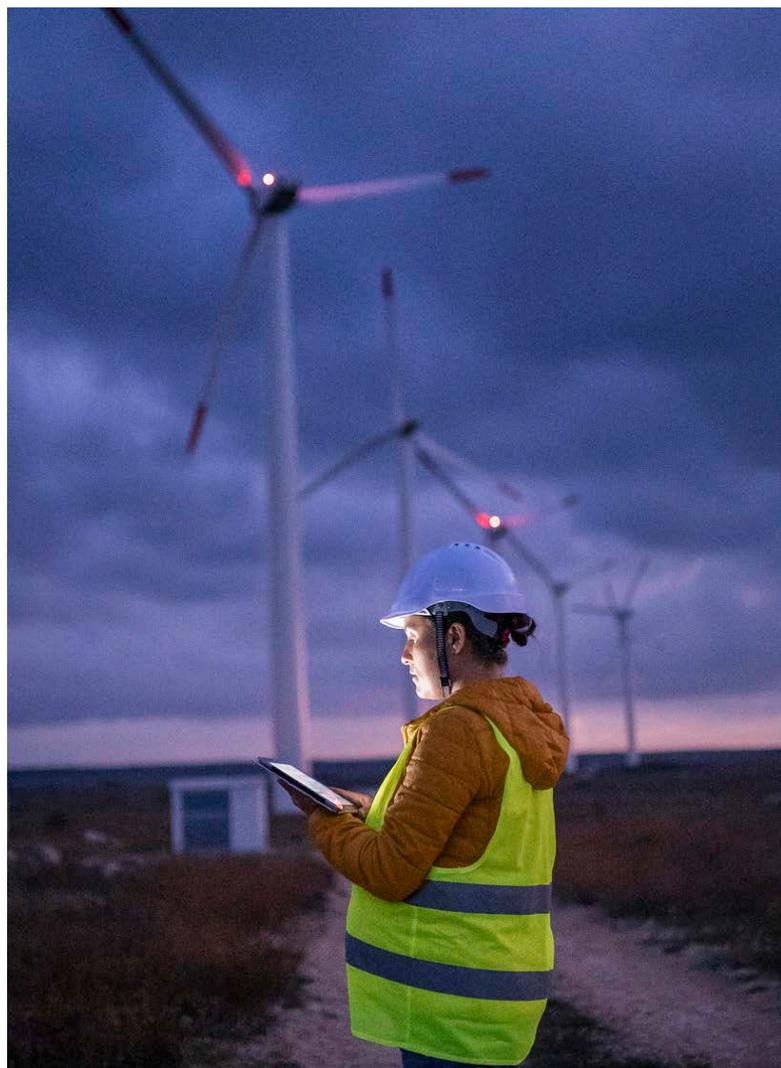
state ESIA regulations and legislation should identify how mining operations' impact on gender roles and relationships will be assessed and analyzed. A thorough gender-mapping process includes an intersectional lens and sheds light on how different groups (women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minorities, Indigenous women, etc.) will be affected by mining projects. As a strategy, governments can promote stand-alone gender impact assessments (GIAs) or an integrated approach to include gender into the ESIA or human rights impacts assessment processes.

13) Create inclusive community consultation criteria for mining companies. As a part of the licencing process, clear standards for consultation must be provided to mining companies outlining the need to consult with men and women equally on mining projects. With communities dealing with poverty, illiteracy, and women's lack of access to education, it is important to encourage mining companies to take meaningful measures to ensure women fully understand the scope of the project, what is being proposed, and potential consequences.

14) Establish gender-inclusive monitoring. Governments are advised to conduct regular audits evaluating the degree and effectiveness of gender equality integration in budgets, infrastructure, policies, and procedures of mining operations. These audits can follow up on measures presented in GIAs or ESIA's. It is critical for governments to ensure that gender equality targets and indicators are meaningfully integrated into mining companies' monitoring frameworks, allowing women's organizations and women community members to conduct independent or joint monitoring.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

15) Strengthen community oversight of mining projects. Governments are advised to encourage community and participatory monitoring of mining projects, such as testing water samples or monitoring changes in biodiversity. Community monitoring will improve legitimacy in processes and results, reduce community tensions, and bolster women's confidence about the environmental and health-related information being provided. Similarly, community members should promote equal representation of women and other sub-groups, and their environmental and social concerns must be included in the scope of oversight.





16) Support women organizations, entrepreneurs, and leaders. Governments are advised to invest, promote, and support private sector investment in local and grassroots women's organizations in host communities that train women in leadership and representation roles that foster women's empowerment and engagement in decision-making processes. It is also advised that governments support financial and administrative independence as well as accountability and transparency of these organizations. In addition, governments can foster women entrepreneurs by simplifying the formation process of mining cooperatives and associations and by providing accessible guidance through mineral agency offices, websites, and social media.

17) Use taxes to support women's programs. There is a need for governments to move away from relying on companies' voluntary social responsibility programs to investing in women's empowerment programs, including but not limited to health, access to education and skills, care work (including subsidized care), services to prevent and protect from GBV, and access to finance.

18) Create a community fund for women's resources. Governments are advised to ensure that a fund is created to invest in the host communities. It is advised that the management of the fund include community members or representatives, with women having joint decision-making abilities on how finances are disbursed. Funds spent on charitable organizations, institutions and initiatives that help women optimize their benefits from mining activity can have positive and lasting benefits.

19) Host awareness campaigns. Governments are advised to target entrenched gender inequalities existing within many mine-hosting communities

to ensure that mining operations do not deepen these inequalities. Accordingly, governments are advised to work with community and religious leaders, women's groups, and local administrations to organize awareness-raising campaigns targeting women, men, and youth in mining-affected communities. Such campaigns could include women's empowerment workshops or GBV-prevention talks with men and boys.

20) Invest in women's careers. In order to boost women's participation in the mining labour force and to support their quest for equal pay and career advances in both LSM and artisanal and small-scale mining, governments are advised to invest in skills building and empowerment for women. Some critical training opportunities related to technical skills are: mining operations, including geological data, field geology and gemmology, sieving, and equipment usage; acquiring mineral rights; marketing; networking; knowledge of financial systems and standards requirements; and leadership and business skills.

21) Promote gender equality in supply chains. Local content policies are tools through which companies ensure that mining operations give back to local economic and social development and help companies reach their national development goals. These policies can focus on increasing direct employment, local procurement, linkages into non-mining sectors, domestic processing of mined products, or national expertise in the sector. They provide long-term and sustainable opportunities for the members of local communities who are willing to be a part of the mining supply chains. However, globally, women are often excluded from these local supply chains mostly due to entrenched gender inequalities that limit their access to resources, including land, equipment, and finances. Governments are advised to



explicitly address this form of discrimination in any local content policies and make sure that local content laws are sensitive to the plight of women as a marginalized segment of society. Some measures that could bolster women's access to local content policies could be, amongst others, quotas or support programs targeting women entrepreneurs.

WOMEN'S SAFETY AND SECURITY

22) Protect women's safety. To ensure better coordination between mining companies, law enforcement, first responders, and other GBV service providers, governments can enforce/encourage mining companies to include GBV as part of their grievance redress mechanisms and to develop GBV action and response plans in consultation with service providers. These action plans should be in line with the standard operating procedures and existing referral pathways of the state institutions and must safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of complainants.

23) Invest in women's safety. Governments are advised to map the quality and capacity of GBV service providers in host communities to determine where safety and security gaps exist. It is also important to ensure these women-focused services are properly funded. For example, funding can be used for counselling, women's shelters, or rehabilitation programs during all phases of the mine life cycle.

24) Investigate allegations thoroughly. Mining and related activities that potentially jeopardize the safety and security of women and girls must be investigated with speed, transparency, and efficiency. This includes investigating all reports related to human rights violations on mine sites or host communities.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

25) Ensure gender-responsive emergency preparedness plans and crisis response programs. Crises and disasters have different impacts on women, girls, boys, and men. People have different risk levels based on many identity factors including age, gender, disability, ethnicity, Indigenous status, or others which may factor in their vulnerability in the face of crises. As once again proven during the current COVID-19 pandemic, globally, natural disasters (and their subsequent impacts) affect women more severely, and when crisis responses are gender neutral, women bear the brunt. Governments are advised to ensure that emergency preparedness plans in the mining sector take into account such gendered differences and offer gender-responsive communication and support plans.

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