



# ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF MINING ON GENDER EQUALITY CONSULTATION BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the impacts of mining go beyond environmental and health impacts to also touch the social, economic, and cultural fabric where mining takes place. The introduction of a mining operation near a community can result in dynamic and multifaceted changes that transform people's livelihoods, ways of life, cultural traits, political systems, community structures, and power dynamics. 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 gender-based violence. It is crucial to ensure changes do not further gender inequality and discrimination but rather support women in reaping the benefits and opportunities the sector can provide.

The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) has outlined various policy tools or programmatic approaches governments and companies can use to assess and respond to the gendered impacts of mining as part of their two-week global consultation process on the Goxi platform ([goxi.org](http://goxi.org)) in September 2020. The following list of tools and approaches is not exhaustive and is meant to help facilitate dialogue during the September global consultations. You can read more on this topic in future IGF reports.

## INTEGRATING GENDER INTO THE ESIA PROCESS

Most countries have included environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) in their legislative frameworks. However, these assessments have traditionally not included a gender-based analysis, focusing instead on the physical environment, such as air, water, and land (Clow, n.d.), and broad stakeholder engagement. Recently, some governments and international organizations have created approaches to address this gap and account for the gendered impacts of mining. Below are a few examples of these tools and approaches.

### **The Government of Canada's Gender-Based Analysis Plus**

The Government of Canada introduced the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) analytical tool to assess how women, men, and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs, and initiatives differently (Status of Women Canada, 2016). The GBA+ approach



seeks to move beyond solely analyzing gender and/or sex in assessments to emphasizing the need for and impact of intersectional issues. The tool analyzes intersecting contexts such as age, education, ethnicity, race, religion, income, culture, and other characteristics (Status of Women Canada, 2017)). GBA+ is a comprehensive analytical tool that can be integrated into ESIA for improved gender mainstreaming or can be performed as a stand-alone exercise, similar to gender impact assessments (GIAs), to complement ESIA.

## **The Netherlands' Framework Integrating Gender in Environmental Assessments**

Similarly, the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA, 2017) has devised a framework illustrating how the various stages of an environmental assessment process offer occasions for integrating gender into the analyses. This approach includes identifying key gender issues during the scoping phase and then indicating the need for gender-specific and sex-segregated data collection and gender expertise within the Terms of Reference. Accordingly, gender is integrated into baseline data collection through the collection of gender-specific (work in and out of the household, time use, and decision-making) and sex-segregated socioeconomic data. The approach also focuses on the meaningful participation of women in the public consultation stages of ESIA development. Based on the qualitative and quantitative data, the ESIA, mitigation measures, and the monitoring and evaluation framework are expected to be inclusive of gender-specific strategies and actions.

## **UNDP's Guidelines on Integrating Health and Gender into ESIA in Sub-Saharan Africa**

While not specific to mining, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2017) published guidelines on how to integrate HIV and gender-related issues into the ESIA process in eastern and southern Africa, in association with the African Development Bank. The guideline focuses on health issues and drivers associated with project activities and provides clear sets of questions to be answered for each step of the ESIA that focus on gender, health, and well-being.

## **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

A GIA is a policy tool used to assess policy proposals or projects “to detect and assess its differential impact or effects on women and men, so that these imbalances can be redressed before the proposal is endorsed” (Esposito & Daaji, 2019). GIAs help ensure the rights of women and men are equally respected throughout the project design and implementation. GIAs require an assessment of the different social, economic, and cultural dynamics between women, men, girls, and boys in affected communities. This includes the division of labour, access to and control over resources, gender relationships, and social and cultural norms. Plans may then incorporate strategies to promote women’s empowerment (Hill et al., 2017). GIAs stand out among other means of impact assessment, as they provide a systematic, gender-specific, and context-driven tool that is beneficial to all stakeholders.



A GIA can be conducted as a stand-alone exercise or part of the ESIA, and it can be undertaken at any point during the mine life cycle. While there are many resources and practical tools for the use of GIAs in a wide array of contexts, these tools necessitate an accurate baseline study to evaluate the gendered impacts of policies and to emphasize the importance of crafting effective gender-focused remedies. Accordingly, a well-planned GIA can be integrated into the baseline studies undertaken at the exploration and/or planning stages and can therefore be reflected in all phases of the project implementation. Similarly, the literature suggests that gender and other identity factors are best accounted for early in the project process, at the point of conceptualization, to help anticipate potential impacts and better integrate gender and other identity factors into project design and implementation (Peletz & Hanna, 2019).

### **Oxfam's Guide to GIA for the Extractive Industries**

Oxfam's 2017 update and expansion of *A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment for the Extractive Industries* emphasizes collecting data on power imbalances between men and women based on their access to and control over resources, gender division of labour at the household and community levels, and the strategic and practical needs of women. The guide outlines crucial foundational principles and approaches to GIAs and "provides a framework for companies to identify, understand and respond to the gender impacts of an extractive industry project" (Hill et al., 2017, p. 3).

### **The World Bank's Rapid Assessment Toolkit**

The World Bank Group's *Rapid Assessment Toolkit* (Eftimie, 2012) offers an approach for "understanding men's and women's differentiated access to the resources and opportunities associated with artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) and how they are affected by ASM." The toolkit situates the gender dimension in ASM under three main pillars: roles and responsibilities, access and control, and impact and benefits. The toolkit offers a set of impact analysis questions to cross-analyze how these gender dimensions affect women and communities throughout five main value-chain components of ASM: prospecting and exploration, mining, processing, goods and services, and marketing of minerals. The main purpose of this tool is to support policy-makers and decision-makers in their understanding of the gendered nature of ASM and to promote the development of gender-responsive policies in ASM.

### **The European Institute for Gender Equality's Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit**

Although not specific to the mining sector, one of the most well-known tools for conducting a GIA is the *Gender Impact Assessment: Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit* developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (2016) within the European Union. The aim of this toolkit is to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into legislation, policies, and programs in a five-step approach.



## HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND DUE DILIGENCE

The UN *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* is a set of universal standards that solicit the private sector's commitment to and good practices for respecting human rights and preventing the infringement of these rights during their operations (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011). Human rights impact assessments (HRIAs) and due diligence are two interlinked processes that enable companies to demonstrate that they know, understand, and commit to these standards and are apt to meet their responsibility to respect human rights.

Meeting this responsibility requires that companies adopt a human rights policy and carry out human rights due diligence as stipulated in the UN *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (Business for Social Responsibility, 2013). According to the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC, 2019, p. 2), "before initiating any new exploration project and before progressing to the next stage of exploration on an existing project, explorers should conduct project due diligence." Accordingly, project due diligence is defined as a risk management process designed to facilitate a company's decision to proceed with a project or not, and, if it does, how to ensure that the social, economic, and environmental risks of the project are envisaged and mitigated at the outset.

The key elements of human rights due diligence are:

- Assessing the actual and potential human rights impacts of a company's operations and business relationships (including through HRIAs)
- Integrating and acting upon the findings in HRIAs
- Monitoring the performance
- Communicating the results.

### The Danish Institute for Human Rights Guidelines

The Danish Institute of Human Rights (2016) defines HRIA as "a process for identifying, understanding, assessing and addressing the adverse effects of the business project or activities on the human rights enjoyment of impacted rights-holders such as workers and community members." HRIA draws on internationally recognized human rights standards and principles and deploys them as the benchmark for the impact assessment.

The institute developed a guideline for extractive industries to showcase how gender can effectively be accounted for through six selected dimensions of the human rights due diligence process: (1) community relations; (2) land acquisition and resettlement; (3) security; (4) local content; (5) grievance resolution; and (6) strategic social investment (Danish Institute of Human Rights, 2019). For each topic, a short overview of key gender issues is provided, as well as strategies for addressing challenges and enhancing gender-responsive due diligence in practice.



## TAKEAWAYS

These are just a few of the many tools and approaches policy-makers and mining companies can use to integrate gender into ESAs and further sustainable development in the sector. Independently of the policy tool and approach taken, some fundamental principles should apply during the process. Below is a short list of some of these key principles that need to be taken into account while assessing the gendered impacts of mining.

1. Integrating gender into impact assessments in meaningful ways is a crucial first step in maximizing the benefits of the mining industry for women while minimizing its negative impacts.
2. Although gender analysis can be undertaken any time in the project life cycle, the exploration and planning phases are the most critical, as acting early can help integrate gender into baseline studies and management plans.
3. Approaching gender analysis in an intersectional way is crucial to fostering gender equality in mining. Analyzing gender roles and relationships in the context of cultural, historical, social, and environmental circumstances is needed. This involves moving away from strictly a traditional “men versus women” approach and instead opting to analyze the diversity within and across categories, including race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic class, sexuality, education, disability, and others (Walker et al., 2019).
4. Implementing gender-based assessments can lead to transforming gender roles and relationships that are fundamental pillars of the local social context. While the goal is to contribute to gender equality and support and empower women, these efforts can, at times, inadvertently aggravate gender inequalities. To mitigate this challenge, analysis should be dynamic and supported by continuous monitoring and updating.
5. The impact assessment should be followed by an action plan and acted upon. The action plan should clearly lay down the responsibilities of different actors (including different departments, units, and positions), should include concrete activities and indicators, and ideally should be complemented with a budget and a monitoring plan. This action plan should be publicly available to ensure transparency, accountability, and political commitment. These actions should be recorded in relevant project planning and management documents.

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