English version

MINING and the SDGs

a 2020 status update

Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment
A JOINT CENTER OF COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL AND THE EARTH INSTITUTE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Responsible Mining Foundation

About RMF

The Responsible Mining Foundation (RMF) is an independent research organisation that encourages continuous improvement in responsible extractive value chains, by developing tools and frameworks, sharing public-interest research results and data, and enabling informed and constructive engagement between companies and other stakeholders.

The Foundation supports the principle that responsible extractive value chains should benefit the economies, improve the lives of peoples and respect the environments of producing countries, while also benefiting companies in a fair and viable way.

The Foundation's work and research reflect what society at large can reasonably expect from extractive sector companies on economic, environmental, social and governance matters.

As an independent foundation, RMF does not accept funding or other contributions from the extractive industry.

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About CCSI

The Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI) is a joint center of the Columbia Law School and the Earth Institute at Columbia University. It is the only applied research center and university forum dedicated to the study, practice and exchange on sustainable international investment. Its mission is to develop practical approaches for governments, investors, communities and other stakeholders to maximize the benefits of international investment for sustainable development.

CCSI integrates legal, economic and policy expertise, and approaches sustainable investment holistically, bridging investment law, natural resource management, human rights, economics, political economy, and environmental management. We conduct rigorous research, provide policy analysis and advisory services, offer educational programs, develop tools and resources, and foster multi-stakeholder dialogue and knowledge sharing among policymakers, development advocates, scholars, business leaders, and community stakeholders. We work to strengthen the sustainable development potential of international investment, and to ensure that international investment is mutually beneficial for investors and the citizens of recipient countries.

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Executive Summary

Background

The mining industry, through its extensive activities and prominent presence in developing countries, has strong linkages with issues covered in all 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These linkages are clearly set out in the 2016 Mapping Mining to the Sustainable Development Goals: An Atlas, produced by the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the World Economic Forum. The Atlas illustrates how mining can positively influence achievement of the SDGs by fostering broad-based economic development and providing minerals essential to technologies, infrastructure, energy and agriculture, while also highlighting the ways in which mining has contributed to many of the challenges that the SDGs aim to address, such as human rights violations, social inequalities, environmental degradation and corruption.

Status update on mining company action on the SDGs

With just ten years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by the target date of 2030 and four years after the publication of the Atlas, this report provides a status update of what large-scale mining companies are currently doing to integrate the SDGs into their business strategies and to take proactive measures that will help deliver these Goals. It is also a reminder of the opportunities that the mining industry has to positively influence achievement of the SDGs, and simultaneously a caution on the inherent risks that mining activities pose that might impede the achievement of the SDGs. This influence that the mining industry can bring to bear is all the more important given the serious implications of the Covid-19 on progress to achieve the SDGs.

Mining company action on the SDGs: why does it matter?

Given its importance to the economies of many developing countries, and the direct proximity of many of its activities to people and natural environments, the mining industry has a major role to play in contributing to realisation of the SDGs. As development partners to many countries, mining companies have an opportunity and responsibility to show how they are mainstreaming these Goals into how they do business. At the same time, mining operations present potential risks (including those that are inherent or unintentional) to attainment of the SDGs. Companies can demonstrate good corporate citizenship through systematic action to avoid and mitigate their negative impacts on people, economies and the planet, and through leverage of their transformative potential to catalyse sustainable development.

In doing so, companies can build trust in the industry as a force for good and show respect for society at large by working to help address the global challenges encapsulated by the Goals. Truly SDG-proactive companies can show themselves as local and global players ready to share responsibility for the three key elements of the SDGs – people, planet and prosperity. Focusing on this triple bottom line requires thinking long-term, beyond the 2030 target date of the SDGs, to ensure thriving economies, a good quality of life for all and healthy environments for future generations.

The business case for action on the SDGs is strong and well-recognised. Mining companies that effectively embed the SDGs into their core operations and strategies will ultimately strengthen their ability to meet the challenges of the future. Demonstrating real action to advance progress on the SDGs will enable companies to build trust (among all stakeholders, including investors and financiers, producing country governments and populations), limit risk (including operational, reputational, financial and regulatory risks) and show respect for the peoples and countries impacted by mining activities.

As such, the SDGs do not represent an additional set of requirements or norms for companies to follow. Rather, the SDGs provide a framework through which companies can demonstrate, via their integration and reporting activities, that they are managing the full range of mining-related economic, environmental, social and governance issues in a responsible manner.

Mining company action on the SDGs: what is happening?

The findings on the extent of company action on the SDGs are based on the results of the RMI Report 2020 by the Responsible Mining Foundation. The RMI Report 2020 assesses the policies, practices and mine-site-level actions of 38 geographically dispersed large-scale mining companies, which together account for around 28 per cent of the global value of mining production. The results from this sample show that:

Integrating and reporting on the SDGs

- *There are a few frontrunners in integrating the SDGs.* A few companies stand out as performing relatively better than their peers (in the sample of 38 mining companies) on integrating the SDGs into business strategy. However, the vast majority of the companies show no evidence of integrating the Goals into their business strategy or corporate governance.

- *Prioritisation of SDGs is often superficial.* Prioritisation most often consists simply of mapping SDGs to ESG issues that have been prioritised in earlier materiality analyses. Prioritisation of SDGs based on consideration of the company's potential positive and negative impacts, as is widely recommended, is rare.

- *Much of the reporting on the SDGs appears 'cosmetic'.* Much of the SDG reporting comprises, for example, a mapping of the SDGs to GRI indicators, or an insertion of SDG logos with no narrative explanations.

- *Reporting on SDG actions is generally very selective.* Reporting is most often focused on particular locations and initiatives to show companies' positive actions on particular SDGs. In the few cases where negative impacts are mentioned, they usually refer to potential industry-level impacts rather than the impacts caused by the company itself. Only a small minority of companies report on progress against the indicators or targets that they have set to track their performance.

Putting in place SDG-supportive measures

- *Examples of strong performance are evident.* Good practices are seen among numerous companies on some SDG-supportive measures, showing models that other companies can follow. The sample of 38 mining companies shows relatively widespread action on SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

- *Systematic actions across the 17 SDGs are largely lacking.* Overall results are weak and no one company is showing comprehensive actions to address all 17 SDGs.

- *Action is weakest on four Goals.* There is very little evidence of action on SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water).

- *Strong mismatches are seen.* There are striking disconnects between the extent of measures on particular SDGs and the prioritisation of those SDGs by mining companies. For example, SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) are both among the most frequently prioritised SDGs, but show some of the weakest levels of action by mining companies.

Conclusions and recommendations

It is heartening to see many companies showing attention to the SDGs to some degree, given the developmental context within which so much mining takes place. And we know that many companies are working on many mining-related economic, environmental, social and governance issues that connect directly to the SDGs.

Integrating and reporting on the SDGs, however, is still not the norm, though good practices are seen among a few companies. The results of this status update suggest that most mining companies still have considerable room for improvement in taking these strategic steps towards fulfilling their considerable potential to help deliver the SDGs.

Frameworks to guide company action include: Mapping Mining to the Sustainable Development Goals: An Atlas, containing guidance and good practice examples; the RMI Framework 2020, presenting a comprehensive SDG-linked framework; and the RMI Report 2020, including learning tools that companies can use to steer their continuous improvement efforts on developing and implementing responsible, SDG-supportive policies and practices.

The SDGs offer a particular mirror for the developmental and transformative role that companies can play in the areas around their mine sites and in the countries where they operate. With this in mind, companies are encouraged to consider the following practical steps that can help demonstrate their commitment to, and action on the SDGs and on responsible mining and sustainable development in general:

1. Demonstrate responsible mining as the business model
2. Raise the status of sustainability in the hierarchy - bring sustainability into the C-suite for stronger governance, accountability and signalling
3. Resource sustainability departments – with enough people, resources and influence at both the corporate and operational level to enable momentum across the organisation
4. Show courageous leadership and attract aspirational talent
5. Integrate the SDGs into existing work on economic, environmental, social and governance issues
6. Leverage the SDG targets to set ambitious, progressive and measurable targets for SDG action
7. Apply SDG-supportive practices consistently across the company and across operations
8. Disclose public interest data points on SDG-linked activities
9. Use the momentum of the SDG Decade of Action to enable transformative change for society, for future generations, and for the mining industry

1 Introduction

1 Introduction

Background

In July 2016, the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and the World Economic Forum published Mapping Mining to the Sustainable Development Goals: An Atlas, as a response to the 2015 global adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the accompanying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Achieving the Agenda by 2030 necessitates unprecedented action and collaboration among stakeholders in all sectors to effectively integrate the SDGs into their business and operations, and to work collectively towards sustainable development. The Atlas serves as an introduction for mining stakeholders to recognise the ample linkages between the mining sector and the SDGs, and seeks to encourage mining companies of all sizes to incorporate more SDGs, while validating current efforts and sparking innovative steps forward.

The Atlas illustrates how mining can positively influence the achievement of the SDGs, by fostering broad-based economic development and by providing minerals essential to technologies, infrastructure, energy and agriculture. The Atlas does so while also highlighting the ways in which mining has contributed to many of the challenges that the SDGs aim to address, such as human rights violations, social inequalities, environmental degradation and corruption.

Within the four years of witnessing the response to the Atlas report, there are many triumphs to be celebrated, for instance, the multiplication of more ambitious water-use efficiency and GHG reduction targets by mining companies and associated implementation plans. However, there are also urgent concerns that require addressing, as evidenced by persistent incidents of, for example, social disruption and conflict, fatal workplace accidents and major pollution spills.

Efforts by large-scale mining companies to address economic, environmental, social and governance issues are regularly tracked and reported on by the Responsible Mining Foundation (RMI), including in the Foundation's biennial RMI Reports. As these comprehensive assessments cover all 17 SDGs, they provide an indication of the extent to which large-scale mining companies are putting in place measures to help deliver these global Goals.

Report scope and objectives

As we enter the SDG Decade of Action, this report draws on the results of the RMI Report 2020 (an assessment of the policies, practices and mine-site-level actions of 38 geographically dispersed large-scale mining companies) to provide a status update on how mining companies are currently:

- developing opportunities to contribute to the SDGs;
- avoiding and mitigating their risks of impeding achievement of the SDGs;
- integrating and prioritising the SDGs within their corporate strategies; and
- reporting on their positive contributions to, and negative impacts on, the SDGs.

In doing so, the report seeks to:

- bring renewed attention to the interlinkages between mining and the SDGs;
- provide an overview, for investors and other stakeholders, of the potential opportunities and risks the mining industry presents to achievement of the SDGs;
- lay out the realities of how mining companies are addressing the SDGs, including identifying major gaps and missed opportunities; and
- propose practical steps companies can take to improve their contributions to the SDGs and their impact reporting, highlighting examples of good practice.

Mining and the SDGs: a societal and business imperative

The mining industry has a major role to play in contributing to achievement of the SDGs and mining companies have an opportunity and responsibility to show how they are mainstreaming these Goals into their business practices. At the same time, mining operations present potential risks (including those that are inherent or unintentional) to realisation of the SDGs. Companies can demonstrate good corporate citizenship through systematic action to avoid and mitigate their negative impacts on people, economies and the planet, and through leverage of their transformative potential to catalyse sustainable development.

In doing so, companies can build trust in the industry as a force for good and show respect for society at large by working to help address the global challenges encapsulated by the Goals. Truly SDG-proactive companies can show themselves as local and global players ready to share responsibility for the three key elements of the SDGs – people, planet and prosperity. Focusing on this triple bottom line requires thinking long-term, beyond the 2030 target date of the SDGs, to ensure thriving economies, a good quality of life for all and healthy environments for future generations.

The business case for action on the SDGs is strong and well-recognised. Mining companies that effectively embed the SDGs into their core operations and strategies will ultimately strengthen their ability to meet the challenges of the future. Demonstrating real action to advance progress on the SDGs will enable companies to build trust (among all stakeholders, including investors and financiers, producing country governments and populations), limit risk (including operational, reputational, financial and regulatory risks) and show respect for the peoples and countries impacted by mining activities.

As such, the SDGs do not represent an additional set of requirements or norms for companies to follow. Rather, the SDGs provide a framework through which companies can demonstrate, via their integration and reporting activities, that they are managing the full range of economic, environmental, social and governance issues in a responsible manner.

This ties in with a growing awareness among companies that they need to act fast to demonstrate they have embedded sustainability as a business model, in order not to risk missing out on commercial and financial opportunities. Developing and implementing good corporate standards on responsible mining is not only good from a corporate citizenship perspective but also increasingly a business imperative as financial services (investors, banks, insurers, etc.) are monitoring much more closely companies' track records on economic, environmental, social and governance issues, and catastrophic failures can have dire financial consequences for the companies involved.

Mining and the SDGs: recent trends and emerging critical issues

While the bulk of the original Atlas remains accurate today, the past four years have borne witness to a number of notable developments and emerging critical issues that make the need for linking the mining sector and the SDGs exceedingly pertinent. With each year the IPCC's deadline to halve global emissions by 2030 grows closer. This calls for urgent action on the part of the mining sector in particular, for a number of reasons. Firstly, about 85 per cent of the energy consumed by mines comes from fossil fuels.[1] And mining's energy demand only stands to grow as the ore grade of available deposits declines, making the extraction process increasingly energy and water intensive. These issues are only exacerbated by the transition to green energy which is set to be mineral intensive.[2]

The carbon footprint of mining threatens to compromise our chance at meeting the IPCC's deadline.[3] Mining-rich regions are already the most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change.[4] In particular, climate change multiplies the water-related risk that mining imposes on these regions. A WWF-CDP study assessed that the financial impact of water risks is as high as USD 20 billion worldwide in 2018 alone.[5] Included is the water risk of tailings dam failures. Catastrophic failures of tailings storage facilities, such as the March 2020 spill in Heilongjiang Province, China and the January 2019 disaster in Brumadinho, Brazil, are ongoing reminders of this major potential risk posed by mining to environments, communities and workers.

At the same time, stakeholder pressure on mining is growing. The World Bank has set up the climate-smart mining initiative[6] to encourage the sector to accelerate efforts to align with the climate change agenda. Under the lead of the Church of England Pensions Board and the Swedish Council of Ethics of the AP Funds, institutional investors created the Investor Mining & Tailings Safety Initiative that led to the disclosure of details regarding tailings storage facilities and the establishment of the Global Tailings Review, involving the establishment of an international standard for tailings dams.[7] Shareholder activism is also pushing for stronger action on climate change, as seen in recent resolutions and votes.

More generally, financial actors are divesting from coal and fossil fuels. In 2019, at least 35 insurers (accounting for 37% of the industry's assets) began divesting from coal,[8] and the number of insurers––including Chubb and Suncorp[9]–– withdrawing coverage for coal projects more than doubled during that year.[10] As of 2020, 26 global banks have ended direct finance of new coal plants and mines,[11] and large investors are starting to scrutinise businesses heavily reliant on thermal coal,[12] and exclude companies that are producing excessive carbon emissions, coal or related profits.[13] As of 2020, around 800 financial service organisations have committed to disclosing the climate-risk of their investments.[14]

Moreover, ESG principles are gaining traction among investors, with over an estimated USD 20 trillion in ESG investing in 2018,[15] and 24 stock exchanges requiring ESG reporting from listed companies.[16] In addition to climate change, water, health and safety, communities and labour rights are of particular concern.[17] Companies are also now submitted to more stringent requirements on the part of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)-compliant countries: since 2019, these countries have been imposing contract transparency[18] and from this year on, disclosure of beneficial ownership[19] will also be mandatory. In parallel, concerns around companies' social license to operate have expanded beyond addressing social and environmental issues, to meeting the expectations of communities' genuinely shared value outcomes from a project.[20]

Momentum is also growing on responsible sourcing issues, from the OECD guidelines,[21] to binding requirements that adopt these guidelines into national, regional, and international standards, including most recently the London Metals Exchange responsible sourcing requirements.[22]

Scientists and R&D departments are developing alternatives to minimise the need for primary extraction of some minerals, through phytomining, biomining, or reuse and recycling technologies.[23]

Moreover, by 2025, the industry will be made up of around 75% millennials,[24] whose aspirations are more value-based[25] than previous generations and are characterised as being confident, liberal, open to change, and supportive of a progressive domestic social agenda.[26] This too might accelerate the sector's transition towards stronger alignment with the SDGs on both the environmental and social fronts. Some anticipate that millennials are bringing with them the desire for gender equality and equity for instance, an issue on which the sector has been slow-moving.[27]

More generally, there is growing awareness of the need for corporations to respect human rights and, where they cause or contribute to adverse impacts on human rights, to provide access to effective remedy. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, unanimously endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, have played an important role in defining company responsibilities and the Principles are being translated into national legislation, such as Modern Slavery legislation in the UK, Australia and Canada, France's Duty of Vigilance Law and similar legislation currently being considered by the Swiss government to oblige Swiss companies to undertake human rights due diligence and report on their management of human rights. As pursuit of the SDGs is intrinsically linked with the realisation of human rights, mining companies can take leadership positions by showing harmonisation between their actions on the SDGs and their efforts to address human rights issues linked to their operations and their supply chains.

And finally, the global COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted, and continues to disrupt, the mining industry and the global economy in an ever-evolving wave of ramifications, most of which confirm pre-pandemic identified needs for urgent action. The pandemic has seriously set back progress on the SDGs and made achievement of the Goals much more challenging.[28] At the same time, the crisis has spurred some public officials to urge for hastened projects,[29] and there is evidence that some companies are taking advantage of the imposed restrictions on public assembly and protest as cover for irresponsible practices.[30] Additionally, there are warranted concerns about community consultations that do occur, but in less opportune situations that prohibit meaningful community engagement and do not fulfil free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) requirements due to COVID-19 restrictions.[31] This is particularly worrying when mining was already ranked as the most dangerous sector for human rights advocates in 2019.[32]

A transformative opportunity

These factors contribute to the mounting interest and invitation for the mining sector to take this transformative opportunity to leverage its human, physical, technological and financial resources to fulfil the sector's developmental potential as a major contributor to achievement of the SDGs by 2030 – and longer-term commitment to sustainable development.

Companies can demonstrate clear leadership on the SDGs by embedding their SDG efforts within a business model that is grounded in responsible mining and that elevates sustainability and ESG issues to the highest levels of responsibility. And as economic, environmental, social and governance issues are more financially material than ever, companies need to act fast to avoid being left behind.

2 Examples of opportunities to support and potential risks of impeding achievement of the SDGs

2 Examples of opportunities to support and potential risks of impeding achievement of the SDGs

Building on Mapping Mining to the Sustainable Development Goals: An Atlas, this section presents the potential Opportunities and Risks for each SDG. Many of the opportunities can be realised directly by company actions, and others are most effective when companies leverage their operational strengths and engage in partnership and meaningful dialogue with government, civil society, communities and other stakeholders. In terms of the potential risks, it is important to note that some of these risks are inherent to mining (e.g. the fact that a mine's physical footprint has implications for other land-uses and land access by nearby communities), while others relate to a lack of safeguards or a lack of action on economic, environmental, social and governance issues. Avoidance, minimisation and mitigation of risks are of key importance if mining companies are to build trust, limit risk, and leave positive legacies after their mining operations close.

SDG 1 NO POVERTY

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Pay taxes and royalties: publicly disclose details of payments to governments; use arms-length rule transfer pricing
- Leverage local procurement: develop local supplier capacity; strengthen local value chains
- Champion inclusive employment: facilitate equitable access to employment opportunities; offer training and apprenticeship programmes
- Preserve land access: begin land access planning early in projects; fully restore resettled communities

Collaboration and leverage

- Collaborate to leverage resources for poverty alleviation
- Support non-mining livelihood options
- Broaden implementation of anti-poverty strategies via Community Development Agreements

RISKS TO AVOID

- Avoid taxes, depriving governments of budget contributions that could be invested into basic public goods
- Hinder land-based livelihoods through air and water pollution and footprint of mining operations
- Displace and resettle mining-affected communities without adequate provisions for sustained livelihoods

SDG 2 ZERO HUNGER

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Explore synergies with agriculture: manage water resources transparently; minimise land take; share infrastructure benefits with agricultural community
- Keep farmland pollution-free: conduct baseline and ongoing geochemical surveys; monitor water quality and soil fertility regularly

Collaboration and leverage

- Strengthen watershed management
- Partner with the agricultural sector
- Support programmes to reduce childhood malnutrition and hunger

RISKS TO AVOID

- Compete for land resources, reducing area available for agricultural production
- Pollute land and water resources required for agricultural production
- Leave post-mining land in an unproductive state, due to inadequate rehabilitation

SDG 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Champion occupational health and safety: promote workplace health; establish rigorous workplace health and safety monitoring and reporting; focus on road safety
- Combat Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS: reduce silica dust; run HIV/AIDS education, prevention and counselling programmes
- Offer and encourage preventive care: screen for NCDs; provide healthy canteen food options and good hygiene protocols; prevent toxic emissions to the environment
- Increase mental health awareness: approach health holistically; set up confidential counselling programmes; regularly test for drug and alcohol use and abuse

Collaboration and leverage

- Support community health programmes
- Participate in response to and recovery from epidemics
- Train community health workers
- Recognise and strengthen traditional medicinal practices

RISKS TO AVOID

- Expose workers to risks of fatal accidents, injuries and physical and mental health problems
- Expose mining-affected communities to health and safety risks
- Expose human rights defenders to risk of attack
- Trigger health and safety risks for children and women due to mine-related in-migration of labour

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

SDG 4 QUALITY EDUCATION

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Assess and upgrade the local skills base: routinise skills baseline assessments and gap analyses; sponsor apprenticeships, scholarships, and graduate programmes
- Train and educate the workforce: train workforce in technical and management skills; ensure training opportunities are made available to employees at all levels and across all backgrounds

Collaboration and leverage

- Link academic programmes with Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- Collaborate with universities to design curricula
- Participate in classrooms and workshops
- Work with schools to keep children in school
- Train for sustainable livelihood opportunities beyond mining

RISKS TO AVOID

- Exacerbate social conflict and local inequalities by bringing in skilled and unskilled workers from outside
- Resettle mining-affected communities without ensuring access to schools

5 GENDER EQUALITY

SDG 5 GENDER EQUALITY

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Offer equal opportunities for women; recruit more women; pay women and men equally; promote more women to visible leadership positions; adopt, where possible, flexible schedules for accommodating childcare
- Practice gender inclusion across the business and project lifecycle: offer gender-appropriate PPE; provide gender-sensitive career development planning; incorporate perspectives of women, men, and children in community-related decisions; include men and women in negotiations

Collaboration and leverage

- Make social investments gender-inclusive
- Offer educational scholarships for women
- Remain vigilant against gender-based violence
- Establish gender-sensitive grievance mechanisms
- Provide women's health monitoring

RISKS TO AVOID

- Discriminate against women applicants in recruitment processes
- Discriminate against women workers in professional development processes
- Marginalise women in mining-affected communities from discussions, decision-making and benefit-sharing activities
- Fail to address gender-based violence commonly exacerbated by presence of mining

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

SDG 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Conserve and recycle water: recycle and/or recover metals from wastewater; reduce water consumption; use alternative water sources (greywater, seawater)
- Monitor water quality: monitor water sources both near-mine and downstream; involve the community in monitoring and share water data openly
- Manage water holistically: align with government water management policies; integrate technical, social, economic, and political water concerns; identify high-value water areas; maintain long-term water balance throughout projects; incorporate water reporting and disclosure

Collaboration and leverage

- Support potable water and sanitation planning and infrastructure
- Clearly delineate watershed management responsibilities
- Share benefits of water infrastructure
- Explore co-financing arrangements
- Support local capacity-building in water and sanitation management

RISKS TO AVOID

- Fail to prevent acid mine drainage
- Exacerbate water stress by competing for water supply
- Pollute water sources from poor waste management and from tailings storage facilities leakages or failures
- Fail to provide gender-appropriate sanitation facilities for women workers

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

SDG 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Improve energy efficiency: undertake energy audits; improve energy infrastructure maintenance; reduce energy demand onsite
- Incorporate renewable energy: deploy off-grid wind, solar or geothermal power; diversify power sources for reducing outages; replace diesel generators

Collaboration and leverage

- Support local energy initiatives
- Integrate into rural electrification schemes
- Share benefits of energy infrastructure
- Explore co-financing arrangements

RISKS TO AVOID

- Increase competition for grid-based power
- Increase share of non-renewable energy produced and consumed
- Slow down move towards renewable energy sources

SDG 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Communicate opportunities and limits of mining: provide decent work; catalyse indirect and induced employment, clearly communicate the capital-intensive nature of mining
- Drive economic growth with local procurement: diversify local economies; make bidding accessible to local contractors; train local suppliers how to meet corporate supply requirements
- Ensure just transition for workers in digitalisation and automation processes

Collaboration and leverage

- Collaborate with local chambers of commerce, finance institutions and NGOs
- Establish business incubators
- Work with local suppliers to build capacity and increase product quality
- Connect suppliers with external markets
- Collaborate to end child labour

RISKS TO AVOID

- Fail to address risk of over-reliance on mining for economies and employment
- Perpetuate poor labour practices and unsafe working conditions
- Fail to ensure no child labour in operations or supply chain
- Limit local jobs to low-paying positions and fail to pay a living wage
- Increase local frustration due to increased automation decreasing local job creation
- Under-report value/quantity of raw materials extracted/exported to controlling authorities

SDG 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Support local procurement: upgrade expertise of local suppliers; improve quality of locally produced goods; provide support to local suppliers to service the mine
- Share infrastructure: explore co-funding arrangements with governments; share rail, road, power, water, ICT infrastructure; harness economies of scale and economies of scope

Collaboration and leverage

- Use business profile to create horizontal linkages
- Use convening power to create clusters
- Promote in-country research and development initiatives

RISKS TO AVOID

- Fail to support shared infrastructure, constraining economic development of producing countries
- Fail to engage with in-country institutions for R&D, to increase capacity for innovation
- Exclude local business and SMEs from procurement and sourcing programmes

SDG 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Anticipate inequality-related risks: be sensitive to local wage disparities; establish baseline welfare statistics before mining
- Champion inclusivity: train, recruit and employ marginalised populations; include excluded groups in local procurement and supply chains

Collaboration and leverage

- Work with local partners to target social investments to marginalised populations
- Encourage participatory budgeting in local communities, especially of mining revenues

RISKS TO AVOID

- Instigate local inflation due to in-migration
- Engage in unequal revenue spending and distribution
- Exacerbate regional inequalities within and between countries
- Maintain wage gap between expat and local workers

SDG 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Mine unconventional deposits: re-mine tailings; mine urban waste (urban mining); pair metals recycling and waste energy reclamation
- Plan land use carefully: plan land use with the life-of-mine in mind; reclaim mines into parks; develop cultural heritage management plans; anticipate unplanned urbanisation

Collaboration and leverage

- Share workforce requirements and planned operations early so local authorities can assess adequacy of local services
- Collaborate with local authorities to develop green space, including decommissioned mines

RISKS TO AVOID

- Resettle mining-affected communities without adequate provisions for livelihoods and social cohesion
- Fail to plan for just transition for communities after mine closure
- Destroy or compromise cultural and natural heritage
- Fail to manage settlement growth and urbanisation due to population influx, straining public infrastructure and resources, and resulting in conflict
- Pollute air, land and water

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

SDG 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Minimise resources use and waste: minimise use of water, energy, land, chemicals; minimise production of waste, effluent, emissions; re-purpose waste rock
- Incorporate lifecycle thinking: analyse mineral and chemical products across sourcing, transport, storage, use, production
- Extend responsible sourcing to suppliers

Collaboration and leverage

- Collaborate inter- and intra-industry to develop and report against materials management codes
- Engage consumers about mining and connect the consumer with raw materials

RISKS TO AVOID

- Externalise the socio-economic and environmental costs of mining
- Disincentivise transition to recycling and a circular economy
- Inadequately address waste management, tailings management and pollution prevention
- Mine very low-grade ores that generate excessive waste material

13 CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Reduce emissions: improve energy efficiency; use renewable energy; use low-emission fuels; align in NDCs; set science-based targets aligned with Paris Agreement; measure and report direct, indirect, and product-related emissions
- Build climate change resilience: plan for climate change impacts on mines and communities; strengthen emergency response plans; model climate-related environmental impacts
- Recognise climate change in planning and investment: use scenario planning to inform views on climate and energy risks and opportunities; use climate projections in design and placement of operations and infrastructure; adopt corporate climate change, carbon management and disclosure policies; use shadow carbon prices to inform portfolio evaluation and investment decisions; include climate change on the board agenda

Collaboration and leverage

- Participate in climate-related R&D and pilots (emissions trading, CCS, projects)
- Engage in intra- and cross-industry climate dialogues
- Publicly support carbon pricing

RISKS TO AVOID

- Contribute to production and use of coal
- Amplify energy- and emissions-intense economies
- Exacerbate climate change impacts on populations and environments
- Disturb ecosystems and exacerbate deforestation

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

SDG 14 LIFE BELOW WATER

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Incorporate life under water into impact assessments: refrain from riverine or marine disposal of tailings/ waste; assess social and environmental impacts on fishing- and marine-based livelihoods; map breeding grounds and migration routes of underwater species
- Approach seafloor mining cautiously: adopt precautionary principle to protect marine life, minimise habitat disturbance; conduct sensitivity analyses in understanding short- and long-term impacts

Collaboration and leverage

- Collaborate with local authorities to establish conservation areas and marine reserves
- Develop multi-stakeholder coastal zone management plans

RISKS TO AVOID

- Exacerbate adverse impacts due to subsea shallow mining and deep-sea mining
- Discharge waste and tailings into rivers, lakes and marine environments
- Adversely impact marine resources due to port infrastructure
- Fail to prevent acid mine drainage

15 LIFE ON LAND

SDG 15 LIFE ON LAND

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Achieve net positive or no net loss impact: apply mitigation hierarchy to minimise impact; avoid impacts to critical habitat; offset biodiversity impacts
- Preserve ecosystem services: recognise dynamic nature of habitats; conduct comprehensive baseline and follow-up environmental assessments

Collaboration and leverage

- Support projects that link communities and biodiversity
- Encourage and participate in landscape-level planning
- Restore historic habitats and engage in reforestation and anti-poaching efforts
- Collaborate in research initiatives

RISKS TO AVOID

- Degrade ecosystems and harm biodiversity due to mining operation footprints and pollution
- Increase environmental strain due to in-migration and increased economic activity
- Facilitate access to illegal activities including deforestation and poaching
- Leave long-term environmental problems due to inadequate rehabilitation
- Fail to prevent acid mine drainage

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

SDG 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Prevent and pre-empt conflict: listen and respond early to stakeholder concerns; establish formal and accessible complaint and grievance mechanisms; participate in conflict-free mineral certification schemes
- Respect indigenous peoples' rights and FPIC: implement human rights impact assessments; extend high standards to security contractors; incorporate both regulatory requirements and local community objectives and sentiments into decisions

Collaboration and leverage

- Publicly report project-related payments country-by-country and project-by-project
- Conduct transfer pricing of intra-company transactions via arms-length rule
- Facilitate peaceful working environment and good community relationships
- Promote the rule of law

RISKS TO AVOID

- Fail to eradicate risk of illicit financial flows and poor governance
- Exacerbate risk of bribery and corruption
- Increase conflicts fuelled by certain minerals
- Fail to eliminate child labour from operations and supply chain
- Withhold public access to public interest information

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SDG 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAXIMISE

Integration into core business

- Mobilise financial resources and technology: publicly disclose payments to governments; build data collection and statistical analysis capacity; transfer technologies to producing countries; engage in public-private partnerships
- Share geo-data: transfer unused exploration data over to national authorities; improve national knowledge of mineral wealth; facilitate trust with governments and communities

Collaboration and leverage

- Dialogue actively with governments, civil society, and development partners
- Strengthen coordination between initiatives
- Join with bottom-up grassroots movements and top-down leadership initiatives
- Apply SDG indicators

RISKS TO AVOID

- Contribute to debilitating lobbying against global governance around climate change, circular economy and tax reforms
- Erode domestic revenue collection and undermine public financing
- Persist with the enclave model
- Fail to publicly disclose public interest data on socio-economic, environmental and governance impacts

3 Integrating, prioritising and reporting on the SDGs

3 Integrating, prioritising and reporting on the SDGs

To what extent can mining companies demonstrate that they have integrated the SDGs into how they do business and recognised their potential negative impacts (as well as positive contributions) on achievement of the Goals? The short answer is: some leading companies stand out as ahead of the curve but for most companies in the sample there is much room for improvement in demonstrating meaningful integration and more balanced reporting.

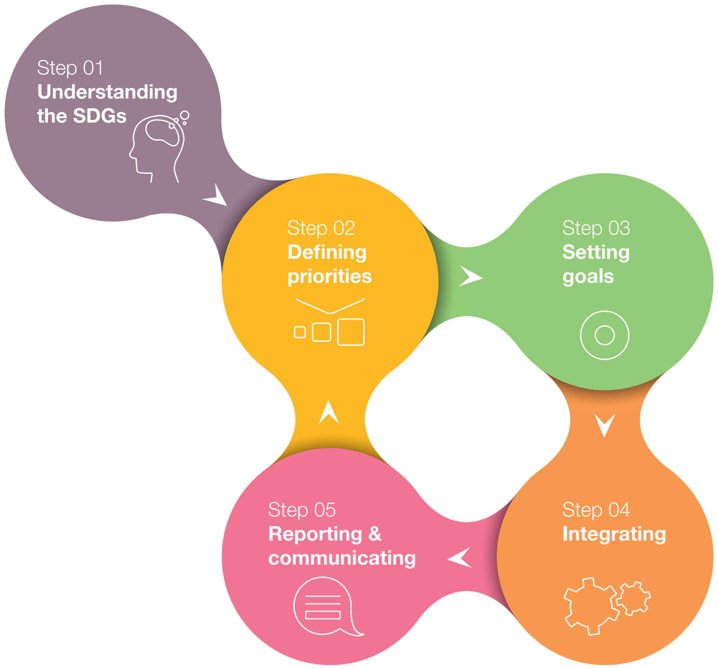
Background

Companies can help maximise their contributions to the SDGs by:

- mainstreaming the Goals into their core business strategies and corporate governance;
- prioritising SDGs based on consideration of the level of potential positive and negative impacts of their activities on the Goals while understanding the interconnectivity of all the SDGs;
- defining indicators or targets to measure their progress on contributing to these Goals; and
- reporting on their progress to support the Goals, including tracking of their positive and negative impacts.

These steps, illustrated in Figure 1, have been the subject of numerous guidelines and frameworks in recent years, providing a wealth of information for companies to use in their work on the SDGs.[33]

Figure 1 Recommended process for integrating, prioritising and reporting on the SDGs



Source: From GRI, UNGC and WBCSD (2015).
SDG Compass: The Guide for Business Action on the SDGs.

Assessment

This section provides an indication of how fully mining companies are taking these steps, by presenting the results of an assessment of the extent to which a sample of 38 large-scale mining companies has:

- Integrated the SDGs into their sustainability, business strategies and corporate governance;
- Prioritised the SDGs that are most relevant to their activities and impacts; and
- Set targets for their SDG-supportive work and reported on their progress to meet those targets.

The assessment questions, set out in Table 1, were applied to the 38 companies included in the RMI Report 2020 (see Annex), produced by the Responsible Mining Foundation. The RMI Report is an evidence-based assessment of corporate-level policies and practices (as well as mine-site-level actions) on economic, environmental, social and governance issues. This sample of 38 companies accounts for about 28 per cent of the global value of mining production. Evidence for this current assessment was obtained from publicly available information (e.g. company Sustainability Reports, Annual Reports, websites, etc.).

Results

The results of the assessment are presented in Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3.

The main findings to note are summarised below.

Integration and prioritisation of the SDGs

There are a few frontrunners in integrating the SDGs. A few companies stand out as performing relatively stronger than their peers (in the sample of 38 mining companies) on integrating the SDGs into business strategy. Evidence of such integration includes, for example, high-level oversight of SDG work within corporate governance, incorporation of the SDGs into company-wide programmes, development of SDG-based performance incentives and regular reviews of company-wide progress on the SDGs. However, the vast majority of the companies show no evidence of integrating the Goals into their business strategy or corporate governance (see Figure 2).

SDG prioritisation is often retrofitted to existing materiality analyses. While 25 of the 38 companies show some level of prioritisation of the SDGs, these prioritisation exercises most often consist of superficial mapping of SDGs to ESG issues that have been prioritised in earlier materiality analyses. Prioritisation of SDGs based on consideration of the company's potential positive and negative impacts, as is widely recommended, is very rare.

Reporting on the SDGs

A few frontrunners stand out. While scores are generally low, a few companies stand out as relatively stronger performers on reporting on the SDGs. These companies show somewhat more evidence than their peers (in the sample of 38 companies) on setting targets for their work on the SDGs and on reporting on their progress SDGs in a more meaningful manner.

Almost all the 38 companies mention the SDGs in their sustainability reporting. Only one of the companies makes no explicit mention of the SDGs and three other companies make a passing mention of the SDGs with insufficient content to score points in this assessment.

Most companies' reporting on the SDGs is limited. Reporting most often consists of general commitment statements and much of the reporting appears 'superficial', often involving, for example, simply a mapping of the SDGs to GRI indicators, or insertion of SDG logos with no narrative explanations.

Reporting on SDG actions is generally very selective. Reporting of SDG-related actions is most often focused on particular locations and initiatives to show their positive actions on particular SDGs. Only a small minority of companies report on progress against indicators or targets they have set to track their performance.

Reporting of even potential negative impacts on SDGs is rare. In the few cases where negative impacts are mentioned, they usually refer to industry-level impacts rather than the impacts caused by the company itself.

Table 1 Assessment of companies' integration, prioritisation and reporting on the SDGs

significant evidence | limited evidence | no evidence

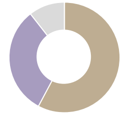
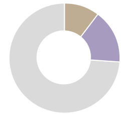
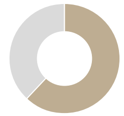
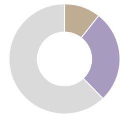
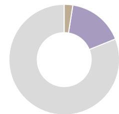
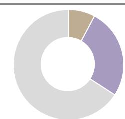
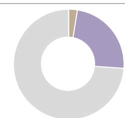
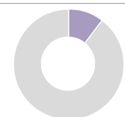
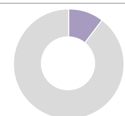
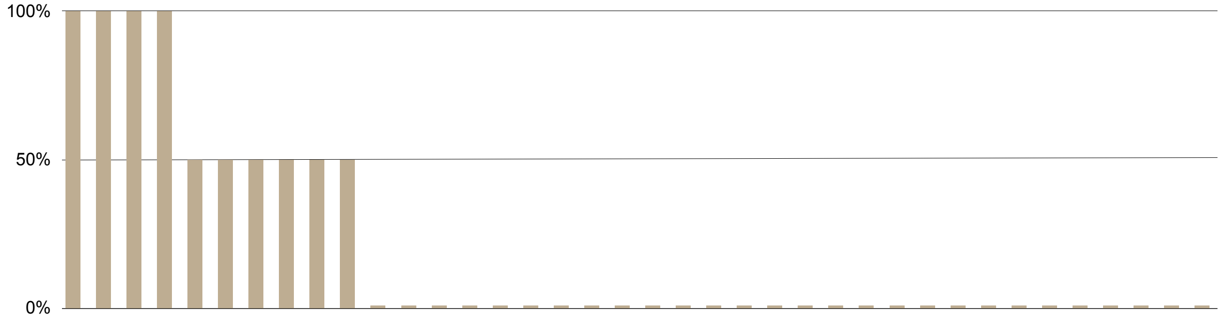
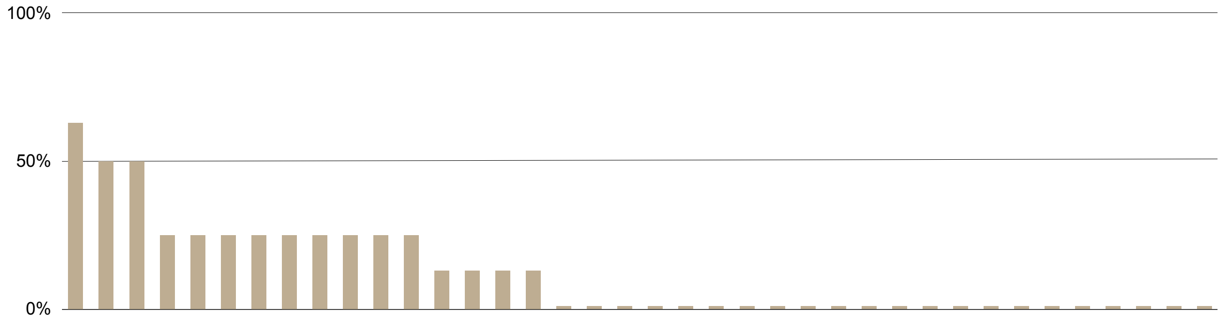
1 Integration of the SDGs into company strategy	**1A** Does the company show evidence of considering the SDGs in its sustainability strategy and programs?	
	1B Does the company show evidence of embedding the SDGs in its business strategy?	
2 Prioritisation of the SDGs	**2A** Has the company prioritised the SDGs it seeks to address?	
	2B Does the company explain how it prioritised these SDGs?	
	2C Was the prioritisation based in part on recognition of company's potential negative, as well as positive, contributions to SDGs?	
3 Setting targets and reporting progress on contributing to the SDGs	**3A** Does the company set target(s) for its work on the SDGs?	
	3B Does the company report regularly on progress in reaching its target(s)?	
	3C Does the company report regularly on any negative, as well as positive, impacts on SDGs?	
	3D Does the company report regularly on the actions it is taking to reduce any negative impacts?	

Figure 2 Integrating SDGs into business strategy
(range of performances among the 38 companies in the RMI Report 2020) .



Note: Evidence of such integration includes, for example, high-level oversight of SDG work within corporate governance, incorporation of the SDGs into company-wide programmes, development of SDG-based performance incentives and regular reviews of company-wide progress on the SDGs.

Figure 3 Setting SDG-supportive targets and reporting on progress
(range of performances among the 38 companies in the RMI Report 2020).



Some examples of good practice

The following examples show how some mining companies have:

- prioritised the SDGs and specific SDG targets; and
- developed indicators and set their own targets against which to measure their progress on the prioritised SDGs.

Examples of one company's prioritised SDG targets

CONTRIBUTING TO SELF-SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

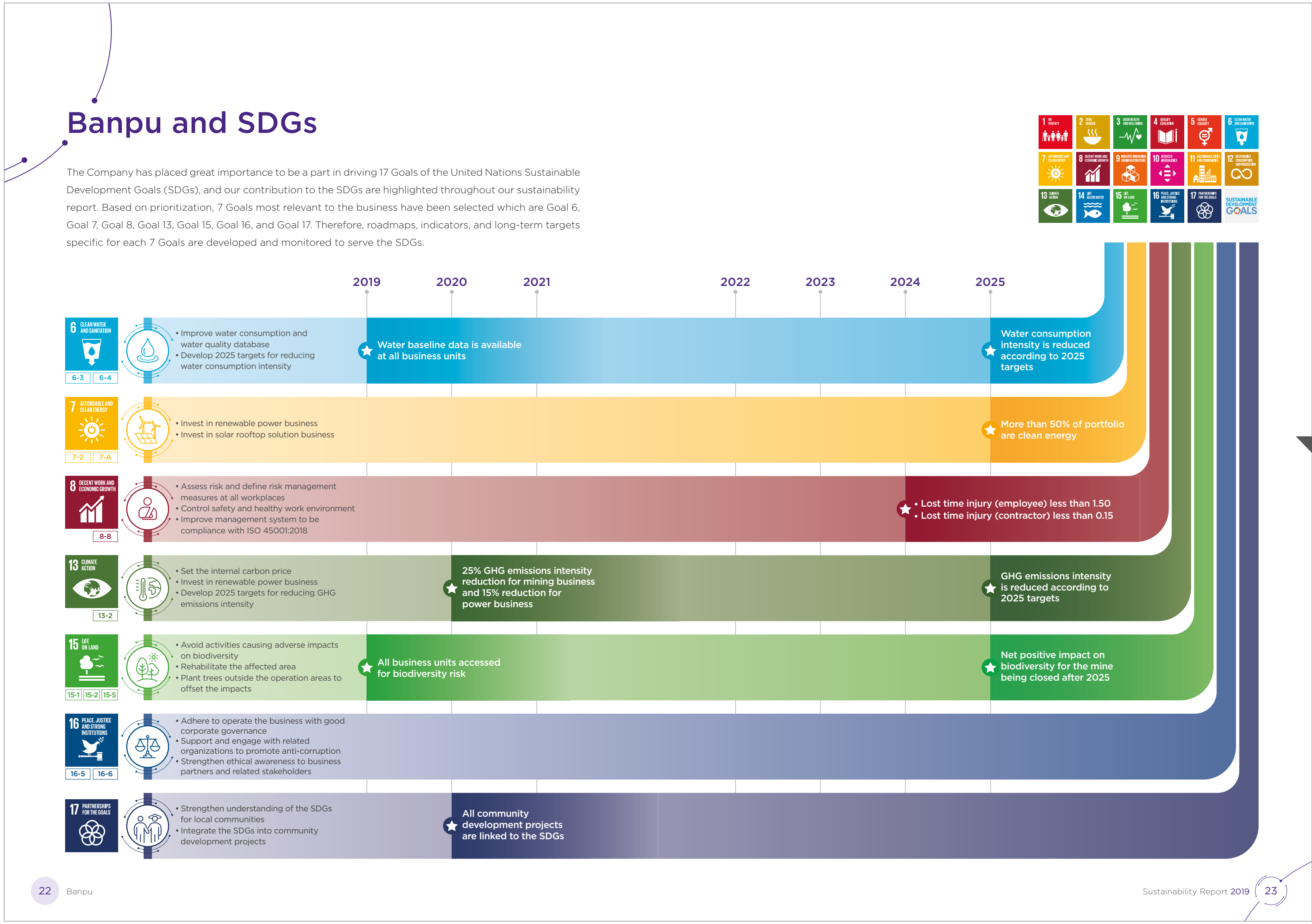
PRIORITISED SDG:

1 NO POVERTY	**1.2.** By 2030, reduce by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	**8.2.** Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on highvalue added and labour-intensive sectors.
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, INFRASTRUCTURE	**9.2.** Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries.
10 REDUCE INEQUALITIES	**10.1.** By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	**11.4.** Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	**17.1.** Strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.

SDG prioritisation at a detailed level (to sub-elements (targets) of each prioritised Goal)

Source: AngloGold Ashanti 2018 Sustainable Development Report

Example of one company's targets and timeline for prioritised SDGs to 2030



Targets to measure progress to 2030 on prioritised SDGs

Source: Banpu 2019 Sustainability Report.

Example of indicator-setting to measure progress on SDGs

5: Developing and executing activities to achieve company goals continued

Connecting themes – strategic focus areas – coherent actions

Incorporate relevant SDG metrics and targets

Strategic focus area	Objective	Key actions	Performance indicators	Target (2030)
Local business development plans	Local business development plans drive achievement of our aspirations		• Country LBD plans agreed by stakeholders	• Income growth > national average SDG 10 10.1
Skills development and capacity building	Local participants develop the appropriate skills and capabilities		• Numbers of local participants developed • % increase in Value Addition and Local Participation • Supplier performance	• Industry share of employment and GDP SDG 9 9.2
Extending product and service offerings beyond mine requirements	Dependence on mining is diminished for thriving self-sustaining businesses beyond life of mine		• % host community businesses demonstrating customer diversification	• Economic productivity and diversification SDG 8 8.2
Establishing strategic partnerships	Strategic partnerships are established for leverage and greater impact		• Number and span of strategic partnerships established	• Increased domestic resource mobilisation SDG 17 17.1

The strategy map outlined in the previous section forms the basis of developing a balanced scorecard.

For each strategic focus area, an objective consistent with the goals is developed. Key actions required to achieve the objective are designed, along with performance targets and metrics which demonstrate achievement of objectives and ultimately the goals.

In the example shown, strategic focus areas which are connected to the SDGs are reflected. Incorporating relevant SDG metrics and targets into the scorecard becomes a relatively easy exercise.

Source: Adapted from Kaplan, R. and Norton, D. (2008): "Mastering the Management System", Harvard Business Review, January, p62-77.

Performance indicators for measuring progress on qualitative targets for prioritised SDGs

Source: Chicksen. B, Cole. M, Broadhurst. J, Meyer. H, Charikinya. E, Hoffman. A, & Viljoen. D. (2018). *Embedding the Sustainable Development Goals into Business Strategy and Action.* MtM & MiLA Working Paper 1 – 2018, Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Results in context

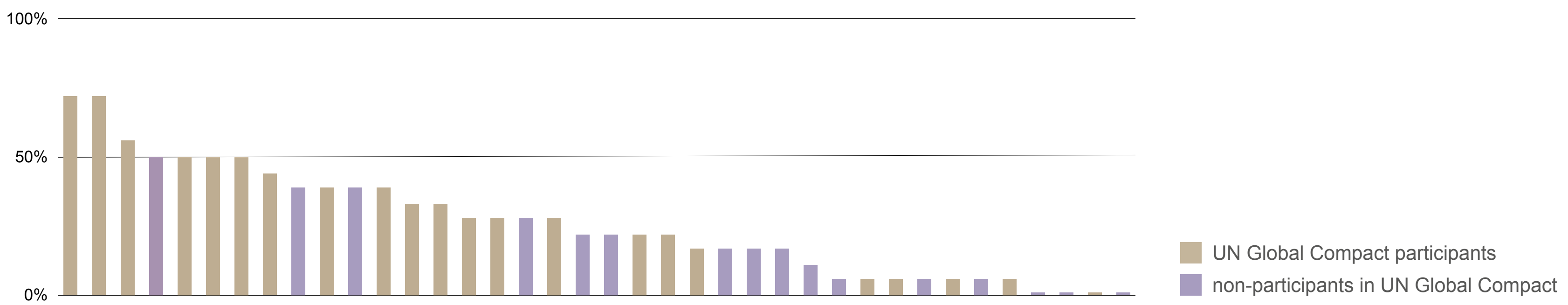
Laudable effort to advance industry action. AngloGold Ashanti has invested considerable effort in reflecting on its SDG-related work and developing a publicly available toolkit, in conjunction with the University of Cape Town, on how mining companies can embed the SDGs in business strategy and action. This is a valuable resource to guide companies' efforts on the SDGs.

Some unexpected better performers. Some of the better-performing companies in this assessment are newer or smaller companies, not necessarily ones that would be expected to outperform more well-established companies on SDG issues. One possible explanation for these unexpected results could be that companies which are still at a relatively early stage of their SDG-related work can use the SDGs as an organising framework for their reporting and can consider SDGs from the beginning of their materiality analyses, allowing for fuller integration and prioritisation. In contrast, companies that had already put in place materiality analyses and sustainability reporting frameworks prior to the 2015 adoption of the SDGs may be less motivated to substantially reorganise these to take into account the SDGs. It should be noted that evidence of prioritisation or meaningful reporting of the SDGs, while encouraging, does not automatically translate into stronger alignment with, or more effective actions on, the SDGs.

Risk of perceived 'SDG-washing'. As many companies' reporting on the SDGs largely focuses on positive impacts, with little or no mention of negative impacts that companies contribute to and that would impede achievement of the Goals, companies risk being perceived as 'SDG-washing'. While there is no evidence that companies are deliberately misrepresenting their influence on the SDGs, accusations of 'SDG-washing' may persist while reporting remains unbalanced.

Mixed results of UN Global Compact participants. The UN Global Compact is a voluntary initiative that seeks to drive business awareness and action in support of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Participant companies are expected to report annually on how they are addressing ESG issues and supporting achievement of the SDGs, though the content of this reporting is not assessed or 'certified' in any way. The performances of the 22 UN Global Compact participant companies in this assessment vary widely, with 11 participant companies scoring 25 per cent or less–– meaning they show little evidence of integrating, prioritising and reporting on the SDGs (see Figure 4).[34] This suggests that there is a real risk that companies may be perceived as 'blue-washing'––whereby companies can affiliate themselves, and claim compliance, with the ten principles of the UN Global Compact, without taking meaningful action.

Figure 4 Integrating, prioritising and reporting on the SDGs
(overall results for the 38 companies in the RMI Report 2020, showing UN Global Compact participants)



4 Developing SDG-supportive policies and practices

4 Developing SDG-supportive policies and practices

To what extent are large-scale mining companies putting in place policies and practices that will help deliver the SDGs? The short answer is: good practices are seen by some companies on some of the SDGs, but for many of the SDGs there is still much opportunity for improvement among the sample of 38 companies; no one company demonstrates strong SDG-supportive measures across the 17 Goals.

Background

The results presented in this section are based on the RMI Report 2020, an assessment by the Responsible Mining Foundation of 38 large-scale mining companies that together account for about 28 per cent of the global value of mining production. The assessment covers corporate-level policies and practices as well as mine-site-level actions, and comprises six broad areas: economic development, business conduct, lifecycle management, community wellbeing, working conditions and environmental responsibility. Given the comprehensive scope of the RMI Report 2020 assessment, it covers all of the SDGs (each SDG is addressed by at least one indicator) and the results provide useful indications of the level of SDG-supportive efforts by this sample of mining companies.

Assessment

The assessment summarised in this section does not look for companies' explicit references to their contributions to the SDGs; rather the assessment uses the RMI Report 2020 results as proxies for companies' SDG-relevant measures – i.e. measures that relate directly to specific SDG targets. It is also important to bear in mind that the results are not a reflection of the impacts of companies, nor on their level of achievement of the SDGs, but instead reflect the extent of measures taken by companies that contribute to achievement of specific SDG targets. And as the RMI Report 2020 is an evidence-based assessment, the results show what companies can demonstrate they are doing, through the information they make publicly available. Low scores may reflect a lack of such public disclosure, rather than a lack of action.

The measures assessed are grouped into seven categories:

- *Commitments:* formal, company-wide commitments endorsed by senior management and backed up by dedicated resources and assigned responsibilities;
- *Risk and impact mitigation:* corporate systems (e.g. management standards, requirements or guidelines) to ensure mining operations mitigate their real and potential adverse impacts, and efforts by companies to review and improve their impact mitigation;
- *Positive actions:* proactive measures taken by companies to achieve positive outcomes (e.g. on local procurement or local business development);
- *Public disclosure:* disclosure by companies of public interest information, particularly relating to their governance;
- *Performance tracking and reporting:* company efforts to monitor, and publicly report on, their performance on managing economic, environmental, social and governance issues, and to review, and take actions to improve, their performance;
- *Local stakeholder engagement:* corporate systems to ensure mining operations engage with mining-affected communities on critical issues, such as emergency preparedness or environmental impacts;
- *Mine-site data disclosure:* public disclosure of mine-site-level data on issues of key importance to local stakeholders (e.g. on local employment, local procurement, or air and water quality).

These measures have different roles to play in contributing to delivering the SDGs:

- *Commitments* provide foundational parameters for systematic action and enable others to hold companies to account for any non-compliance with their corporate policies;
- *Risk and impact mitigation* contribute to SDG targets related to avoiding and minimising adverse impacts;

- *Positive actions* contribute directly to SDG targets;
- *Public disclosure* supports accountability which in turn can prompt company actions to show responsible conduct;
- *Performance tracking and reporting* enables companies to ‘know and show’ how they are managing economic, environmental, social and governance issues and to take measures to improve their performance;
- *Local stakeholder engagement* contributes to more effective and locally-relevant outcomes;
- *Mine site data disclosure* is important for accountability as a driver of responsible mining practices.

Results

Figure 5 shows the overall results for each of the 38 companies, taking into account all their SDG-supportive policies and practices, and measuring the extent and robustness of these measures against society expectations, as articulated in the RMI Framework.[35]

Table 2 summarises the overall results for each of the SDGs, broken down by the different categories (different types of SDG-supportive measures) that are covered by the RMI Report 2020 indicators. The scores shown include lowest and highest scores achieved (among the 38 companies) for each category, and the average score (across the 38 companies), as well as the overall aggregate score for each SDG.[36] The percentage scores (reflecting the extent and robustness of companies’ policies and practices, measured against society expectations, as articulated in the RMI Framework) relate to the:

Minimum: the score achieved by the lowest scoring company for the combination of indicators in the given category (or the given SDG as a whole)

Average: the average score achieved across the 38 companies for the combination of indicators in the given category (or for the given SDG as a whole)

Maximum: the score achieved by the highest-scoring company for the combination of indicators in the given category (or the SDG as a whole)

Figure 5 SDG-supportive policies and practices (overall results for the 38 companies in the RMI Report 2020).

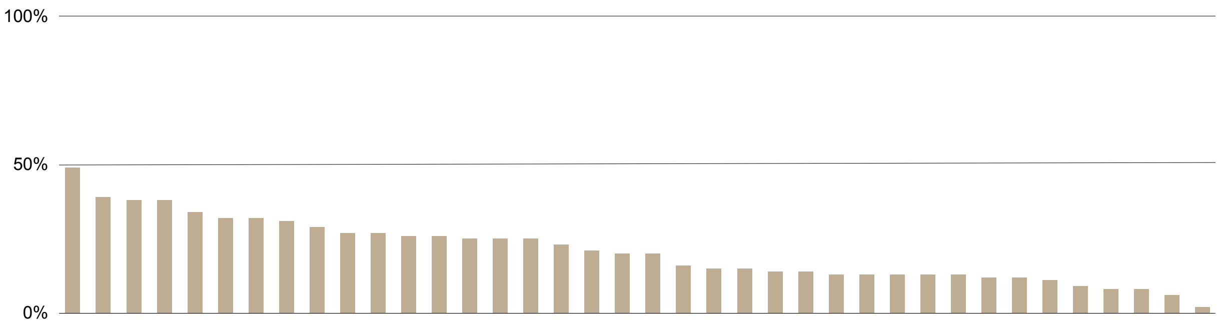


Table 2 SDG-supportive policies and practices (detailed results for the 38 companies in the RMI Report 2020)

	Commitment			Risk management and impact mitigation			Positive action			Public disclosure			Performance tracking and reporting			Local stakeholder engagement			Mine-site data disclosure			**All categories**		
	Min Score (%)	AVG Score (%)	Max Score (%)	Min Score (%)	AVG Score (%)	Max Score (%)	Min Score (%)	AVG Score (%)	Max Score (%)	Min Score (%)	AVG Score (%)	Max Score (%)	Min Score (%)	AVG Score (%)	Max Score (%)	Min Score (%)	AVG Score (%)	Max Score (%)	Min Score (%)	AVG Score (%)	Max Score (%)	**Min Score (%)**	**AVG Score (%)**	**Max Score (%)**
No Poverty	0.0	6.3	50.0	0.0	27.7	75.0	6.3	26.6	75.0				0.0	1.3	16.7				0.0	8.6	29.8	**2.3**	**17.6**	**54.1**
Zero Hunger				0.0	24.8	75.0																**0.0**	**24.8**	**75.0**
Good Health and Well-being				0.0	17.2	70.8	0.0	11.2	100.0				0.0	7.7	25.0				0.0	9.1	38.3	**0.0**	**11.9**	**34.7**
Quality Education							8.3	36.4	75.0													**8.3**	**36.4**	**75.0**
Gender Equality				0.0	14.1	55.6	0.0	12.2	50.0				0.0	5.6	30.6	0.0	14.5	100.0				**0.0**	**10.9**	**41.7**
Clean Water and Sanitation	0.0	4.6	100.0	0.0	16.7	75.0							0.0	16.9	41.7				0.0	11.7	33.3	**0.0**	**13.6**	**37.7**
Affordable and Clean Energy													0.0	25.4	66.7							**0.0**	**25.4**	**66.7**
Decent Work and Economic Growth	25.0	89.7	100.0	0.0	15.6	50.0	0.0	34.4	83.3	0.0	45.0	83.3	0.0	5.0	16.7				0.0	8.1	44.4	**4.2**	**25.0**	**48.6**
Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	0.0	10.7	100.0				0.0	22.8	100.0													**0.0**	**16.8**	**66.7**
Reduced Inequalities				0.0	22.8	66.7																**0.0**	**22.8**	**66.7**
Sustainable Cities and Communities	0.0	33.1	100.0	0.0	26.4	75.0																**0.0**	**28.7**	**83.3**
Responsible Consumption and Production	0.0	20.9	70.8	0.0	30.2	88.9	0.0	22.8	100.0				0.0	26.1	66.7	0.0	11.2	50.0	0.0	9.1	38.3	**0.0**	**21.1**	**49.3**
Climate Action				0.0	26.8	66.7				0.0	0 0	0.0	0.0	32.9	66.7	0.0	10.9	100.0				**0.0**	**19.5**	**51.7**
Life below Water	0.0	4.6	100.0																			**0.0**	**4.6**	**100.0**
Life on Land	12.5	46.4	100.0	0.0	40.1	100.0							0.0	21.5	62.5	0.0	11.2	50.0				**4.2**	**31.2**	**77.8**
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	5.6	48.0	100.0	0.0	18.0	66.7				0.0	35.0	66.7	0.0	15.0	45.8				0.0	15.1	54.2	**3.8**	**26.4**	**56.0**
Parnerships for the Goals							0.0	22.8	100.0	0.0	46.1	100.0										**0.0**	**34.4**	**75.0**

The main findings to note are:

Some leading companies. In Table 2, 15 of the categories show a maximum score of 100 per cent – showing that at least one company is demonstrating good practice in meeting society expectations on these measures. Likewise, maximum scores of 75 per cent or more are seen for six of the SDGs, meaning that in each case at least one company is taking strong measures to support achievement of the SDG.

Much progress to be made on demonstrating relevant actions across all SDGs: Figure 5 shows that even the relatively stronger-performing companies have some way to go to meet society expectations of large-scale mining companies' management of economic, environmental, social and governance issues related to the entire set of SDGs.

Quality Education (SDG 4) and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) show strongest average results: As a group, the 38 companies show relatively more or stronger measures related to these two goals, with average scores between 34 and 36 per cent (see Table 2). These relatively stronger results are largely due to:

SDG 4: Quality Education: Relatively widespread actions by mining companies to support: (1) skills development among their local workforces; and (2) STEM education and technical skills development among local populations in producing countries.

- *Context – direct and significant contributions.* The efforts that companies are demonstrating on skills development and education contribute directly and significantly to achievement of SDG 4. Some companies are going further and showing leading practices, such as collaborating with producing country institutions to improve the quality of teaching in mining-affected regions, or developing specific training programmes for underrepresented groups on their workforce, such as indigenous peoples, women, or people with disabilities. While these kinds of programmes are important, it is worth noting that actions on these issues generally entail relatively straightforward investments for companies, compared to the more complex actions required on other SDGs.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals: Significant efforts by (a minority of the 38) mining companies to collaborate with local/regional governments on socio-economic development planning, and with in-country institutions on Research & Development on socio-economic and environmental issues related to mining. In addition, relatively widespread disclosure of payments to governments.

- *Context – encouraging trends.* Actions by mining companies to work collaboratively with in-country institutions on responsible mining-related R&D directly contribute to achievement of SDG 17, as mineral revenues and public-private partnerships can support sustainable development in producing countries. Encouragingly, mining companies are increasingly participating in collaborative programmes with local or regional governments to plan and implement socio-economic development initiatives. These kinds of partnerships offer strong potential for progress on many of the SDGs in these areas. In terms of disclosure of payments to governments, this action on basic transparency is generally driven by national legislation and contributes only indirectly to this Goal.

Strikingly divergent results on Life below Water (SDG 14):

SDG 14: Life below Water: Company efforts on this SDG are measured through one dimension: establishment of formal company-wide commitments to not dispose of tailings (mining waste) in rivers, lakes or marine environments. The divergent results shown in Table 1 reflect the fact that, while one company can demonstrate it has a formal commitment in place, backed up by accountability and resources, the other 37 companies show no evidence of any such commitment.

- *Context – lack of commitments only part of the problem.* At least eight of the companies are actively discharging tailings to rivers or marine environments or are storing them on the seabed. Note: the assessment did not consider whether companies have committed not to engage in deep-sea mining––another activity which would potentially hinder achievement of this marine-oriented SDG.

Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3), Gender Equality (SDG 5), and Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6) show some of the weakest results: Aside from the result on Life below Water, these three SDGs show the weakest average results, ranging from 11 to 12 per cent (see Table 2). These weak results are largely because of the following:

SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing: Little evidence among the 38 companies on a range of measures including, for example: (1) tracking, reviewing and acting to improve their performance on reducing their adverse impacts on water quality; (2) conducting health impact assessments in mining-affected communities; and (3) providing gender-appropriate health services (e.g. family planning and sexual health) for workers.

- *Context – little action on this priority issue.* The fact that most of the companies show no evidence of assessing health impacts in mining-affected areas is striking, given that mining operations are associated with wide-ranging health issues linked to pollution, in-migration and social disruption. Likewise, occupational diseases, injuries and fatalities are common in the mining sector.

SDG 5: Gender Equality: A generalised lack of evidence of measures, such as systems to: (1) protect women workers from harassment and gender-based violence; (2) ensure women workers are provided with gender-appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE); (3) conduct gender impact assessments in mining-affected communities; and (4) include women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses in local business development and local procurement support activities.

- *Context – lack of action where it matters most.* The lack of measures on gender equality contrasts with the fact that mining companies frequently refer to their positive contribution to SDG 5, in the context of their programmes to improve the gender balance of their Boards of Directors and senior management teams. While these programmes are important, companies are showing much less action on avoiding adverse impacts on gender equality within their mining workers and within mining-affected communities on more fundamental issues such as ensuring women workers have gender-appropriate PPE or ensuring women-led businesses are not excluded from local procurement support activities.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation: Little or no evidence on the part of many of the companies of measures to, among other things: (1) track, review and act to improve their performance on reducing their adverse impacts on water quality and water quantity; (2) disclose mine-site-level data on water quality; and (3) design and implement water stewardship strategies, in consultation with other water users.

- *Context – priority risks not matched by action.* Mining companies often publicise their positive contribution to SDG 6, in the context of community projects on water and sanitation, whereas there is little evidence of companies systematically addressing their potential adverse impacts on water or disclosing data on water quality impacts downstream of their operations.

Results in context

Table 3 shows some striking mismatches between the level of company SDG-supportive efforts and the prioritisation of the SDGs by the same group of 38 companies. For example, SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) are both among the most frequently prioritised SDGs, but show some of the weakest levels of action by mining companies. Looking at the three SDGs for which mining companies pose the highest risk of negative impacts (according to S&P Global),[37] two of these receive some of the weakest levels of action by companies: SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water).

Table 3 Comparison of SDG-supportive efforts with prioritisation of the SDGs and relative SDG-risk exposure of mining operations

	1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Average score (%) for SDG-supportive measures by the 38 mining companies* ● highest scores ● lowest scores	17.6	24.8	11.9	36.4	10.9	13.6	26.4	25.0	16.8	22.8	28.7	21.1	19.5	4.6	31.2	26.4	34.4
Prioritisation of the SDG by the 38 mining companies** ● most frequently prioritised ● least frequently prioritised	48	36	92	60	56	72	60	100	64	64	64	72	76	20	64	60	52
Highest risk of negative impact by mining companies on achievement of the SDG*** ●						●								●	●		

* Scores shown are average results across all 38 assessed companies, on SDG-supportive measures. Given evidence-based nature of the assessment, low scores may reflect lack of public disclosure by companies of public interest information, rather than a lack of measures.

** Percentage of companies that have prioritised the SDG, among the 25 assessed companies that have publicly disclosed their prioritisation of SDGs (see next section).

*** See Trucost (2020). *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Emerging Trends and Analysis of the SDG Impact of Companies in the S&P 500.* https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/documents/sp-emerging-trends-and-analysis-05-002.pdf The report defines SDG risk as *"…the risk that a company may be directly or indirectly causing a negative impact on the SDGs (such as greenhouse gas emissions in the supply chain) or the risk that a company may be dependent on practices and activities that conflict with the SDGs (such as underpayment of wages or child labor)."* The report identifies SDG 6, SDG 14 and SDG 15 as the Goals to which mining companies are most exposed.

5 Conclusions and looking ahead

5 Conclusions and looking ahead

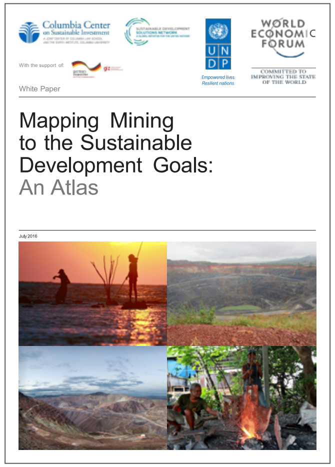
Conclusions

It is heartening to see many companies showing attention to the SDGs to some degree, given the developmental context within which so much mining takes place. And we know that many companies are working on many mining-related economic, environmental, social and governance issues that connect directly to the SDGs.

Integrating and reporting on the SDGs, however, is still not the norm, though good practices are seen among some companies. These companies are clearly making considerable efforts to think about how their businesses connect with the SDGs and how they can track and report on their contributions to achievement of the global Goals.

Overall the results of this status update suggest that good practices have not been widely adopted and most mining companies still have considerable room for improvement in taking these strategic steps towards fulfilling their considerable potential to help deliver the SDGs.

Frameworks to guide company action on the SDGs



The Mapping Mining to the Sustainable Development Goals: An Atlas includes guidance and good practice examples.

The RMI Framework 2020 presents a comprehensive SDG-linked framework.

The RMI Report 2020 includes learning tools that companies can use to steer their continuous improvement efforts on developing and implementing responsible, SDG-supportive policies and practices.

Looking ahead – some recommendations

The SDGs offer a particular mirror for the developmental and transformative role that companies can play in the areas around their mine sites and in the countries where they operate. With this in mind, companies are encouraged to consider the following practical steps that can help demonstrate commitment and action on the SDGs.

1. **Demonstrate responsible mining as the business model.** Companies can show leadership on the SDGs as part of their regular way of doing business, rather than as add-on efforts.

2. **Raise the status of sustainability in the hierarchy.** Bring sustainability into the C-suite for stronger governance, accountability and signalling. Consider assigning the Chief Sustainability Officer role to the CEO.

3. **Resource sustainability departments.** Equip sustainability departments with enough people, resources and influence at both the corporate and operational level to enable momentum across the organisation.

4. **Show courageous leadership and attract aspirational talent.** Companies can gain stronger trust and respect in the long term by being open about the challenges they face in addressing economic, environmental, social and governance issues and the SDGs. Honest and balanced reporting on SDGs together with courageous targets will retain and attract ambitious and talented staffs.

5. **Integrate the SDGs into existing work on economic, environmental, social and governance issues.** Companies which have already put in place responsible mining policies and practices can go further by demonstrating meaningful integration of the SDGs into their business strategies, corporate governance and into their sustainability monitoring and reporting processes. Importantly, the SDGs are not an additional requirement for companies beyond their efforts on economic, environmental, social and governance issues; effective action on the SDG issues translates into effective performance on responsible mining.

6. **Leverage the SDG target and indicator framework to set progressive measurable targets for SDG action.** The SDGs are data-driven through an indicator and target framework. Rather than viewing the SDGs as a menu of a set of options, use the Goals as a framework to measure performance against a baseline and towards progressive ambitious quantitative targets to drive and track their progress to 2030 and beyond.

7. **Apply SDG-supportive practices consistently across the company.** Companies can learn from the good practices of others and amplify good examples from within their own portfolio across their operations. Positive case studies are inspiring but need to be copied and normalised as standard practice, even across mine sites with the same company.

8. **Disclose public interest data points on SDG-linked activities.** Companies can proactively disclose: (1) the actions they are taking related to the SDGs, via their management of economic, environmental, social and governance issues; (2) information on their positive actions, data on their negative impacts and explanations of mitigation measures; and (3) results of their performance monitoring and efforts they are taking to improve their performance.

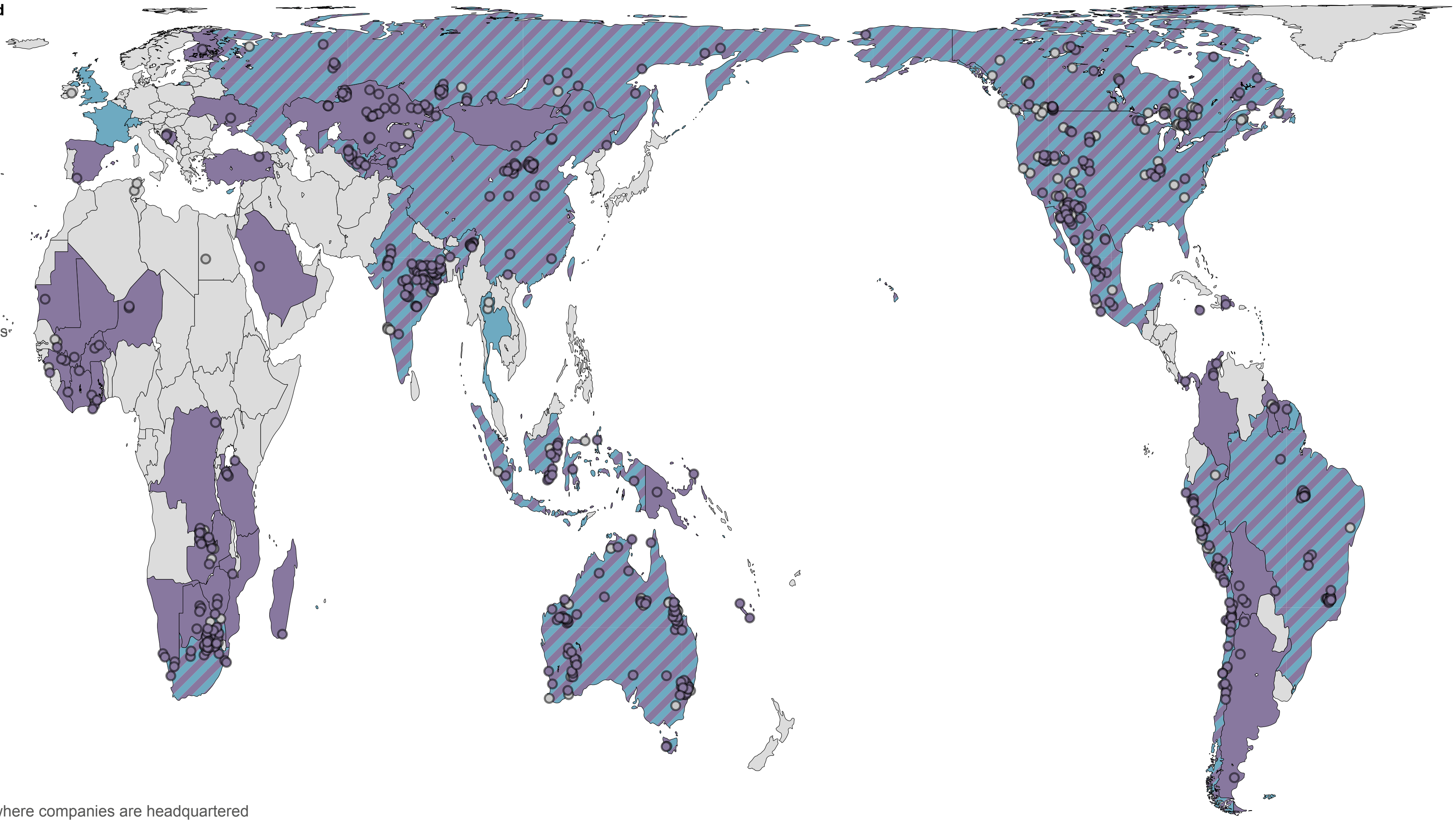
9. **Use the momentum of the SDG Decade of Action to enable transformative change for society, for future generations, and for the mining industry.**

Scope of sample of 38 companies

Scope of the 38 companies included in the RMI Report 2020

Companies assessed

Anglo American
AngloGold Ashanti
Antofagasta
ArcelorMittal
Banpu
Barrick Gold Corp
BHP
Buenaventura
Bumi Resources
China Shenhua
Coal India
CODELCO
ERG
Evraz
Exxaro Resources
First Quantum Minerals
Fortescue
Freeport-McMoRan
Glencore
Gold Fields
Grupo México
Industrias Peñoles
MMG
Navoi MMC
Newcrest Mining
Newmont
NMDC
Nordgold
Orano
Peabody Energy
Polymetal
Rio Tinto
RUSAL
Sibanye-Stillwater
Teck
Vale
Vedanta Resources
Zijin



Home countries, where companies are headquartered
Producing countries, where companies have mining operations
Operational mine sites
Closed or suspended mine sites (known)

Endnotes

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35 The RMI Framework comprises topics, indicators and metric questions relating to key economic, environmental, social and governance issues. The scope of the framework has been developed based on extensive consultations with experts and with stakeholders including mining-affected communities, civil society organisations, labour unions, peoples' movements, mining companies, investors, governments and others.

36 The scores are based on the results and the scoring framework of the RMI Report 2020, with average scores for a given category representing an aggregation of the individual scores achieved by the 38 companies on the indicator(s) included in that category. Low average scores indicate that only a few companies show evidence of putting these measures in place or that the companies as a whole show little evidence of these measures. So for example, a 30 per cent score at its simplest can show that one-third of the companies are putting all the relevant measures in place, or that all 38 companies are putting one-third of the relevant measures in place. In practice, the scores reflect a combination of how widespread the measures are across the 38 companies and across the different issues (indicators) and how robust the relevant measures are, as measured by the scoring framework.

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