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# Gender Impact Assessment Tools for Mining Remain on the Shelf

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Mining can bring significant economic opportunities to local communities, but it can also transform people's ways of life, cultures, livelihoods, politics, community structures, and power dynamics. These effects can be felt very differently within a community. For women and girls, who already suffer discrimination [at work](#) and [in their communities](#), the effects of mining can be influenced by intersecting factors, including sociocultural background, age, economic class, sexuality, education, and disability. Understanding these impacts before operations start—and planning accordingly—is essential for both the well-being of local communities as well as the mining companies that need the social licence to operate.

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The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) recently published a [global review](#) of the toolkits, guidelines, and legal frameworks that have been both developed and deployed by governments, international organizations, and civil society groups to identify and address the gendered impacts of mining operations. Most often, these tools and frameworks take one of the three approaches:

- Assessing the gendered impacts of mining operations during the environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs)
- Conducting standalone dedicated gender impact assessments
- Integrating the gender analysis into due diligence or human rights impact assessments.

The IGF found that despite the many available methodologies, governments, mining companies, and other stakeholders do not conduct sufficient comprehensive, systemic, and structured gender analysis. This finding is echoed in the [Responsible Mining Index 2022](#), which found that very few mining companies are assessing for gendered impacts.

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Governments are well positioned to remedy the situation by including gender analysis as a requirement of impact assessments. Canada is a standout in this regard, with its 2019 [Impact Assessment Act](#) that requires proponents of large-scale infrastructure projects, including mining, to conduct assessments that consider “the health, social and economic effects, including with respect to the intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors.” The Canadian government also promotes the application of the [Gender-Based Analysis Plus](#) analysis framework to unpack the intersections of gender with diverse identity factors during the impact assessment process. Importantly, these policies have successfully led proponents in the country to undertake gender analyses. Similarly, the Netherlands has a framework to integrate gender dimensions into

the ESIA process for overseas projects supported by the government's international cooperation program, and Peru has been following Canada's lead and working on gender-specific indicators. This may indicate a positive trend is emerging—but so far, only a few countries are making progress.

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Civil society or community-based groups can take the initiative and conduct gender analyses or gender impact assessments that can feed into impact assessment processes. In one case, Oxfam Zambia [led by example](#) and implemented a structured approach to include women's voices and agency during the ESIA process for a mining project. In this instance, the authorities and project proponent received Oxfam's work positively and considered the concerns of women in the local community. When stakeholders embrace civil society's work in this way, it can become a sustainable practice. Other groups, including the [Feminist Northern Network](#) and [Native Women's Association of Canada](#), have developed tools and guidelines for governments and companies and have supported community-led gender impact assessments.

Another potential way to encourage better practices is by strengthening environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. While many mining companies have developed ESG criteria, research shows that provisions related to gender impacts remain [largely absent](#). Enhancing ESG standards in this way will require raising awareness among investors, so they demand companies do better to understand and plan for how women, girls, and other historically underrepresented groups are uniquely affected by mining.

The gap between the broad range of available tools and resources for integrating gender into impact assessments and their lack of use highlights how decision-makers continue to overlook women and girls in mining communities. The path forward is clear, but action is absent. Community organizations, industry, and

governments must all take action to ensure impact assessments include gender analysis.

