

Roundtable Consultations on the RMI Draft Methodology – a summary

Introduction

Throughout the feasibility study and methodology development, RMI consulted with a wide range of stakeholder groups and experts - in person, via teleconference, and in written correspondence.

From June 2016 to March 2017 this was supplemented with roundtable consultations held in Cote d'Ivoire, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Peru, South Africa and Switzerland. The purpose of the roundtables was to present the RMI and to test assumptions and elicit feedback on the RMI Draft Methodology from a wider range of stakeholders, including representatives of mining-affected communities, local civil society organisations, national and international NGOs, academics, and others. Six of these consultations took place in countries with important mining sectors. More than 150 people participated in the consultations, with many of the local community participants travelling considerable distances in order to attend.

The consultations provided the opportunity for rich and wide-ranging discussions about the issues facing mining-affected communities, and the wider social, environmental and governance issues related to mining in the countries and regions hosting the consultations. Participants were also invited to comment on the overall approach of RMI, the Draft Methodology and the issues it should cover both at company-wide and mine-site level.

This summary outlines the main points raised during the consultations, and the recommendations on the RMI Draft Methodology.

Perspectives of local stakeholders

In discussing the topics that should be included in the Responsible Mining Index, a high level of frustration and often cynicism was voiced by many. This was expressed very similarly across different regions by representatives of mining-affected communities and local community organisations and related to their experience with mining operations, mining companies, and governments. These included:

- A strong sense of disempowerment in their interactions with both mining companies and governments;
- A lack of respect towards local community stakeholders on the part of both companies and governments;
- Low levels of trust between local community stakeholders and both companies and governments;
- Poor government performance, weak legislation, and a lack of adequate enforcement at national and local government level;
- Collusion between governments and mining companies, including collusion between government law enforcement agencies and companies to the detriment of communities;
- Threats to the work and safety of human right defenders;
- Little or no economic benefit filtering back to the local level;
- Severe impacts on people's livelihoods and food security through the effects that mining operations have on water, air and other environmental considerations;
- Unnecessarily large mining leases, resulting in the loss of arable land that could be put to productive use;
- A universal despair at the lack of sufficient employment and training opportunities.

In some cases a view was very strongly expressed that:

- Mining can never be considered 'responsible' so mining activities should be kept to the minimum that is necessary;
- Coal mining should be discontinued immediately due to the implications for climate change.

It is worth noting these overarching sentiments, that surfaced spontaneously in the course of the more specific conversations around the scope and methodology for the Responsible Mining Index.

Overall approach of RMI

The consultations confirmed a strong level of support for the RMI approach, including:

- The rationale and goal of the Index;
- The analytical framework, including the topics covered, Issue Areas and Measurement Areas;
- The emphasis on public disclosure of information;
- The approach to weighting of Issue Areas;
- The consultative approach to developing the methodology;
- The focus on mine sites; and
- The contextual research to be provided on these mine sites.

There were also calls for RMI to adapt or strengthen its approach to:

- Cover more and smaller companies in the Index;
- Cover more mine sites per company;
- Include mine site verification ;
- Enable civil society to provide information on company behaviour;
- Take account of important role of governments in influencing mining company behaviour;
- Publish disaggregated information to support stakeholders in their interactions with mining companies.

Suggestions for additional topics

Across the consultations, many different topics were proposed as potential additions to the scope of the methodology. Some have been included in the methodology, and others have not for various reasons like practicality, measurability, assessability, or outside the scope of company responsibility. These topics included:

- Decent living conditions for workers and families;
- Crèches for woman workers, with meals for the children;
- Schools near mine sites for workers' children;
- Decent benefits as well as a living wage;
- Multi-stakeholder committees for monitoring of environmental issues;
- Impacts of mining on children;
- No-go areas for mining, based on environmental/biodiversity/cultural heritage values;
- Community holding shares in mining companies;
- Human health as a transversal issue;
- Inter-generational considerations as a transversal issue;
- Sharing of mine-planning information, e.g. where new underground developments will impact structures above ground;

- No subcontractors taking work from local;
- Making governments more accountable.

Considerations regarding the philosophical approach of RMI:

- Avoid the western development model – take a holistic view of humanity as a part of the whole;
- Overall concept of territory and land that integrates the topics like water, air and biodiversity in a more intrinsic way;
- See the environment as an entity in and of itself;
- Ensure that information is shared for the common good and continuous improvement, not just another academic tick-box exercise.

Suggestions for content and format of RMI report

Participants in the consultations made some practical recommendations on how the RMI report could best show the Index results in a useful and accessible manner. Among the suggestions were:

- Translations into several regional and local languages;
- Different versions of the report, tailored to the needs of different stakeholders;
- Use of infographics, cartoons, and other visuals;
- Results available on mobile phone apps that can update in real time;
- Clear language, without jargon or too many acronyms;
- Regional trend analyses to highlight differences in results;
- Track main changes seen from one report to the next; and
- Publish all raw data on which scoring is based.

Conclusions

The learnings from the roundtable consultations were the result of the generosity, knowledge and articulate participation of many people.

RMI would like to thank all those who made the time to travel and attend the consultations, and hopes that the methodology and the results from the data-gathering and analysis to follow will prove to have been responsive to the conversations and thinking that surfaced across all the groups.

Annex: Figures

Figure 1. Main stakeholder groups represented at the roundtable consultations

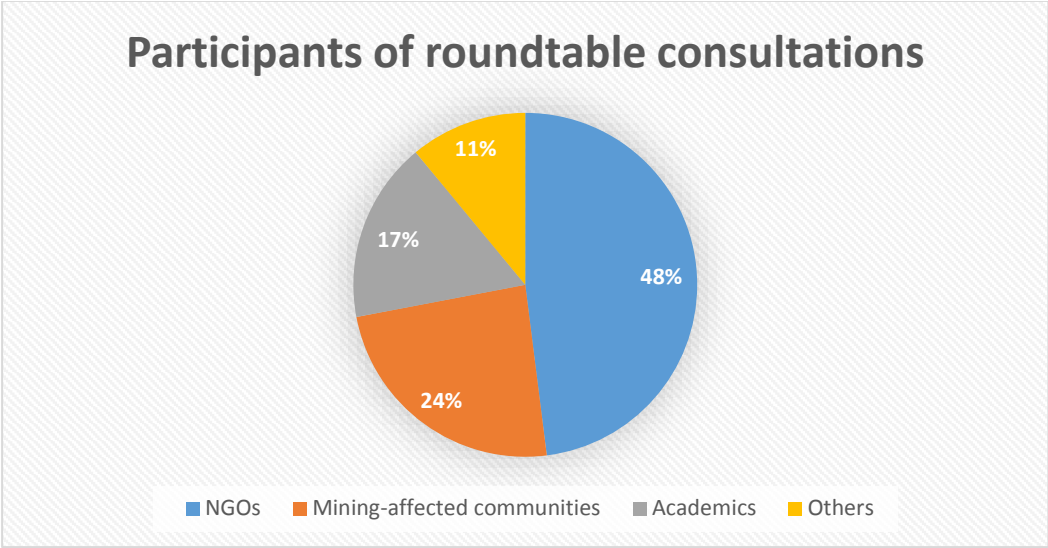


Figure 2. Country locations of the roundtable consultations

