Concept Note: Responsible Mining Community of Practice (CoP)

Background

The Africa Evidence Network (AEN) is a pan-African network of more than 5000 members and is open to all who live and work on the continent. It is unique in its inclusivity and diversity in six broad dimensions. It spans i) all countries in Africa; ii) all sectors across the Sustainable Development Goals; iii) all spheres, including government, academia, civil society, citizens, and all intermediaries; iv) the full diversity of roles within these spheres from members of parliament to program managers to researchers; v) all elements of the evidence production and use cycle, from the generation of evidence to its integration into policy and implementation; and vi) all types of evidence from administrative data, to evaluations of all kinds, to experimental research, to citizen experiences and systematic syntheses of primary studies. Its strategic goals are to foster collaboration among those engaged in or supporting evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) in Africa, increase knowledge and understanding of EIDM, share capacities across the EIDM ecosystem, improve the enabling context by promoting EIDM in Africa, and advocate for Africa's full voice and participation in the national, regional, and global movements to increase EIDM.

The concept of responsible mining has evolved beyond questions of environmental compliance or operational performance. It increasingly encompasses how mineral resources are governed, how decisions are made, who participates in those decisions, whose knowledge is recognised, who benefits from mineral development, and how environmental and social risks are anticipated and managed across the mining lifecycle. This complexity creates a fundamental need for EIDM to ensure that evidence can reach the right actors, in the right form and at the right time to meaningfully transform the lives of the most vulnerable.

Purpose of the Community of Practice

Africa's mineral resources are central to the continent's economic transformation, industrialisation and global economic position. The growing importance of critical and green minerals presents significant opportunities for African countries to advance regional economic integration, employment, technological development and inclusive economic growth. At the same time, mineral development sits at the intersection of complex environmental, social, economic and governance challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, water security, land and livelihoods, human rights, occupational health and safety, gender inequality, community participation and equitable distribution of mineral wealth.

The Africa Evidence Network (AEN), working alongside AFREWATCH International and PDI Tanzania, proposes the establishment of a Responsible Mining Community of Practice (RM-CoP). The Community of Practice will serve as a continental platform for advancing EIDM in responsible mining by connecting stakeholders, strengthening learning, amplifying community voices, and supporting evidence-informed advocacy and policy development. EIDM is fundamental to responsible mining because responsible mining is, at its core, a decision-making challenge. A stronger evidence ecosystem can help decision makers understand what is known, what remains uncertain, whose perspectives are missing, which interventions have worked in comparable contexts, and where further evidence is required. In turn, this can support more transparent, participatory, adaptive and accountable approaches to mineral development.

The main aim of the proposed Responsible Mining CoP is to bring together the people and institutions that produce, use, translate and are affected by evidence about mining. Responsible mining decisions rarely have a single or technically determined answer. They involve competing priorities, uncertainty, different forms of knowledge and significant consequences for communities, economies and ecosystems. Geological, economic, environmental, social, health, governance and community evidence may all be relevant to a single decision. Yet this evidence is often generated by different institutions, disciplines and sectors, using different methodologies and operating within different knowledge systems. The Responsible Mining CoP seeks to achieve the following in alignment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- Establish a trusted platform for dialogue and collaboration on responsible mining *(SDG 16, SDG 17)*.
- Promote the use of evidence in mining policy, advocacy and decision-making *(SDG 16, SDG 17)*.
- Amplify local and community-generated knowledge and experiences *(SDG 10, SDG 16, SDG 5)*.
- Support learning and knowledge exchange among practitioners, policymakers, researchers and civil society actors *(SDG 4, SDG 16, SDG 17)*.
- Strengthen collective understanding of emerging mining challenges and opportunities *(SDG 16, SDG 17)*.
- Contribute to the development and dissemination of a Responsible Mining Outlook for Africa *(SDG 12, SDG 16, SDG 17)*.
- Foster regional and cross-country collaboration around mining governance and accountability *(SDG 4, SDG 16, SDG 17)*.

The Responsible Mining CoP will bring together key stakeholders that will provide perspectives towards providing the relevant EIDM infrastructure that recognizes the

importance of context, values, lived experience, local and indigenous knowledge related to responsible mining in Africa. This CoP will not seek to duplicate existing mining networks, bodies or advocacy platforms, but will rather focus on the space between evidence, knowledge and decision-making.

Objectives

1. Convene stakeholders and create a platform where diverse perspectives ca be engaged in constructive dialogue around responsible mining issues.
2. Strengthen Evidence-Informed Decision-Making by promoting the systematic use of evidence in the design, implementation and review of mining policies, programs and advocacy initiatives.
3. Amplify community voices and ensure that communities impacted by mining activities are recognised as critical knowledge holders and contributors to decision-making processes.
4. Build capacity and learning by strengthening stakeholder capacity to understand, generate, communicate and apply evidence to improve mining governance and accountability.
5. Support collective advocacy and facilitate evidence-informed advocacy that advances transparency, sustainability, equity and accountability within the mining sector.

Key Activities

The Responsible Mining CoP will provide a combination of practical learning, collaborative knowledge management and discussion through the following core functions:

1. Knowledge Exchange

- Webinars and online learning sessions exploring technical expert insights and cross-industry leader experience.
- Panel discussions, workshops and practical learning sessions between experts and practitioners to explore successes and emerging issues.
- Mining learning exchanges between countries and organisations, and regional dialogues.

2. Evidence Translation and Knowledge Brokering

- Production of knowledge products such as evidence summaries, research digests, mining governance insights and community evidence products.

- Develop a stakeholder repository of key resources, tools, and practical guidance and toolkits.
- Emerging trends, opportunities and challenges across Africa will be published across quarterly papers/newsletters/insights.

3. Responsible Mining Outlook and Strategic Intelligence

- Contribute to generating a flagship evidence product that serves as a trusted continental reference.
- Short thematic country spotlight reports highlighting key developments in key countries.
- Landscape scanning and systematic identification of emerging risks, opportunities and policy trends likely to influence mining governance.
- Expert advisory roundtables that convene experts to interpret evidence and identify strategic implications for practitioners and policymakers.

4. Community Participation and Social Accountability

- Support communities to document and communicate their experiences through story collection, participatory research, community-led data collection.
- Facilitate a community mining voices platform that is dedicated to storytelling that captures perspectives across different key stakeholder groups (e.g women in mining, community leaders, youth advocates etc.).
- Amplify community case studies that showcase lessons learned to be shared amongst stakeholders.

5. Capacity Strengthening and Evidence-Informed Advocacy

- Strengthen the ability of stakeholders to generate, interpret and communicate evidence for responsible mining through training sessions.
- Support constructive evidence-informed engagement around responsible mining and collective problem-solving.
- Collaborative advocacy learning sessions to strengthen evidence-informed advocacy approaches and share lessons learned.

Expected Outcomes

I. **Increased participation of diverse stakeholders** in responsible mining conversations and stronger relationships established across sectors with improved understanding of different stakeholder perspectives.

II. **Enhanced access to relevant and accessible evidence**, and stakeholders better informed about responsible mining issues and emerging trends.

III. **Increased visibility of community experiences**, priorities and perspectives through stronger representation of traditionally underrepresented voices in mining conversations.
IV. **Increased stakeholder knowledge of EIDM**, responsible mining and evidence-use.
V. **Shape the Responsible Mining Outlook** with key areas of focus on mining trends, risks and opportunities and overall increased stakeholder engagement around priority issues affecting the sector.

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