

Collaboration underway to develop consolidated standard for responsible mining

28 November 2023 – The Copper Mark, Mining Association of Canada, ICMM and the World Gold Council are working towards consolidating their individual voluntary responsible mining and metals standards into a single global responsible mining standard, and multi-stakeholder oversight system.

This collaboration responds to direct feedback from investors, civil society, customers, policy makers and mining companies that confirmed the appetite for a less crowded and complex standards landscape that is more transparent, robust and encourages wider industry participation to drive impact at scale.

The process aims to take the best attributes of each organisation’s standard as the foundation for developing a single, global standard that would be practical and implementable by any mine operator regardless of commodity, geography, or size. Implementation of the standard would be overseen by an independent, multi-stakeholder governance body and a credible assurance process, both of which are to be defined and developed as part of this exercise.

The proposed standard could, at the outset, have the widest coverage of any voluntary responsible mining standard to date, with initial implementation by more than 80 mining companies with around 700 operations in almost 60 countries worldwide. Broader participation by companies beyond the four organisations will help support the industry to further raise the bar on ESG performance.

The development process is being informed by multi-stakeholder and industry advisory groups that will play an essential role in providing a balanced perspective on the proposed standard, assurance process and governance model. Inclusive engagement and consultation are at the core of this process. The draft standard will be shaped by wide ranging stakeholder engagement and feedback through a public consultation that we expect to launch in 2024.

Whilst developing a new standard is a challenging process, all partners are fully committed in their efforts to conduct a robust and thorough process in pursuit of this objective.

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Notes to Editors:

Quotes from the four initiative partners:

Rohitash Dhawan, CEO and President of ICMM said: *“Everything we do at ICMM is aimed at helping raise the standards of responsible mining, represented by our Mining Principles. As a condition of membership, these Principles and their accompanying site-based Performance Expectations have helped deliver significant change across approximately 650 sites in over 50 countries where our members operate, and many others beyond.*

This change will need to continue and reach all parts of the global mining industry to foster a safe, just and sustainable world enabled by responsibly produced metals and minerals. Key to this is having a multi-stakeholder governed standard for responsible mining that drives continuous improvement at scale.”

Pierre Gratton, President and CEO of MAC said: *When MAC first launched Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) in 2004, it was unique as a site level performance system with independent assurance and multi-stakeholder oversight. Today, the landscape has changed and there are a number of different mining standards with some of the same attributes. A consolidation of several of today's standards into one can simplify the landscape for customers, investors, civil society and the mining industry itself. MAC brings to this exercise a commitment to building a new standard that drives performance improvement, is fully transparent and embraces the views and perspectives of impacted communities.*

Michèle Brühlhart, Executive Director of The Copper Mark, said: *"The Copper Mark offers a robust assurance framework for copper, molybdenum, nickel and zinc that is governed to equal parts by industry and non-industry representatives. In an increasingly complex landscape of sustainability initiatives, exploring the option of converging responsible mining standards provides us with an opportunity to build on the strengths of each existing system with a view to scale the implementation of responsible practices across the mining industry. A strong, site-level, assurance process, engagement with all impacted stakeholders and multi-stakeholder oversight will be essential to build support for a converged standard and its implementation."*

David Tait, Chief Executive of the World Gold Council, said: *"The Responsible Gold Mining Principles (RGMPs) set out an over-arching framework that defines what constitutes responsible gold mining and has been widely adopted by the gold mining industry and accepted by a broad range of stakeholders. Recognising that many of our members produce other metals as well as gold, and additionally, report across a number of different responsible mining standards and reporting frameworks, we believe that it is appropriate to explore the potential in developing a single, global framework that covers all commodities. We strongly believe that responsible mining underpins sustained socio-economic development and therefore we support efforts to increase wider adoption of responsible mining standards."*

About the four organisations

1. ICMM

ICMM stands for mining with principles. We bring together a third of the global metals and mining industry, along with key partners to drive leadership, action and innovation for sustainable development, ultimately delivering a positive contribution to society. Through collaboration, ICMM member companies set the standard for responsibly produced minerals and metals in a safe, just and sustainable world.

2. Mining Association of Canada

The Mining Association of Canada is the national organisation for the Canadian mining industry. Its members account for most of Canada's production of base and precious metals, uranium, diamonds, metallurgical coal, mined oil sands and industrial minerals and are actively engaged in mineral exploration, mining, smelting, refining and semi-fabrication.

3. The Copper Mark

The Copper Mark is an assurance framework to promote responsible practices and demonstrate the transition minerals industry's contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Copper Mark uses a rigorous site-level assessment process to independently verify whether individual copper, nickel, zinc and/or molybdenum producing sites have responsible production practices. Over 20% of globally mined copper is currently produced by Copper Mark-assured sites.

4. The World Gold Council

World Gold Council is a membership organisation that champions the role gold plays as a strategic asset, shaping the future of a responsible and accessible gold supply chain. Their team of experts builds understanding of the use case and possibilities of gold through research, analysis, commentary, and insights. They drive industry progress, shaping policy and setting the standards for a perpetual and sustainable gold market.

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