

13th PPA ALIGNMENT SESSION

24 April 2023

OECD

Paris, France

OVERVIEW AND NEXT STEPS

On April 24, 2023, the Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade (PPA) convened a side session during the OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains. Representatives from the PPA and other aligned organizations and initiatives – including the ASGM Formalization Partnership, European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM), Fair Cobalt Alliance, the Progressive Due Diligence Lab, and Responsible Minerals Initiative – gathered to take stock of current and emerging issues and trends in responsible sourcing and share insights about participants’ respective organizational activities and priorities. In doing so, attendees sought to identify opportunities to collaborate or complement each other’s work and impact, and discussed where coordination could address emerging priorities and gaps.

Several opportunities for enhanced coordination emerged and are detailed below. As a starting point, there are near term opportunities to amplify one another’s open calls, including

- The PPA Data for Impact Symposium Request for Abstracts ([English](#) | [French](#) | [Spanish](#)); responses are due June 23.
- EPRM’s forthcoming call for proposals to support mine sites (anticipated for publication in June).

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY

Overview

The PPA convened this alignment meeting to foster strategic dialogue and coordination among initiatives promoting responsible sourcing of artisanal minerals. Participating organizations opened the meeting by sharing brief overviews summarizing their respective activities and priorities. To inform discussion about opportunities for further collaboration, complementarity, and amplification, the PPA summarized themes emerging from recent interviews with a number of aligned organizations, including several in attendance. A significant point of further group discussion sought to articulate and align on shared principles relating to responsible minerals development and trade.

Avenues and Opportunities for Collaboration

Attendees identified the following opportunities for potential collaboration.

Information-sharing: Circulating timely and accessible information among aligned initiatives could take several forms, from sharing relevant news and updates (e.g., grant opportunities, calls for proposals, etc.), convening joint webinars, and more. There could be value in the identification of a central clearinghouse to more effectively achieve this shared objective. Donors who choose not to fund a worthy project given considerations relating to organizational priorities, available funds, or existing portfolios may wish to facilitate matchmaking between the applicant and other donors. Relatedly, donors can highlight especially catalytic projects or developments for one another and identify opportunities for jointly amplifying those approaches.

Alignment on Key Definitions and Principles: Developing and aligning on common definitions (e.g., ‘formalization,’ ‘legitimacy,’ ‘progressivity’) and approaches to interventions would be a productive exercise to avoid mixed messages or interventions that can unintentionally but negatively impact progress. Initial thinking on some of these issues and additional areas for increased conceptual alignment can be found in the Shared Principles section [below](#).

Outreach and Communications: With clearer alignment on definitions, shared principles, and intervention approaches, participants also underscored the need to bring nuance to mainstream narratives around responsible sourcing of artisanal minerals by contextualizing key issues and principles. Relevant target audiences include journalists, consumers, and civil society advocates. In particular, there may be value in educating these groups on the value of a holistic view of risk, the importance of progressive improvement, and links between minerals development and a global energy transition. Additionally, given the role of critical minerals to industries such as renewable energy and electric vehicles, dedicated outreach to actors in these spaces can expand and diversify the coalition advancing these messages.

Joint In-Region Engagement and Activities: Organizing joint delegations to the GLR and other geographies of interest can facilitate shared learning and coordination on complementary follow-up activities among participants while allowing in-region representatives to share their message with multiple audiences at once.

Shared Principles

The PPA Secretariat summarized a number of principles and observations that have recently surfaced in a number of forums but which may not be fully understood among responsible sourcing proponents. An updated set of proposed principles, integrating input from this meeting, appears below:

- **To create a viable path for upstream actors to engage with formal, responsible trade, there is a need to offer competitive incentives to artisanal miners and traders.** Traceability and due diligence require data, time, and actions from miners which may impact their business; oftentimes, this burden is uncompensated. Interventions need to propose a value-add to miners that overcomes the myriad costs of due diligence and provides a benefit over illicit trade.¹
- **A progressive approach to risk mitigation is a responsible approach. This should be reflected in corporate behavior and regulatory policy.**
 - **Risk cannot be avoided completely.** It is present in all geographies and is not limited to conflict-affected areas. It is present in all supply chains and is not limited to artisanal production.
 - Aside from OECD Guidance Annex II risks that warrant suspension of operations, **attempts to de-risk through disengagement may ultimately undermine objectives for responsible minerals development**, by pushing alienated suppliers into relationships with buyers with less regard for human rights, environmental outcomes, and other ESG considerations.
 - **A consistent approach to risk assessment, mitigation, and enforcement is needed** in order to avoid harboring “blind spots” in which illicit actors can operate with impunity,

¹ As one example, while monitoring how new technologies can assist traceability efforts, there is also an opportunity to leverage large-scale, untapped, existing data (e.g., transport flows, satellite records) to increase visibility in mineral supply chains. This type of data may enable new approaches that impose less burden while achieving similar or better clarity on risk.

and to avoid hyperfocus in other areas which unfairly penalizes those with the fewest resources.

- **Formalization is more than legalization.** Formalization is not simply a process for the state to collect revenue. Rather it must include a focus on – and resources to support – *professionalization*, including improved social, environmental, health, and safety outcomes, as well as business skills for long-term planning and entrepreneurship.
- **Enhanced cooperation between government silos (host and donor governments)** can help to address systemic barriers and constraints and avoid unintended consequences from interventions that address one issue (e.g., mercury or anti-money laundering) that inadvertently create other conditions for informality.
- **Supporting conditions for coordination among NGOs.** NGO coalitions can offer valuable insight and nuances to overcome issue silos and improve efficacy of interventions and needs upstream. *However*, coordination by NGOs requires significant investment of time, money, and intellectual property. Donors can make space in their budgets to support coordination by and between grantees, and should consider how their funding processes can incentivize collaboration rather than competition.