

## Press Release

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# Just transition for mining requires more than net-zero

**Commendable and important as mining companies' commitments to become carbon-neutral are, emissions reduction is only one element of a responsible response to climate change. Recent research by RMF reveals that action to assess and address climate-related risks on people and environments impacted by mining – yet essential for a just transition – is conspicuously missing from current efforts by mining companies.**

The mining sector is a significant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, particularly when Scope 3 emissions are taken into account. In the absence of efficient recycling value chains and real circular economy models, it is also clear that the energy transition will create additional demand for metals and minerals. Many mining companies are positioning themselves to take advantage of this opportunity, though appealing appellations like 'green mining' and 'future-facing industry' obscure the socio-environmental challenges that mining still faces as an industry.

Recent research by RMF reveals that the majority of assessed large-scale mining companies have not identified and disclosed how climate change may exacerbate their impacts on communities, workers or the environment. These weak performances contrast with the much stronger results on companies tracking and reducing their GHG emissions. Although human-induced greenhouse gases emissions are the main reason behind the huge changes in the world's climate system, working solely on the reduction of these emissions leaves local impacts and risks unaddressed.

Mining companies' approaches to climate-sensitive issues such as water management, tailings, or community health show a similar trend to how they address broader climate change, with a strong focus on operational considerations and much less attention to the salient impacts that mining operations have on local stakeholders, biodiversity and the environment at the local level.

There is a real risk of 'carbon-washing' if companies' re-branding is underpinned only by their current limited action on climate impacts and narrow net-zero focus. To defuse this risk and deliver a positive contribution, companies, financiers, insurers, and governments must ensure that mining's climate-related (and climate-exacerbated) impacts are identified, assessed and addressed.

Mining companies can show more leadership in how they tackle climate change beyond their risk to business by mainstreaming and normalising leading practices amongst their peers. Action on the ground at mine-site level, where mining and climate impacts intersect, is essential for the wellbeing of local people and the health of local environments – as well as the stability of the socio-economic context of the mining operations themselves.

[Read more](#)

Issued by: **Responsible Mining Foundation**, Nyon, Switzerland  
Email: [media@responsibleminingfoundation.org](mailto:media@responsibleminingfoundation.org) – Tel.: +41 22 361 14 18

### About the Responsible Mining Foundation

The Responsible Mining Foundation (RMF) is an independent research organisation that encourages continuous improvement in responsible extractives across the industry by developing tools and frameworks, sharing public-interest data and enabling informed and constructive engagement between extractive companies and other stakeholders. The Foundation does not accept funding or other contributions from the extractives sector.

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