



IGF

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM
on Mining, Minerals, Metals and
Sustainable Development



MEETING REPORT

Gender Impact Assessments: Breaking the pattern of inaction

An event co-hosted by the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development and Global Affairs Canada

Sunday, March 5, 2023
Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre

Background

Gender impact assessments (GIAs) are key to assessing the potential and ongoing impacts of mining operations on people of different genders, ages, and sociocultural backgrounds. However, a recent review by the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) (2022) found that governments, mining companies, and other stakeholders do not conduct sufficient,

comprehensive, systemic, and structured gender analyses before or during the mining project cycle.

For this reason, the IGF and Global Affairs Canada co-organized an event to explore how governments, civil society, industry, and practitioners can take action to support GIAs.

The 3-hour side event took place in the margins of the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada on Sunday, March



5, 2023, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. This event follows IGF's increased work to support gender equality in mining governance and the release of the global review on how to integrate gender into mining impact assessments. There were approximately 50 attendees to the side event, including the panellists.

Designing the Event

The objective of the overall event was to promote discussions across three main groups of stakeholders in GIAs—governments, civil society, and industry—to find concrete ways to fill the existing gaps that prevent gender equality from being fully integrated into impact assessments.

In order to cover the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, and in order to capture the breadth and complexity of the topic, the event was designed to feature two panels of experts. The first group explored the role of governments and civil society in overseeing impact assessment frameworks, and the second group invited representatives to discuss the role of the industry and practitioners in GIAs.

Structure and Content

Introduction and Scene-Setting

Introductory remarks by David Fournier (from Global Affairs Canada) introduced the Feminist International Assistance Policy of Canada, and highlighted Canada's concerted efforts to integrate [Gender Based Analysis Plus](#) across their work. Fournier also recognized the existing gender inequalities in the extractive sector and the shortcomings of impact assessments that often fail to take into account the gendered impacts of mining. Greg Radford, Director of the IGF, spoke next and provided the context to IGF's recent (2022) [global review of GIAs frameworks](#), which found very few good examples of the successful integration of any aspects of gender equality into impact assessments.

As scene-setting for the event, Ege Tekinbas, Senior Advisor on Gender Equality at the IGF, gave a brief overview of the gendered impacts of mining operations on mining communities. She also highlighted that there is no single solution for measuring the impacts of mining operations on women; however, suggestions include



conducting a stand-alone GIA, and systematically measuring gendered impacts through environmental and social impact assessments.

Group of Experts Panel Discussion

PANEL 1: The Role of Governments and Civil Society in Overseeing Impact Assessment Frameworks

Moderator:

Carolina Rojas, Independent Consultant

Panellists:

Melanie Campbell, Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan Secretariat, Natural Resources Canada

Joanne Lebert, Executive Director, IMPACT

Ege Tekinbas, Senior Policy Advisor on Gender Equality, IGF

Moderated by Carolina Rojas, the discussion opened by looking at the main reasons for inertia regarding GIAs. Ege Tekinbas suggested that perhaps GIAs aren't required by investors and are not necessarily included in environmental, social, and governance requirements. The terms of reference for environmental and social impact assessments don't necessarily make specific mentions of gender equality. There might, as well, be a lack of understanding around the unequal impacts of mining and how it affects the social licence to operate.

Melanie Campbell explained that Canada's Impact Assessment Act and its Gender-based Analysis Plus requirement were meant to create a more rigorous understanding of vulnerable people. The Canadian Minerals and Metal Plan was developed in collaboration with provinces and territories and Indigenous groups. Targets included in the plan were developed in collaboration with mining communities. Ensuring the

meaningful contribution of women in consultation processes has been recognized to have many positive effects across the entire sector, including on the social licence to operate, on productivity, and on social cohesion. The Canadian government work with communities and women's groups to implement the policy.

Joanne Lebert, from IMPACT, shared an example of their own toolkit for artisanal and small-scale mining workers and supply chains, where there is a need to locate vulnerabilities and support the formalization of artisanal and small-scale mining for women. Some priorities identified by the toolkit were ultimately adopted by the Uganda government within their policies and governance structures. This is a robust example of civil society's work engaging with the government, leading to transformative action. As Joanne Lebert explained, while it



Time	Activity
9:30 am	Registration and Networking
10:00 to 10:10 am	Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Fournier, Deputy Director Development Operations, GAC Greg Radford, Director, IGF
10:10 to 11:05 am	Panel 1 The Role of Governments and Civil Society in Overseeing Impact Assessment Frameworks <p>Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carolina Rojas Hayes, Independent Consultant <p>Presenter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ege Tekinbas, Senior Policy Advisor for Gender Equity, IGF <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melanie Campbell, Director, Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan Secretariat at Natural Resources Canada Andrew Irvine, Legal and Corporate Affairs Director, EITI Joanne Lebert, Executive Director, IMPACT



is not civil society's role to direct changes in policy, its work can support such change, in turn leading to the effective implementation of inclusive impact assessments. Lebert also highlighted that developing guidance around GIA should be a collaborative process that is experiential in nature, and suggested that the greatest impact is learning for all stakeholders involved. This process should be owned by local actors and supported by national frameworks.

PANEL 2: The Role of Industry and Practitioners in Integrating Gender Equality in Impact Assessment

Moderator:

Carolyn Burns, Executive Director,
Devonshire Initiative

Panellists:

Jennifer Adams, Country Director, Mongolia,
Catalyste+

Ben Chalmers, Senior Vice President, Mining
Association of Canada

Susan Joyce, President, On
Common Ground

The second panel kicked off with a discussion of the reasons why there are few good examples of GIAs. Susan Joyce acknowledged that the recent uptake on the human rights dimension in impact assessments led to an increase in the adoption of laws on human rights due diligence. This has been noted as a positive trend, as human rights-related impacts have previously been considered to be "indirect" impacts or "induced" impacts of mining. The lack of GIAs could stem from a series of factors, such as systemic or internalized gender bias in mining, how impact assessments are used to obtain permits, and a lack of women at the negotiation table in the early stages of the mining life cycle. There is also a lack of focus on the "front end"

such as community engagement because companies gloss over the mitigation of the impacts of mining on communities and move straight to the provision of economic benefits and investment in communities.

The development of voluntary standards, such as the Gender Equality standard from *Toward Sustainable Mining* by the Mining Association of Canada, stems from a similar observation on companies' tendency to perceive assessments as a means to obtain permits. According to Ben Chalmers, there was a need to codify gender equality as a standard because it was found that a lot of existing standards centred around the "permitting stage." The standard on gender equality now includes an Indigenous community outreach protocol, as well as protocols on equality, diversity, inclusion, and safety around anti-gender-based violence and harassment. Human rights due diligence has a lot of influence on the standard, requiring dialogue with communities and ensuring they understand the risks at the community level. They also encourage separating the mitigation of risks from the benefits provided; as Chalmers said, dumping more money is not a quick fix to the range of adverse impacts mining has on communities.

Mongolia stands out as an example of how a sector-wide GIA can be conducted. The process was facilitated by the existing laws, policies, and provisions in Mongolia that enabled the exercise. In 2017, a workshop brought all stakeholders together, and they agreed that the lack of gender-disaggregated data required a country-wide GIA for the drafting of a policy. The information gathered was presented to stakeholders and disseminated to local governments, communities, and women's groups for feedback. A gender audit was carried out, and it kicked off the learning process on gender equality within the industry and companies involved in it. The government also received training on



Gender-based Analysis Plus. Jennifer Adams explained that the exercise also found that investors lack awareness on the gendered impacts of mining and that the turnover of staff across governments, civil society, and industry requires constant on-boarding of new actors. She underscored that the process is a learning journey that demands a shift in understanding and perspective from different actors toward a better understanding of gender equality in mining. This often can break the existing status quo around gender equality in the sector and open up opportunities to work toward greater gender equality in the sector.

Conclusion and Ways Forward

During the short Q&A period, attendees and panellists raised additional points and nuanced perspectives. They emphasized the importance of educating investors and engaging companies at the board level to sustain good practices and improve the corporate culture around the gendered

and human rights impacts of mining. The participants also highlighted that the mining industry has faced criticism for “greenwashing” and “genderwashing,” where companies use sustainability and gender initiatives to mask the negative social and environmental impacts of their operations. Such practices undermine the credibility of these important issues and illustrate the need for greater transparency and accountability in the industry. According to the participants, using the sustainable development goals as a framework for GIAs can help to ensure that mining projects are evaluated in a comprehensive and holistic manner, taking into account both the gender-specific impacts and the broader sustainable development impacts of the project.

Engaging all actors in GIAs was also identified as being critical to ensuring that progress toward gender equality is sustained. Turnover of leadership and personnel within civil society or government can lead to a loss of institutional memory and expertise, which can disrupt the



progress toward gender equality and make it difficult to maintain momentum on ongoing initiatives. By engaging all actors—including the private sector, investors, civil society, and governments—in GIAs, organizations can help to ensure that gender considerations are institutionalized and that progress toward gender equality is sustained even in the face of changes in leadership or personnel.

At the conclusion of the training, the IGF reiterated its commitment to explore various and novel options to support governments and practitioners alike in conducting and acting upon GIAs. The event concluded with a networking lunch for all attendees.



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April 2023

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Kingdom of the Netherlands