



re-sourcing

The Responsible Mica Initiative

Case Introduction: A supportive approach towards upstream suppliers as part of a holistic program to improve workplace conditions in the mica supply chain (mining and processing) and to eradicate child labour.





Case Study Learning Objective

- **Learn how** to design effective supporting tools for upstream suppliers
- **Understand the benefits** of moving from a compliance approach to a supportive approach to achieve responsible production and making a real change on the ground.
- **Get insights into** the holistic approach of the Responsible Mica Initiative and how it can be applied by other actors.



Case Context

- Mica is a mineral essential in the creation of many products, including electronics, paints, cars, plastics, cosmetics, construction materials and increasingly important for renewable energy (e.g. wind turbines) and e-mobility (electric vehicles, EV-batteries and EV-stations).
- The mining is predominantly done in ASM-context by impoverished people, major mica mining countries are India and Madagascar, but also China, Brazil, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.
- Illegality, poor working conditions and child labour at the upstream part of the supply chain.
- The Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI) is a non-profit organization which members (about 80) are mainly businesses and industry associations engaged in the mica supply chain and are committed to work towards the vision of RMI.
- The vision of the RMI includes a world in which mica supply chains are fair, responsible, sustainable and free of child labour.



Good Practice Aspects

1. Holistic approach to improve working conditions and eradicate child labour
2. Multistakeholder approach on local level to work on formalisation
3. The use of block chain traceability tool
4. Development of workplace standards specifically for mica processors
5. Development of training materials and local staff for support

Challenges Addressed

- Addressing root causes of child labour
- Poor working conditions at the upstream part of the mica supply chain
- Lack of formalization of the mining sector (illegal mining)
- Lack of impact on the ground of downstream due diligence efforts.
- Insufficient support by downstream companies for strengthening upstream companies.



The characteristics of the Responsible Mica Initiative

- A supporting initiative on the ground.
- Support of and inclusion of local actors in the initiative.

The benefits

- The benefit is more impact on the ground than with a pure compliance approach.
- Focus is on closing the gaps between the workplace standards and the workplace practices by providing the right support.

How does it work?

The holistic approach consists of three programs:

- Community empowerment for communities that pick mica. The idea is to address the root causes of child labour including access to education, health care, and additional sources of income.
- Support of upstream companies to improve workplace conditions (mica pickers and mica processors)
- A multistakeholder approach to work on a legal framework and formalisation

