

Position statement

Mining and Protected Areas

In accordance with the ICMM Principles and the commitment to measure corporate performance against these principles, ICMM corporate members have agreed to the following recognition statements and commitments with respect to Mining and Protected Areas:

Recognition Statements

1. The Plan of Implementation agreed to at the World Summit on Sustainable Development recognises that minerals are essential for modern living and that mining, minerals and metals are important to the economic and social development of many countries. This is often true in developing countries where, in some instances, there may also be serious issues regarding biodiversity loss in protected areas.
2. ICMM member companies have made considerable progress in reducing the environmental and biodiversity impacts of their operations and many have become leaders in the development and application of state of the art land rehabilitation and ecosystem reconstruction techniques. Today, other avenues are being actively pursued to enhance contributions to biodiversity conservation, including assessments and conservation of unique flora and fauna, research and development and supporting protected area site management programmes.
3. ICMM members recognise the role of properly designated and managed protected areas in in-situ conservation strategies.
4. Comprehensive and representative lists of various types of designated protected areas are important to ensure that ecosystems, habitats and species are protected from damage and loss, particularly those which are remarkable in terms of richness, rarity, sensitivity and are relatively unmodified by human influence.
5. ICMM members further recognise that, in some cases, exploration and mining development may be incompatible with the objectives for which areas are designated for protection, even after all technically and economically feasible steps to reduce adverse impacts have been considered.
6. National and global systems for the evaluation, designation, classification and management of areas listed for protection are needed to ensure consistency of approach to land access decisions
7. Such systems should be transparent, rigorous, based on scientific and cultural understanding, backed by legal controls, and should contribute to the equitable resolution of different land-use, conservation and development objectives.

8. An understanding of the mineral development potential of areas proposed for listing for protection, including World Heritage properties, as well as the availability of clean mining and processing technologies should be some of the factors considered in assessments and related decision-making processes.
9. The decisions taken over the evaluation, designation, management and modifications of protected areas should also be based on the principles of sustainable development and take into account the opinions of and consequences for local communities, including indigenous peoples, and the regions involved. Development opportunities, if forgone, should be addressed by alternative plans for poverty alleviation and social development.
10. Of the existing international systems of protected area designation only that of the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines currently meet all of these requirements sufficiently for ICMM member companies to recognise existing World Heritage properties as 'No-go' areas.

ICMM Commitments

1. In accordance with Principle 7 of the new ICMM Sustainable Development Framework, ICMM members will respect legally designated protected areas.
2. ICMM member companies undertake not to explore or mine in World Heritage properties. All possible steps will be taken to ensure that existing operations in World Heritage properties as well as existing and future operations adjacent to World Heritage properties are not incompatible with the outstanding universal value for which these properties are listed and do not put the integrity of these properties at risk.
3. ICMM is committed to working with IUCN - The World Conservation Union - to address application issues and to strengthen the IUCN system of protected area categorisation. ICMM recognises that sufficient reform of this system will lead to recognition of categories of protected areas as 'No-go' areas and others with a multiple-use designation.
4. ICMM is committed to working with IUCN, governments, intergovernmental organisations, development and conservation NGOs and others to develop transparent, inclusive, informed and equitable decision-making processes and assessment tools that better integrate biodiversity conservation, protected areas and mining into land-use planning and management strategies, including 'No-go' areas.
5. ICMM will also work with IUCN and others in developing best practice guidance to enhance industry's contribution to biodiversity conservation, including in and around protected areas.