

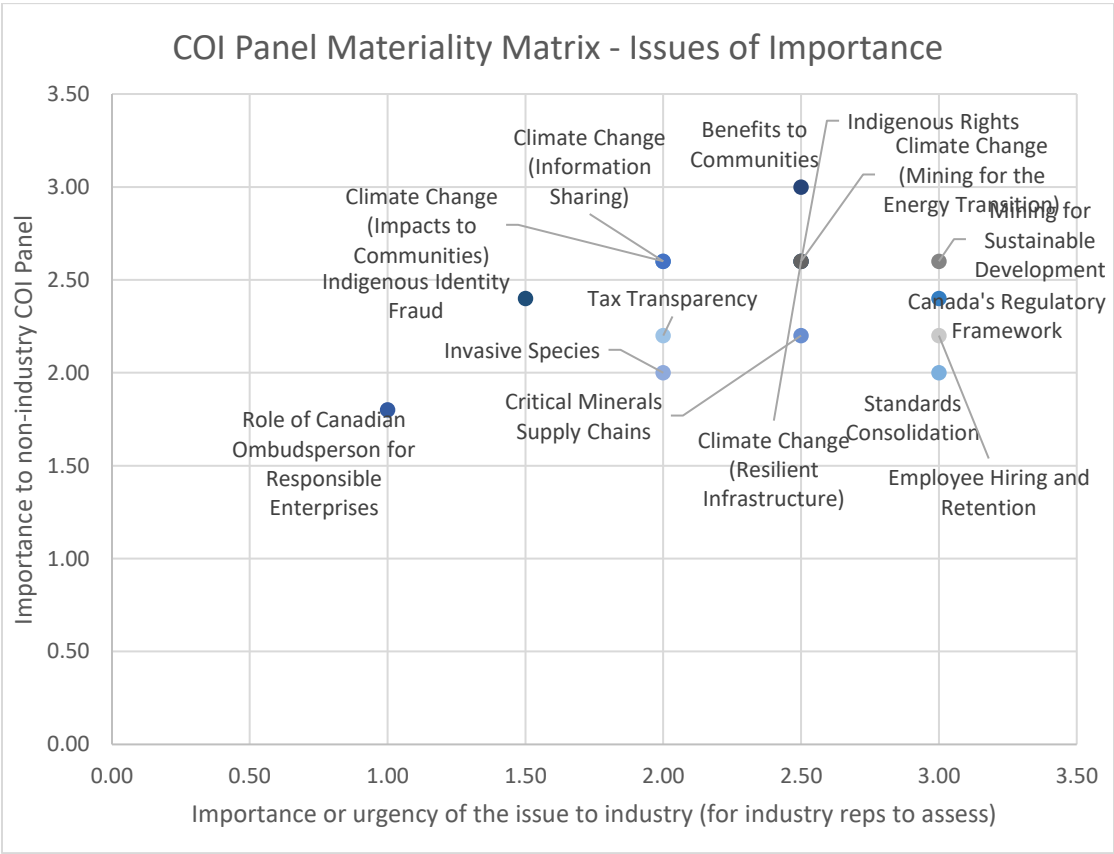
COI Panel 2024 Annual Statement

The Communities of Interest Panel for Towards Sustainable Mining

Established in 2004, the Communities of Interest (COI) panel provides governance and oversight to MAC’s Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) reporting standard. Eighteen individuals representing Indigenous People, environmental and civil society organizations, economic and community development, finance and investment, labour, law, international development, and industry meet twice a year as a full group and numerous times throughout the year in smaller working groups. The COI is a place for dialogue on issues of concern and emerging interest to the mining sector and its communities of interest.

A Year in Review

In 2024, Towards Sustainable Mining celebrated its 20th anniversary. Over the years, the Communities of Interest Panel (COI) has played an integral role in prompting discussion on critical issues in the mining sector and providing oversight into efforts to advance responsible mining globally. During 2024, the COI prioritized climate change, Indigenous identity and rights, community benefits, regulatory oversight, tax transparency, critical minerals and employee retention and attraction as key issues.



There were two governance developments of significance to the COI in 2024. One was an amendment to the [TSM COI panel terms of reference](#) to formalize the role of the panel as a decision-making body, working in parallel to the Mining Association of Canada's Board of Directors. The second was the addition of a new seat on the COI. As interest in responsible sourcing continues to grow, the COI recognized the value of having a downstream user on the COI and welcomed two new members representing customers of mined materials.

As part of its annual work, the COI met twice, conducted two post-[verification reviews](#), evaluated applications for TSM awards, and contributed expertise to the [Consolidated Mining Standard Initiative](#). The CSMI is an effort to improve transparency and comparability for those tracking ESG performance and to reduce the reporting burden for company personnel tasked with that responsibility.

In 2024, TSM and The Copper Mark participated in a pilot project to undertake a joint verification process of both standards on a number of sites. The project included a verifier meeting directly with communities of interest and company employees as part of their on-site verification process. The COI heard feedback from one of the participating communities of interest and looks to incorporate the findings into future improvements to the TSM process.

Each year the COI goes through a renewal process and at the close of 2024 panel members said farewell and thank-you to colleagues representing environment (Graeme Reed) and economic development (Daniel McNeely) and welcomed their replacements Lisa McLaughlin and Devin Naveau. The panel was also joined this year by Sarah McLean (De Beers) and Carol Plummer (Agnico Eagle) to fill a seat left by Alice Wong (Cameco) to whom we extend our warmest wishes for a happy retirement. As noted, two new seats were added to the COI in 2024 to provide a voice for customers of mined materials and the panel welcomed Kai Ammann (BMW) and Sarah Wirtz (Mercedes-Benz).

Addressing Downstream Interest in Responsible Mining

The impact of mining extends far beyond the extraction phase, and it is essential to incorporate the interests and concerns of downstream sectors to achieve comprehensive responsible mining practices. Addressing downstream interests is critical for ensuring sustainability and long-term value across the entire supply chain.

A key reason for addressing downstream interests is to ensure transparency and traceability throughout the supply chain. With increasing consumer and regulatory pressure for responsible sourcing, industries that rely on raw materials must be able to trace the origin of their minerals and materials. The integration of downstream stakeholders—such as manufacturers and product developers—to responsible mining practices ensures that materials are sourced ethically and in compliance with environmental and social standards.

Meeting Consumer and Regulatory Expectations

With growing consumer demand for sustainable products and increasing regulatory pressure, industries that rely on mined materials must ensure their supply chains adhere to stringent social and environmental standards. Responsible mining standards play a critical role in helping downstream industries meet these expectations by ensuring that the materials they use are ethically sourced and traceable.

Promoting Environmental Sustainability

By taking an active role in responsible sourcing, downstream companies are taking actions to mitigate environmental impacts associated with mineral extraction. This includes promoting the adoption of cleaner, more energy-efficient mining techniques, reducing waste, and minimizing water and land degradation during the mining and refining processes.

Addressing downstream interests in responsible mining standards is essential for creating a comprehensive, sustainable, and ethical supply chain. By ensuring transparency, promoting environmental sustainability, mitigating supply chain risks, and aligning with consumer expectations, responsible mining practices benefit all industries that depend on mined materials. This integrated approach aims at fostering collaboration and reducing risks, while trying to minimize negative environmental, social, and economic impacts. Ultimately, by involving downstream stakeholders, responsible mining becomes a shared responsibility, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient value chain.

Indigenous Identity and the Mining Sector

In recent years, Indigenous identity fraud has become a significant and complex issue in Canada, raising concerns about the authenticity of claims to being Indigenous and the impact on Indigenous rights and communities. Indigenous identity fraud occurs when non-Indigenous individuals falsely claim to be Indigenous, either intentionally or unintentionally. Individuals may falsely self-identify as Indigenous for a sense of belonging or for personal gain, such as to gain access to economic resources, research funding, employment opportunities, honorary positions, awards, or other benefits intended for Indigenous Peoples and their citizens.

During the fall 2024 meeting, Indigenous Panel members provided an overview of the topic to provide COI members with a greater understanding of this important issue and the effects on the mining industry and Indigenous communities. Key points are summarized below.

1. **Indigenous rights and identity:** Indigenous Peoples and their communities hold specific communal rights, which are defined locally and internationally. To avoid confusion about which individuals are entitled to these rights, it is important to start with a common understanding and definitions of the terminology related to Indigenous identity (i.e., Métis, First Nation, and Inuit). Indigenous identity is not just about genealogical connection or self-identification, identity is deeply linked with belonging and connection to a community.

2. **Calls to Action for government and society:** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action for government and society outline specific economic and employment benefits for Indigenous Peoples via their citizens (e.g., procurement, hiring priorities) to reconcile historic wrongs inflicted on Indigenous collectivities.
3. **Benefits to communities:** Mining companies are required to engage with and provide benefits to Indigenous communities and normally rely on regulators to identify project-affected Indigenous rights-bearing communities. While companies are hesitant to ask for proof of community affiliation and lean towards inclusivity, this hesitancy can be rectified by working with Indigenous partners to create processes for vetting Indigenous identity claims in hiring and contracting processes.

Closing: Change and a Commitment to Continuous Improvement

As COI panel members reflect upon the past year, the committee is proud of the work done to strengthen the governance of the COI and formalize the important role this group plays in supporting Towards Sustainable Mining. For 2025, panel members commit to continuing to evolve the agenda of the COI to incorporate contemporary issues in the relationship between mining and society and to raise concerns, challenge assumptions, and champion change.

A number of topics discussed in 2024 will continue to remain important: Indigenous rights and reconciliation; Canada's role in providing the metals, minerals and materials needed for the transition to a green future; ensuring Canada has a mining sector that is transparent, responsible, and inclusive and that acts as a catalyst for the sustainable development of resource-rich regions in Canada and around the world.

As members of the COI, we look forward to our ongoing work.