

Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

Report for the Calendar Year 2023



building
local promise.



Pact, Inc.

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Abbreviations and acronyms:

ASM	Artisanal and small-scale mining
CPSA	Comité Provincial de Surveillance et d'Alerte
CLS	Multi-stakeholder committees (<i>Comités Locaux de Suivi</i>)
CPP	Provincial steering committees (<i>Comités Provinciaux de Pilotage</i>)
CRAFT	Code of Risk-mitigation for artisanal and small-scale mining engaging in formal trade
DDG	OECD <i>Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas</i>
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ITSCI	International Tin Supply Chain Initiative
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
VPA	Voluntary Principles Association
VPSHR	Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

A. Commitment

A.1. Statement of commitment or endorsement of the Voluntary Principles

Pact is an international nonprofit that works in nearly 40 countries building solutions for human development that are evidence-based, data-driven and owned by the communities we serve. Our vision is thriving, resilient and engaged communities leading their own development. Founded in 1971, Pact works with partners to build resilience, improve accountability, and strengthen knowledge and skills for sustainable social impact. We are a recognized global leader in human development, with expertise in capacity development, public health, governance, the environment, energy, livelihoods, women's empowerment, mining communities, microfinance and more.

What brings all of Pact's work together is our focus on local communities. Our cornerstone is community engagement – building solutions for human development in true partnership with those we serve. We strive to leverage the immense promise that already exists in local communities and to ensure that they are active participants in our programming at every step, from design to implementation to evaluation.

Pact's Responsible Mining Practice has been working to improve the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector and the lives of artisanal miners for more than 15 years across Africa, Asia, and South America. Pact brings together government, industry, miners and mining communities to make ASM safer, formal and more productive, while making the most of ASM's contributions to development. We also work with large-scale mining (LSM) companies, mining and metals industry associations, downstream companies, and stakeholders along the entire mineral value chain to promote responsible sourcing, community-led development, and LSM-ASM coexistence and partnership models.

We specialize in health and safety in mining, security and human rights, traceability and transparency, economic empowerment, mercury abatement, child labor reduction, mineral due diligence and ethical sourcing. Our programs help communities gain lasting benefit from mineral resources by using them more sustainably. About one-third of the people we serve are women, which is consistent with their representation in the global mining sector.

Pact views the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) as a valuable mechanism and tool to manage risk, achieve improved governance and security practices, and strengthen communities' rights. As a forum and coalition for positive change through responsible practices, the VPSHR presents an invaluable opportunity for civil society, industry, and government to share challenges, lessons, approaches, and messages. Such collaboration and communication are essential if all sectors of society are to gain lasting benefit from the equitable and responsible use of their mineral resources.

Pact is a Founding Member of the Voluntary Principles Association (VPA). This report encompasses relevant activities from January to December 2023.

B. Policies, Procedures, and Related Activities

B.1. Relevant policies, procedures, and/or guidelines (or any changes thereof from the previous reporting year) to implement the Voluntary Principles

International Tin Supply Chain Initiative

The most significant change in the reporting period is the localization of the International Tin Supply Chain Initiative (ITSCI) from Pact to Kumbuka Afrika.¹

In September 2023, the ITSCI Programme and Pact announced that after 10 years of implementation by Pact, the management and implementation of ITSCI would be transferred to local nonprofit organization Kumbuka Afrika. From October 1, 2023, all activities of the ITSCI Programme in Africa's Great Lakes Region are therefore managed by Kumbuka Afrika. This localization is an important step in the full engagement of locally based organizations in

¹ <https://kumbuka-afrika.org/KA/en/index>

the delivery of field implementation activities. ITSCI and Pact were in full agreement that this is the right way forward for ITSCI and worked together to facilitate the transition.

Since 2010, the ITSCI Programme and Pact have been partnering on implementation in Africa's Great Lakes Region. As part of that work, ITSCI has maintained a core objective to train and empower local partners and, through Pact, has worked to achieve the vision of supporting and enhancing local ownership of the Programme.

Throughout the years, Pact has played an important role in building local capacity and expertise in management of ITSCI field activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Over time, Pact has supported the transfer of day-to-day activities to local organizations, and for a number of years, the large majority of ITSCI staff in the region have been employed and managed by local organizations.

After more than 10 years of successful progress, Pact and ITSCI believe that local management teams have the ability and expertise to lead and deliver the implementation of ITSCI on the ground. Both Pact and ITSCI share the vision of enhancing local ownership and are transitioning all local ITSCI implementation activities by Pact to a Kumbuka Afrika.

Localization is considered good practice in the international development community and is central to Pact's mission of enabling locally led development. It capitalizes on in-region teams' understanding and knowledge of local context and builds on their trusted relationships developed over the years with multiple stakeholders, including governments, companies and communities.

The implementation of the ITSCI Programme, including field activities in Africa's Great Lakes Region, continues in all areas as usual, without any interruption, using the same OECD-aligned standards. ITSCI remains fully committed to supporting responsible mining and sourcing practices for tin, tantalum and tungsten minerals. Pact, a recognized leader in responsible mining, has continued to implement a range of activities in support of artisanal miners and mining communities in Africa's Great Lakes region and beyond, and remains committed to making ASM safer, formal and more productive.

B.2. Examples of promoting awareness of the Voluntary Principles throughout the organization or government

In 2023, Pact engaged with the VPSHR NGO Pillar and Steering Committee in several ways to promote awareness at Pact and identify ways in which we could support the initiative further.

- Pact was represented at the 2023 annual general meeting of the Voluntary Principles Association in May by Aylin Sahin, ITSCI Program Manager.
- In May 2023, Pact met with Search for Common Ground in Washington D.C. to learn more about VPSHR and how pact could support with various NGO pillar activities and upcoming verification presentations.
- In October 2023, Pact enquired about upcoming Steering Committee nominations with the NGO pillar with the plan to nominate to join in 2024.

C. Country Implementation

C.1. Overview of country operations selected for reporting: DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Mali

International Tin Supply Chain Initiative

The activities described for ITSCI in this report cover the January 1st to December 31st 2023 and are based on the 2023 ITSCI Annual Report.² Due to the transfer and localization of ITSCI from Pact to Kumbuka Afrika starting October 1st 2023, Pact was responsible for ITSCI activities from 1st January to 30th September 2023 and Kumbuka Afrika was responsible from 1st October to 31st December 2023.

² International Tin Supply Chain Initiative (ITSCI). (2023). ITSCI Annual Review 2023. ITSCI. Available at: https://www.itsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ITSCI-2023-Annual-Review_EN.pdf

In 2023, ITSCI continued operating in DRC, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda monitoring over 2,700 tin, tungsten, and tantalum (3T) mine sites. Through its on-the-ground team continuously collecting, verifying, and reporting information, ITSCI supports companies along 3T mineral supply chains with their due diligence aligned with the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (OECD DDG).

ITSCI undertakes ongoing mine site visits, training, and support to stakeholders from mine to smelter level on practical implementation of the OECD DDG. This includes daily advice to companies and authorities regarding policies, procedures, assessments, risk management and reporting, and organizing official training events for different stakeholder groups, including local committees, high-level officials, and public and private security services.

ITSCI works with approximately 100,000 artisanal and small-scale miners over 2,700 3T mine sites, improving livelihoods, security, and human rights, and is a tangible demonstration of how an industry initiative can promote responsible behavior of the police, army, and mine site security personnel in line with the VPSHR.

As reported in the ITSCI annual report, in 2023 ITSCI activities included:

- Monitoring **2,740 mines comprising ~90,500 miners**, with 58 mines newly added in 2023.
- Conducting **8,433 joint visits** with ITSCI and government field staff.
- **Enabling the export of 23,436 tons of 3T minerals** through the ITSCI bagging and tagging system **using ~740,000 tags**.
- Recording **1,763 incidents** related to due diligence, chain of custody, corruption, security, and human rights, with 55 incidents reported by stakeholders through the whistleblowing mechanism.
- Undertaking **988 training sessions** with **16,432 participants**.
- **2,017 radio spots** broadcast on 29 community radios promoting ITSCI whistleblowing program.
- In the DRC, coordinating 58 multi-stakeholder and provincial steering committees (*Comités Locaux de Suivi [CLS] / Comité Provincial de Pilotage [CPP]*).
- In Rwanda, coordinating 16 District Mining Task Forces (DMTF).

Promoting a Mercury-free Mali

Promoting a Mercury-free Mali is a five-year project (2021-2025) funded by the United States Department of State and implemented by Pact in partnership with the Ministry of Mines Mali. Its objective is to support the formalization of small-scale gold mining (ASGM) and the reduction of mercury use, while strengthening the transparency of Mali's ASGM supply chain.

At the local level, the project mostly focuses on Cercle de Keniéba in southwestern Mali, where it supports *Cooperative de Dje Kabara* (an ASGM cooperative of 1,500 miners) and *Cooperative de Sewa* (a newly established ASGM cooperative of 200 miners). Pact supports formalization efforts and technical and business strengthening. Pact also collaborates with industrial mining companies and local authorities in both Cercles.

At the national level, Pact supports the Ministry of Mines Mali and other government departments, private sector companies and civil society organizations in strengthening the governance of the sector, with a focus on curbing gold smuggling, preventing conflict financing, and ASGM formalization.



A woman miner cleans sluice carpets to separate gold in Djidjan Koda, a mineral processing site in Cercle de Keniéba, southwestern Mali (photo by Jorden de Haan, 9 May 2022)

Children out of mining program (Kolwezi, Lualaba province, DRC)

For close to a decade, Pact's Children Out of Mining Program has been working with at-risk mining communities throughout the DRC to sustainably and systematically address child labor in mining.

As part of this program, in 2023, Pact implemented three projects supporting targeted interventions across eight ASM communities in the provincial capital city of Kolwezi, Lualaba Province, in southern DRC's Copperbelt. These interventions, funded by downstream companies, are in line with those companies' commitments towards human rights promotion, responsibly sourced materials and supporting to local communities.

Pact's right-based and child-centered approach responds to child miners' needs by delivering local solutions and promoting coordination and accountability between multiple actors. As such, we 1) focused on strengthening community members' capacity to educate their peers on children's rights and the detrimental effects of mining on children's health; 2) provided targeted economic support to 169 vulnerable families who are sending or are at risk of sending their children to work in the mines; and provided vocational education to 100 adolescent miners (ages 15–17 years).

At the provincial level, the project collaborated with the *Comité Provincial de Surveillance et d'Alerte* (CSPA), a committee established by the government of Lualaba in 2017 to support partners and the private sector in monitoring and alerting on all issues related to the presence of children in artisanal mining sites.

C.2. Engagements with stakeholders on country implementation

International Tin Supply Chain Initiative

ITSCI supports country level stakeholder engagement of the VPSHR in several ways. First, through ongoing local level multistakeholder committees. In the DRC stakeholder engagement is carried out on a local, provincial, and national level through local and provincial CLSs. CLSs meet on regular basis to discuss mining activities in their area, monitor any human rights abuses in the mining sector, and agree on mitigation measures that should be implemented to address and resolve identified risks. In 2023, ITSCI supported coordination of 58 CLSs in the DRC.

The equivalent of CLS in Rwanda are DMTFs which are a collaborative initiative between Rwanda Mining Board, ITSCI, local authorities, and security forces to address mining-related issues, such as informal mining. By the end of 2023, there were 16 DMTFs in operation following an official directive from RMB, which appointed a supervisor for their creation. ITSCI developed a framework for joint mine site visits with RMB to improve activity monitoring and incident mitigation. Reports with recommendations generated by these monthly visits were shared with mining companies to enhance mining operations.

Second, ITSCI provides direct capacity strengthening to stakeholders to assess, report, and manage risks in accordance with the OECD DDG, including on security and human rights. In June 2023, ITSCI field teams from all DRC provinces where ITSCI operates met in Goma for a week of training. Field Officers implement ITSCI on-the-ground, engaging with local miners and exporters, facilitating data collection and the distribution of traceability materials, including tags and logbooks. As part of their role, ITSCI Field Officers monitor mining activities in their area; collect, verify, and report risk information; engage with local authorities, traditional authorities, multiple state services (in charge of mining and beyond), security forces, mining operators, and civil society representatives; facilitate discussion at multi-stakeholder committee meetings; and conduct capacity-building and awareness training of local stakeholders. These efforts therefore support the longer-term and sustainable implementation of the VPSHR by including the materials in training and capacity strengthening activities.

Promoting a Mercury-free Mali

Under the Promoting a Mercury-free Mali project, Pact organized two main stakeholder workshops in relation to security and human rights in the mining sector.

In October 2022, Pact and the Mali Ministry of Mines organized a Responsible Gold Marketing Workshop (*Atelier de Commercialisation d'Or Responsable*) in Bamako with stakeholders from government, private sector, and civil society. They introduced international frameworks on due diligence in gold supply chains and discussed challenges and actions required to promote responsible and formal gold trading in Mali and abroad. Through plenary discussions and an anonymous survey, workshop participants shared their inputs for the development of a first version of a [Responsible Gold Trading Policy Paper](#).



Workshop participants, 6 October 2022, Bamako, Mali

In March 2023, Pact and the Mali Ministry of Mines organized the follow-on *Atelier de Validation* (Validation Workshop) to review, refine and formally adopt the Responsible Gold Trading Policy Paper. Prior to the workshop, stakeholders shared their feedback with organizers. During the workshop, participants identified challenges and recommended actions for addressing gold smuggling, the risks of terrorism financing through ASGM, and discussed responsibilities and resources for implementing the actions. By the end of the workshop, all stakeholders officially validated the policy paper.

In 2024, it is anticipated that the Mali Ministry of Mines will establish the *Cadre de Concertation*, a multi-stakeholder mechanism including government, private sector and civil society partners mandated to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the actions specified in the policy paper.

Table 1: Participants of multi-stakeholder workshops in Bamako

Government	Private sector	Civil society	International partners
Ministère des Mines (Ministry of Mines)	Union des Comptoirs et Raffineries d'or du Mali (Union of Gold Comptoirs and Refineries of Mali)	Fédération des Femmes Minières du Mali (Federation of Women Miners of Mali)	Delegation of the European Union to Mali
Direction Générale des Douanes (Directorate General of Customs)	Marena Gold Refinery	Association des Femmes Minières du Mali (Association of Mining Women of Mali)	Embassy of the United States of America to Mali
Direction Générale du Commerce de la Consommation et de la Concurrence (Directorate General for Consumer Trade and Competition)	Kankou Moussa Refinery	Confédération Nationale des Sociétés Coopératives des Orpailleurs du Mali (National Confederation of Cooperative Societies of Artisanal Gold Miners of Mali)	Embassy of Switzerland to Mali
Direction Nationale de la Géologie et des Mines (National Directorate of Geology and Mines)	Association des Comptoirs et des Collecteurs d'Or (Association of Comptoirs and Gold Collectors)	Groupe des professionnels du secteur des Mines du Mali (Group of professionals in the mining sector of Mali)	Embassy of Canada to Mali
Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Assainissement et du Développement Durable (Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development)	Chambre des Mines (Chamber of Mines)	Fédération Nationale des orpailleurs du Mali (National Federation of Gold Miners of Mali)	Pact Inc.

Direction Générale des Impôts (Directorate General of Taxes)	Other representatives of ASGM miners and gold exporters	Djoko ni Maaya (national NGO)	
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Children out of Mining program

In November 2023, the Children Out of Mining program organized a meeting with the Provincial Monitoring and Alert Committee (*Comité Provincial de Surveillance et d'Alerte* [CPSA]) coordinator, the security advisor of the Ministry of Interior, the CPSA administrative secretary, a representative of CPSA members, and a representative of the Civil Society Concertation framework, to discuss CPSA plans for 2024. This discussion highlighted the CPSA's difficulties to conduct its mandate, mainly due to lack of funding and weak leadership.

The main recommendations from this meeting included the following:

- The need for quarterly meetings between CPSA and other technical and financial partners, who could support CPSA activities.
- The need to integrate new actors to the CPSA to replace those who have changed ministries.
- The need to focus in 2024 on advocacy with the provincial government to obtain a budget to implement actions defined in the national sectoral strategy to combat child labor in mining.



Participants of the CPSA revitalization meeting, November 2023

C.3. Examples of supporting outreach, education, and/or training of relevant personnel, (private security, public security, and/or civil society, e.g., local NGOs, community groups)

In 2023, ITSCI convened 611 training and coaching sessions in the DRC, reaching a total of 14,208 participants, including state agents, miners, traders, cooperatives, exporters, state security forces, and local authorities. Participants learned about tagging procedures, due diligence, organizational health and safety, and the VPSHR.

Since 2019, the ITSCI whistleblowing program has partnered with local community radios that broadcast several times per week in both French and Swahili, raising awareness about due diligence and publicizing how to report risks in mining areas anonymously and free of charge. At the end of 2023, ITSCI expanded the radio campaign to five new community radios, including three in Tshopo Province where ITSCI expanded its activities. The project continues to be successful in raising awareness, sparking dialogue, and fostering action in artisanal mining communities. ITSCI gathered positive feedback from community radios on the campaigns, and in particular on addressing child labor in mining. In Maniema Province for instance, local authorities used the campaign to inform the Lubutu community about artisanal mining and raise awareness among parents regarding the risks associated with child labor in mines. Listeners reported the campaign was beneficial and encouraged the radio station to “rebroadcast without limits.” Similarly, in North Kivu, artisanal miners and members of a mining cooperative

announced that they would no longer allow children to work in the mines. Still in North Kivu, in Walikale territory, radio stations are planning to facilitate community forums where locals can talk about artisanal mining, child labor, and risks. In Tshopo Province, despite logistical challenges posed by limited phone network coverage, communities reported educating children about the dangers of mining and encouraging them to go to school (ITSCI 2023).

Promoting a Mercury-free Mali

In 2023, Pact's Promoting a Mercury-free Mali project convened two multiple-day training series and two workshops lasting one day, reaching more than 200 participants, including state agents, miners, traders, cooperatives, exporters, gold refiners, local authorities, and civil society organizations. Participants learned about national mining regulations, supply chain due diligence in international gold trade, the evaluation, mitigation and reporting of security, human rights, legal, financial, environmental and health risks, business management, mercury-free mineral processing, and occupational health and safety.

In follow-up to these trainings and workshops, Pact has provided ongoing coaching and technical support to Cooperative de Djeka Baara – a cooperative bringing together 1,500 ASGM miners in Keniéba, Kayes region – in managing and reporting risks in gold production and trading. This training is conducted using Pact's adapted version and reporting tools of the Code of Risk-mitigation for artisanal and small-scale mining engaging in formal trade (CRAFT). By the end of 2023, Pact was able to report that all 'high-level risks' as outlined in Annex II of the OECD DDG were absent, while significant progress had been made on other risks.

Moreover, in follow-up of the workshops in Bamako, Pact engaged formal gold buying and refining companies in Bamako to consider using Pact's adapted CRAFT tools and formally buying the gold produced by Pact's ASGM partners while addressing due diligence risks.

Finally, Pact engaged an industrial mining company and another ASGM cooperative in Cercle de Kangaba, Koulikoro region to analyse and mediate a long-standing land dispute between the company and the cooperative. Specifically, Pact interviewed all stakeholders, including local law enforcement (Gendarmerie) engaged by the mining company, to conduct a gender-sensitive analysis, understand the root causes and dynamics, and identify conflict resolution areas. Subsequently, the parties undertook various mediation sessions exploring possible solutions such as 'co-existence' arrangements between the company and the ASGM cooperative.



Women miners of Djeka Baara Cooperative in Keniéba, Mali, show their certificates after completing a training series on formalization, supply chain due diligence and business management (by Jorden de Haan, 14 March 2023)

Children out of mining program

The Children Out of Mining program reached 36,187 people (40% children, or 14,413) through individual and group awareness raising at mining sites as well as strategic locations in the communities. Messages focused on children's rights, the worst forms of child labor, and parenting techniques. Furthermore, the program collaborated with four primary schools and four youth clubs, which organized a range of activities to sensitize their peers, including school children, children working at mining sites, or at risk of doing so. The program also organized public concerts, and

broadcasted on a local radio awareness-raising messages designed both by the project team as well as student journalists.

D. Lessons and Issues

D.1. Lessons or issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the organization

In 2023, Pact has continued to support the implementation of the VPSHR throughout project activities in the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Mali, working with government and private security services, ASM communities, and engaging in workshops with a large-scale mining company in Mali.

Pact has built VPSHR principles into various capacity strengthening and training project activities in the DRC through ITSCI and our Children out of Mining programming. This approach has supported the progressive improvement of stakeholder's awareness and implementation of the principles among civil society, government, and private sector. Pact's involvement in the ITSCI program and its transfer of local operations to Kumbuka Afrika underscores the importance of fostering local ownership and capacity in addressing security risks in mining areas.

Similarly, in Mali, the organization of multi-stakeholder workshops and extensive bilateral consultation meetings with Malian government, private sector companies, and civil society organizations has helped garner significant momentum for ASGM formalization and gold trading. Given the wider context of worsening insecurity and instability in the Sahel, there is significant opportunity for the VPSHR to support multi-stakeholder collaboration around the ASGM and LSM sector and mitigate associated security human rights and security risks.

In 2024, Pact plans to be an NGO reviewing on various verification presentations, be nominated to the Steering Committee, continue embedding with relevant project trainings, seek partnerships with VPSHR members across all pillars, and promote the VPSHR both internally and externally to a wide range of stakeholders.

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International Tin Supply Chain Initiative (ITSCI). (2023). ITSCI Annual Review 2023. ITSCI. Available at: https://www.itsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ITSCI-2023-Annual-Review_EN.pdf

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