

## **Important principles: Life cycle approach, recycling/reusing of natural resources and market transparency**

Mining provides us with necessary natural resources for many of the products we consume.

Consumption is only at the end of the supply chain and Switzerland therefore supports business lead initiatives which address human rights and conflict related issues in the whole supply chain of minerals. Among other these initiatives include the recent membership of Switzerland in the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, an initiative of extractive industries to address human rights issues in their security arrangements.

Though a Swiss mining industry is almost non existent, due to a lack of mineral resources, which could be mined in a cost-effective way, Switzerland supports efforts to address responsible finance and trading of minerals. In this regard Switzerland partnered with the United Nations Principles on Responsible Investment (an investor initiative in partnership with UNEP Finance Initiative and the UN Global Compact)<sup>1</sup> in

Being a net importer of natural resources, mainly in the form of manufactured goods, Switzerland is concerned about environmental and social problems caused over the life cycle of such products. Environmental considerations and corporate social responsibility principles, including the responsibility to respect human rights, should to be introduced at each step of the life cycle of a product. In this regard Switzerland supports efforts within the United Nations and the OECD to develop standards of business due diligence for environmental, social and human rights standards.

Comprehensible, transparent and verifiable product-related information to evaluate environmental impacts are necessary for consumers to base their decision on and allow selecting the product, which is less harmful for the environment and society. In other words: when there is more market transparency, consumers have a chance to reward environmental and social considerations along the life cycle of a product, including its extraction through mining.

Switzerland sees the growing trend of many countries to try to reach national self-sufficiency in minerals with concern. This puts pressure on the other countries to do the same, which further accelerates the process and leads to an even stronger scarcity of natural resources.

Many natural resources are increasingly depleted, but the demand is growing. A large share of the mineral resources, which will be needed in future are now stored in infrastructures, factories, machines, cars, and other goods. Many of these resources can be reused or recycled. To do so, it is necessary to have an inventory of the amount of goods processed, to be able to identify the right operations and have material preparation plants to recover those resources.

Through its bilateral development cooperation, Switzerland supports Sustainable Artisanal Mining projects in development countries. The main goal of these initiatives is to contribute to the development of responsible mining to ensure that artisanal miners are recognized as responsible members of a key economic sub-sector contributing to sustainable rural development. This can be done by correcting the current mining practices, which cause severe environmental damage, social problems and unacceptable livelihood conditions for the artisanal miners and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unpri.org/about/>

Together with the International Conference of the Great Lake Region, Switzerland supports projects, aiming to de-link artisanal mining and the recourse curse of conflict finance.

Finally, in the framework of the Kimberley Process (a joint governments, industry and civil society initiative to stem the flow of conflict diamonds)<sup>2</sup>, Switzerland supports the Kimberley Trust Fund and partnered with the Canadian NGO “Partnership Africa Canada” in order to include human rights and labor issues in artisanal mining into regional review processes.

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<http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/>