

### 3.1 Impact mitigation and enhancement

Leading companies have internal processes in place to assist operations in improving their management of a project's impact on the community, environment and human rights. The basic principles underpinning these frameworks also apply to indigenous communities, although how they are applied will be highly dependent on the context.

The key principles are as follows:

- Strategies and actions should be underpinned and informed by knowledge of the communities and groups within those communities that may be affected by, or benefit from, the project. Social maps, baseline studies, cultural heritage surveys, cultural relic registries and impact assessments (see **TOOL 8**) are all valuable tools for building this knowledge, as is ongoing engagement.
- It is important to seek the input, support and participation of, Indigenous Peoples in identifying issues, and framing and implementing responses (see **TOOL 8**). Taking account of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives on development is essential.
- Good planning and design can enable many potential problems to be avoided from the outset.
- Attention to implementation is critically important. Strategies should be underpinned by action plans that specify what needs to be done, when, and by whom, and ensure that adequate resources have been allocated.
- Ongoing monitoring and regular evaluation is required to track progress, identify emerging issues and assess the effectiveness of strategies to enhance benefits and minimize the impact or consequences of a project or project activities. Monitoring and evaluation processes should be relevant to Indigenous Peoples and their concerns and aspirations, and participatory wherever possible.

#### Addressing the likelihood of a project having a negative impact at the design stage

Where there is a risk that a project may have an adverse impact on the community, much of this can be addressed in the project design phase. This is true not only for the project's environmental impacts (eg land disturbance, noise, dust, water use, water quality, biodiversity) but also the project's socioeconomic, cultural, human rights and political impact. For example, the risk of uncontrolled in-migration into indigenous lands might be reduced by minimizing road construction.<sup>22</sup> Other examples of actions that can be taken to address the negative impacts of projects in the design stage are provided in **TOOL 6**.

There are a number of guiding principles for consideration at the design phase. One which has been adopted as policy by the IFC and other international development institutions, is that companies should make every effort to avoid resettlement of indigenous communities (see Box 2).

Another guiding principle, which is embodied in ICMM's 2003 Position Statement on Mining and Protected Areas, is that operations should not be established in World Heritage Sites, which can include areas of cultural significance to Indigenous Peoples. The position statement commits ICMM members not to mine or explore in World Heritage Sites.<sup>23</sup>

There is also the question of those groups who have made it known that they wish to live in voluntary isolation, prior to, and independent of, the announcement of mining activity in their territories. In such situations, it will be very difficult for mining or other forms of development to proceed with either the support or consent (as applicable) of affected indigenous communities.

<sup>22</sup> See IFC, *Projects and people: a handbook for addressing project-induced in-migration*, Washington, DC, IFC, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> [www.icmm.com/document/43](http://www.icmm.com/document/43)