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The International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) is an organisation of leading mining and metals companies that collaborate to promote responsible mining, with a shared commitment to respect people and the environment. Part of this commitment includes the requirement that members implement and measure performance against our ten sustainable development principles, including the need to “contribute to the social, economic and institutional development of the communities in which we operate” (Principle 9). Responsibly addressing resettlement issues is one means by which companies can positively contribute to development.

Despite the clear global standards around resettlement and land acquisition—notably, the International Finance Corporation’s Performance Standard 5 (International Finance Corporation 2012)—in practice, this remains a very challenging area for companies. Many projects do not begin planning resettlement activities early enough. Nor do they invest enough human or financial resources in ensuring impacts are assessed and mitigated, and that benefits are shared in a sustainable way. As a consequence, grievances from resettled and host communities can result in conflict and mine closures. Nearby communities can also disrupt project activities if they do not see benefits accruing to them, even though they may not be directly affected by resettlement.

However, projects that do invest in planning resettlement appropriately with well-managed engagement of relevant stakeholders have been shown to gain the trust of local communities, formed more collaborative relationships with governments and been able to minimise disruptions to the business. The aim of this guidance is to support companies in achieving these positive outcomes. While the primary audience for this guidance is operational-level employees of mining companies with direct responsibility for carrying out resettlement activities, it should also be useful for corporate-level staff with responsibility for social performance.