

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN HRIA AND REAL IMPACT



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Do HRIAs lead
to real change
on the ground?



Foundational concepts



Methodology for the research



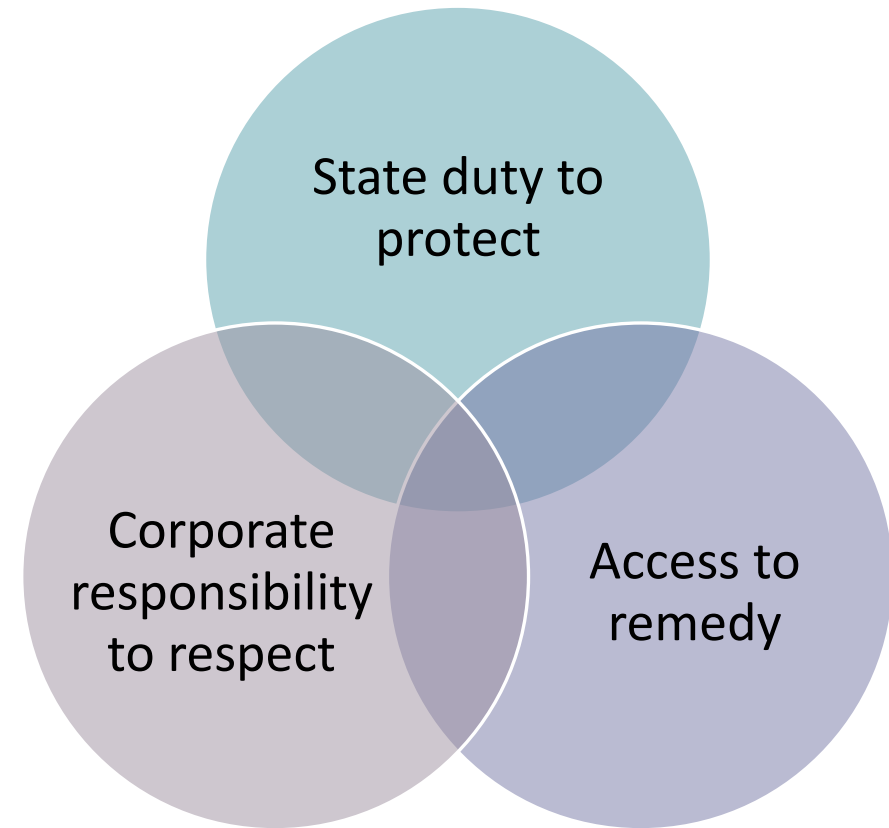
Findings



Lessons learnt from conducting HRIA

The UNGPs

The UNGPs provide “a blueprint for the steps all states and businesses should take to uphold human rights.”



Human Rights Due Diligence

For companies to prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their adverse human rights impacts, they need to conduct HRDD.



Identify



Integrate findings and take action



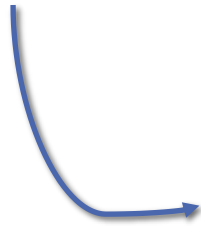
Track effectiveness



Communicate how impacts are addressed.

Human Rights Impact Assessment

HRIAs are an essential step for putting human rights due diligence into practice.



But, do they help companies prevent harm and take responsibility for it?

Case studies

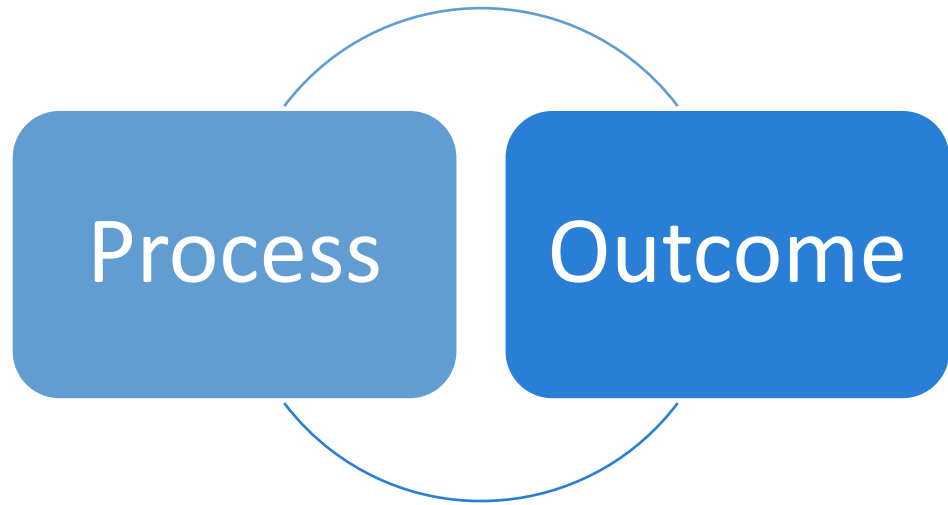
Reviewed publicly available human rights impact assessments in the mining sector from 2012 to 2025.

Prior to project
approval

During exploration

During operation

Key questions



- **Identify:** Are impacts clear and grounded in rightsholder engagement?
- **Integrate and act:** Are actions defined and responsibility assigned?
- **Track:** Is effectiveness measured?
- **Communicate:** Are findings and steps to address impacts publicly disclosed?

Findings

Are identified impacts grounded in stakeholder input?



HRIAs based on direct engagement with rightsholders provide a more detailed and fuller picture of people's concerns, lived experiences, and how business activities lead to specific impacts.



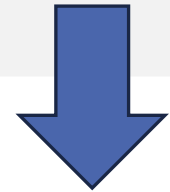
HRIAs based on engagement with representatives tend to provide a more generic description of impacts.

Companies are more likely to take action to address harm if they understand **what** activities are causing **what** impacts, **who** is impacted, and **how**.

Are HRIAs clear about the impacts that have or could occur?



Most HRIAs assess both actual and potential impacts, although findings tend to blur the distinction, framing impacts in a language that suggest potential e.g. “could cause” “may contribute”.



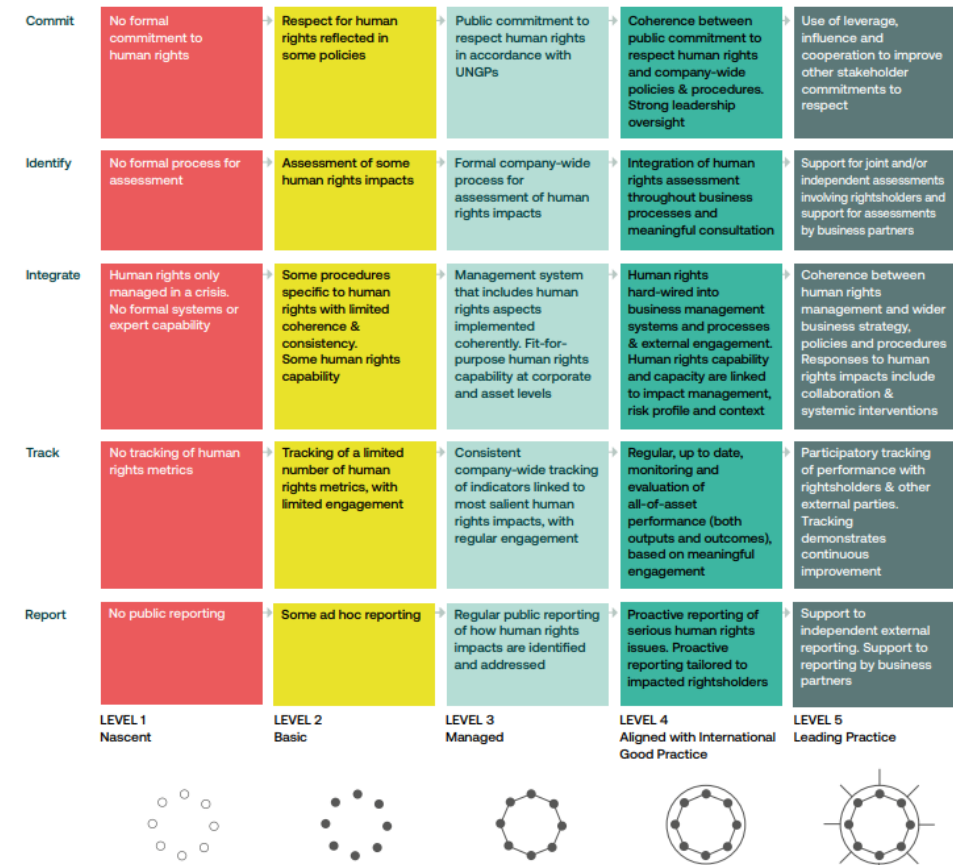
Without clarity on what harm has already occurred and what harm could occur, the right measures may not be implemented to address it.

To what extent do HRIAs assess the effectiveness of existing systems?

HRIAs tend to place limited emphasis on assessing how existing management systems and the internal processes support the prevention and remediation of impacts.

Impact identification alone is unlikely to lead to a change if the systems to ensure that the right steps are taken are not in place.

Figure 1: Human Rights Due Diligence Maturity Matrix – overview



Are actions defined and responsibility assigned?

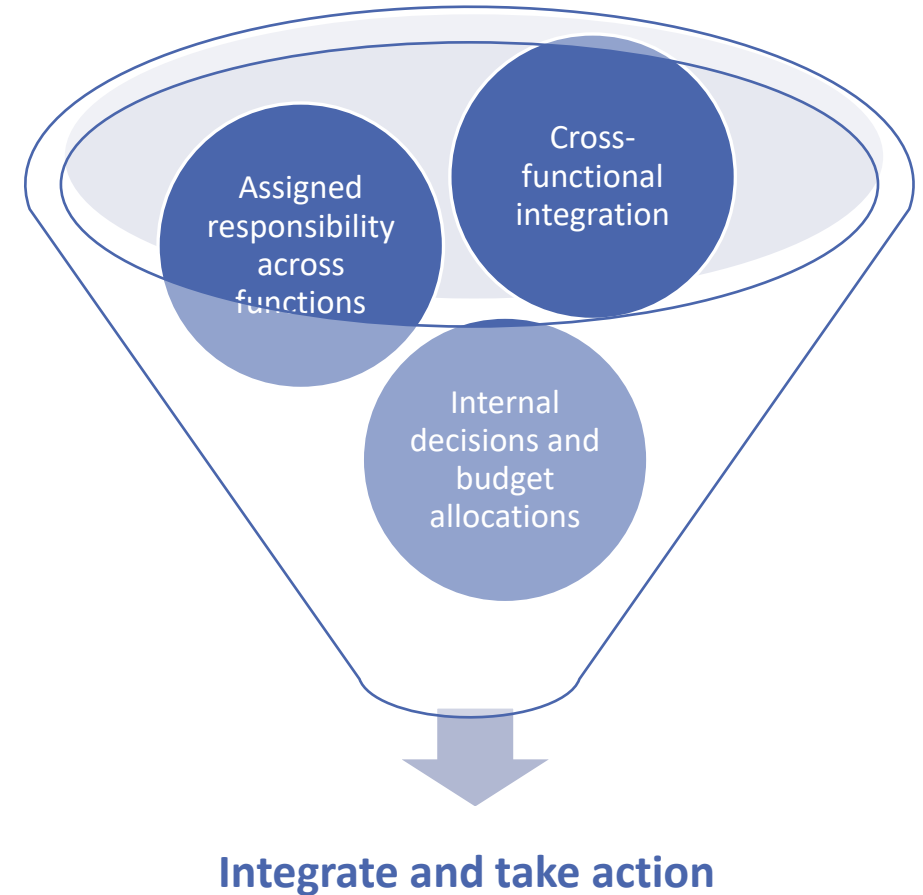


Recommendations are often generic and not specific about actions required to address identified impacts e.g. 'develop policy', 'update plan', 'explain', 'continue', 'engage', 'train'.



HRIA recommendations rarely assign responsibility, ownership or accountability across functions.

Companies are more likely to address impacts if recommendations clearly state **what needs to be done, by whom and when**.



HRIAs tend to pay less attention to whether the effectiveness of existing measures is monitored.



Where assessments do not evaluate the effectiveness of existing measures, companies may continue implementing measures that do not address human rights impacts.



Is
effectiveness
measured?

Are findings and steps to address impacts publicly disclosed?

There is little evidence of how companies are addressing identified impacts and the adequacy of their responses.



HRIAs are less likely to build accountability or demonstrate change in practice, where the actions taken and progress made are not communicated to rightsholders and the general public.



Do HRIAs help companies prevent and take responsibility for human rights impacts?



Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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