



**ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE MINING  
ARM**

**GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE  
STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

for the development of social and environmental standards  
related to artisanal and small-scale mining and the supply chain of its products

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Supersedes Generic Terms of Reference of the Standards Committees V1.0, 2012

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*The Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) is an independent, global-scale, pioneering initiative established in 2004 to enhance equity and wellbeing in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) communities through improved social, environmental and labour practices, good governance and the implementation of ecosystem restoration practices. ARM is committed to social justice and environmental responsibility as the values driving the transformation of ASM.*

*ARM's vision is for artisanal and small-scale mining to become a formalized, organized and profitable activity that uses efficient technologies, and is socially and environmentally responsible. It is a vision of a sector that increasingly develops within a framework of good governance, legality, participation and respect for diversity and that increases its contribution to the generation of decent work, local development, poverty reduction and social peace in our nations, driven by a growing consumer demand for sustainable minerals and ethical jewelry.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) develops, as part of its mission, **voluntary social and environmental standards related to responsible artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) and the downstream value chain of its products** (ARM Standards).

ARM Standards may be developed by ARM as sole standard setter or by ARM in cooperation and partnership with other standard setting organizations or build upon other compatible standard setter's standards with due authorization. The term ARM Standards refers to all existing and all eventual future standards developed by ARM (i.e. currently the Standard Zero, the Fairmined Standard, and the Market Entry Standard).

The purpose of this document is to set the Generic Terms of Reference of ARM Standards Committees (**ToR-SC**), to be established for the maintenance of existing ARM Standards as well as for the development of new ARM Standards. The Terms of Reference seek to ensure the credibility of all ARM Standards, by incorporating the values of transparency, participation and fairness into the processes for their development, and through alignment with international best practice for standards development.<sup>1</sup>

This document shall be available publicly and free of charges in electronic format for download at the ARM website. For distribution as hard- or soft-copies through other media, ARM may charge at cost.

Comments or suggestions regarding the Generic ToR-SC may be submitted at any time by email to [standards@responsiblemines.org](mailto:standards@responsiblemines.org), or in writing to the postal address of ARM published at the ARM website [www.responsiblemines.org](http://www.responsiblemines.org). Comments and suggestions will be taken into account at the next revision of the Generic ToR-SC.

The Generic ToR-SC shall be revised periodically, at least every five years, or in shorter intervals if considered appropriate by ARM in order to comply with its mission and to increase stakeholder confidence and commitment.

## 2. PURPOSE AND MANDATE

ARM Standard Committee(s) are created by the ARM Board of Directors as permanent committees for the development and maintenance of existing and new ARM Standard. For each ARM Standard a separate Standard Committee shall be established at the appropriate moment according to the ARM standard-setting procedures.

At the moment of enactment of this document, this refers to the following standards:

- Standard ZERO for fair trade artisanal gold and associated silver and platinum (on hold)
- FAIRMINED Standard v2.0 for gold from artisanal and small-scale mining, including associated precious metals (enacted and released)
- Market Entry Standard for artisanal and small-scale gold mining (in preparation)

Specific ToR for each Standard Committee (based on these Generic ToR-SC) shall be approved by the Board of Directors. The Specific ToR shall include at least the following:

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<sup>1</sup> The document aims for compatibility with the "ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards" but does not claim any compliance with the ISEAL Standard-setting code.

- The aims and objectives of the ARM Standard that the Committee is mandated to develop or revise;
- The procedures to be followed;
- The working language(s);
- The decision making process;
- Any additional specific requirements to complete the work;
- Timetable for the standard development process.

The ToR may provide for the constitution of one or more sub-committees mandated or delegated to address specific aspects of the overall Specific ToR. These specific aspects shall be documented in specific ToR for the sub-committee. Each Standard Committee has a decision-making mandate regarding the ARM Standard assigned to that committee. For that purpose, the Standard Committee shall:

- develop and review the ARM Standard assigned by the ARM Board of Directors, according to the Specific ToR
- monitor the appropriateness of the ARM Standards-setting procedures, the Generic ToR-SC, and the Specific ToR of the Standard Committee, and present proposals for amendments as needed, and adopt the Terms.
- agree on internal operating practices, timelines and responsibilities of the Committee and of individual Committee members
- provide technical input for the development or revision of the assigned standard and request additional research if applicable
- overview the standard setting and eventual standard testing procedures
- review the proper stakeholder involvement during public consultations
- advise ARM on all matters regarding the content of the assigned standard and related relevant supply chain, downstream and commercial issues to ensure highest quality, consistency and continuous improvement.
- approve final drafts of standards for presentation to the Board of Directors

Additional specific mandates may be assigned to a Standard Committee by the Board of Directors, or by being recommended by the Standard Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

### **3. COMPOSITION, MEMBERS AND FUNCTIONS**

Standard Committee(s) should consist of at least 10 and a maximum of 16 members plus the Standards Coordinator. The total should always be made up by an odd number of individuals.

Standards Committees must always combine balanced expertise from different aspects of ASM and key supply chain players, , such as miners' organizations, miners' associations, , traders, manufacturers, brands and global or national thematic and sectorial experts. A diverse, multi-stakeholder composition of the committees is crucial to ensure the legitimacy, applicability and technical quality of the ARM Standard.

Ideally but not mandatory in exact numbers, Standards Committees should be composed by

- 1/3 supply side (in case of existing ARM Standards preferably certified producers). It is encouraged to have a participation of a woman miner to represent the challenges of the sector from a gender-balanced point of view.
- 1/3 demand side and downstream supply chain (in case of existing ARM Standards preferably authorized buyers or operators and consumers facing operators).
- 1/3 thematic or sectorial experts.
- The Standards Coordinator.

In any case and mandatory,

- neither stakeholder group shall have a majority (+50%) in the Standard Committee;
- if ARM Board members and ARM staff (except the Standards Coordinator) are appointed to serve in the Standard Committee, their total number shall be a minority (-50%).
- Representatives of ASM miners must always be included.

Additionally, as far as reasonably possible, a geographical balance according to the scope of the standard shall be taken into consideration.

Standard Committee Members are appointed by the Executive Director on behalf of the Board of Directors, on the basis of their specific insights and experiences with the assigned ARM Standard and their commitment to responsible ASM.

Objection against the composition of a Standard Committee can be presented, if it does not represent the required balance of interests.

Members of an ARM Standard Committee are expected to

- adhere to the Generic Terms of Reference (ToR) and the Specific ToR of the Standard Committee;
- share ARM's mission and vision and demonstrate high ethical commitment to convert ASM into a socially and environmentally responsible activity, and to improve the quality of life of marginalized artisanal miners, their families and communities;
- represent their stakeholder group, including but not exclusively the interest of their institutions. Members are expected to keep their respective organizations updated on the assigned Standard and to be fully aware of their participation in the Standard Committee.
- declare all conflicts of interest at nomination and before taking part of decision making processes;
- have specific interest, proven expertise<sup>2</sup> and broad experience<sup>3</sup> on the topics related to the assigned standard;
- contribute in a constructive way to the standard development and evolution;
- regularly participate to Standard Committee meetings;
- properly prepare for meetings and contribute to all follow-up actions as agreed and/or mentioned in the meeting minutes.

Members are expected to remain on the Standard Committee for as long as a standard development or revision cycle lasts, up to a maximum of 5 years. Any member is entitled to renounce nomination at any moment, in writing to the Executive Director on behalf of the Board. The Board of Directors is entitled to revoke nomination at any moment, in writing by the Executive Director to the member and the Chair of the Standard Committee. Membership is renewable.

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<sup>2</sup> "broad expertise" is understood as the combination of understanding of ASM issues with not all, but several of the following relevant aspects: sustainability standards including certification, development issues, labour, health and safety, mining, mineral processing and cleaner technologies, metallurgy, manufacturing, environmental management, ecological restoration, gender and child labour issues, formalization, legal and regulatory frameworks, minerals supply chains, conflict minerals issues, minerals supply chains, due diligence requirements, traceability, commercialization and markets, or other topics relevant for the assigned standard.

<sup>3</sup> Except in case of artisanal miners, international experience is expected.

The Chair assumes the role to support the Standard Coordinator during the Committee meetings and to ensure effective meetings: full participation during the meetings, the agenda is sent on time for all members and all the issues are included during the discussions in the meetings.

The Standard Committee shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair for renewable periods of 2 years. The Vice-Chair replaces the Chair in cases of absence, conflict of interest or other grounds found necessary.

#### **4. MEETINGS**

Standard Committee(s) shall meet as often as needed to fulfill the mandate and according to the timetable for the standard development process. During active standard development and revision phases ordinary meetings should occur, during maintenance phases at least once a year. Extraordinary meetings may be convened if necessary.

Meetings take place electronically, by conference call facility provided by ARM and/or email consultation. Exceptionally, physical meetings may be agreed upon, subject to approval by the Executive Director.

##### **4.1 Working languages**

The primary official language of all Standard Committee(s) shall be either English or Spanish, to be defined in the Specific Terms of Reference of the committee.

The Specific ToR may specify additional secondary official language(s). If additional official languages are specified, ARM will provide for translation of all documents relevant for informed decision making. Bilingual members are called upon to support monolingual peers during discussions.

##### **4.2 Preparation of meetings and meeting minutes**

Meetings shall be properly prepared for by the Standards Coordinator, with support from the ARM Secretariat, by timely<sup>4</sup> announcing the meeting to members, and preparing the agenda and all necessary background information. The chair approves the meeting agenda. Reasonable time shall be provided to members to request additional topics to be set on the agenda and to provide the necessary background information.

All members shall carefully study the information provided and prepare their contributions to the Standard Committee. All members shall also contribute to follow-up actions after meetings as agreed and/or mentioned in the meeting minutes.

The Standards Coordinator or assigned person agreed by the Chair, will take minutes of the meeting and distribute these to all Standard Committee members at earliest convenience, however, not later than 10 working days after the meeting, for feedback and final approval.

Minutes are normally approved by consensus through non-objection during 10 working days after receipt. In case of disagreements, approval of minutes shall become an agenda item for the next meeting.

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<sup>4</sup> Ordinary meetings should be announced well in advance but with at least 10 days anticipation. Extraordinary meetings can be held ad-hoc if quorum is achieved. Optional physical meetings shall be announced with at least 1 month anticipation.

### 4.3 Participation

To ensure an efficient operation of the Standard Committee and guarantee a quorum for decision making, the members should assume the following commitments:

- have regular access to email or phone to allow fluent communication with the ARM secretariat when necessary;
- respond to written communications within the deadlines stipulated;
- have reliable access to the Internet and means to get connected to the online meetings;
- attempt to delegate their vote, if unable to attend the session, and when the decision can be made based on the background information sent previous to the meetings;
- send apologies in advance whenever unable to participate in a committee session.

Members who miss three consecutive meetings will be deemed to have resigned unless it is due to extenuating circumstance.

### 4.4 Decision making

Every member has one vote. Proxy votes (delegated in writing to the Chair) are possible; however, one person may only assume one proxy vote.

Quorum for decisions exists if more than half (+50%) of the members participate in a meeting. Proxy votes count for the quorum. In case of teleconferences or exceptional physical meetings this refers to participation, in case of email-consultations this refers to an email response to the consultation.

If quorum is not reached in a meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned for a reasonable period suitable to obtain quorum. If at such adjourned meeting a quorum is not present, the members present shall be a quorum, with exception of decision-making on a final draft.

A final draft, for the submission to the Board of Directors, after having followed procedures as indicated in article 2.5 of the ARM Standard-setting Procedure can only be approved with quorum (+50%) of the Standard Committee members.

The Standard Committee(s) shall seek to achieve unanimous decisions wherever possible, defined as decisions taken with no votes against.

If unanimity cannot be reached, opponents shall be asked to propose alternative options that are more likely to reach consensus and these alternatives shall be discussed. If these discussions do not lead to any decision by unanimity, majority decision-making procedures should be used.

On request to carry out additional research by a minority of at least 25% of the votes or by the Standards Coordinator, the topic in question may be postponed once for the next meeting of the Standard Committee.

If no research request is made or supported by at least 25% of the votes, or if the topic has already been postponed once, decisions can be taken by simple majority (+50%). In case of a tie, the vote of the Standards Coordinator decides; in his absence the vote of the chair, the vice-chair, or the acting chair in this order.

All decisions as well as a summary of deliberations shall be documented in minutes of Standard Committee meeting; in suitable form to be released to the public.

By decision-making on a topic or approving a draft, the Standard Committee approves the content of the topic or draft. Administrative Amendments (according to article 3.5 of the standard-setting procedures) shall be carried out by the Standards Coordinator when needed and do not require approval by the Standard Committee.

#### **4.5 Observers, guests and resource persons**

Members of the Standard Committee or ARM may propose the invitation of observers, guests, resource persons or external experts to participate in meetings (entirely or partly) as deemed conducive for the purpose. Invitations may be approved by the Chair for participation in the entire meeting or certain agenda items only.

Observers, guests and resource persons have no vote. The Chair may ask observers, guests and resource persons to kindly leave the meeting during final deliberations and voting.

ARM board member's others than those nominated as committee members may at any time participate in Committee meetings to provide responsive feedback on standard setting progress and alignment with institutional vision and mission.

### **5. MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **5.1 Documentation**

All records (electronic copies and paper copies) of the Standard Committee shall be kept for as long as the published ARM Standard remains the current version, but at least five years, in particular:

- Nominations of members and updated member lists
- Invitation lists to meetings
- Meeting agendas
- Lists of participants
- Minutes
- any Standard Committee approved documents

At least member lists and meeting minutes shall be made available publicly as download from the ARM website. Other documents may be made available per email on request of interested parties indicating the intended use.

Confidentiality agreements regarding individual documents shall be respected.

#### **5.2 Remuneration**

Participation in the Standard Committee should be on a voluntary basis. Members of the Standard Committee may be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses involved in participating in meetings.

### **6. REFERENCES**

ARM Standard-Setting Procedures (version 3.0)

ARM Standards Complaints Procedures (version 2.0)

[ISEAL Code of Good Practice: Setting Social and Environmental Standards v 6.0.](#)