Supporting just mineral transitions through responsible mining of critical energy transition minerals

Elisa Tonda
Chief of the Resources and Markets Branch, UNEP

UNECE Sustainable Energy Week 2023
13 September 2023
1. The Secretary General's Initiative ‘Harnessing Critical Energy Transition Minerals for Sustainable Development'
2. Responsible mining of critical energy transition minerals: Protecting People and Planet
Developing countries have an important share of critical energy transition minerals

Share of global mineral production and reserves held by developing countries (2017)

Source: IRENA (2023), Geopolitics of the Energy Transition: Critical Materials

Source: UNCTAD (2022), The Least Developed Countries Report 2022
How can developing countries harness the increasing demand for critical energy transition minerals for Sustainable Development...

Growing demand for energy transition minerals is expected to bring USD$1.7 trillion in global mining investment (Wood Mackenzie).

Countries will have a 20/30-year window to tap into these investment flows.
…while creating safeguards for people and planet

Assess and manage risks

Plan settlements for mining and beyond ensure the well-being of local communities

Decarbonize, mitigate, plan for site remediation, enhance circularity

Protect community and human rights, particularly vulnerable groups like women and children

**FIGURE 3.5** The majority of mining sites face high water risks

Source: IRENA (2023), Geopolitics of the Energy Transition: Critical Materials

Active Mining conflicts in LAC

Source: Observatory of Mining Conflicts in LAC (2023)
Harnessing Critical Energy Transition Minerals for Sustainable Development in LDCs and LLDCs

**Just Transitions in Low Carbon Technologies**

**Objectives**
- Support and accelerate a just energy transition focusing on minerals
- Support LDCs and LLDCs and developing countries with critical energy transition minerals in capitalizing from the green transition to drive economic growth, support sustainable development, and reduce poverty and inequality while minimizing negative environmental and social impacts of minerals development.

**Partners**
UNEP, UNDP, UN RECs, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNICEF, UN Women, IRENA, IEA, ILO, OHCHR, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UN Country Teams, the IFC and the World Bank.

**Outputs**

**Phase I (year 1)** [target audiences: developing countries with mineral resources]
Building on available material and thinking within the UN and other partners and through stakeholder consultations:
1. **UN Knowledge hub on extractives**
2. **UN Toolkit on critical energy transition minerals**
3. **UN Framework on Just Transitions for Critical Energy Transition Minerals**

**Phase II (years 2 and 3):**
[target audiences: LDCs and LLDCs with mineral resources]
1. **UN Framework on Just Transitions for Critical Energy Transition Minerals tested and customized** in 12 LDCs/LLDCs for tools, capacity laws, skill building and leveraging funds (in year 2).
2. **Recommendations from UN Framework are implemented** to enhance production and trade capacities, plan for investment financing, develop skills, and put in place environmental/social safeguards. These will be implemented in year 3 in 12 selected countries.

**Possible Countries identified by the WG+:**
**Latin America:** Bolivia Plurinational State
**Africa:** Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, South Sudan, and the Sudan.
**Central Asia:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.
**Southeast and East Asia:** Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mongolia

*Identified based on partner capacities in these countries but need further discussion.
Galvanizing collective action for just transitions in critical energy transition minerals

Breaking silos
A framework co-developed by UNDP, UNEP, UN Regional Economic Commissions, UNCTAD, ILO, UNIDO, OHCHR

Action-Oriented
A framework that will be guided and applied by UNCTs

Building on years of knowledge and experience
A framework that will build on the work and expertise from the UN, IEA, IRENA, IGF, OECD, World Bank, EITI, IRMA, and others.

Bringing together producers and consumers
A framework that will be developed through meaningful and broad multistakeholder consultations, offering a space to exchange views and best practices

Harmonizing effective approaches
Bringing in voices from several parts of the value chain to harmonize safeguards, create enabling conditions for economic transformation, reliability, resilience and benefit-sharing

ENSURING JUST MINERALS TRANSITIONS

CONNECTING Knowledge and actors along the supply chain

UN Framework on Just Transitions for Critical Energy Transition Minerals

UN Agencies
UN RCs and RCOs
Experts
Countries Regions
Civil society
Private Sector (mining, finance, trade)

Economic transformation, producer empowerment
Effective environmental and social protection
Strong regulatory environment
Trust and transparency