

# **MINING COMMUNITY RELATIONS TRENDS PRACTITIONER ASSESSMENT TOOL**



A Diagnostic Framework for Mining Operators,  
Community Relations Professionals, and Investors

2026

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# How to Use This Tool

This assessment tool is designed for mining operators, community relations professionals, and investors seeking to evaluate their positioning against six major trends reshaping community relations in mining. Complete the tool in 60 to 90 minutes using operational knowledge of your community relations practice.

The tool is organized into six sections, each addressing a distinct industry trend. Rate each diagnostic question using the scoring scale provided. Where possible, involve multiple stakeholders in completing the assessment. Single-perspective assessments consistently underestimate capability gaps.

## Important Note on Methodology

This tool is a diagnostic aid, not a compliance checklist. Scores indicate relative positioning and priority areas for investment. Professional judgment remains essential for interpreting results and designing appropriate responses. Where scores indicate significant gaps, consider engaging specialist advisory support before making strategic decisions.

## Scoring scale:

Rate each indicator on a scale of **1 to 4**. Use the scoring definitions below consistently.

<b>1</b>	Not started. No systems, processes, or capabilities in place for this area.
<b>2</b>	Early stage. Initial efforts underway but not yet systematic or consistent.
<b>3</b>	Established. Functioning systems in place with consistent application across operations.
<b>4</b>	Leading. Best-in-class practice with measurable outcomes and continuous improvement.

## Recommended completion approach:

1. Complete all six trend sections, scoring each diagnostic question honestly.
2. Transfer your scores to the Summary Scorecard to calculate percentage ratings.
3. Use the Prioritization Framework to classify each trend by urgency level.
4. Complete the Action Planning Worksheet for your top three priority areas.

Schedule separate information-gathering sessions with field CR teams and corporate leadership. Relying solely on headquarters-reported data systematically underestimates community relations gaps.

## Section 1: Mitigation to Value Creation

Assesses whether your community relations approach has shifted from compliance-driven risk mitigation toward creating shared economic and developmental value with communities.

#	Diagnostic Question	1	2	3	4
Scale:		Not started	Early stage	Established	Leading
1.1	Our CR strategy is explicitly designed around community development priorities identified through systematic community consultation, not around standard industry templates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	We have conducted a community economic baseline study within the last three years and use it to inform benefit program design.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	Community benefit budgets are justified based on measurable developmental impact, not just spend volume or project count.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4	We track economic outcomes for community members (employment, income, market access) rather than only tracking inputs (money spent, projects delivered).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5	Our benefit programs operate on multi-year timelines with phased milestones, rather than annual project cycles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6	CR professionals on our team include individuals with development economics, agricultural productivity, or livelihood programming expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Trend 1 Total Score (out of 24):</b>				_____	<b>/ 24</b>

### Priority Actions If You Scored Below 12

- **Commission an independent community economic baseline study** before your next benefit agreement negotiation.
- **Audit your benefit program portfolio:** what percentage of programs were designed based on documented community priorities versus internal assumptions?
- **Recruit or contract at least one professional** with development economics or livelihood programming expertise to complement your existing CR team.

## Section 2: Technology-Enabled Community Engagement

Evaluates whether technology is being used to improve the quality, accessibility, transparency, and measurability of your community engagement.

#	Diagnostic Question	1	2	3	4
<i>Scale:</i>		<i>Not started</i>	<i>Early stage</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Leading</i>
2.1	We use a digital platform for grievance tracking that allows community members to submit complaints and check resolution status.	■	■	■	■
2.2	Community meeting records, decisions, and agreements are digitized and accessible to both company and community stakeholders.	■	■	■	■
2.3	We maintain non-digital engagement pathways for communities or individuals with limited connectivity or digital literacy.	■	■	■	■
2.4	We use data analytics on community engagement data to identify patterns (e.g., grievance clusters, attendance drops) before they escalate.	■	■	■	■
2.5	Community benefit distributions are tracked through digital systems that provide transparency about who receives what and when.	■	■	■	■
<b>Trend 2 Total Score (out of 20):</b>				_____	<b>/ 20</b>

### Priority Actions If You Scored Below 12

- **Conduct a connectivity and digital literacy baseline assessment** of your community stakeholders before deploying any digital platform.
- **Implement a digital grievance tracking system** that provides community members with a reference number and status updates.
- **Ensure every digital engagement channel has a parallel non-digital pathway** for stakeholders who cannot access the technology.

## Section 3: ESG-Driven Standardization of CR Practice

Assesses how well your community relations practice aligns with emerging ESG requirements from investors, lenders, and asset managers.

#	Diagnostic Question	1	2	3	4
	<i>Scale:</i>	<i>Not started</i>	<i>Early stage</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Leading</i>
3.1	We have mapped our CR practice against the ESG requirements of our primary investors and lenders, and can document compliance.	■	■	■	■
3.2	Our grievance mechanism meets international standards (UNGP effectiveness criteria) and we can demonstrate this to external auditors.	■	■	■	■
3.3	We have standardized CR reporting metrics across all operations that align with ESG disclosure requirements.	■	■	■	■
3.4	We treat ESG requirements as minimum standards and invest additional resources in adapting approaches to local cultural and regulatory context.	■	■	■	■
3.5	Our mid-tier or smaller operations have the same reporting capability and compliance posture as our flagship sites.	■	■	■	■
<b>Trend 3 Total Score (out of 20):</b>				_____	<b>/ 20</b>

### Priority Actions If You Scored Below 12

- **Map your current CR practice against IFC Performance Standards and ICMM Mining Principles** to identify specific compliance gaps.
- **Develop a standardized CR reporting template** that all operations complete quarterly, covering grievance data, engagement activity, and benefit delivery.
- **Engage an external ESG auditor** to conduct a gap assessment of your grievance mechanism against UNGP effectiveness criteria.

## Section 4: Critical Minerals and Community Relations Pressure

Evaluates whether your community engagement approaches are adequate for the compressed timelines and heightened scrutiny of critical minerals projects.

#	Diagnostic Question	1	2	3	4
<i>Scale:</i>		<i>Not started</i>	<i>Early stage</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Leading</i>
4.1	Where we operate critical minerals projects, our community engagement timelines allow adequate community deliberation, not compressed to match exploration urgency.	■	■	■	■
4.2	We have adapted our engagement approaches for communities with no prior mining experience, providing foundational education about mining before seeking consent.	■	■	■	■
4.3	We proactively engage with NGOs and civil society organizations active in our critical minerals operating areas rather than treating them as adversaries.	■	■	■	■
4.4	Our investor communications explicitly address community relations risk in critical minerals projects with specific mitigation strategies.	■	■	■	■
4.5	We have assessed whether our community engagement staffing and expertise is adequate for the pace and complexity of our critical minerals portfolio.	■	■	■	■
<b>Trend 4 Total Score (out of 20):</b>				_____	<b>/ 20</b>

### Priority Actions If You Scored Below 12

- **Review your community engagement timelines for critical minerals projects:** are communities given at least the same deliberation time as for conventional projects?
- **Develop a "mining 101" engagement module** for communities with no prior mining experience.
- **Map the NGO and civil society landscape** in each critical minerals operating area and initiate proactive engagement.

## Section 5: Women and Youth as Central Stakeholders

Assesses whether women and youth are genuinely included as central stakeholders in your community relations strategy, rather than treated as peripheral.

#	Diagnostic Question	1	2	3	4
<i>Scale:</i>		<i>Not started</i>	<i>Early stage</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Leading</i>
5.1	We conduct separate, dedicated engagement with women's groups and youth associations, in addition to engagement with formal community leadership.	■	■	■	■
5.2	Our community benefit programs include components specifically designed around women's priorities and youth priorities.	■	■	■	■
5.3	Women and youth have dedicated representatives in joint monitoring committees and company-community dialogue forums.	■	■	■	■
5.4	We collect and analyze engagement data disaggregated by gender and age to identify whether women and youth perspectives are being captured.	■	■	■	■
5.5	Our community agreements were negotiated with documented input from women's and youth groups, not solely from formal community leadership.	■	■	■	■
<b>Trend 5 Total Score (out of 20):</b>				_____	<b>/ 20</b>

### Priority Actions If You Scored Below 12

- **Establish dedicated women's and youth stakeholder groups** with company facilitation but community-controlled governance.
- **Audit your last community agreement:** can you document that women's and youth groups provided input that shaped the final terms?
- **Disaggregate your community engagement attendance data by gender and age.** If women represent less than 30% of participants, redesign your engagement format.

## Section 6: Data-Driven Conflict Prevention

Evaluates whether your organization uses systematic data collection and analysis to anticipate and prevent community relations conflicts before they emerge.

#	Diagnostic Question	1	2	3	4
	<i>Scale:</i>	<i>Not started</i>	<i>Early stage</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Leading</i>
6.1	We track grievance volume, resolution time, and repeat complaint patterns and review this data at least monthly to identify emerging risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	We monitor community meeting attendance trends and participation diversity as indicators of community engagement health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3	We conduct regular community sentiment assessments (at least quarterly) and track sentiment trends over time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4	We have defined specific thresholds or indicator combinations that trigger escalated leadership attention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5	Our data systems are transparent to communities: community members know what data we collect and how we use it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.6	We use data analytics as an input to intensified qualitative engagement, not as a replacement for direct community relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Trend 6 Total Score (out of 24):</b>				_____	<b>/ 24</b>

### Priority Actions If You Scored Below 12

- **Implement monthly grievance data review meetings** that include trend analysis, not just case-by-case review.
- **Define three to five early warning thresholds** specific to your operation and establish escalation protocols.
- **Share a simplified version of your community relations dashboard with community leaders** to build transparency and trust.

## Summary Scorecard

Transfer your total scores from each section. Calculate your percentage rating by dividing your score by the maximum score. Circle the appropriate priority level.

Trend	Score	Max	% Rating	Priority
1. Mitigation to Value Creation		24		H/M/L
2. Technology-Enabled Engagement		20		H/M/L
3. ESG-Driven Standardization		20		H/M/L
4. Critical Minerals Pressure		20		H/M/L
5. Women and Youth Inclusion		20		H/M/L
6. Data-Driven Conflict Prevention		24		H/M/L
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		<b>128</b>		

## Prioritization Framework

Use this framework to translate your scores into an action plan.

Score Range	Priority Level	Recommended Response
<b>Below 40%</b>	<b>Critical (Immediate)</b>	Significant vulnerability. Allocate resources within the next quarter. Consider external advisory support to accelerate capability building.
<b>40% – 60%</b>	<b>High (6-Month)</b>	Foundations exist but gaps are material. Develop a structured improvement plan with defined milestones and accountability.
<b>60% – 80%</b>	<b>Moderate (12-Month)</b>	Practice is functional but not leading. Refine existing approaches and benchmark against industry leaders.
<b>Above 80%</b>	<b>Maintaining (Ongoing)</b>	Practice is strong. Sustain performance, share best practices across operations, and monitor for emerging changes.

# Action Planning Worksheet

Based on your assessment results, identify your top three priorities and define specific next steps. Focus on the trends where your scores indicate the largest capability gaps.

## Priority 1

<b>Trend Area</b>	
<b>Current Score / Max</b>	
<b>Target Score (12 months)</b>	
<b>Specific Actions</b>	
<b>Resources Required</b>	
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Accountable Person</b>	
<b>Success Metrics</b>	

## Priority 2

<b>Trend Area</b>	
<b>Current Score / Max</b>	
<b>Target Score (12 months)</b>	
<b>Specific Actions</b>	
<b>Resources Required</b>	
<b>Timeline</b>	

<b>Accountable Person</b>	
<b>Success Metrics</b>	

**Priority 3**

<b>Trend Area</b>	
<b>Current Score / Max</b>	
<b>Target Score (12 months)</b>	
<b>Specific Actions</b>	
<b>Resources Required</b>	
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Accountable Person</b>	
<b>Success Metrics</b>	

## Next Steps

This assessment provides a snapshot of your organization's positioning against 2026 industry trends. To maximize its value:

- **Repeat this assessment annually** to track progress and identify emerging gaps as industry practice continues to evolve.
- **Compare scores across operations** to identify sites that are leading and those that need targeted support.
- **Share results with leadership** to build the business case for strategic investment in community relations capability.
- **Use the Action Planning Worksheet** to convert assessment findings into funded, time-bound improvement plans with clear accountability.

### Need Help Interpreting Your Results?

Our strategic advisory services help mining operators translate assessment findings into actionable improvement plans tailored to your specific operational context, stakeholder landscape, and investment priorities. Schedule a consultation to discuss your results and define a path forward.

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