

## **The Responsible Mica Initiative's efforts towards establishment of a clear legal framework for the mica sector in Jharkhand turn successful**

**Ranchi & Paris - February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022** - The [Responsible Mica Initiative](#) (RMI) is excited to learn about the decision taken by the Jharkhand Chief Minister's cabinet on February 10, 2022 following the Jharkhand Chief Minister's initiative to empower Jharkhand State Mineral Development Corporation (JSMDC) for mica Dhibra disposal (mica waste) and to take decisive steps towards developing a conducive mica ecosystem in the state.

Since 2018, RMI's has led and facilitated a series of multi-stakeholder consultations. From mica workers to Jharkhand government representatives, passing by PRI members (Panchayat Raj Institutions), national and global mica-using companies, India-based mica exporters and processors and especially the Mica Exporters Association (MEA), as well as India-based and international civil society organizations, stakeholders from various spheres have had the opportunity to share their perspectives. RMI elaborated the outcomes in the "Jharkhand Sustainable Mica Policy Framework and Vision" which was submitted to the Jharkhand government in June 2020.

Building on this submission, RMI engaged key stakeholders in a second round of consultations with the Jharkhand government, the Mica Exporters Association, civil society organizations. This co-development work resulted in three short-term recommendations to create a robust mica ecosystem in the state for the benefit and the overall development of the mica reliant communities, while promoting responsible business practices in the mica sourcing region.

**Yesterday, the first of these three recommendations has been adopted during a Jharkhand cabinet meeting, with the JSMDC being empowered as the focal point and decision body for all mica-related topic in the state.**

"RMI warmly welcomes this decision which is both a strong signal demonstrating the Jharkhand government's willingness to recognize and to bring its support to mica-picking communities, creating safe and dignified work opportunities for mica pickers, as well as a decisive first step for the effective formalization of the mica sector. This will undeniably contribute to improve the robustness and transparency along the mica supply chain. Empowering the JSMDC regarding mica related matters will ease and accelerate discussions and decision-making processes. It will strongly contribute to the implementation of RMI's mission and actions", said **Fanny Frémont, Executive Director, Responsible Mica Initiative.**

The next two recommendations, which shall now be discussed in the coming days and weeks pertain to (i) the development and release of a new Jharkhand Mica Dhibra Policy, and (ii) the pilot-testing of two community-based business models designed to replace illegal mica sourcing with a robust mica collection and commercial ecosystem.

The Jharkhand government is paying close attention to these recommendations, as the districts of Giridih and Koderma are a global sourcing hub for high-quality natural mica used in a wide range of industrial applications within India and abroad. Mica's aesthetic and functional attributes make it a key component in a wide variety of industries including cosmetics, automotive including electrical vehicle battery, paints, electronics, oil and gas extraction, and aerospace.

The passage of India's National Forest Conservation Act in 1980 resulted in a *de facto* prohibition on mines and mining in the districts' forests. Nevertheless, communities of artisanal miners who were dependent on mica for their livelihoods continued to collect and sell mica through unregulated channels which fostered poor working conditions including engagement of children in economic activities. RMI was created to address and eliminate the root causes of these conditions.

Following two years of close consultation with the Jharkhand government and the [Better World Foundation](#), RMI has developed two community-based business models aiming to propose a formal structure for mica collection and mica mining in Jharkhand, and to ensure the overall socioeconomic development of the mica community.

"A new clear legal framework would now not only lead to the formal recognition of an economic activity carried out by around 300,000 mica-dependent people and to the protection of their rights with a sense of dignity, but also revive



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mining in a sustainable manner. Processing and exports of mica from Jharkhand would provide additional revenue to the state, create jobs, stimulate indirect economic activities, while simultaneously eliminating illegal mining. In coordination with Jharkhand government, RMI would be able to pilot test these community-based business models that include responsible sourcing practices. This being the opportunity to renew our support and deep gratitude to Jharkhand government for the fruitful joint work achieved over past years”, said **Fanny Frémont, Executive Director, Responsible Mica Initiative.**

***About the Responsible Mica Initiative***

*The Responsible Mica Initiative is a non-governmental organization created to establish a fair, responsible and sustainable mica supply chain in India by promoting responsible sourcing practices, and eradicating child labor and unacceptable working conditions. RMI members are drawn from industries associated with the mica supply chain in partnership with civil society organizations and local stakeholders. The Responsible Mica Initiative is an association, established in accordance with the French Law of 1901 concerning non-profit organizations, with its head office located in 6 rue d'Armaillé, 75017 Paris - France.*

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