

SOCIAL RISKS ASSESSMENT OF MICA IN MALAYSIA PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Context

While India and Madagascar together account for around 50% of global mica production, other countries, such as Malaysia, are also sources of mica and therefore of interest to certain members of the Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI). RMI therefore commissioned Embode to conduct a Social Risks Assessment and provide a first documentary review of the social risks associated with the mica supply chain in Malaysia.

Main objectives

- Understand the characteristics of mica supply chain in this specific geography.
- Identify any social risks linked to mica mining.
- Inform RMI's discussion process related to due diligence activities in Malaysia.

Limitations

Important to note that very little specific information on mica was found available, which required extrapolating information related to mining activities in general and cross-reference this information to specific mica-producing regions.

Key preliminary findings regarding social risks



Critical

Health risks

Workers in informal or small-scale mica-linked operations face exposure to silica dust, respiratory issues, musculoskeletal disorders, and chemical-related illnesses due to poor ventilation, limited use of protective equipment, and inadequate oversight.



Critical

Community risks

Communities surrounding mining and processing sites experience water and air pollution, loss of biodiversity, contamination of agricultural land, and weakened livelihoods. Informal operations using outdated or illegal techniques heighten these risks.



Critical

Land conflicts

Land conflicts arise in areas where land acquisition is facilitated by state-led industrial zoning or private development without adequate consultation. Indigenous and rural communities, particularly in Peninsular Malaysia, are vulnerable to displacement and lack accessible grievance mechanisms.



Low

Child labor & forced labor

While no verified cases of child labour were found in the context of mica, the wider informal sector in Malaysia has documented cases of child and forced labour, suggesting systemic vulnerabilities that may also affect mica-adjacent activities.

The Responsible Mica Initiative's next actions

On-the-ground explorations in 2026

- Organize a field visit in 2026 to conduct a targeted supply chain assessment. This to better understand labor conditions, environmental risks, and community-level impacts at mica extraction and processing sites.
- Engage discussions with supply chain actors and related stakeholder to deepen understanding of Malaysia's mica sector's needs and figure out whether RMI could support. This step is also important to enhance stakeholder mapping and begin building trust with key actors.