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ITSCI's ongoing commitment to independent Alignment Assessment vs OECD standards

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ITSCI is pleased to confirm our intention to initiate a second independent Alignment Assessment (AA) in mid-2022. This will provide an update to the first assessment of ITSCI by OECD in 2018. While there is a general expectation that AAs should be updated every 5 years we aim to bring forward re-assessment from 2023 to demonstrate our continued and full commitment to the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas.

Building on the positive results from our first AA in 2018, including our already 100% aligned standards, we have recognised, and acted on, opportunities to improve our programme to help drive forward company due diligence practices. We believe an AA is the best and most appropriate means of independently demonstrating this progressive improvement and the credibility of our programme.

ITSCI will appoint a qualified, experienced, independent evaluator to undertake an assessment to the existing OECD methodology referenced in the EU Responsible Minerals Regulation. The methodology includes several stages, including the evaluator's consideration of stakeholder inputs and perspectives. To provide maximum confidence for users of the AA, information on the evaluator's qualifications, conflict of interest statement, the process and timelines and an outline of information sources consulted will be reported. For transparency, and to further maximise confidence, ITSCI will publish relevant content from the AA tool itself in addition to the overall AA report. In years intervening full AA, we also aim to publish brief annual progress and improvement updates.

We believe the purpose of joint initiatives is to make things simpler, not more complicated, and provide efficiencies in how companies can conduct due diligence. As such, we recognise that expert AA is critical in helping upstream and downstream companies understand the role of joint initiatives and decide how they may rely on and/or supplement that joint work. It is our intention that ITSCI's independent AA and published documents will provide all possible information needed by user companies, company auditors, and for any external recognition [e.g., RMI].

ITSCI always aims to maximise transparency, make extensive information [publicly available](#) and encourage positive engagement. ITSCI facilitates a number of stakeholder groups, and operates a whistleblowing mechanism. Aside from the opportunity for stakeholder inputs envisaged in the AA methodology, these other routes for clarifications on AA results are always open. We also encourage direct engagement and financial support from downstream companies who recognise the value of upstream due diligence and wish to make use of ITSCI information in understanding supply chain risks and their mitigation.

ITSCI has helped to drive significant improvements in mineral supply chains in conflict-affected and high-risk areas. We are proud to continue to work hard, with our member companies, partners and stakeholders, in maintaining standards in due diligence and deliver real and positive outcomes on the ground.

Roper Cleland (Ms.)
On behalf of the ITSCI Programme