

Stakeholder views on Policy Options for Managing Public Health Impacts in Mining Areas

preliminary findings from a Q-methodology study in Tanzania

Background information

In summer 2021, the governance work stream of HIA4SD project carried out a [Q-methodology study \(Q-study\)](#) to identify and analyse how different stakeholders from government, civil society, and the private sector think about various policy options to improve public health in the context of large-scale mining projects. A first analysis of the collected data revealed areas where these different stakeholders tend to agree and disagree with regard to various policy options. The preliminary findings were discussed at the [multi-stakeholder workshop](#) that took place in Dodoma on 12 August 2021.

General observations

A cursory analysis of the Q-study data revealed unanimous support for strengthening public health considerations in large-scale mining among all participants from included stakeholder groups, i.e. the Ministry of Minerals (MoM), Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC), National Environment Management Council (NEMC), the private sector, and civil society organizations.

Participants share a general consensus that public health is not sufficiently considered in industrial mining today. There is a broad agreement that managing public health impacts in mining areas should not be left to the discretion of companies. Participant views further indicate that communication and coordination between mining companies, local communities, and local institutions needs to be improved and strengthened, including in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Preliminary findings on policy options

Health impact monitoring

- ▷ Preliminary findings indicate robust support for **improved monitoring efforts** and notable support for the collection of baseline data across all stakeholder groups. Study participants generally agree that health impact monitoring should be conducted through public institutions and not be left to mining companies.
- ▷ Participants from all stakeholder groups except for the private sector indicate support for the proposal that **mining companies finance regular health surveys**. However, critical voices have expressed concerns that financial contributions from companies could influence survey activities and results.

Regulatory requirements

- ▷ Participants' views on regulatory requirements converge in the shared perspective that current **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) provisions are insufficient** and that an improved regulatory framework that includes public health issues is desirable. Preliminary findings suggest that there is a robust consensus across stakeholders that mining companies are able to comply with higher standards in area of public health without being overburdened.
- ▷ Stakeholders do not reveal a clear preference whether a **separate Health Impact Assessment (HIA)** should be required or whether the existing EIA requirements should be amended to include public health issues. Both policy options can be considered during a policy dialogue on strengthening public health in large-scale resource extraction projects.
- ▷ There is general although not unanimous support among participants that **public health must figure more prominently in the management plan**. Including public health aspects in the management plan could go hand in hand with improving monitoring efforts in mining areas.

Capacity-building

- ▷ Strengthening capacities to address public health impacts in large-scale mining areas is regarded as important by most study participants. There is broad agreement that **capacity-building is especially required in the area of public health impact monitoring**.
- ▷ Some study participants support the proposal that the MoHCDGEC should be given with a role in public health monitoring and impact assessment, and be provided with the necessary resources; other participants point to the need of creating monitoring capacities at the regional level. The preliminary findings indicate there is **no clear consensus on the distribution of tasks and responsibilities** among national and subnational entities and respective capacity-building requirements in the area public health monitoring and impact assessment.

Strengthening coordination

- ▷ All stakeholder groups view improving coordination as relevant but with motivations and objectives. Most support gathers the call to **create a platform for coordination between the local health system and mining companies**.
- ▷ Several participants also support the idea to **create a formalized exchange forum**. A cursory analysis of the preliminary findings suggest that some see it as way to further promote public health considerations among stakeholders; others view it as an opportunity to discuss a broader variety of mining related issues beyond public health.

Increasing transparency

- ▷ A notable share of participants across different stakeholder groups calls for **more transparency and responsiveness by mining companies**.
- ▷ Several participants support the proposal that mining companies need to conduct **regular awareness campaigns** to inform about mining related health risks and to promote best health practices