

The future of mining lies in sustainability

A [report](#) found that two-thirds of mining companies are pursuing community impact programmes - on areas such as jobs, transport and clean water - as part of their sustainability policies. Waste management was equally prioritised, followed by employee wellbeing by 57% of respondents (including aspects such as medical health and health and safety in the workplace), and local education and skills training at 55%.



Image source: Getty/Gallo

Transition to renewables in the mining industry has so far been slow to pick up. The impact on local communities has been prioritised over renewable energy in Africa as the continent remains underdeveloped and improving the communities where mining companies operate is often integral to obtaining mining permits. Mining is an energy-intensive industry, and companies need a reliable power supply that presents a challenge with certain types of renewables, delaying widespread uptake. 28% of respondents said their company had targets around renewable energy.

Mining companies recognise the importance of greener energy to achieving greater sustainability in the African mining industry. When respondents were asked to rank their top three sustainability areas for intensified focus, increased renewable energy utilisation ranked highest, followed by net carbon reduction and greater adherence to voluntary ESG standards, such as the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

Critical considerations

The *Future of Mining Report*, published by Hogan Lovells, considers why community impact and employee wellbeing remain critical considerations for any mining operation, and why human rights are core to effective sustainability policy.

It also examines how sustainability within the mining industry across Africa compares with other emerging markets around the globe, and the hurdles that have hindered faster progress on sustainability and prioritising growth, including in areas such as adoption of renewables.

"Sustainability is integral to good business. However, there's no single definition or one size fits all approach. It really depends on each company, and the variations can be huge depending on what they do and where they are," Laurie Hammond, partner, Hogan Lovells, Johannesburg, says.

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