

The transition to a low-carbon economy has increased the demand for so-called green minerals, such as lithium and cobalt, which are essential for renewable energy technologies, electric vehicles and battery storage systems. However, their extraction is often linked to exploitative labor practices, including child labor in cobalt mines, unsafe working conditions and inadequate wages for workers in the mining sector. Environmentally, large-scale extraction depletes water sources, contaminates soil and contributes to deforestation, exacerbating ecological degradation. Additionally, mining projects frequently result in the forced displacement of indigenous and rural communities, depriving them of their land and livelihoods. While international human rights frameworks seek to address these risks, corporate accountability gaps and weak enforcement mechanisms create significant barriers to effective protection. Without stronger accountability measures, the green transition risks reproducing extractive injustices rather than correcting them.

To prevent the green transition from reinforcing environmental and social harms, accountability human rights accountability mechanisms must evolve beyond compliance-driven models toward proactive human rights protection. This paper argues that stakeholder engagement should be embedded into corporate governance as a structural safeguard, ensuring that affected communities, workers and civil society actively shape corporate responsibility, policies and remediation processes. Operationalizing this approach requires integrating stakeholder engagement at every stage of corporate due diligence practices. Engagement mechanisms such as early consultation, participatory decision-making and accessible grievance systems ensure that those most affected have a direct role in shaping corporate accountability, increasing transparency and strengthening human rights protection within the green minerals sector.