

iTSCi Appoints New Independent Evaluators Synergy Global Consulting For Conflict-Free Minerals Programme Assurance

iTSCi is pleased to announce the appointment of UK consultancy firm Synergy Global Consulting as the new Independent Evaluator for the minerals traceability and due diligence Programme. The company will be carrying out a range of auditing and assessment activities designed to provide general information of the circumstances around the mineral trade in the areas of iTSCi operation as well as specific audit, and other assurance.

These independent assessments include;

- Company pre-audits: preliminary assessment of companies' documentation during application for membership, evaluating the company history, ownership, management policies and procedures and potential links to conflict minerals trade in the region;
- Company site audits: regular field-based auditing of member companies' operations to track companies' performance against international due diligence standards, in particular the OECD and UN guidance;
- Governance Assessments: field research, analysis and reporting on key challenges relating to the governance of regional mineral sectors and the implementation of the iTSCi Programme, especially in regard to OECD Annex II issues.

Synergy has staff based in Oxford (UK), Johannesburg (South Africa), Doha (Qatar) and Paris (France) and the company has, since 2000, worked in over 70 countries with companies, governments and NGOs, focusing on the management of social issues surrounding commercial projects, particularly in the extractive industries. Synergy is a leading consultancy that works with businesses operating in challenging environments to help them secure their long-term value by creating positive social outcomes through the way they work. Further information is available on the company website; <http://www.synergy-global.net>

Ed O'Keefe, Director of Synergy said "We are pleased Synergy is now the Independent Evaluator of the iTSCi Programme. This builds on Synergy 15 years' experience providing independent trusted support and assurance to some of the leading extractive sector projects, often addressing challenging issues such as conflict and mining in the Great Lakes region. Our team are proud to be contributing to the continued assurance of the quality of iTSCi."

Kay Nimmo, representative of the iTSCi Governance Committee explained that "We felt that Synergy provided an excellent combination of regional knowledge of the Great Lakes, familiarity with large and small scale mining issues, due diligence and audit experience and the ability to contribute to improvements in the assessment processes. We look forward to their contribution to the independent evaluation activities that are a vital and integral part of the overall iTSCi Programme."

Importantly, a level of continuity in evaluation has also been achieved with transfer of a staff

member from the previous evaluation team to Synergy.

The iTSCi Programme currently covers more than 1,000 primary production sites in four Provinces of the DRC (Katanga, Maniema, South and North Kivu) and Rwanda, and has also recently started work in Burundi. More than 70,000 miners are known to be benefiting from access to international market provided by the iTSCi Programme operations in these areas.

Synergy will be contributing to the evaluation of more than 94 Accepted Full members and 84 Provisional Full members across almost 30 countries, the majority of whom are small enterprises in the Great Lakes Region, but which range from co-operatives to large global commodity traders.