



Guidance for Suppliers: Navigating Quality and Effectiveness of Mining and Supply Chain Standards

Version 2.0

Mercedes-Benz



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Version 2.0 of the Mercedes-Benz Guidance for Suppliers: Navigating Quality and Effectiveness of Mining and Supply Chain Standards (the “Guidance”) aims to support suppliers in identifying the appropriate standard for their purposes. The Guidance is based on an evaluation of Mercedes-Benz AG and is for informational purposes only. It is not binding on Mercedes-Benz suppliers. The relevant antitrust regulations have been observed and taken into account.

Mercedes-Benz will review the Guidance annually and encourages exchange with standard setting initiatives for further improvement. For further information, please contact sustainable-procurement@mercedes-benz.com.

INTRODUCTION

METHODS & CATEGORIES

INITIATIVES

SOURCES

Navigating Quality and Effectiveness of Mining and Supply Chain Standards

Mining and Supply Chain Standards are still a fairly new instrument in the human rights and environmental due diligence efforts of OEMs. There is a strong dynamic in the development of the individual standard systems. It is likely that five years from now, the standards landscape will differ profoundly from what we see today.

It is of great importance that OEMs as end users of standards play their part in this development, emphasising how standards need to be constructed to serve as effective due diligence instruments. This role of OEMs has been underrepresented in recent history. The goal of the original Guidance published last year was to change that, articulating what Mercedes-Benz considers as necessary for standards to serve as appropriate due diligence instruments.

The research period of this year's document was closed at the end of July 2024. Again, the evaluation is based exclusively on publicly available information.

Compared to last year's Guidance, we have refined our criteria, trying to better include the view of directly affected groups: The composition of stakeholders was expanded by a criterion analysing the protection of the

interests of vulnerable stakeholder groups and the involvement of affected parties in audits was adapted by the possibility to self-declare as a stakeholder of concern. Additionally, adaptations have been made according to the way access and participation is facilitated by the standards – focusing on the way relevant information is provided to different stakeholder groups by emphasising access for affected rightsholders.

One year after the publication of the first guidance and bilateral engagements with all standard systems covered in the Guidance, we see substantial progress:

- › The average score across all systems is up by 3,5 points;
- › 6 out of 8 standard systems have improved their score.

All in all, this means that the standard systems covered in the Guidance come close or have entered into the former top group. This is good news, as it shows that standard systems are receptive to input from stakeholders and even willing to question governance models and formal proceedings.

Two standards (Towards Sustainable Mining – TSM and Responsible Mica Initiative) have significantly increased their score. Formal changes have

been implemented quickly within one year. At the same time, the actual impact of these changes will only become visible some years down the road. Also, as of today, the practical implementation of such quick formal adaptations needs to be validated. It will be interesting to see if and how, for example, TSM will change course now that the indigenous representatives in the board can no longer be outvoted by their industry peers. Equally, while the Copper Mark is planning to announce audits and enable self-declared rightsholders to get in touch with the auditor, it will take time before affected rightsholders in the context of all entities in the Copper Mark system will profit from this new opportunity.

We can also observe that the standards generally do well with criteria related to audits. On the other hand, our new criteria about the inclusion of directly affected groups represents a challenge for most standards. It will be interesting to see how the standards will cope with this in the future.

Through our memberships and increasingly leadership positions we hold in IRMA, TSM, the Responsible Minerals Initiative (RMI) and the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI), we will continue to work towards bringing the formal improvements to life and create actual impact for affected rightsholders.

Categories

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For each category a maximum of three points can be achieved.

Composition of stakeholders

Standards need to ensure a balanced composition of stakeholder groups (incl. those affected and their representatives) in their governance. This includes equal voting rights in the setting and development of standards.

CRITERIA
Formal civil society representation in highest decision making bodies

Enshrined protection of the interests of vulnerable stakeholder groups (e.g. through unanimous decision making, blocking minorities)

Progressivity of the requirements

The requirements of standards should be continuously developed further. In order to ensure an accessible entry for new companies, standards should offer a low threshold entry point for the first audit.

CRITERIA
Regular revision cycles

Low threshold entry point for the first audit

Intensity of audits

Standards should have the most extensive and consecutive audit options possible.

CRITERIA
Self-assessment

Document analysis

Site inspection

Independence of auditors

The auditors should be independent of the audited company.

CRITERIA
ISEAL 5.4.2 Independence of Oversight

Quality of auditors

Standards need to ensure the quality and comparability of audits and to this end provide appropriate assistance and training opportunities for the auditors.

CRITERIA
ISEAL 5.5.2 Building Competence

Categories

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Involvement of those affected in audits

Standards should systematically provide for the inclusion of directly affected population groups in the vicinity of the mine in the context of audits. There should be a mechanism for interest groups, including those who declare themselves as such, to participate in the audit without limitation.

CRITERIA
Independence of auditors to select interviewees

Possibility to self-declare as community / stakeholder of concern

Enabling access and participation

Standards should provide suitable means so that stakeholders can actively participate (e.g. in the development of standards) and companies can adequately prepare for the audit.

CRITERIA
Training or guidance documents for companies seeking to undergo an audit

Central point of access for stakeholder specific information beyond industrial users

Stakeholder specific information for at least purchasers and affected rightsholders

Complaints mechanism

Standards should have a complaints mechanism that those affected can use to lodge complaints in a protected process. This applies, at least, to the implementation of the audits as well as the results of the audits and the type of their publication.

CRITERIA
Complaints mechanisms available

Whistleblowing protection

Target group-centred access

Transparency

Standards should make their structure, processes, content and results of audits publicly available without limitations.

CRITERIA
Standard-setting process

Requirements

Implementation process

Auditors

Assessed companies

Results of audits

Consulted stakeholders within audit

Centralised publication of audit results

Public audits announcement

ISEAL

ISEAL defines requirements for good practice for sustainability standards. This framework applies the ISEAL membership as a proxy for the basic quality of structures and processes of the standards.

CRITERIA
ISEAL membership

Effectiveness control

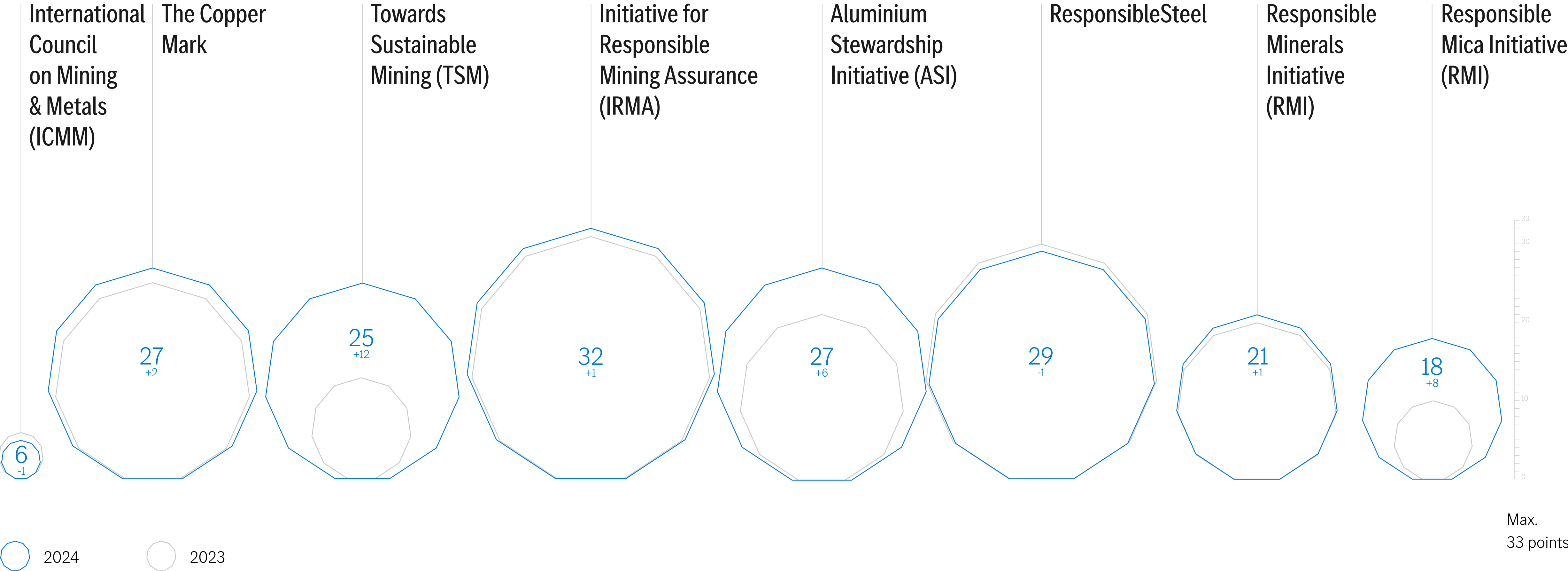
Standards are expected to include mechanisms that incentivise continuous improvement. Standards are expected to review progress toward improvement. The impact of the standard requirements and learnings from these reviews should be included in the further development of the standard system.

CRITERIA
Mechanism to incentivise continuous improvement

Third party review of improvement


Impact Assessment and Learning


Overview

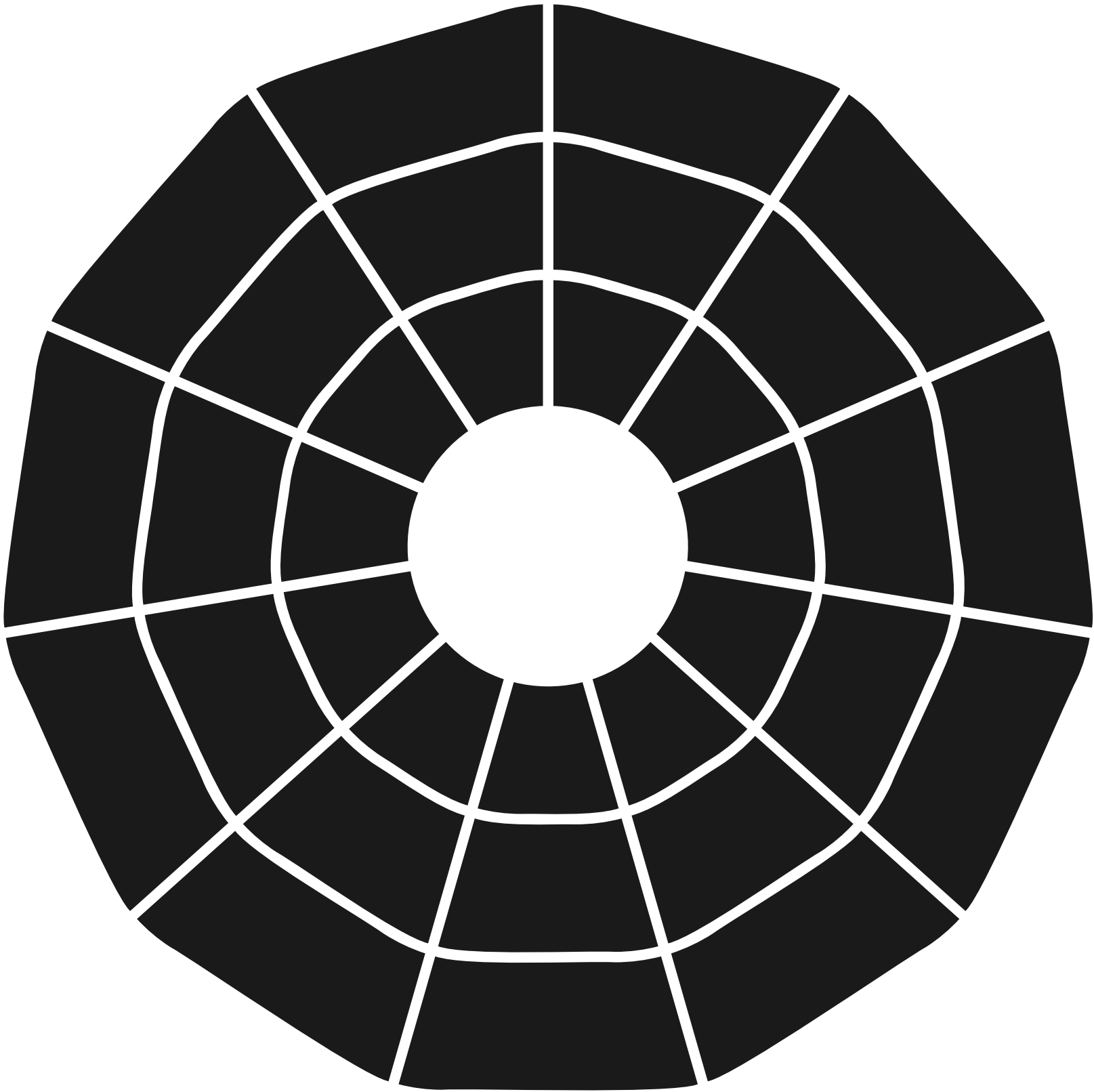


International Council on Mining & Metals (ICMM)

Total
6 out of 33

 Click on category
to see full analysis


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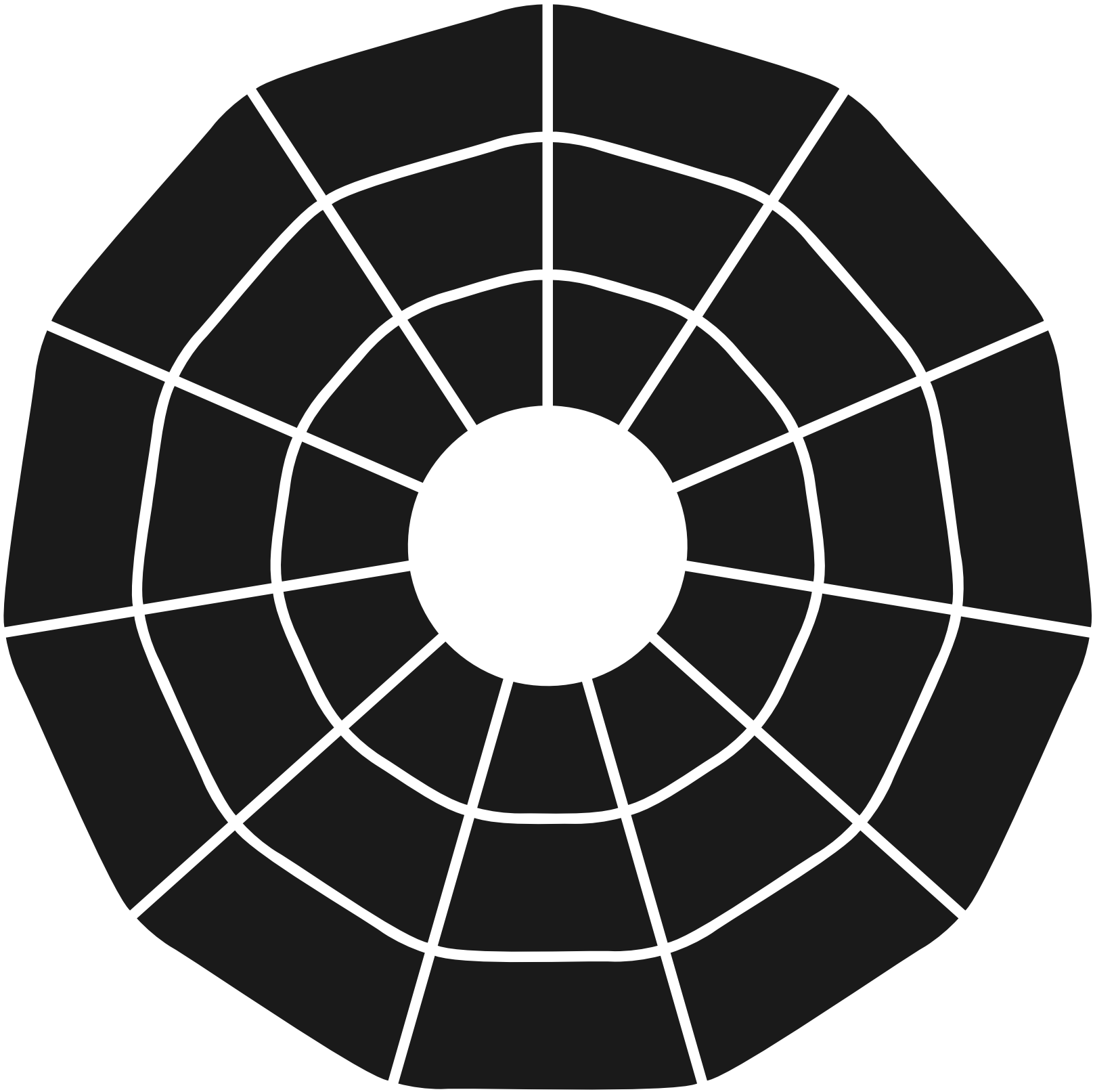


The Copper Mark

Total
27 out of 33


 Click on category
to see full analysis


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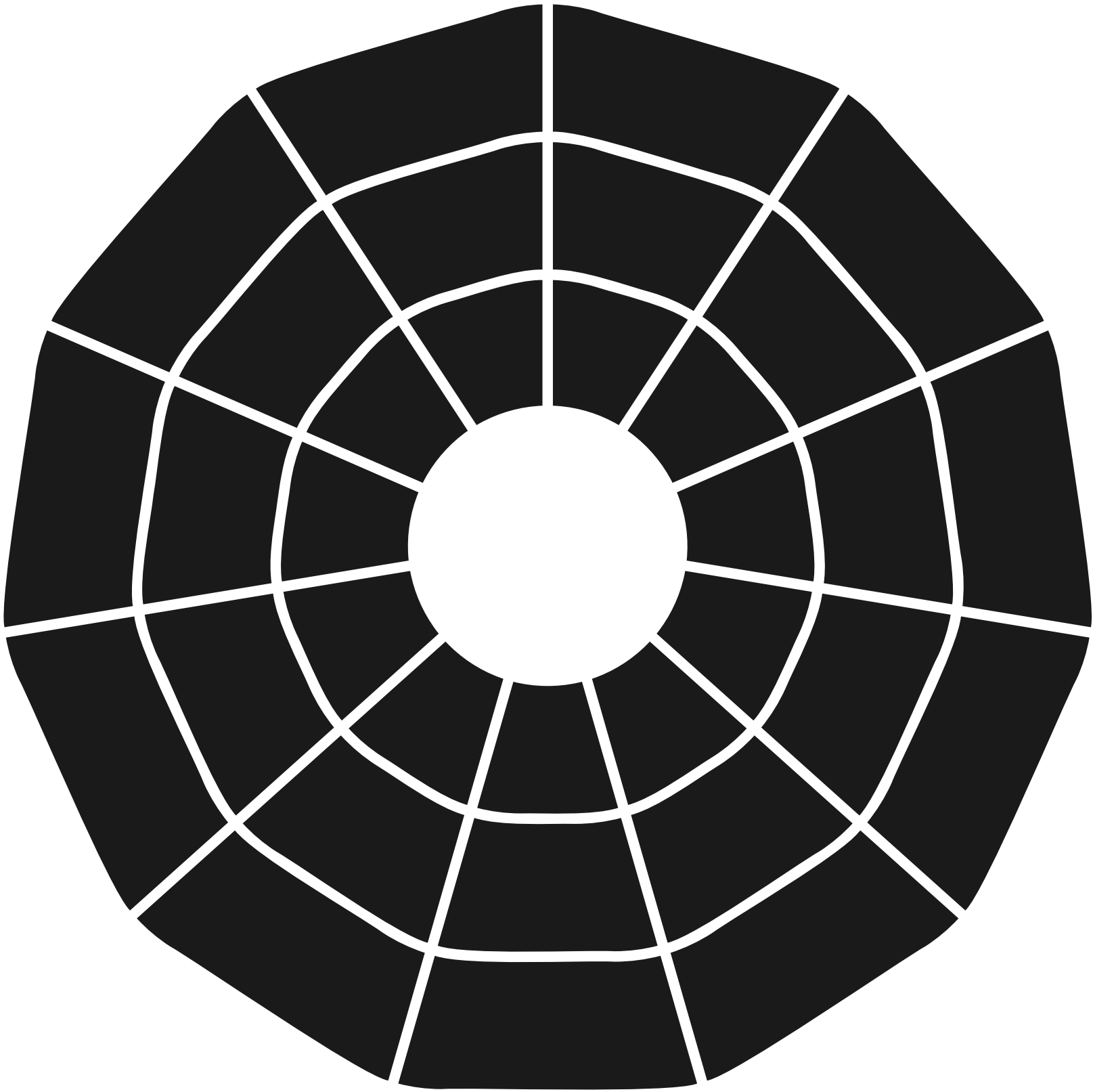


Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM)

Total
25 out of 33

 Click on category to see full analysis

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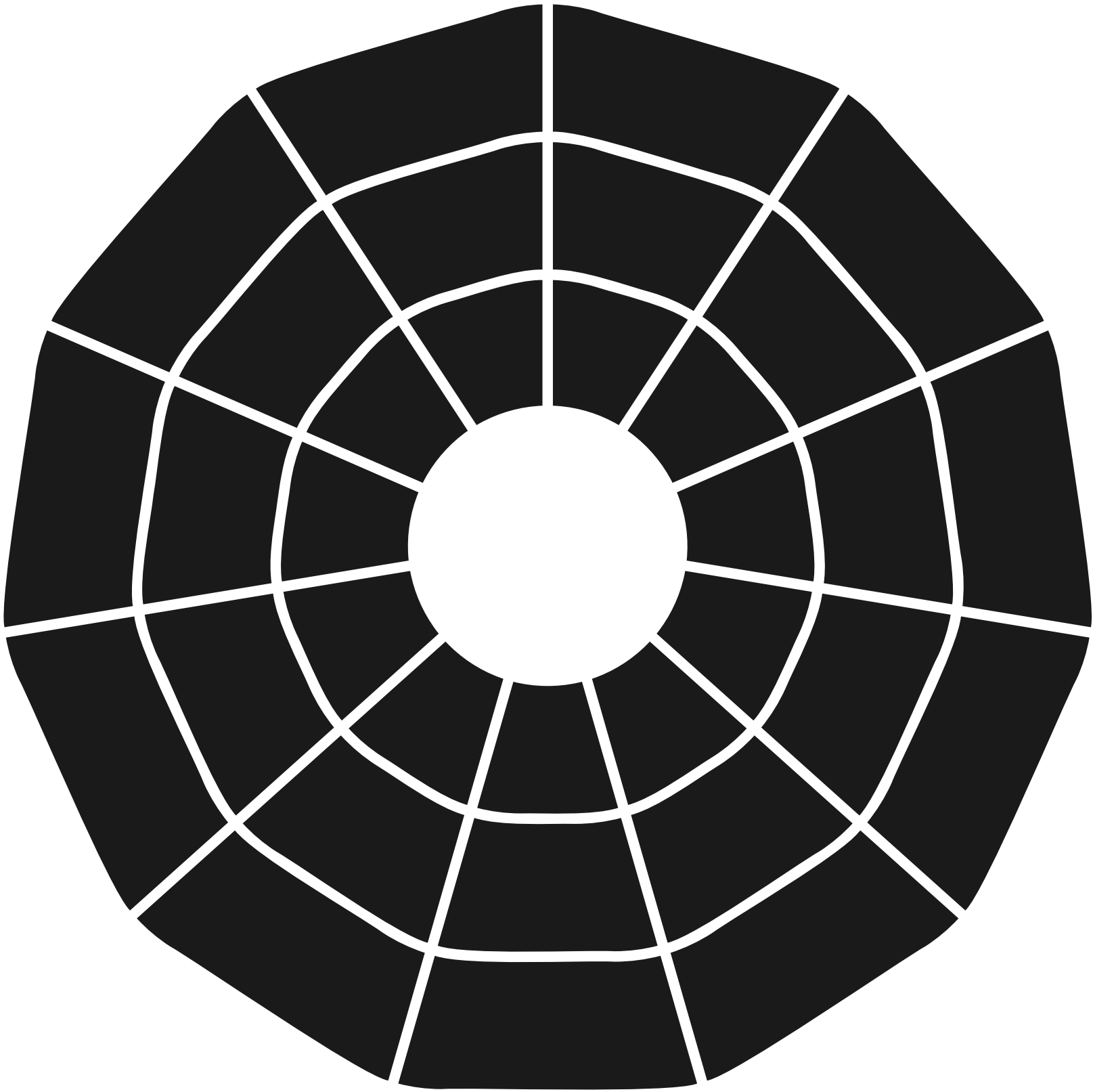


Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA)

Total
32 out of 33

 Click on category to see full analysis

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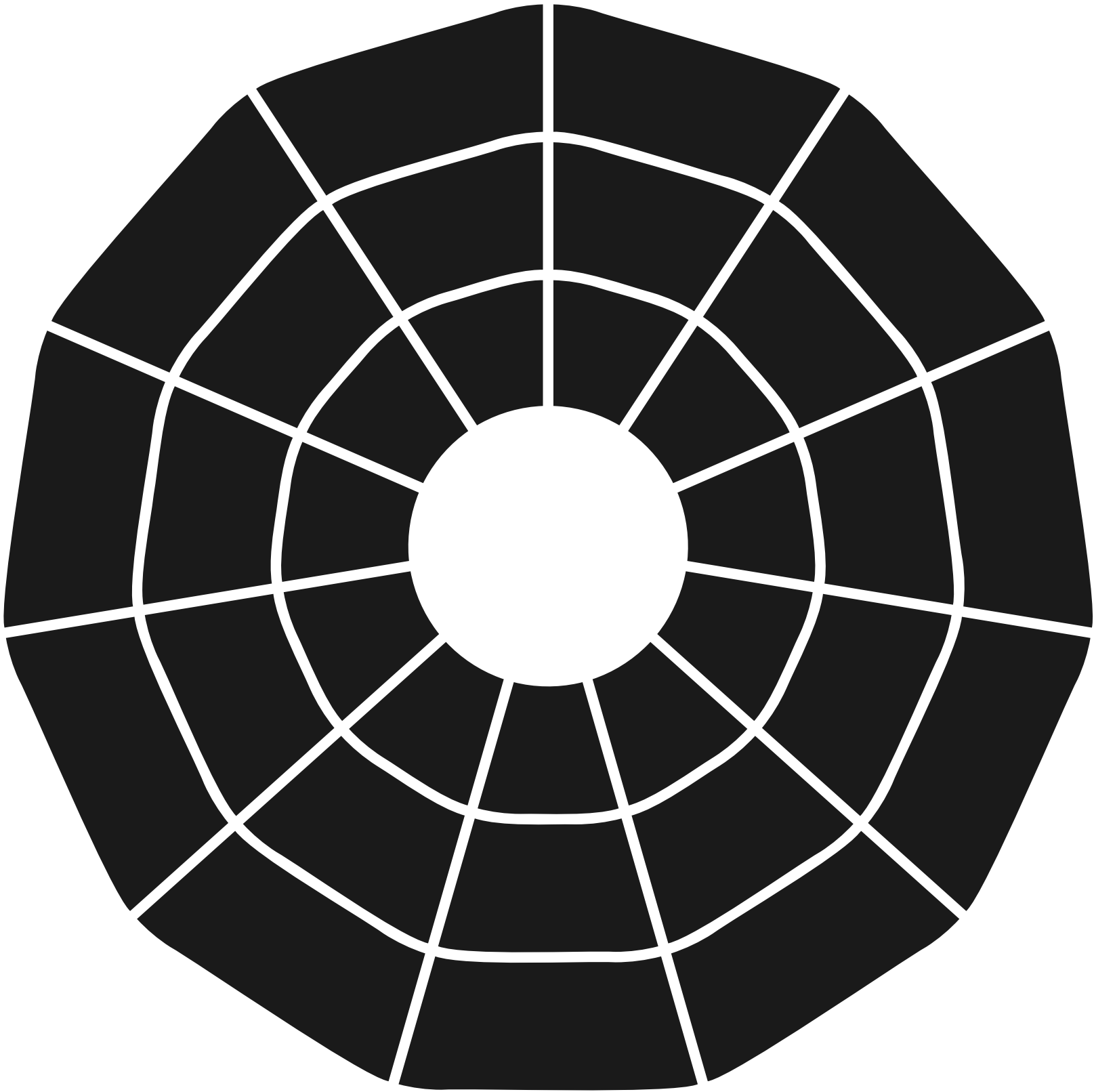


Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI)

Total
27 out of 33


 Click on category to see full analysis


 Desktop version only

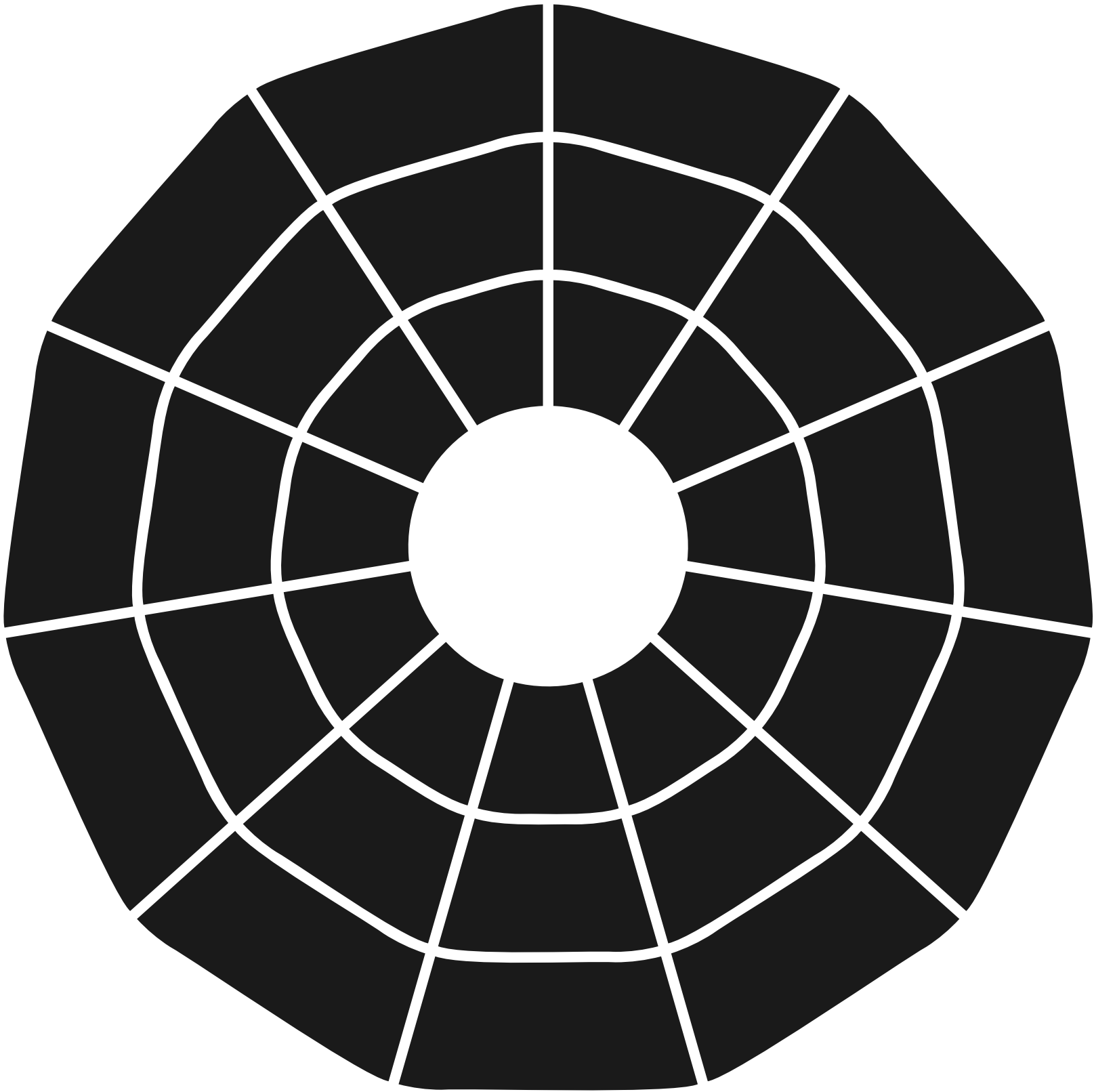


ResponsibleSteel

Total
29 out of 33


 Click on category
to see full analysis


 Desktop version only

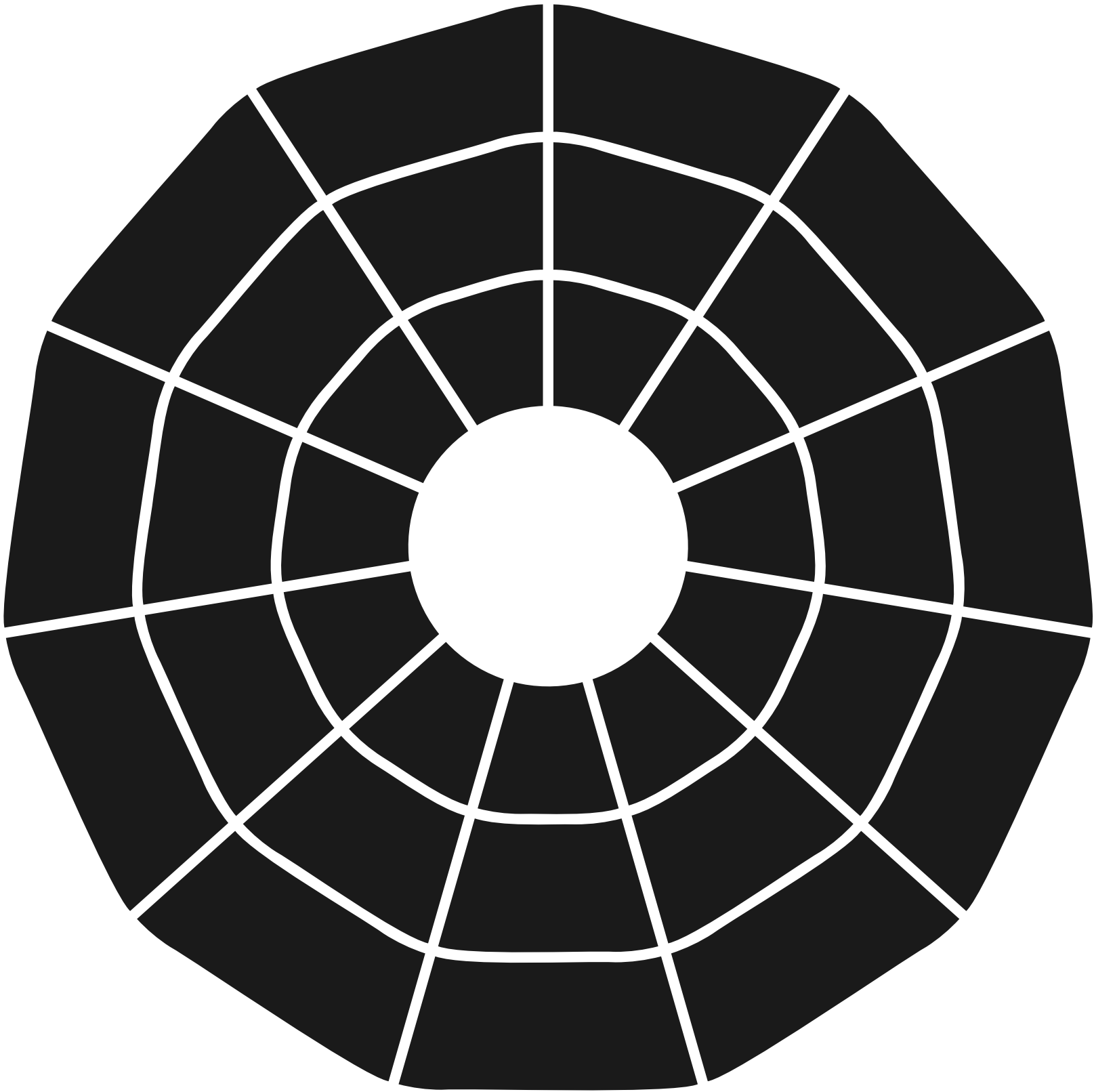


Responsible Minerals Initiative (RMI)

Total
21 out of 33

 Click on category to see full analysis

 Desktop version only

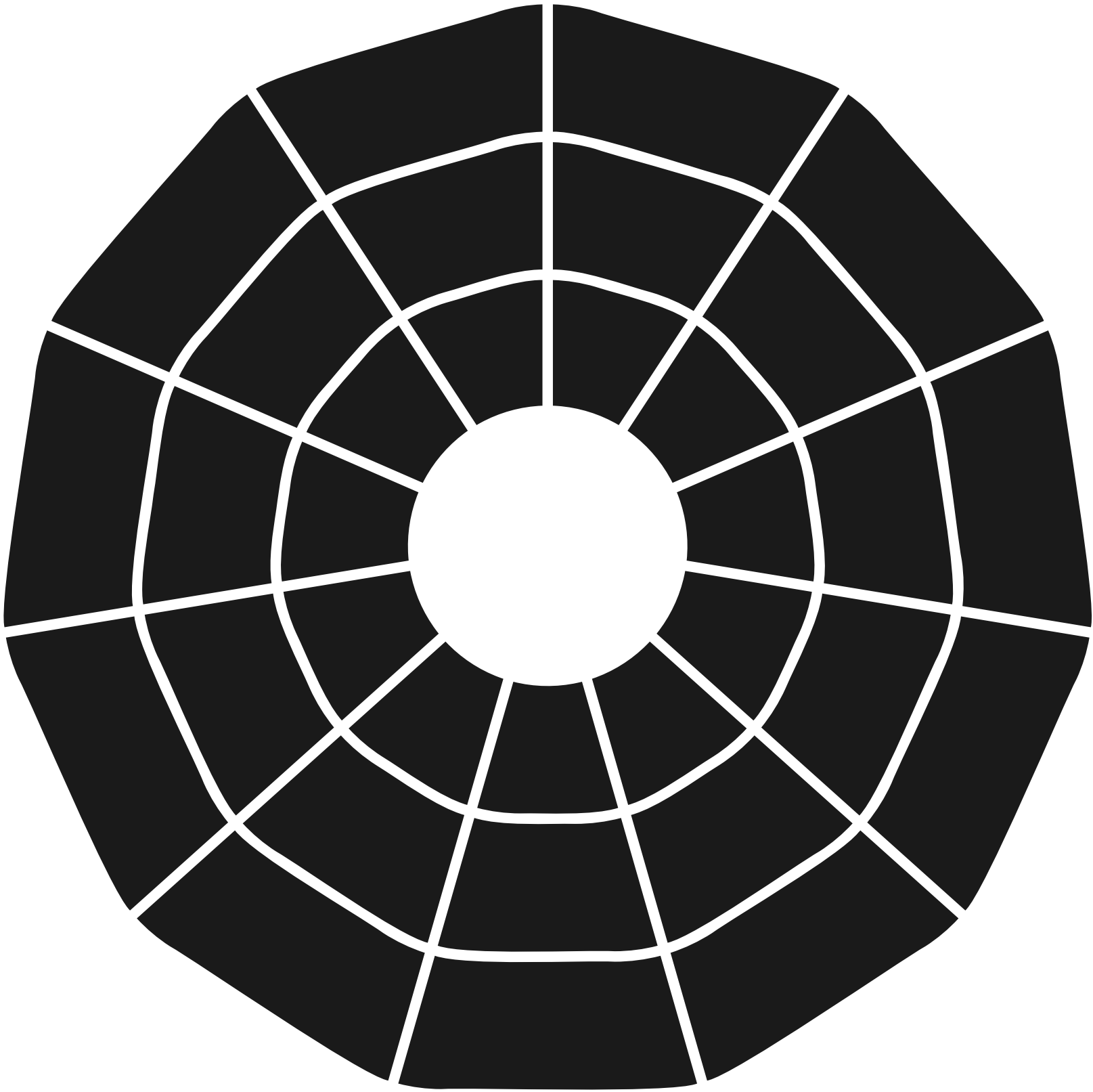


Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI)

Total
18 out of 33

 Click on category to see full analysis

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Disclaimer: The listed sources were last accessed on 31.07.2024

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