

# SQM expands ESG commitment with IRMA audit

*The Chilean company cements its commitment to transparent reporting and measurement against the highest levels of environmental and social protection in mining*

SANTIAGO, CHILE, January 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [SQM](#), a global leading producer of world-class lithium, based in the Salar de Atacama in Chile, announces the commencement of a third-party audit against the world's most rigorous standard of best practices in environmental and social responsibility at industrial scale mines: the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance ([IRMA](#))'s Standard for Responsible Mining.



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*SQM CEO Ricardo Ramos*

According to a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report published in 2020, IRMA 'is the only mine-site focused multi-stakeholder standard for industrial scale mining that offers independent external verification and certification, that requires corrective actions and continuous improvement. IRMA is also the only mine-site

standard that requires community engagement in all steps of the process, an aspect of focus for SQM. The IRMA standard has the most robust criteria related to fair labour and terms of work, occupational health and safety, and community health and safety.'

By commencing a publicly-noticed independent third party audit, the company can now participate as a Member in the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) scheme. SQM is the second lithium mining company and the first Chilean mining company to initiate an independent IRMA audit and through this become a full IRMA Member.

Interested stakeholders may directly contact auditors ERM-CVS, an IRMA-approved certification body. An audit report will also be shared publicly upon completion, allowing reviewers to understand both strengths and challenges at the operation, and will guide improvements. SQM encourages diverse stakeholders to participate in the audit and to review the resulting report as the company works to continuously improve its practices in the months and years ahead.

This membership is part of SQM's established process of working to a high standard of transparency and public accountability in its corporate objectives on environmental matters,

sustainable operations, and social responsibility. It is also linked to the role that the company plays in the value chain of strategic industries supporting human development, among these being the revolution in electric vehicles and sustainable mobility.

At the end of 2021, SQM also announced it is participating in the UN's Race To Zero programme, and trialling Chile's first high-tonnage electric truck to be used in low-emission mining operations, further demonstrating the company's ESG commitments.

Commenting on the news, SQM's CEO Ricardo Ramos said: "This is a fantastic step forward for SQM in our ongoing efforts to continue to lead the industry in terms of sustainability commitments and public reportability of our ESG objectives. SQM's IRMA membership represents the newest development in a slew of green initiatives, but we are not stopping here. Our aim is to achieve the IRMA Transparency Level by 2022 and IRMA 50 by 2025 and we are firmly optimistic that we can make the changes necessary to meet these carefully considered goals. This is an exciting time for SQM as we continue to explore innovative ways to make our lithium production more environmentally-friendly, while listening and supporting our local communities."

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#### About SQM

Based in northern Chile, SQM has provided solutions for human progress for 53 years through its five business lines. Its products are essential for the health, food and technology industries, and for the generation of the clean energies that move the world.

SQM was built and is managed based on a culture of excellence, safety, sustainability and integrity. It seeks to position itself as a leader in sustainability in order to create a "green" brand through ongoing efforts to responsibly manage natural resources, care for the environment, build close, trust-based relationships with local communities and create shared social value.

#### About IRMA

The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) is the answer to a global demand for more socially and environmentally responsible mining. IRMA offers true independent third-party verification and certification against the globe's most comprehensive and rigorous mining standard. IRMA is the only global mining standard system governed equitably by civil society working alongside the private sector. IRMA can be used for all mined materials and provides 'one-stop coverage' of the full range of issues related to the impacts of industrial-scale mines.

In order to promote value for mining companies to improve and meet the highest standards of responsible mining practices, and to support purchasers' commitment to due diligence in reducing harm in supply chains, IRMA offers third party verification of performance against comprehensive and rigorous criteria for environmental and social responsibility.

The IRMA standard was developed in 2006 following consultation with over 100 stakeholder groups, and is applicable to all sizes of industrial mines in all parts of the world. More information on IRMA's governance, the requirements in IRMA's standards, and the audit process can be found at [www.responsiblemining.net](http://www.responsiblemining.net).

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