

# **The relevance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting in the Barents region: Case studies from the metal mining industry**

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**Abstract.** This paper examines the relevance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the framework of metal mining operations in the Barents region, located in the most northern latitudes of Europe. A fragile ecosystem and areas with comparatively high population require that mining companies meet their ecological and social responsibilities in the European Arctic. The analysis encompasses four metal mining enterprises in the Barents region and their specific approaches to implement CSR into the corporate strategy. This includes reporting, auditing and accounting of diverse CSR practices. Particularly, reporting and policy documents of the chosen case studies enable the analysis of CSR relevance in the mining sector and provide a comprehensive portrayal about CSR standards and guidelines that are applicable. Additionally, the analysis reveals stakeholder groups, affected by the companies; including local communities, employees, governmental actors, customers and NGO's.

**Keywords** Corporate Social Responsibility, Barents region, CSR standards, mining industry, stakeholder dialogue, sustainability reporting, auditing, accounting, non-financial reporting

## **Introduction**

The Barents region with its territories in Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Russian Federation is in an extraordinary position in comparison to other circumpolar areas. More than five million people live in the Barents region, the highest populated area in the most northern latitudes of the world (Barentsinfo - Your window to the Barents region; Ludviksen 1995). The abundance of various metals and minerals in the Arctic grounds attract the mining industry to explore these areas and extract natural resources (Kokko et al. 2014; Moe 1994; Välkky et al. 2008). Social and environmental challenges

result from industrial operations and the comparatively high population in a vulnerable and meaningful Arctic ecosystem (Kokko et al. 2014).

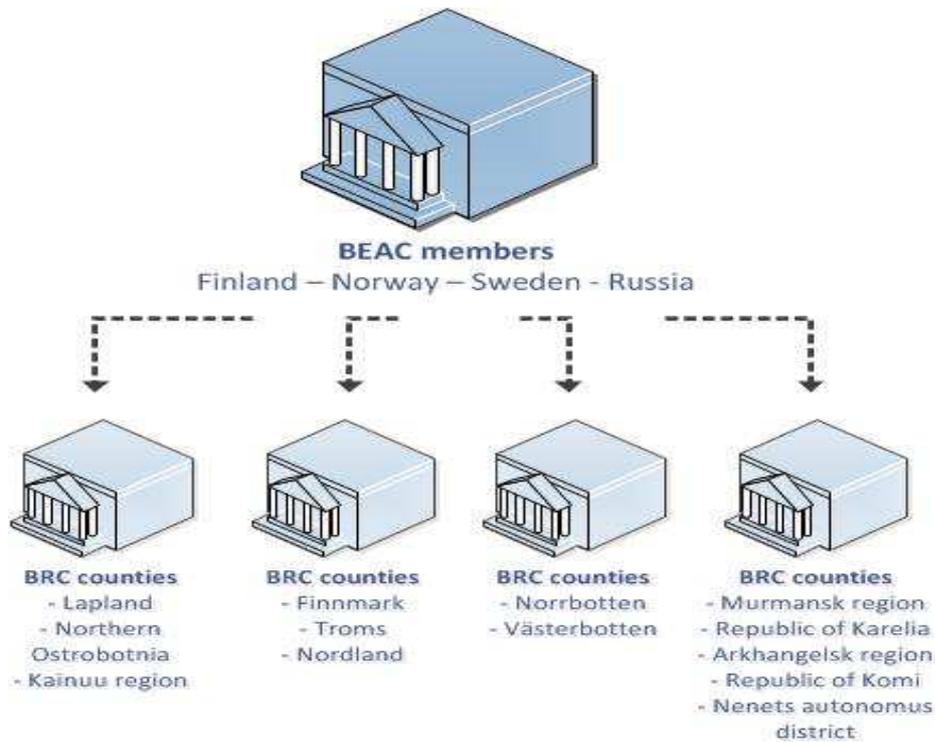
The ecosystem in the Barents region comprises to a large extent of boreal forests and a unique natural habitat with many species (Holst 1995; Roderfeld et al. 2006). The Arctic flora and fauna is less resilient and depend more on an intact ecosystem than the most other regions on the planet. The extractive industries have to consider negative ecological impacts caused by mining operations and have to strengthen their individual corporate environmental performance (Dashwood 2014) with proactive behaviour (Clarkson 1995). The existence of numerous towns and villages in the Barents region, home to indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, requires diverse social efforts of corporations as well (Barentsinfo - Barents region cooperation 2015). In this respect, mining corporations may develop local infrastructure, create jobs and build up public facilities to support local communities (Sairinen et al. 2012). This paper analyses the relevance and approaches of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting for metal mining companies with business relations in the Barents region. The research work intends to reveal possibilities of CSR reporting to contribute to less environmental damages and accomplishing the social demands in northern Europe.

### **The Barents region – challenges of international cooperation**

In recent years, the cooperation and collaboration among Arctic states is a topic with rising significance. The impacts of climate change and joint exploration programmes in favour of the extractive industries are just two notable reasons in this regard (Suutarinen 2014). There is relevance to consider established ideas of Arctic cross border cooperation in the light of pursuits to increase cooperation by local and national governmental actors. One of these ideas is the Barents region, a regional definition that was accomplished more than twenty years ago (Barentsinfo - Barents region cooperation 2015; Nilsen 2014).

The most northern parts of Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Northwest of the Russian Federation form the Barents region (Barentsinfo - Barents region cooperation 2015; Väliky et al. 2008) to strengthen the cooperation among the four participating nations and its thirteen counties (see Figure 1: Member countries and counties of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Barents Regional Council). In this context, the Barents region was developed to outline an extraordinary importance by focusing on issues such as human impacts on the environment, social development and financial and political cooperation. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) was founded in 1993 and this forum took a guiding role to develop intergovernmental and interregional cooperation inside the region (Barents Euro-Arctic Council

2015). Additionally, the Barents Regional Council (BRC) has been established to cover local and regional cooperation as well (Barents Euro-Arctic Council - Barents Regional Council 2015).



**Fig. 1.** Member countries and counties of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council - BEAC & Barents Regional Council – BRC (Barents Euro- Arctic Council 2015, Vålky et al. 2008)

The International Barents Secretariat (IBS) headquartered in Kirkenes, Norway was established in 2007 to provide administrative support to the Barents cooperation (International Barents Secretariat - Terms of Reference for the Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region 2007). One of the main goals of the BEAC is sustainable social and economic development in the Barents region (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2015). In the period from 2013 to 2015 the Arkhangelsk region (Russian Federation) holds the chairmanship of the BRC. Under this chairmanship the identified priorities for cooperation in the Barents region encompass industrial development, development of multimodal transport and port infrastructure, implementation of technological innovations (e.g. renewable energies, energy efficiency), creation of hi-tech knowledge-intensive cluster, integration of environmental-related activities, enhancement of youth competence, business potential in tourism, cross-border

cooperation on public health development, cross-border projects in the sphere of culture and sports and preservation of cultural heritage (Barentsinfo - Chairmanship Priorities of Arkhangelsk Region 2013; Nilsen 2014). On the intergovernmental level in relation to the BEAC, Finland holds the chair from autumn 2013 to autumn 2015. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland is responsible in this regard and defined the overall goals as the promotion of stability and sustainable development in the Barents region. The key priorities defined by the Finnish ministry are similar to the developed priorities on the regional level by the local government of Arkhangelsk (Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2015; Barentsinfo - Chairmanship Priorities of Arkhangelsk Region 2013; Nilsen 2014). Economic development, well-functioning transport connections and youth cooperation comprise for instance three of these priorities. On the contrary to the Arkhangelsk strategy, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs formulates a deeper emphasis on the issues of climate change and support for indigenous peoples' activities as core topics for the Barents cooperation (Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2015).

The recent activities and established priorities of the current chairs of BEAC and BRC outline a high relevance of social and environmental development in the territories (Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2015; Barentsinfo - Chairmanship Priorities of Arkhangelsk Region 2013).

### **Corporate Social Responsibility – a tool for sustainable practices**

Corporate Social Responsibility is not a new concept but its significance is rising continuously without referring to a particular industry, market or territory (Okoye 2009; Scherer & Palazzo 2011). There is a widely accepted consensus that CSR is foremost applied voluntary and CSR strategies find predominantly linkages to the economic, social and ecological development of an organisation (Kirton & Trebilcock 2004; Tilt 2009). In a global perspective, an increasing number of companies integrate a CSR strategy into the organisational strategy, for instance to improve the stakeholder dialogue, to gain better reputation and to achieve a more efficient use of resources (Christensen et al. 2013). CSR has numerous definitions and many companies decide to formulate its own CSR definition. Consequently, the number of definitions is rather growing instead of assertion of a core definition (Okoye 2009; Scherer & Palazzo 2011). The following definition, expressed by the Russian metal mining company OJSC MMC Norilsk Nickel exemplifies an individual CSR definition:

*Corporate social responsibility: – the company's conduct philosophy integrated into a business model that determines how the business community, companies, and individual business*

*representatives deal with stakeholder expectations aimed at sustainable development.* (Norilsk Nickel – CSR report 2013)

Companies follow different ideas by implementing CSR strategies. Often it is a matter of financial resources, reputation of the company, a company’s size and the industrial sector with its specific social and environmental challenges that determines the relevance of CSR in the organisational framework (Filho & Pawlak 2009). Some companies follow rather simple strategies by defining solely a CSR statement and a Code of Conduct. Nowadays, it is for many large-scale enterprises common practice to create a sustainability report in addition to CSR statements/code of conduct and apply reporting standards to depict the CSR achievements of the enterprise (Scherer & Palazzo 2011). Over the recent decades, diverse CSR standards and guidelines have emerged, differing in terms of its characteristics and scope (Matten et al. 2003; Tilt 2009). Two of the most popular traditional models were developed by Archie B. Carroll (1991, 1999) and Max Clarkson (1995). In addition to traditional approaches, a categorisation of CSR standards into four categories gained attention inside the CSR discourse (Rasche 2009). The following table outlines briefly the three different concepts of categorising CSR.

Table 1: Three ways of categorising CSR

Model by	Carroll	Clarkson	Rasche
Focus on...	CSR responsibilities	a firm’s behaviour	CSR standard category
category # 1	economic responsibilities	reactive firms	policy standards
category # 2	legal responsibilities	defensive firms	reporting standards
category # 3	ethical responsibilities	accommodative firms	accounting standards
category # 4	philanthropic responsibilities	proactive firms	auditing standards

Diverse approaches for CSR categorisation based on the concepts of A. B. Carroll, M. Clarkson & A. Rasche

The amount of CSR standards is rising and there are several approaches behind each standard as indicated by Rasche (2009). Some are useful to implement a CSR policy into the corporate strategy (e.g. United Nations Global Compact, OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises); other standards provide a path to audit the CSR performance of a company (Owen

& O'Dwyer 2005). In this regard, the environmental management systems EMAS and ISO 14001 have succeeded as popular international standards to achieve certification for decreasing negative ecological impacts due to production processes and further corporate activities (European Commission - Eco-Management and Audit Scheme 1993; International Organization for Standardization - ISO 14001). With respect to sustainable reporting, strong attention has nowadays the Global Reporting Initiative standard which is periodically updated and provides standardised environmental, social and economic performance indicators (Global Reporting Initiative G4 guidelines - GRI). Additionally, this standard includes supplements for a few specific industrial sectors, such as the GRI Mining and Metals Supplement (GRI 2013). Further standards with key roles in relation to mining businesses target health and safety issues, linked to the workforce. For example, the International Organization for Standardization currently develops the safety standard ISO 17757 (Autonomous Machine System Safety Standard).

### **CSR as driving force for mining companies in the Barents region**

Several business sectors have an enormous significance for local communities and the environment in the Barents region. Particularly, the extractive industries have considerable impacts on the nature as well as on the population in the North of Europe (Sairinen et al. 2012). CSR is in this respect a prominent approach to depict the individual environmental, social and economic efforts of an organisation (Dashwood 2014; Tilt 2009). By linking CSR to the extractive industries in the Barents region, more comprehensive views of social needs and environmental challenges of the region are perceptible. In the framework of this paper is the overall perspective on the mining industry, as mining is relevant in all four Barents region countries (Best Environmental Practices in the Mining Sector - report 2013). The mining sector contributes significantly to the success of national economies. Local mining communities strongly depend on mining businesses and mining results inevitable into ecological impacts in local, regional and global extents (Dashwood 2014). CSR strategies and policies could support a development of improvements in the mining sector with respect to social and environmental performances (Raufflet et al. 2014). Particularly, the large-scale mining companies have implemented CSR strategies and publish frequently reports and/or non-financial statements to inform stakeholders and the public about CSR efforts and practices (Dashwood 2014; Jenkins & Yakovleva 2006). These publications may comprise CSR/sustainability reports, codes of conduct, environmental statements and reports, CSR sections as part of annual reports, social programme reports, shareholder and investor reports and stakeholder related documents (Panapanaan & Linnanen 2009).

The publication of an annual CSR/sustainability report has prevailed as a popular business activity to represent comprehensively corporate sustainability actions. That is especially among large-scale mining companies evident nowadays (Dashwood 2014; Jenkins & Yakovleva 2006). Notably, creation of CSR reports is of high relevance for companies with operations on a multinational scale and with interests in stakeholder groups (Dashwood 2014; Sairinen et al. 2012).

Critics of CSR argue that the concept is not directly linked to the productive outcome of a company and might result into disturbance for the business as a cost factor (Dunne 2008; Scherer & Palazzo 2011). Milton Friedman's critique regarding CSR went even a bit further and stressed that:

*There is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.*  
(Friedman 1970)

This critique implies that companies invest resources such as capital, workforce and time for CSR efforts that have no direct connection with the drawing of profits.

Companies invest their resources into CSR to gain internal benefits and to decrease external pressure by critical stakeholder groups which demand a better CSR performance (Dunne 2008). In this context, proponents of CSR counter argue to Friedman's opinion that CSR is beneficial for corporations to increase reputation and gain efficiency improvements regarding resource usage. The magnitude of benefits varies among different business sectors and sizes of corporations (Dunne 2008). The companies facing lots of attention in the media by being involved into social debates, such as health and safety issues for the workforce, fair wages and well-being of local communities (Raufflet et al. 2014). The impacts on the livelihoods of the indigenous population produce just another characteristic in this context (Dixon & Scheurell 1995). In addition, the environmental impacts play no inferior role next to the social issues of mining operations (Kokko et al. 2014). Mining is affecting the environment in any case and it matters to what extent this happens (Best Environmental Practices in the Mining Sector 2013; Jenkins & Yakovleva 2006). Tailings into nearby lakes or rivers to the mine lead to contamination of water, tailings into waste water ponds can do the same with the ground. Emissions to the atmosphere (e.g. sulphur dioxide) results into further damages to the environment and might influence the physical health of the local population and workforce (Best Environmental Practices in the Mining Sector 2013). Media organisations and NGO's with environmental protection frameworks pay attention to the ecological impacts of mining

corporations. This attention, particularly in case of an accident with severe damage to the environment, creates pressure that could be a driving force to enhance CSR efforts in the mining industry companies (McDonald & Young 2012).

### **Nickel mining case studies in the Barents region**

For the current study four mining corporations had been chosen to outline the relevance of CSR in the framework of practical cases in the Barents region. Each of the four companies operates in one of the four Barents region countries. The companies are as follows:

- FQM Kevitsa Mining Oy – First Quantum Minerals Ltd. – Finland (abbr.: “First Quantum”)
- Nordic Mining ASA – Norway (abbr.: “Nordic Mining”)
- Nickel Mountain AB – Nickel Mountain Group AB – Sweden (abbr.: “Nickel Mountain”)
- Kola Mining and Metallurgical Company (Kola MMC) joint-stock company (JSC) - open joint-stock company (OJSC) MMC Norilsk Nickel – Russia (abbr.: “Norilsk Nickel”)

These corporations have a couple of important characteristics in common to enable comparability in the research. All case study projects take place inside the Barents region and all these operations are linked to nickel mining. The relevant mining projects are currently at different stages of the individual project life cycles. By considering the three dimensions of sustainability, all chosen mining enterprises have impacts on the environment, economy and social development in their specific region and the entire Barents region. The projects belong either to multinational enterprises or are subsidiaries of domestic mining companies. The concentration of the case study projects is partly on nickel as the grounds at the mine locations contain further metals (e.g. copper, cobalt, platinum group elements...). The background of the companies will be briefly presented in the following.

#### **I.) FQM KEVITSA MINING OY**

FQM Kevitsa Mining Oy (operations in Kevitsa, Finnish Lapland) is a subsidiary of the Canadian multinational mining corporation First Quantum Minerals Ltd. (First Quantum - Corporate Responsibility) that took over Kevitsa Mining Oy from Scandinavian Minerals Ltd. (previously Scandinavian Gold Prospecting AB). The territory was claimed for mining in

year 2000, thirteen years after the Geological Survey of Finland (GTK) explored the deposit that contains plenty of nickel, copper and platinum group elements (PGE). All necessary permits for mining the deposit were granted in autumn 2009. As a result the infrastructure in the region has been developed by First Quantum, including building an access road and a bridge to the mine (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014). The company produces, by carrying out mining in an open-pit, annually around 9,000 tonnes of nickel and 15,000 tonnes of copper. The life-span of the mine was indicated for at least twenty years, tantamount to on-going extraction processes until year 2030 or beyond. The parent company First Quantum Minerals runs operations at seven mine sites in the world, four in Europe, two in Africa and one in Australia. Moreover, First Quantum is involved in further mining business relations in Latin America (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014). The social, economic, legislative and ecological backgrounds of the countries and subsequently of the local communities and workforces are different. For instance First Quantum underpins that laws and prescriptions in Finland are the highest legislative standards for responsible mining operations. In developing countries such as Zambia and Mauritania the mining laws are less sophisticated (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014). This is an important aspect in terms of environmental protection, safety issues and fair incomes for the workforce.

## II.) NORDIC MINING ASA

Nordic Mining ASA was formed through a demerger from Rocksource ASA and registered in the Norwegian Register in May 2006. Its mining operations are concentrated as well in northern as in southern territories of Norway. The company is to this date active in the field of exploration by considering the activities in the Seiland Igneous Province in northern Norway. Nordic Mining made discoveries of nickel, copper, cobalt, gold, palladium and platinum group elements in the Reinfjord and Lokkarfjord territories on the Oksfjord peninsula. Further drilling is under way to collect more data about the ores in the ground and the feasibility to extract them. Altogether, Nordic Mining has fifteen exploration licenses in the Seiland Igneous Province (Nordic Mining - Operations). The population in this province is low, however approximately thirty kilometres to the east of the Oksfjord peninsula is the Alta municipality located, with around 20,000 people the most populated municipality in the Finnmark region (Finnmarksstatistikken 2010). Further exploration and possible extraction will affect the social development of the region and its inhabitants. It matters in an ecological perspective that the Oksfjord peninsula is connected to the Arctic Ocean, due to the fact that resource extraction nearby water bodies might have adverse impacts on the maritime ecosystem (Maest et al. 2005).

### III.) NICKEL MOUNTAIN AB

Nickel Mountain AB (subsidiary of Nickel Mountain Group AB) is fully responsible for the Ronnbacken Nickel Project which is expected to produce 26,000 tonnes of nickel per annum over nineteen years as soon as the extraction processes will begin. The corporation will produce by-products such as Cobalt as well. The production will mainly exercised by using conventional mining technology and open-pit-mining at three deposits in the area (Nickel Mountain - Ronnbacken - A significant nickel and iron project in Sweden). Inside a maximum distance of ten kilometres away from each deposit, Nickel Mountain's processing plant is going to be constructed. The project is in the midst of the permission process, as Nickel Mountain received an exploitation concession for 25 years in 2012 and is currently applying for the environmental permit that will be issued by the Swedish Environmental Court. Upon the receipt of the environmental permit, Nickel Mountain still has to consider additional regulatory frameworks such as the Plan and Building Act and Heritage Conservation Act (Nickel Mountain - Environmental Policy). The Ronnbacken mine is characterised by a high grade nickel concentrate of 25-30 percent that results, according to the company, into a comparatively low amount of waste rock (Nickel Mountain - Ronnbacken Project). However, the Ronnbacken Nickel Project is continuously receiving lots of criticism due to the fact that local communities fear the destruction of the nature around the locality of Tarnaby (Storuman Municipality) at the Swedish-Norwegian border (Knoblock 2013). Particular interests into a healthy ecological system in these areas have been raised by indigenous peoples that predominantly gain their livelihoods with reindeer herding. The changing environment (needed area for the mine, tailings and infrastructure) arouses anxieties among local people that the natural habitat of reindeers and other species will be severely disturbed and that the vulnerable ecosystem is unable to recover in a long-term perspective (Knoblock 2013).

### IV.) KOLA MMC JSC – NORILSK NICKEL

Kola MMC JSC is a subsidiary of the world's largest nickel and palladium producer OJSC MMC Norilsk Nickel. Kola MMC is located in the Murmansk region (Kola peninsula) in the Northwest of Russia, nearby the Norwegian-Russian border. The company is running three mines in the region to produce primarily nickel and copper. Underground as well as open-pit mining is part of the extraction processes in the area (Bronder et al. 2010; Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013). A nickel smelter in the town "Nikel" (Murmansk region) emits large amounts of sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere. Since decades, regional and national political tensions between Norway and Russia occur due to negative environmental impacts on the Norwegian territory as a

consequence of the emissions (Bronder et al. 2010). Kola MMC produces annually around 110,000-120,000 tonnes of nickel and in recent years around 60,000 tonnes of copper per annum (Norilsk Nickel - Operations). These numbers underpin the fact that Kola MMC is an important actor for the local economy and contributes to the development of employment and infrastructure in the region (Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013). The parent company OJSC MMC Norilsk Nickel has developed to a multinational company with enterprises also outside of Russia (e.g. operations in Africa and Australia (Norilsk Nickel - About Norilsk Nickel)). However, the most meaningful mine location of Norilsk Nickel is in “Norilsk”, a city that is known to be the most northern city in the world with a population of more than 100,000 and continuously Russia’s most polluted city. Norilsk is located in the Krasnoyarsk Krai in Siberia and the city is enormously dependant on the local mining operations in an economic and social perspective (Bronder et al. 2010).

### **The analysis of nickel mining case studies in the Barents region**

Four metal mining companies with operations in the Barents region had been selected to highlight the relevance of CSR inside the mining industry and in the Barents region.

The published content on company’s websites is an important gateway to connect a company and its various stakeholder groups. The case study mining companies all run a website and published content that is related to individual CSR practices. However, there are differences in the accessibility of CSR content on the website and usage of variant terminology. The CSR related web content of the case study companies was analysed in the framework of this study to reveal the relevance of CSR from individual company’s perspectives. Further documents with CSR relevance are linked to the websites of the case companies and became also part of the analysis. These encompass CSR/sustainability reports, codes of conduct, company presentations and environmental policy statements. Inside the analytical process, the study focused on CSR terminology utilised on each corporate website. The analysis is based on the situational analysis method (Clarke 2003, 2005) to link the individual companies into their position in the social world and the discourse of CSR. The analysis of CSR relevant terminology allowed the application of coding and categorisation methods based on the Grounded Theory method (Strauss 1987; Vasconcelos 2007). These methods enable the generation of detailed patterns of the location of Barents region mining corporations in the context of natural environment, social sphere and stakeholder discourse.

Nordic Mining and First Quantum place CSR into the main navigation of their homepages. Norilsk Nickel also has a section for sustainable development on the front page, including further links. The main navigation of Nickel Mountain AB contains the section “Governance” and from this follows a linkage to “Corporate Social Responsibility”. The following tables depict terms and sections of the case study companies linked to the individual CSR publications on their websites.

Table 2: Mining case studies and CSR related terms

<b>Company</b>	<b>CSR related term</b>
First Quantum	Corporate Responsibility
Nordic Mining	CSR
Nickel Mountain	Governance > Corporate Social Responsibility
Norilsk Nickel	Sustainable Development

CSR terms that are used internally at the case study companies of the mining industry (First Quantum - Corporate Responsibility; Nordic Mining - CSR; Nickel Mountain - Governance; Norilsk Nickel - Sustainable Development)

Table 3: Mining case studies and CSR related web content

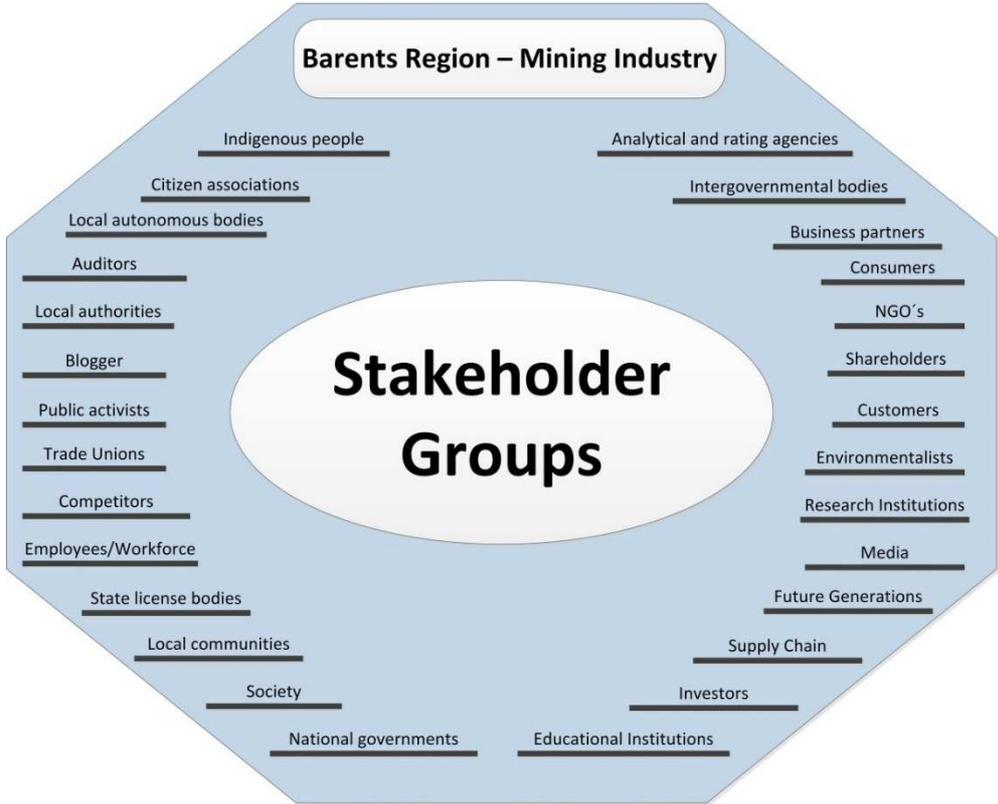
Company	CSR related web content
First Quantum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainability strategy</li> <li>- Corporate Governance</li> <li>- Economics</li> <li>- Environment</li> <li>- Social</li> <li>- Labour</li> <li>- Policies: Social Policy, Environmental Policy, Human Rights Policy</li> <li>- Reports: Sustainability Report, Environmental Data Report, Greenhouse Gas Protocol Report</li> <li>- Code of Conduct</li> </ul>
Nordic Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corporate Responsibility in Nordic Mining</li> <li>- The Mineral Industry in Society</li> <li>- Knowledge for development</li> <li>- Other societal contributions</li> <li>- Mineral resources</li> </ul>
Nickel Mountain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code of Conduct</li> <li>- Environmental Policy</li> </ul>
Norilsk Nickel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social Mission and Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Report: “New Approach to Sustainable Development”</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Sustainability Governance and Management</li> <li>- Stakeholder Engagement</li> <li>- Strategy of the Company</li> <li>- Product Responsibility</li> <li>- Environmental Protection</li> <li>- Social Policy</li> <li>- Occupational Health and Safety</li> <li>- Contribution to the Development of the Regions of Operations</li> </ul>

Main sections (web content) with respect to individual CSR strategies of the case study companies (First Quantum - Corporate Responsibility; Nordic Mining - CSR; Nickel Mountain - Governance; Norilsk Nickel - Sustainable Development)

### Stakeholder groups of the Barents region mining industry

The analysis of CSR documents of the four cases revealed various stakeholder groups that have relations in different ways to the mining

companies. Some groups benefit from the activities and other facing disadvantages. Further groups are not directly affected by the operations but have worries about the negative social and environmental effects of mining. It is a large variety of groups with relevance for the mining industry. Hence, the implementation of CSR strategies into corporate practices requires the understanding of needs, wishes and expectations of each individual group. Consequently, a stakeholder dialogue has to be part of the CSR strategy to gain this comprehensive understanding (Dashwood 2014; Kirton & Trebilcock 2004). The stakeholder groups which received the major attention in the case studies of the mining businesses in the Barents region comprise local communities, workforces, investors, political actors, customers, consumers and NGO's. The following chart depicts the actors with relations to the mining industry in the Barents region based on the findings of the analysis.



**Fig. 2.** Stakeholder groups from the perspective of the mining industry in the Barents region (based on published CSR documents and CSR statements of First Quantum, Nordic Mining, Nickel Mountain and Norilsk Nickel)

## **The threats of mining – views of the mining companies**

The presented Barents region mining companies admit to some extent that mining activities are linked to negative environmental impacts and social risks. First Quantum puts emphasis on the inevitable necessity to clear natural forest away to build up processing plants and access roads and enable the preparation of the pit. The company describes this necessity as a dilemma by trying continuously to minimise the harmful effects on the nature (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014). Nickel Mountain comprises its main impacts on the environment by usage of land, energy consumption and waste handling (Nickel Mountain - Environmental Policy). Norilsk Nickel declares that the production of emissions of sulphur dioxide at the company's metal plants, due to the high sulphur concentration in the feedstock, is one of the major ecological impacts caused by the company. Metal-containing dust is another component that deteriorates the surrounding ecosystems of the plants (Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013). Norilsk Nickel highlights two further priority areas next to emissions, such as discharges of polluted wastewater into water bodies and a negative anthropogenic impact on the environment due to waste and pollution of transportation processes (Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013).

## **The commitment of mining companies to prevent and combat extraction risks**

In an overall sense, the diverse reports and statements of the chosen mining companies provide more information about their activities to minimise negative social and environmental impacts, than just describing these impacts. Nordic Mining underpins on its website that their products should create a contribution to a sustainable social development. First Quantum implemented the Environmental Management System (EMS) ISO 14001 and the company declares that they follow the specific guidelines which were established by the International Organization for Standardization - ISO (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014). In this respect, First Quantum developed an environmental program with several key aspects, such as compliance with host country laws/regulations, efficient use of natural resources, rigorous management of effluent and emissions and climate change management. For the latter the individual "Greenhouse Gas Report" is published on the website (First Quantum - Environmental Policy 2015 - Greenhouse Gas Report). As operating on multiple markets around the globe, Nickel Mountain outlines that some markets have a lack of environmental laws; but the company

follows in any case at least the Swedish environmental jurisdiction (Nickel Mountain - Environmental Policy 2015).

*The main environmental impact from NMG's (Nickel Mountain Group) activities is usage of land, energy consumption and waste handling. NMG's environmental policy states that our activity shall have the least possible negative impact on the environment. NMG will strive to use energy, land and material in an efficient and environmentally friendly way. (Nickel Mountain - Environmental Policy 2015)*

By facing its challenges with sulphur dioxide emissions, Norilsk Nickel implemented a Production Development Strategy with three priority areas. These areas include renovation of concentration capacities by implementing cutting-edge technologies. Furthermore, the renovation of the smelting facility of the Nadezhda metallurgical plant (Zapolarny Branch in Krasnoyarsk Krai) with new nickel matte refining technology. Thirdly, new project implementations for renovation of sulphur recycling facilities (Nadezhda metallurgical plant). Apart of facing the emissions problem, Norilsk Nickel developed in 2011 an internal audit system in the framework of an EMS and provides environmental trainings for the staff to achieve continuous improvement of the corporate environmental performance (Norilsk Nickel - EMS).

In a social perspective all four companies underpin that the production of metals is significant for the society in many ways (First Quantum - Our Products 2015; Nordic Mining - Other Societal Contributions; Nickel Mountain - Corporate Social Responsibility; Norilsk Nickel - Social Mission and CSR strategy). Nordic Mining formulated this relevance as follows:

*The mineral industry, of which we are part, fulfills important social functions by satisfying society's needs for various minerals. Minerals are used in many products and contexts, e.g. building and construction, metal production, environmental technology, electronics, chemical products, and much more.... A Personal computer consists of 70 individual minerals that are mined, processed and manufactured before ending up in a computer...Modern society depends on minerals in countless ways. From the roads we drive, to the buildings we live in and the airplanes we fly. (Nordic Mining - CSR 2015)*

Norilsk Nickel argues similarly by declaring that its social mission includes the production of output demanded by the society. The company set up a number of CSR principles directly contributing to societal needs. These

principles encompass amongst others safety requirements and quality of competitive products. Furthermore, the operations have to be carried out in the most efficient way by considering the concerns from business actors and society at large (Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013).

Another important part of each individual CSR program in the mining industry is the consideration of employees and communities living nearby operating mines and plants (Dashwood 2014). In this regard, First Quantum intends to improve the quality of life of their workforce and of the local community by utilising internal socio-economic development programs. First Quantum established social policy principles such as “Respect”, “Engagement” and “Benefit”, including transparent relationships and mutual trust with stakeholders and local communities. Additionally, First Quantum states the significance of a stakeholder dialogue (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014). Nickel Mountain is linking the economic and social dimension of the company’s CSR practices in a statement from Torbjörn Ranta (CEO Nickel Mountain):

*Nickel Mountain is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities towards its shareholders and other stakeholders as a conscientious corporate citizen. Our objective is to be an economically highly successful company and, at the same time, being a highly responsible company which entails: operating a workplace that is safe and healthy.* (Nickel Mountain - Code of Conduct - Torbjörn Ranta (CEO Nickel Mountain))

In the same document the CEO puts emphasis on the importance of a strong relationship with the local communities and that Nickel Mountain pursues a high level of business ethics and transparency in the day-to-day business (Nickel Mountain - Code of Conduct). Nordic Mining enunciates that the company is sharing common interests with the society and that these interests have to be based on mutual trust. Furthermore, Nordic Mining makes efforts to be proactive with respect to environmental impact assessments and stresses the company’s commitment to the legislative requirements, (e.g. Minerals Act Norway, Planning and Building Act Norway) including the various permits (e.g. environmental permit (Kokko et al. 2014)) that are necessary in Norway to run a mine (Nordic Mining - The Mineral Industry in Society). First Quantum is highlighting the significance of local communities as well. Amongst others, the company target to achieve effective community engagement and impact assessment, facilitation of broader poverty alleviation, human rights management and social structure development. The current version of their sustainability report illustrates predominantly mining operations of the Canadian parent company First Quantum Ltd. in Africa (Zambia) and Latin America (Panama), including the depiction of social

efforts of their businesses. In this context, First Quantum promotes education inside the mining communities (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014). Philanthropic approaches and charity activities are part in the other case studies as well. Norilsk Nickel weights charity high as a part of its social mission and they are reporting about expenditures that had been used to build a sports centre in Monchegorsk and the maternity ward reconstruction at the Pechenga central district hospital (Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013). Employment of young professionals and professional trainings to educate the youth are further efforts in this perspective. Norilsk Nickel highlights their role for the social and economic development in the regions of their mining operations as follows:

*Many entities of the Norilsk Nickel Group are the largest employers in the communities where they operate....The Company's role in the social and economic development of its regions of operation is so high that local self-government authorities always capture its economic performance in their regional development strategies. (Norilsk Nickel - Contribution to the development of the regions of operations)*

Additionally, Norilsk Nickel's corporate human rights policy is recognising indigenous peoples who are impacted by mining activities in their homeland:

*The Company recognizes the right of Far Northern indigenous ethnic minorities to preserve their identity in the territories it uses, and promotes initiatives to preserve and develop their culture. (Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013)*

As indigenous peoples (e.g. Saami peoples) live in all four territories of the Barents region; community involvement is an important part of stakeholder dialogue and CSR policies in the European Arctic mining businesses. This is relevant for non-indigenous as well as indigenous communities in the Barents region (Barentsinfo - Fact Sheet).

### **CSR standards and guidelines as tools to implement CSR**

The companies in the four cases differ from size and operational status (exploration, permission or extraction phase (Kokko et al. 2014)) and also vary in terms of using CSR standards and frameworks. As mentioned before the implementation of CSR policies and the way to conduct CSR efforts is voluntary for each corporation (Kirton & Trebilcock 2004; Tilt 2009). The

mining companies of this study have a disparity with respect to the amount of implemented CSR frameworks.

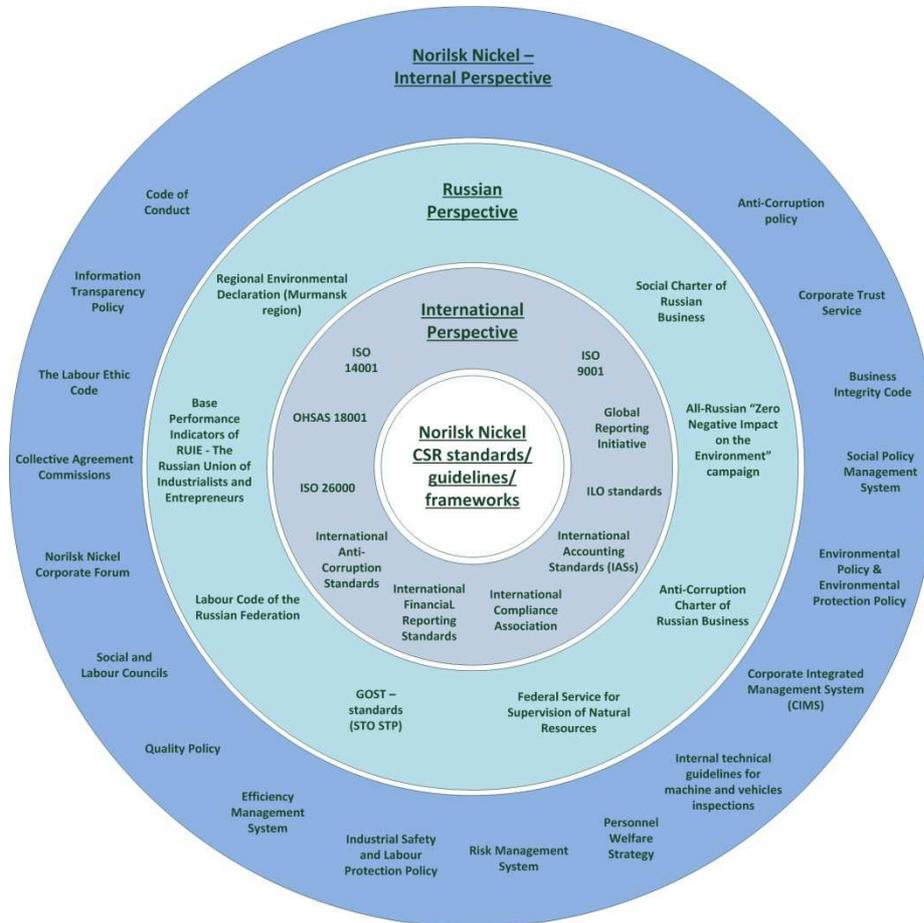
Many CSR guidelines, standards and frameworks are applied among the case study mining corporations. The largest mining company in this study, Norilsk Nickel implemented the greatest number of these standards compared to the three cases from the Nordic countries. Nordic Mining is still mainly in the exploration phase in northern Norway and has out of the case studies, the least amount of standards presented in their CSR web content. Torbjörn Ranta (CEO Nickel Mountain) describes Nickel Mountain as relatively small (Nickel Mountain - Code of Conduct) and the CSR content on their website is rather little compared to First Quantum and Norilsk Nickel. From this it follows that First Quantum and Norilsk Nickel put emphasis on global CSR standards in addition to domestic and internal guidelines, as Nickel Mountain and Nordic Mining predominantly rely only on domestic and internal frameworks (First Quantum - Corporate Responsibility; Nordic Mining - CSR; Nickel Mountain - Governance; Norilsk Nickel - Sustainable Development).

The Finnish mining enterprise of this study First Quantum has a globally oriented CSR strategy, due to the fact that the company is operating in multiple countries with distinguished background conditions. First Quantum's latest CSR strategy is basically correlating to the performance indicators of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI guidelines) even though the company decided not explicitly applying GRI categories comprehensively (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014). For considering environmental impacts of their operations, First Quantum implemented the environmental management system ISO 14001. The Equator Principles comprise another set of guidelines utilised as well to check the social and environmental risks at the Kevitsa mine (First Quantum - Sustainability Strategy). In terms of health and safety issues of its mining operations, First Quantum relies on the British standard OHSAS 18001. Furthermore, sustainability performance standards, provided by the International Finance Corporation, find consideration in the CSR strategy of First Quantum as well as an internally formulated Code of Conduct (First Quantum - Sustainability Report 2014).

Nordic Mining is referring to three main standards in relation to their exploration processes on the Oksfjord peninsula, all linked to Norwegian governmental authorities. These frameworks comprise the Pollution Control Act published by the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment, Planning and Building Act (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation) and the Minerals Act (Ministry of Trade and Industry). In addition, Nordic Mining has established a Code of Practice with a particular focus on the internal achievements of corporate governance activities (Nordic Mining - CSR).

The Swedish mining company Nickel Mountain among the case studies puts primarily emphasis on domestic mining standards and internal guidelines. One organisation has a key role in this regard, the Swedish Association of Mines, Mineral and Metal Producers (SveMin). Nickel Mountain is amongst others using SveMin's Ethical Guidelines for Exploration Work (Nickel Mountain - Environmental Policy). Another standard developed by SveMin is the Checklist for Environmentally Safe Machinery and Work Place, obligatory for the entire personnel of Nickel Mountain to follow during their work. An internal Code of Conduct has been formulated by Nickel Mountain's senior officers to cover areas such as Ethics and Governance, Occupational Health and Safety, Community Engagement and Environmental Performance. The CSR strategy of Nickel Mountain is strongly linked to the notion of ethics and in this respect the company implemented an international framework, the United Nations regulations for ethical investments (Principles for Responsible Investment - PRI).

Norilsk Nickel as the major producer of nickel globally, published the most extensive CSR content among the mining case studies and the corporation uses the most CSR standards in the framework of this study. These standards cover accounting, auditing, reporting and policy elements and consider an internal, a Russian and an international point of view. The latest CSR report of Norilsk Nickel to this date (CSR report 2013) highlights the performance indicators of GRI, several ISO standards (ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 26000), ILO labour standards and international financial reporting standards (IFRS). Notable is also the set of guidelines of national and regional Russian standards. These comprise amongst others the Anti-Corruption Charter of Russian Business, Labour Code of the Russian Federation and the Social Charter of Russian Business (Norilsk Nickel - Social Mission and CSR strategy). With particular focus on the Barents region operations, the company concentrates on the Regional Environmental Declaration of the Murmansk region. Additionally, various internal codes and frameworks were presented in the latest CSR report and on the website of Norilsk Nickel. The company implemented a Code of Conduct, Business Integrity Code and internal policies focusing anti-corruption, social issues, environmental protection and information transparency (Norilsk Nickel - Development of Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting; Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013). The following chart depicts the current CSR standards and frameworks which gained attention inside the corporate practices of Norilsk Nickel.



**Fig. 3.** Norilsk Nickel – Internal, national and international standards and frameworks of a CSR strategy (Norilsk Nickel - CSR report 2013; Environmental Protection and Social Policy of Norilsk Nickel; Norilsk Nickel - Sustainable Development activities 2015)

## Conclusion

By answering the question if CSR is of relevance in the nickel mining industry in the Barents region, the analysis of CSR related web content of four metal mining companies outlined that mining operations face several ecological, social and economic challenges. These overlap to some extent with the key priority areas that were formulated by the current chairs of BEAC and BRC (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland & Arkhangelsk

region). Environmental protection, sustainable use of energy, youth employment and improving the efficiency of transport activities exemplify a few of the BEAC/BRC priority areas that find simultaneously consideration in the CSR related documents of the mining case studies. All case study companies implemented CSR into their corporate strategy. Several parameters differ in the four cases such as quantity of reports, CSR/sustainability definitions, the use of CSR standards and partly the established key priorities. On the contrary numerous conformities are present. All companies name the importance of stakeholder dialogue, as numerous stakeholder groups are concerned about the CSR performance of mining companies in northern Europe. Particularly with local communities, the case studies revealed that mining companies underpin common interests with people living nearby mining operations and that CSR is significant to build up mutual trust among the involved actors. Philanthropy and charity could be important factors in this respect as well. The study discovered several corporate investments of the mining companies with no direct relation to the production processes. These comprise amongst others construction of sports and hospital facilities, day-care centres for employees and additional pension funds for former workers and local communities. The companies express regret that mining operations cause environmental impacts and highlight extensively the benefits that the produced metals create for the society and the indispensable nature of these metals for the global civilization. CSR reporting standards help to gain transparency of ecological impacts and proactive business behaviour to allow continuous improvement processes inside the mining industry. The cases show a large availability of guidelines and frameworks to implement CSR into the corporate strategy. The Global Reporting Initiative guidelines, codes of conduct, ISO 14001 and ILO labour standards are the most notable ones, utilised by the companies of this study. The application of these standards and a sophisticated stakeholder dialogue, particularly including critical stakeholder groups such as indigenous peoples and environmental protection organisations, enable mining companies to improve its individual social and environmental performances and allow a reflection of the relevance that CSR has in the mining industry in the Barents region.

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