



BOTTOM LINE!

TOWARDS A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Including end-of-programme reflection and outlook on the future



AL TO: Tomponika © Stephanie Broekarts/IUCN NL





BOTTOM LINE!

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INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly changing world, the mission of Bottom Line! to support a fair and sustainable energy transition with minimal impact on people and nature remains more urgent than ever. The project is built on the principle that clear limits must guide the expansion of mining for transition minerals. A 'bottom line' defines where and how extraction can take place, ensuring impacts on ecosystems, water, biodiversity, and communities remain within strict boundaries.

Since the project started, the global competition for 'critical minerals' such as nickel, lithium, copper, and bauxite has further intensified. Demand is driven by renewable energy technologies, (electric vehicle) batteries, digital infrastructure, and increasingly by strategic and military applications, making critical minerals a key geopolitical priority. Vested interests elevate the political stakes of critical minerals, while technological and circular solutions are often overlooked. These developments are accelerating mining expansion in biodiversity-rich regions and Indigenous territories.

Civic space around critical mineral mining is shrinking globally, as communities and activists face mounting legal, political, and physical barriers to speaking out. Deep-sea mining debates have intensified in the past few years in both national and international waters. The UN's International Seabed Authority is still negotiating a regulatory code and environmental safeguards while companies and governments push to begin extraction, and the United States has launched a unilateral push to mine in areas beyond national jurisdiction that is illegal under international law.

The issue of critical minerals has also gained significant global momentum. Growing geopolitical competition over supply chains has pushed the topic to the forefront of international politics and news. Reports and media increasingly highlight the environmental and social costs of mining, including deforestation in biodiversity hotspots and risks to Indigenous peoples, local communities, and environmental defenders. Media attention for deep-sea mining has also increased, with scientists, UN experts, and civil society warning about potentially irreversible impacts on marine biodiversity and ocean health.

As a result, the critical minerals debate is increasingly being positioned not only as an energy transition issue, but also as a major challenge for biodiversity protection, human rights, and global equity.

Over the past three years, Bottom Line! has grown as a powerful coalition of partners, including IUCN NL, the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), Natuur & Milieu, EcoJustice, the Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (AlTo), A Rocha Ghana (ARG), Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), the Vereniging van Beleggers voor Duurzame Ontwikkeling (VBDO), and Auriga Nusantara.

Together, we have advocated for a just energy transition aligning with global biodiversity, climate, and human rights frameworks and commitments. An energy transition that puts protecting planetary health and security at its heart. We've worked, with depth and rigor, towards reduced energy and mineral use through a circular economy and for socially and ecologically sound mineral governance that upholds national and international protections for ecosystems, water, biodiversity, and Indigenous peoples and local communities.

In this report, we share key impacts achieved in 2025 and highlight notable activities and results from the past year. With the programme coming to an end in 2026, we also reflect on our joint achievements and the challenges we have faced over the three years of Bottom Line!.

HIGHLIGHTS 2025

In the third and final year of the project, we have made big strides in **amplifying community voices** in mining landscapes, achieved **milestone policy successes**, and helped create further awareness on the need for protecting planetary health at the heart of the just energy transition. Below we share some key highlights from 2025.



Key 2025 highlights :

- In Indonesia, after a series of study trips for local leaders from Tompotika to the nickel mining hotspots in North Morowali, organised by AIto, **villagers rejected mining plans after witnessing firsthand the devastated forests and contaminated water**. Sampaka village successfully applied to declare over **4000 hectares in the Heart of Tompotika Forest as hutan desa**, an official community-protected area (see page 5 and 10).
- The formation of a new national community network in the Philippines by ATM will strengthen coordination and awareness on the **emerging issue of seabed mining**, and will provide a platform to amplify coastal voices to influence policy and safeguard marine ecosystems and local fisheries at a critical moment (see page 8).
- Auriga Nusantara took an important step in advancing **no-go zones for mining in ecologically or socially significant areas** in Indonesia, presenting a stakeholder-informed map to relevant Ministries that was positively received and opened space for further policy dialogue (see page 11).
- A major policy achievement in Ghana was the **repeal of a law that would have opened forest reserves to mining**, secured through A Rocha Ghana's legal challenge and sustained public advocacy (see page 12).
- With **40 nations now calling for a deep-sea mining (DSM) pause or moratorium**, the movement for a halt on DSM is gaining momentum. Norway's new government announced it will not grant any new mining licenses in its national waters until at least 2029, an about-face from the previous rush toward being among the first to exploit (see page 13).
- At the World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, IUCN members adopted a groundbreaking **resolution to safeguard biodiversity and human rights in energy transition mineral governance**. A landmark moment and important political signal (see page 14).
- The Investor Initiative on Responsible Nickel Supply Chains, co-led by VBDO, successfully secured commitments from **36 investors** overseeing \$4.5 trillion, and **28 automakers** and battery manufacturers to improve transparency and address social and environmental risks in nickel supply chains for electric vehicle batteries (see page 20).
- A **keynote speech on circular offshore wind** by Natuur & Milieu at WindDay 2025 – the only one delivered by an NGO – deepened engagement with the Dutch government and industry and helped lay the groundwork for future circular offshore wind projects (see page 20).
- Using a **fictional ecocide case** based on nickel mining in Sulawesi 'This is Not a Trial' was a powerful theatrical performance that prompted public discussion about the energy transition, ecocide legislation, the effects of mining on nature and communities, and consumer responsibility (see page 22).

THEORY OF CHANGE



BOTTOM LINE!



GOAL

A successful energy transition minimizes damage to nature and people

OUTCOME

Green energy minerals are sourced and used responsibly



OUTCOME

Governments, companies, and financial institutions set and implement stringent rules for responsible sourcing and circularity

PATHWAY 1

In specific mineral-rich land- and seascapes, essential ecosystems, threatened species, and the rights of local communities are protected

PATHWAY 2

Circularity strategies, reduced consumption, and enhanced use of recycled metals lead to reduction in use of virgin minerals

A Governments set and implement strict policies for responsible mineral extraction, including no-go zones

B Governments and companies are transparent about mining permits and locations

C Mining companies comply with environmental and human rights protection laws

D Energy sectors only use responsibly sourced and recycled minerals and metals and implement strategies for circular economy activities

E Governments set and enforce rules and incentives for responsible sourcing and circular economy activities

F Financial institutions only invest in best-practice and ecocide-free mining and circular economy alternatives

STRATEGY 1



Strengthen the voice of local communities and organisations that stand up for nature and human rights in mineral-rich areas and encourage responsible mining at regional mines

STRATEGY 2



Advocate the need to reduce, recycle, and use responsibly sourced minerals among consumers and in the public and private sectors

STRATEGY 3



Increase awareness and dialogue on the energy transition/mining footprint and wise energy use

PATHWAYS TO A SUCCESSFUL ENERGY TRANSITION

Bottom Line! promoted a **circular approach** that prioritises reducing energy and raw material demand, while strengthening socially and ecologically responsible mineral governance. To that end, Bottom Line! partners:

- advocate for **Mining No-Go Zones** in ecologically and culturally important areas, putting planetary health at the heart of the just energy transition;
- support **meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities**, including women and youth, and respect for **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)** and the right to say no;
- push for greater **transparency and accountability** across mineral value chains;
- promote **high environmental and human rights standards** for mining.

PATHWAY 1



In specific mineral rich land- and seascapes, essential ecosystems, threatened species and the rights of local communities are protected.

From January to December 2025, we worked on the following objective to protect nature and people in mineral-rich land- and seascapes:

1.1 Empowering local communities

In mining landscapes in Indonesia, Ghana, the Philippines, and the deep sea we worked to strengthen the rights, position, and voices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities so they could effectively protect their ecosystems and livelihoods.



INDONESIA

Central Sulawesi's Tompotika peninsula is home to rare wildlife such as the Critically Endangered maleo bird. Dozens of villages rely on healthy forests and seas, while nickel companies are pressing in. Until recently, many communities viewed mining as an unquestioned path to prosperity. Communities in the entire Tompotika peninsula, but especially the dozen-or-so villages in the northwestern part, are most affected by recent or imminent mining.

These people have become tremendously more aware and engaged in the mining issue and are insisting on their right to be involved in decisions and to protect forests, rivers, and clean air. Mining companies have promised jobs, infrastructure, and donations for schools and mosques. Investment was framed as progress, but promises on paper are different from realities on the ground.



Left: Maleo's at Dawn at the Libuun Breeding Site. Right: Nickelmine near Siuna, Central Sulawesi
© Stephanie Broekarts / IUCN NL

Exchange visit as a gamechanger

A game-changer was a series of study trips organised by AITo for 28 local leaders from Tompotika to North Morowali, one of Indonesia's hotspots of nickel mining and home to vast industrial parks and dozens of active nickel mining concessions. What Tompotika villagers feared might arrive in their forests and coasts, was already visible in Morowali. The group included village heads, community representatives, and members of newly formed youth-led environmental groups. Many had never questioned mining expansion before. Guided by AITo's mining outreach coordinator, they spent several days visiting villages affected, while speaking with officials, residents, and mine workers.

For many, the turning point was realising that mining's benefits were temporary, while the damage to ecosystems and livelihoods was lasting. And amid the discussions, voices reminded them that forests are not only about water and soil. 'If the forest is destroyed,' one said, 'the maleo and other wildlife will vanish. And their loss will hurt people too.'

On the road back to Tompotika, conversations in the bus were animated. Leaders who had been skeptical about conservation began voicing their fears. 'Everywhere we went,' one said, 'the same problems: polluted water, destroyed forests and mangroves, dust.' Another admitted he had joined the trip only reluctantly, but now was thankful: 'Without this visit, in our village we would have been blind. Now, we cannot be fooled anymore.' One village head declared openly that he would refuse mining permits, even if it cost him his position. Others echoed the message: better to defend forests and water now, than regret it later.



'For local communities, the question is urgent: short-term profits or long-term survival? The voices from Morowali show that without safeguards, transparency, and respect for local communities' rights, mining leaves behind pollution, conflict, and inequality. So, building awareness and solidarity at the community level is essential. And once public opinion moves, politicians and companies must respond.'

Marcy Summers, director of AITo



Community members wearing T-shirts with 'Forests Bring Life, Mining Brings Ruin' © AITo

CRITICAL MINERALS: CRITICAL TO WHOM?

The term critical minerals is used to refer to minerals that governments consider critical for their policies and priorities. However, the benefits for which 'critical minerals' are considered essential, are rarely enjoyed by the communities where they are mined. For many rural and Indigenous peoples, these minerals are not critical to their livelihoods, yet extraction often disrupts their lands, cultures and local economies. Mining expansion often takes place in biodiverse rainforest and coastal areas, causing deforestation, pollution, and loss of ecosystems on which communities depend for their livelihoods and wellbeing. This raises urgent questions about justice, inequality, and how to pursue a truly sustainable transition.

Strengthening the work of youth, women, and communities

AITo also supported the formation of two new youth-led community groups to spread awareness and mobilise local residents. The field trip and other capacity-strengthening, knowledge, and awareness work, and other community initiatives by AITo sparked public demonstrations and declarations by community members and elected officials. The Bupati, regent of the Banggai regency, called a meeting of mining companies and scolded them for harming the environment. Provincial officials called for investigations. News media have produced numerous stories on the topic, compared to nothing before.

In Tompotika, where public discourse is heavily male-dominated, AITo prioritised including women in all outreach meetings and events, sometimes holding special meetings just for women in order to make sure that their voices were heard. AITo also made efforts to feature women as spokespeople in our news and outreach materials. In addition, we included immigrants from other parts of Indonesia who tend to settle in enclaves and specific neighbourhoods within the Tompotika region. They would likely not have been included without AITo's outreach.

Local communities are very keen to understand the impacts of mining and their rights. AITo's outreach has been widely welcomed, including in villages where many residents currently or previously supported mining. At the same time, pro-mining actors at times use intimidation to discourage open discussion, and tensions are now noticeably higher than when our work began.



ARG continued to build the capacity of communities and traditional authorities to monitor mining concessions and advocate for their rights, creating a model for community-led conservation that can be replicated elsewhere. Supporting and expanding the network of community paralegals was part of this: such a network has now been established in five regions, empowering them to monitor extractive activities and defend community rights. The work in the Muni-Pomadze Ramsar site, where community mobilisation led to the suspension of lithium exploration licenses, is a powerful example of local empowerment.

In 2025, ARG placed gender and inclusion at the centre of its advocacy. It partnered with women's rights organisations for targeted consultations with women in frontline communities, documenting how mining pollution affects their roles as primary providers of water and food. These testimonies informed media campaigns and policy briefs, helping frame opposition to proposed mining in forest reserves in clear human and social terms. ARG also set a target of at least 40% female participation in its community paralegal training, strengthening women's roles as legal monitors and advocates in their own communities.

Also in Ghana, community ownership proved to be the ultimate guarantee of success: top-down advocacy victories can be fragile. Empowering local communities, like the women in Asiakwa or the youth in Winneba, with information, legal literacy, and a platform for their voices ensures that environmental protection has local guardians who will hold duty-bearers accountable long after a project ends.



Atewa Forest in Ghana © Jan Willem den Besten / IUCN NL



ATM and local partner Convergence of Initiatives for Environmental Justice (CIEJ) helped strengthen communities by building their capacity to organise, collaborate, and engage in local decision-making on the southern island of Mindanao, where a major copper and gold mine is planned in a critical watershed and Indigenous territory. This led to the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Tampakan taking concrete policy action to protect the watershed by strengthening local tax policies and revising its Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which now prioritises forest and watershed protection and removes the mining tenement from the municipality's plans. The LGU also cancelled the mining company's business permit over alleged fraud and issued a substantial tax claim, now under legal dispute.

Farmers and irrigators are now better organised and meet regularly to discuss water, environment, and land use. They take part in decisions and pass local resolutions. The Marbel-Buluan Watershed Management Alliance became an important space for coordination and joint action to protect their watershed and livelihoods. 38 irrigators associations representing nearly 5,000 farmers have mobilised against the mine, warning of severe impacts on irrigation systems and agricultural production. However, the risk of mining development remains, underscoring the need for continued vigilance.

Strengthening the work of youth and women's groups

In Mindanao and other landscapes, (Indigenous) youth groups have become more active, especially online, helping to disseminate information and engage a wider audience. Community members said more people now understand the impacts of large-scale mining projects and feel more confident to speak up. Farmers, irrigators, youth, and local groups now work closely with government agencies and with each other. ATM actively engaged women in frontline roles; women leaders organised learning sessions, led creative actions, and served as spokespersons in media and public events, with support from ATM's Working Group on Women and Mining.



Community safety and security training © ATM

EMPOWERING COASTAL COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS THE THREAT OF SEABED MINING

In January 2025, ATM together with DSCC, brought together national partners and representatives from coastal communities in a national campaign conference to address the growing threat of seabed mining in Philippines waters. Seabed mining involves the mechanical removal of marine sediments to extract minerals, encompassing both deep-sea (>200 m) and shallow-water operations in nearshore waters with potentially large impact on marine biodiversity, coastal resilience, and small-scale fisheries. Until then, there was limited awareness among civil society and coastal communities.

As a next step, ATM convened a national gathering of coastal communities in November 2025. The meeting strengthened local campaign capacity, clarified community priorities, and established a coordinated national network to challenge destructive seabed mining. This national structure came at a critical moment, as the government revises shallow-water seabed mining guidelines to meet growing global demand for critical minerals. By organising communities and amplifying their voices, the network will help to position coastal communities to influence decision-making and safeguard their marine ecosystems and livelihoods.

In line with this, IUCN NL supported a study to gather evidence on the environmental and social risks of emerging Shallow-Water Seabed Mining, using the Philippines – where large-scale offshore magnetite sand mining is likely to take-off soon – as a key case study, with results expected at in the course of 2026.



Community meeting in Zambales the Philippines © ATM



THE DEEP SEA

In 2025, DSCC worked ever more closely with Indigenous leaders and communities, providing platforms to voice their resistance to deep-sea mining on the world stage, including at the International Seabed Authority, the Our Ocean Conference, and the Third UN Ocean Conference.

At the March ISA Council meeting, DSCC hosted a side event with the Tetiaroa Society, Te Ipukarea Society, and the Maui Nui Makai Network: three Pacific Indigenous community groups. The event highlighted the deep cultural connections Indigenous peoples across the region have with the deep sea. Speakers emphasised the need to include Indigenous knowledge in ISA decision-making. To date, at least 72 Indigenous groups alongside more than 1,500 allies from 51 countries, have joined the [call for a ban on DSM](#).

Youth continue to play a key role in DSCC's campaign, through training, capacity building, and creating political space for colleagues from their member organisations, as well as direct advocacy in key governance fora. It is energising to see the next generation of ocean advocates step forward with such intelligence and commitment.



An angler fish © New Zealand-American Submarine Ring of Fire 2005 Exploration; NOAA Vents Program



Jellyfish showing amazing structure.
© NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research,
2015 Hohonu Moana



Chimaera, Indonesia
© NOAA Okeanos Explorer Program, INDEX-SATAL 2010,
NOAA/OER

1.2 Enhancing governance and policies

In Indonesia, Ghana, the Philippines, and the deep sea, project partners worked to achieve policy results for stronger regulation of mineral extraction to protect critically important areas for biodiversity and the rights and livelihoods of communities.



INDONESIA

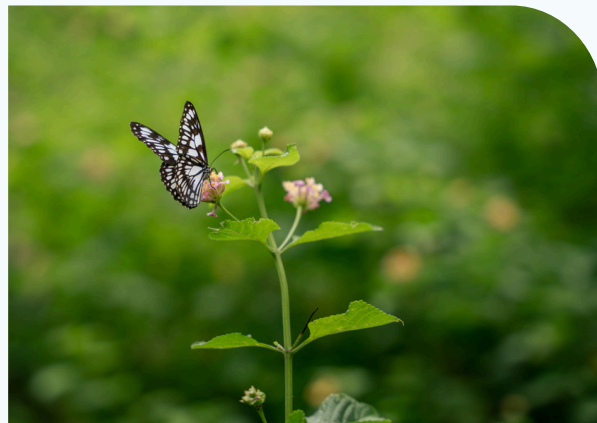
Achieving concrete policy results for stronger regulation of nickel mining in Indonesia, including in areas like Tompotika, remains challenging due to structural and legal constraints. Indonesian environmental law is still relatively underdeveloped, with limited legal tools and precedents available to prevent or mitigate mining impacts compared to many other countries. While AITo and other environmental organisations are exploring possible legal avenues, weak enforcement, overlapping mandates, and strong economic incentives for nickel extraction continue to hinder meaningful regulatory progress. However, AITo and the village of Sampaka achieved some key policy successes at the local level, and Auriga Nusantara advanced policy discussions on Mining No-Go Zones .

Securing long-term protection of the Heart of Tompotika Forest

A major success in 2025 was the government's approval of the community-protected forest in an area where mining companies had proposed new mines. The application process was complicated and lengthy and the proposed area was made much smaller, but in the end, the news couldn't be better: Sampaka's application for a new Hutan Desa Village Forest protected area had been officially approved!

This means that more than 4000 hectares of the Heart of Tompotika Forest in Sampaka village's jurisdiction will be protected for 35 years, the maximum time allowed. Crucially, the new official Hutan Desa status will strengthen village residents' efforts to prevent the area's conversion to a nickel mine, which was permitted by the central government without their prior information or consent. Mining would not only destroy vast swaths of forest upslope of their residences, making their entire village vulnerable to flooding and landslides, but would also likely contaminate the forest stream from which fresh water is piped to thousands of households in villages below.

AITo has also galvanised local people and many village leaders all over the peninsula to support declaration of a new protected forest area in the Heart of Tompotika Forest, and this process is now underway.



Working towards no-go zones for mining

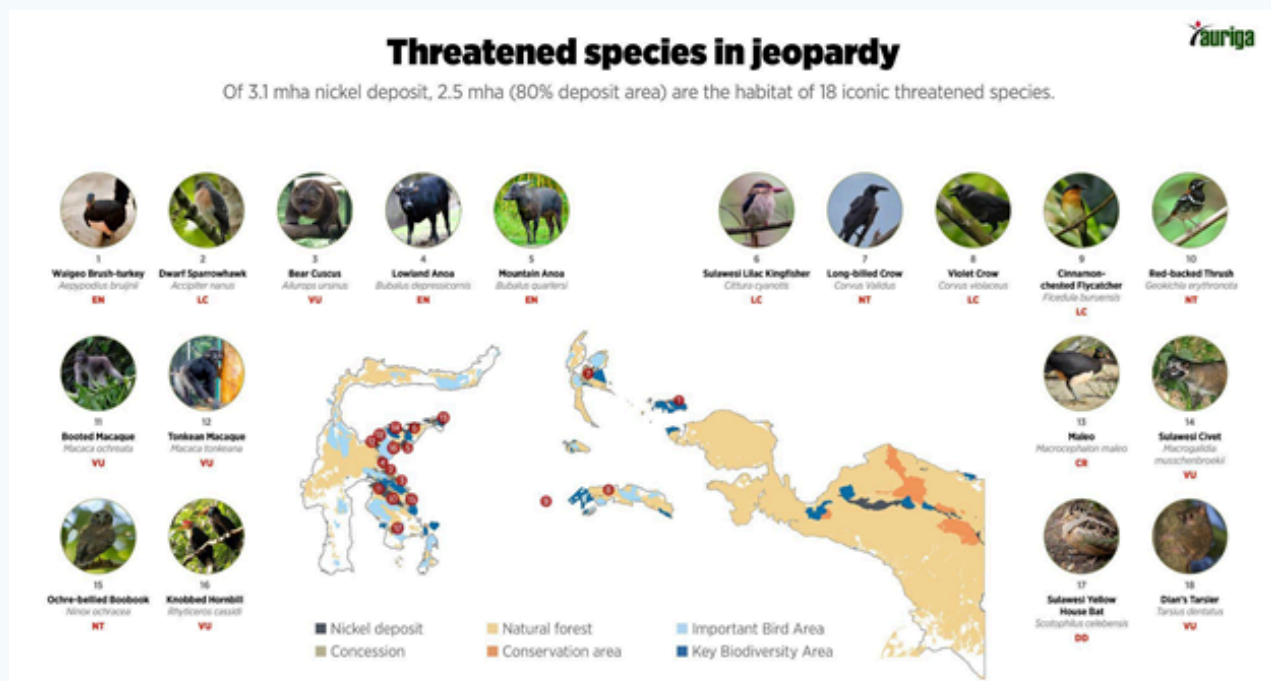
Auriga Nusantara continued to advance the concept of Mining No-Go Zones in Indonesia as a practical way to prevent mining in areas of high ecological and social importance. In July 2025, Auriga Nusantara presented the No-Go Zones map it produced following legal/policy research and consultations with stakeholders (CSOs, local governments, communities) in Sulawesi to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Geological Agency. Both institutions responded positively to the principle of No-Go Zones, marking an important step toward broader policy discussion. Following this engagement, Auriga Nusantara prepared a letter to the President to further advance the proposal.

In November 2025, Auriga Nusantara, IUCN NL, and other civil society organisations raised the need for No-Go Zones at the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) Indonesia national forum, calling for faster and more concrete action to prevent further environmental and social harm. The No-Go Zones concept builds on existing Indonesian laws protecting disaster-prone areas, biodiversity, coastal ecosystems, food production lands, and Indigenous territories. Further advocacy will be needed to translate these principles into practice. Auriga also began exploring people-to-people collaboration between Indonesia and China to broaden dialogue on responsible mining.

Auriga’s Nusantara work on Mining No-Go Zones also informed its subsequent [Red Alert: Raja Ampat Threat Report 2025](#), which highlights the growing impacts of nickel mining on coastal waters and marine ecosystems. The report documents how mining activities on small islands and in coastal areas can damage coral reefs, fisheries, and local livelihoods, and reinforces the call to apply No-Go Zone protections to coastal and small island regions where ecosystems are particularly vulnerable.



Fishermen in nickel-polluted waters, Sulawesi, Indonesia © Garry Lotulung





Protection of the Atewa Forest

In 2025, the multi-year legal and advocacy campaign resulted in the successful exclusion of the Atewa Forest from bauxite mining interests as well as the initiation of the formal process to designate Atewa a National Park. This successful campaign was organised by ARG together with other groups and community partners such as the Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape. This is a landmark victory, protecting a globally significant biodiversity hotspot and the water source for millions of Ghanaians. It demonstrates that sustained, evidence-based advocacy can overcome powerful economic interests.

Repeal of controversial mining law strengthens forest protection

The other key policy achievement is the repeal of L.I. 2462, a new legislative instrument that would have allowed the entry of mining in forest reserves. ARG's legal challenge and public advocacy against L.I. 2462, leading to its eventual repeal, successfully stalled the finalisation of mining licenses for over 25 forest reserves, including twelve Globally Significant Biodiversity Areas. This has prevented imminent and widespread ecological destruction, setting a critical precedent for the protection of Ghana's remaining forests and the livelihoods of local communities.

Through Bottom Line!, ARG has strengthened civil society's ability to combine research, community perspectives, and legal analysis into clear advocacy positions. This helped build a broader coalition that used evidence, media engagement, and sustained dialogue with decision-makers to highlight mining risks in forest reserves and push for stronger legal safeguards. In October 2025, following the mounting public pressure and dialogue with civil society, the Government tabled a revocation instrument in Parliament. Its adoption in December 2025 formally repealed L.I. 2462, closing the legal pathway for mining in forest reserves.

Further, ARG has successfully influenced the new government's extractive agenda by engaging with key ministries and agencies of the new administration. Their work continued to prioritise the need for safeguards for forests and water resources in all extractive sector interests. Building on ARG's 2024 assessment of Ghana's transition mineral prospects and trade-offs, we engaged stakeholders and held high-level policy dialogues to ensure the findings informed the new government's policy and legal frameworks.



As part of its campaign work, ATM engaged LGU officials and successfully advocated for the adoption of resolutions and ordinances opposing the opening up of new mines in ecologically or culturally significant areas. These efforts have already resulted in significant policy gains. For example, on 1 July, 2025, the Provincial LGU of Oriental Mindoro issued a resolution directing the immediate cease and desist of mining companies operating in the province.

A few months earlier, in March 2025, a major victory for people and nature was secured, when the provincial government of Palawan adopted a Provincial Ordinance establishing a 50-year, extendable moratorium on new mining endorsements and prohibiting expansion into new sites by existing mining companies. Often described as the country's last ecological frontier, Palawan is home to exceptional forests, freshwater systems, and coastal ecosystems that sustain local livelihoods, fisheries, and food security. For years, communities, Indigenous Peoples, and CSOs – including ATM and its members – warned that expanding mining, particularly for nickel, would irreversibly damage these ecosystems while exposing communities to pollution, flooding, and loss of land.



'This is a historical step towards protecting the remaining forests and natural resources of Palawan and upholding the rights of citizens, Indigenous Peoples, farmers, and fisherfolk – particularly the right to a safe and healthy environment.'

Grizelda Mayo-Anda, Executive Director at Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC)



THE DEEP SEA

In 2025, advocacy by the DSCC delivered concrete policy outcomes that significantly slowed the advance of DSM and reinforced international legal and governance norms. 40 States – up from 0 in May 2022 and 32 at the end of 2024 – now publicly support a pause or moratorium on DSM, of which 20 are European.

At the Third UN Ocean Conference in June 2025, the EU positioned itself as a global standard-setter when it reaffirmed its precautionary position on DSM via the [European Ocean Pact](#), a document which will serve as a guide to the EU's diplomatic and political engagement on ocean matters.

Norway's newly elected government ruled out DSM licences in Norway's Arctic waters until at least 2029. This decision followed sustained pressure from civil society and negotiations with green opposition parties. It was a significant policy shift, since in late 2024 Norway had fast-tracked plans to open more than 281,000 km² of seabed to commercial DSM. Norway's decision is a vital signal that governments are increasingly unwilling to shoulder the environmental, financial, and political risks associated with DSM.



'Norway's decision to halt all deep-sea mining exploration and exploitation is another nail in the coffin for the unnecessary, reckless, and highly destructive industry.'

Sofia Tsenikli, DSCC DSM Moratorium Campaign Director

Progress toward DSM exploitation stalled further, as negotiations on the Mining Code were again delayed and no exploitation contracts were issued, effectively preventing the start of commercial DSM. This was reinforced by a strong institutional response to unilateral actions, including a formal inquiry into contractors affiliated with The Metals Company, signalling growing resistance to premature exploitation within the International Seabed Authority.

At the same time, momentum for precaution strengthened across governance, science, and finance. The Convention on Migratory Species adopted a strong scientific recommendation underpinning precautionary action on DSM in line with the resolution adopted at its Conference of Parties in 2024, and both the Asian Development Bank and major financial institutions publicly endorsed precaution, underscoring the increasing isolation of DSM proponents.

PATHWAY 2



Circularity strategies, reduced consumption and enhanced use of recycled metals lead to reduction in use of virgin minerals.

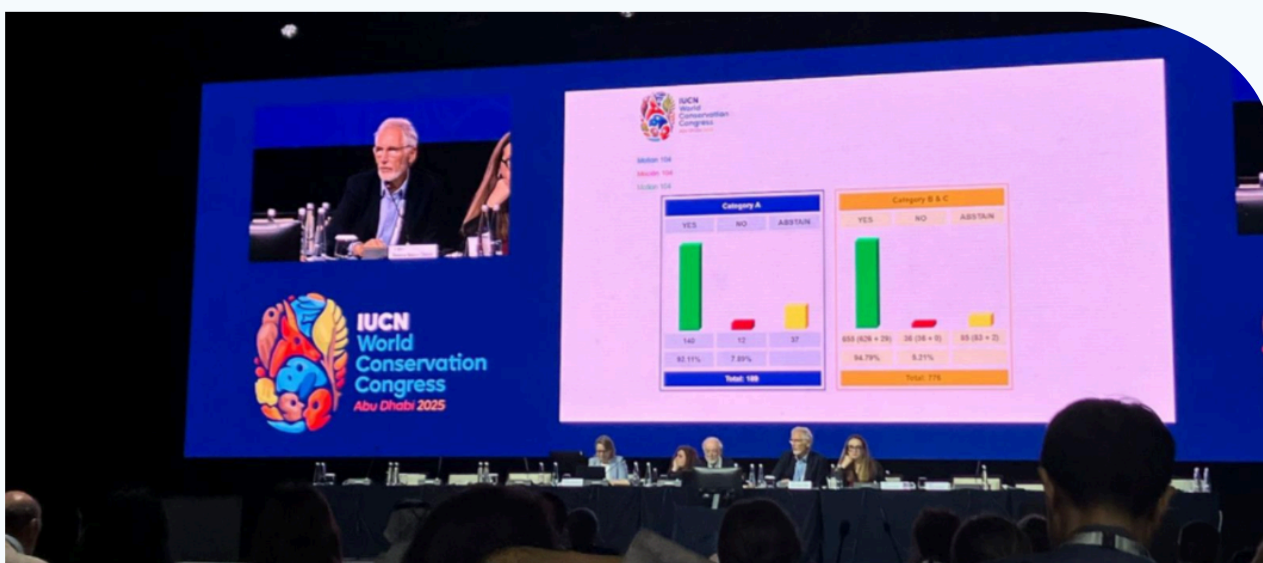
From January to December 2025, we worked on the following to make sourcing of minerals more responsible, reduce consumption and enhance the use of recycled metals:

2.1 Enhancing governance and policies in the Netherlands and international arenas

Strengthening governance and policy frameworks is key to ensuring that the energy transition does not come at the expense of nature and people. Also in 2025, Bottom Line! partners engaged in national and international policy arenas to advocate for stronger rules, safeguards, and accountability in mineral governance.

Landmark resolution to safeguard biodiversity and human rights in energy transition mineral governance

A landmark victory for the Bottom Line! partners was the adoption at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi (9 - 15 October), of the motion '[Safeguarding Biodiversity and Human Rights in Energy Transition Mineral Governance](#)'. IUCN members including states, government agencies, civil society groups, and Indigenous Peoples' organisations voted with an overwhelming majority of votes to adopt the motion that is now an [IUCN resolution \(number 103\)](#). The resolution provides a powerful political signal, even if it carries no binding force. It can be used to hold supporting governments accountable, reminding them they endorsed this resolution and now must put it into action, and encouraging consistent follow-through in other decision-making fora. The resolution also provides a clear mandate to strengthen and align action across the IUCN as a Union, including through its commissions such as the World Commission on Protected Areas.



The voting results of motion 104 presented at the World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi 2025 © IUCN NL

The motion was developed by Bottom Line! partners ARG and IUCN NL and submitted to the Members Assembly at the IUCN Congress by ARG, supported by Natuur & Milieu, Stop Ecocide International, EcoJustice, DSCC and many other IUCN members. It advocates for reduced energy and mineral use through a circular economy, and for socially and ecologically sound mineral governance that upholds national protections for ecosystems, water, biodiversity, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LCs). It calls for the designation of Mining No-Go Zones in ecologically or culturally significant areas, including the deep sea, the meaningful participation and rights of IP&LCs, and for mining and post-mining practices to meet the highest human rights and environmental standards.



'This resolution is an important step towards safer and more just mineral governance.'

Seth Appiah-Kubi, National Director of A Rocha Ghana

ARG and other Bottom Line! partners will continue to raise awareness and build capacity for responsible transition mineral governance, engage governments, civil society, and other stakeholders to implement the resolution's provisions and support Indigenous and local communities affected by mining activities. IUCN NL and ARG will organise a number of online exchange sessions for key countries such as Ghana, Indonesia, and the Philippines to inform NGOs of the resolution and the opportunities it provides for their advocacy.

Another landmark motion that was adopted, co-supported by Bottom Line! partners, is Motion 061, 'Recognising the crime of ecocide to protect nature', calling on states to treat severe, widespread, or long-term environmental damage as a serious, actionable crime in national and international law, including supporting its inclusion in the Rome Statute.



Waterfall in Atewa © A Rocha Ghana

Research shows: nickel mining on Sulawesi overlaps with globally important biodiversity areas



Research initiated by IUCN NL, contributing to the International Responsible Business Conduct (IRBC) agreement for the Renewable Energy Sector, highlights significant environmental damage from nickel mining linked to Sulawesi's Morowali Industrial Park. Mining concessions have been granted in areas of globally important biodiversity, including Key Biodiversity Areas.

As one of the world's largest nickel mining sites, Morowali (producing nickel for stainless steel and electric vehicle batteries) served as the focus of the study, which documents large-scale environmental impacts across the region.

IUCN NL presented the findings of the study during a knowledge session of the IRBC agreement for the Renewable Energy Sector that was well attended by its members, wind, and solar companies. The report further attracted a lot of attention from (international) journalists, NGOs, and governments.

Advocating for a circular energy transition

In 2025, Bottom Line! partners continued to advocate for an integrated policy approach towards a circular energy transition. Natuur & Milieu led this work, focusing on reducing demand for 'virgin' critical materials needed for electric vehicles and supporting the sustainable rollout of offshore wind projects.

Natuur & Milieu also built on [CE Delft's 2024 research](#), quantifying how circular strategies for electric vehicles could reduce demand for battery materials, including nickel, and cut emissions. The [analysis](#) showed substantial potential savings by promoting lighter cars and increasing car sharing. The Dutch NGO shared these findings through various platforms, appearing on [radio 1](#), in the AD, and in [Energieia](#).

A key insight that Natuur & Milieu has gained from the engagement with politicians and the energy sector is that, although urgency surrounding the use of critical raw material (CRM) is increasing, responses from markets and policymakers focus primarily on securing alternative supply (e.g. from countries like Australia and possibly Indonesia) rather than reducing consumption. In difficult economic conditions, CRM reduction is not prioritised, making it necessary to actively promote circularity as a way to strengthen business cases and supply chain resilience.

Influencing Dutch government's position on deep sea mining

IUCN NL, DSCC, and EcoJustice continued their involvement in a coalition of Dutch NGOs on the topic of deep sea mining, whose objective is to influence the Dutch position on this issue. Through this coalition, we stayed up to date on key decisions for deep-sea mining in the Netherlands and the opportunities to influence them. While the Netherlands has not yet joined other European countries calling for a moratorium, advocacy efforts included parliamentary questions, media engagement, and a motion challenging unilateral deep-sea mining actions, though political instability contributed to a continued deadlock. The involvement of (partly) Dutch-owned companies, like AllSeas, in deep-sea mining activities has drawn attention because of the potential conflict with international law on ocean use.

Engaging Dutch ministries

In 2025, Dutch Bottom Line! partners engaged with several directorates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to share our expertise on responsible value chains for transition minerals. We advocated for legislation on due diligence in value chains in line with the [OECD Guidelines](#), but unfortunately the political dynamics in Europe changed and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive was watered down substantially.

IUCN NL, together with the author of the report showing that nickel mining on Sulawesi overlaps with globally important biodiversity areas, held a meeting with civil servants of various relevant directorates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (i.e. Directorate Inclusive Green Growth, Critical Materials team, Directorate for Multilateral Institutions and Human Rights) to present and discuss the findings of the study of nickel mining linked to Sulawesi's Morowali Industrial Park. There was a lively discussion and exchange, with a shared commitment to stay in touch and share updates about what is happening on the ground.

Natuur & Milieu's engagement with policymakers focused on civil servants working on shared mobility and smaller vehicles at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and the Ministry of Climate and Green Growth. They advocated for targets on material-use in mobility and for CO₂-reduction targets. Politicians and government employees find it extremely difficult to create effective raw material reduction policies without these targets.

Unfortunately, efforts to promote an interdepartmental approach to the energy and material transition, as well as political advocacy on circular electric vehicles, were hindered by the change in government and did not yield the intended results. The earlier observation that policymakers and the market do not prioritise CRM reduction in difficult economic conditions plays into this as well.

2.2 International outreach

International outreach helps connect local mining impacts with global policy processes. In 2025, Bottom Line! partners engaged international platforms to amplify community voices and advance responsible mineral governance.

IUCN World Conservation Congress

At the IUCN World Conservation Congress in October, IUCN NL, together with EcoJustice, A Rocha Ghana and other partners working on the subject, hosted a dynamic and well-attended event at the IUCN Pavilion: 'Prosper with nature: safeguarding biodiversity and human rights in energy transition mineral governance'. The session addressed the rising demand for these minerals in biodiversity-rich regions, with case studies from West Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America.

Experts proposed actions, robust safeguards, and best practices to safeguard nature and planetary security, and human rights during the transition. The interactive discussion with the audience emphasised the need for strong environmental and social safeguards, including no-go zones for mining in ecologically and culturally significant areas, and for aligning the energy transition with the GBF targets and global climate goals.



Side event at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025
© IUCN NL



Daryil Bosu from A Rocha Ghana at
the side event © IUCN NL

High-level engagement at the UN Ocean Conference

DSCC played a central role at the Third UN Ocean Conference in June by co-hosting two high profile side events. A ministerial event with the Government of Palau and other partners brought together leaders from moratorium alliance States, with the Marshall Islands' Minister of Environment announcing a call for a precautionary pause. This was complemented by a widely attended DSCC reception featuring an exclusive preview from the new David Attenborough documentary 'Ocean', alongside interventions from scientists, ministers, and Indigenous leaders underscoring the urgent need to protect the deep ocean.

Global Advocacy on Philippine nickel mining

In 2025, ATM contributed to several international research initiatives on environmental human rights and transition minerals, partnering with Global Witness, Amnesty International Asia Pacific and Climate Rights International. These collaborations produced key publications highlighting the social and environmental impacts of the nickel boom in the Philippines, including (environmental) human rights issues, climate vulnerability, and the consequences of European demand for electric vehicle batteries. The reports 'Power, corruption and reprisals in Philippine nickel mining - How Philippine communities pay the price for Europe's electric vehicle boom', 'What do we get in return? How the Philippines nickel boom harms human rights' and 'Broken Promises - Philippines Nickel Mining Causes Rights Abuses and Increases Climate Vulnerability' were all published in 2025, strengthening global awareness and advocacy on responsible nickel mining.



Residents protesting against the entry of a mine that would threaten their land and waters © ATM

Shaping Catholic responses to mining and extractivism

ATM's contributions also helped shape the October 2025 publication 'Catholic Approaches to Mining: A Framework for Reflection, Planning, and Action' guiding church leaders and Catholic organisations in responding to mining-related socio-environmental injustices and supporting affected communities. This followed ATM's participation in a June 2025 international conference in Bogotá on the church's role in mining and extractivism, aligning with Laudato Si' and peacebuilding initiatives.

2.3 Engaging financial and energy transition sectors

In 2025, Bottom Line! partners worked with investors and the energy sector to strengthen responsible sourcing practices, raise awareness of biodiversity and human rights risks, and promote more circular approaches within the energy transition.

Keynote for the wind energy sector at WindDay

WindDay is a premier event that brings together experts, innovators and companies from the wind energy sector. At WindDay 2025, Natuur & Milieu was the only national non-profit organisation to deliver a keynote, presenting its vision for circular offshore wind turbines and actively engaging stakeholders on the practical and regulatory barriers to implementation. The contacts and insights gained during the event were used to inform input to the Dutch national offshore tender. While no bids were ultimately submitted – limiting the immediate inclusion of circular solutions – these interactions strengthened Natuur & Milieu’s engagement with the ministry and key industry players. Over time, this dialogue contributed to a broader shift in perspective within the offshore sector, helping to lay the groundwork for more circular approaches in future offshore projects despite challenging economic conditions.



Keynote speaker at WindDay 2025 © Natuur & Milieu



Participating in WindDay 2025 © Natuur & Milieu

Investor Initiative on Responsible Nickel Supply Chains

In 2025, through the Investor Initiative on Responsible Nickel Supply Chains, VBDO, and Rainforest Foundation Norway brought together investors and civil society to address environmental and social risks linked to nickel used in electric vehicle batteries. Supported by 36 investors representing about \$4.5 trillion in assets, the initiative engaged 28 automakers and battery producers to improve transparency and due diligence in their supply chains.

Over 2024-2025, the Initiative established a credible platform for dialogue between investors and EV companies on responsible nickel sourcing. Investor engagement helped raise internal attention to Environmental, Social and Governance risks, prompting several companies to strengthen approaches to biodiversity, FPIC, grievance mechanisms, and mining standards. In parallel, over ten knowledge sessions improved investor understanding of mineral supply chain risks, enabling more targeted engagement and supporting gradual progress toward stronger, more transparent supply chain governance.



Open pit nickel mining in Raja Ampat, Indonesia © Auriga

Investor briefing on the risks posed by deep sea mining

In a webinar for investors, VBDO provided an up-to-date investor briefing on deep sea mining, its risks and regulatory developments, and the role investors can play. It reviewed recent developments, including proposals from the United States to unilaterally mine in international waters. One clear call to action during this session, and in a follow-up email to all participants, was to support the [statement](#) to governments on deep seabed mining by the Finance for Biodiversity Foundation.

Engaging the Asian Development Bank on critical minerals and safeguards

In May 2025, ATM contributed to a joint briefing paper '[Reinvention of a Troubled Legacy](#)' with the NGO Forum on the Asian Development Bank (ADB). ATM joined the NGO Forum on the ADB at its Annual Meeting in Milan and participated in panels and bilateral meetings, pressing the bank to strengthen, and expand implementation of its safeguards. The Forum raised critical concerns about the ADB's proposed Critical Minerals investment framework in the context of its Energy Policy revision. On the other hand, given the uncertainties and risks involved, the bank has adopted a [precautionary stance](#) on investment proposals for seabed minerals development projects.

Women in Clean Energy event

EcoJustice facilitated a workshop on the geopolitics and legal landscape of deep sea mining at a Women in Clean Energy event in The Hague in March 2025. This is an annual event for professionals in the energy transition industry, with more than 150 visitors. The workshop informed participants of the biodiversity and human rights risks of the energy transition and potential legal repercussions.

RAISING AWARENESS

The balancing act between the necessity of accelerating the energy transition and the environmental impact of the required resources to do so remains important in our communications. We continuously share a nuanced story that emphasises the importance of a fast transition away from fossil fuels that should not come at the cost of valuable ecosystems and people.

'This is Not a Trial' – A fictional case on ecocide

'This is Not a Trial' was a theatrical performance that was developed by researchers and students from Utrecht University, as part of the interdisciplinary project Conceptualising Ecocide in collaboration with IUCN NL, EcoJustice, AIto, artists, and actors. The students presented a powerful and well-received performance that focused on the bill on ecocide (tabled by the Party for the Animals in 2023) and the complexity of the energy transition.

The fictional case at trial was based on the Bottom Line! case of the nickel mining issues on Sulawesi, Indonesia, and the detrimental impacts it has on the environment (e.g. the maleo bird) and the local communities living in the vicinity of the mining operations. The performance proved to be a powerful tool to start the conversation about the impact of the energy transition on nature and local communities, and it addressed the question of what role ecocide legislation can play in addressing these impacts. Moreover, the audience was confronted with their own position as consumers and the role they can play.



This is Not a Trial in Utrecht © EcoJustice



Kieswijzer Tweede Kamer © EcoJustice

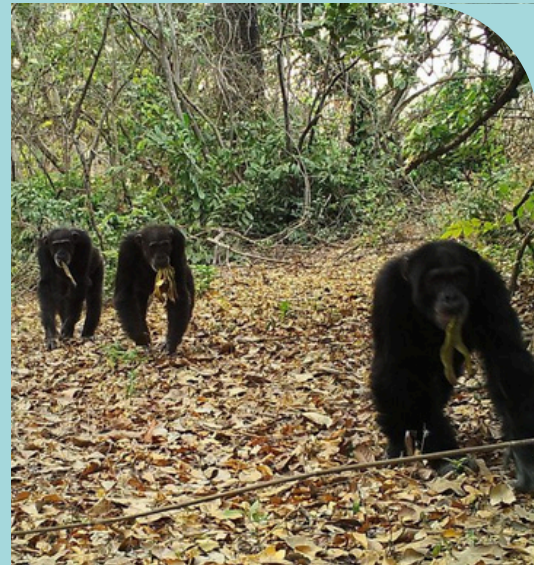
Promoting the concept of Ecocide

EcoJustice gave public mobilisation and legal awareness top priority to address the threat of ecocide associated with the energy transition. In order to put responsible mining practices firmly on the public agenda, EcoJustice organised the first-ever legal bloc at the Climate March in The Hague in October in collaboration with outside partners, including Advocates for the Future. A Kieswijzer (voter's guide) was created in advance of the Dutch national elections and released in the lead-up to the Climate March, providing voters with clear information on ecocide-related issues to further influence the debate.

Bottom Line! partners also convened a learning session on ecocide for legislators and civil society in the Philippines, strengthening engagement with both faith communities and key policymakers supporting the ecocide bill and Rights of Nature movement. In March 2026, Philippine lawmakers proposed new legislation that would criminalise ecocide, marking a significant step toward stronger protection for the country’s ecosystems and communities.

CRITICAL MINERALS AND THE WESTERN CHIMPANZEE: HOW BAUXITE MINING THREATENS ONE OF WEST AFRICA’S LAST STRONGHOLDS

In West Africa, the global scramble for critical minerals is putting immense pressure on unique ecosystems. As the demand for bauxite – the ore used to produce aluminium – surges, mining is expanding rapidly, including in some of the most biodiverse and socially sensitive landscapes. Mining has fragmented and degraded ape habitats across Africa and roads, exploration camps and other infrastructure open previously remote areas to hunters, loggers, and other environmental threats. One example is the Boé region in south-east Guinea-Bissau, a critical refuge for the Critically Endangered western chimpanzee.



Western Chimpanzee in sacred forest © Chimbo Foundation

Protecting Boé’s forests and western chimpanzees requires applying strong environmental and social safeguards from the start of exploration, with independent monitoring and transparent reporting. Key habitats and movement corridors must be protected, while local communities are meaningfully involved through consultation, co-management, livelihoods, and benefit-sharing to safeguard both nature and people.

Essay collection ‘Hope in times of Ecocide’

The call to criminalise large-scale destruction of nature, often referred to as ecocide, is gaining momentum. The book Hope in Times of Ecocide, authored by lawyer Femke Wijdekop and former Dutch Parliament member Lammert van Raan, both of whom are also co-authors and sponsors of the Ecocide Criminalisation Bill, explores how religious, Indigenous, and spiritual traditions support this call and encourage a renewed, respectful relationship with nature. Supported by IUCN NL and Ecojustice, the book attracted significant media attention, helping to raise public awareness and spark dialogue on the urgent need to protect ecosystems from large-scale harm.

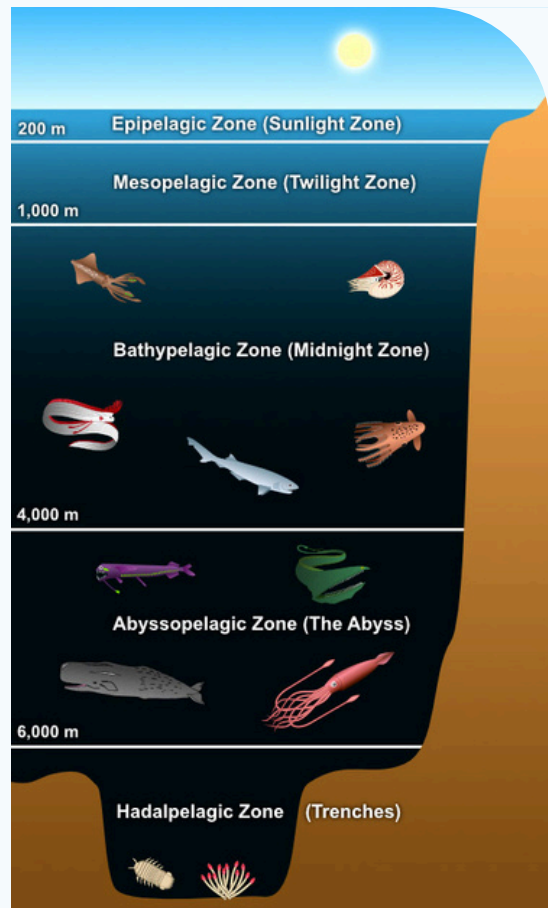
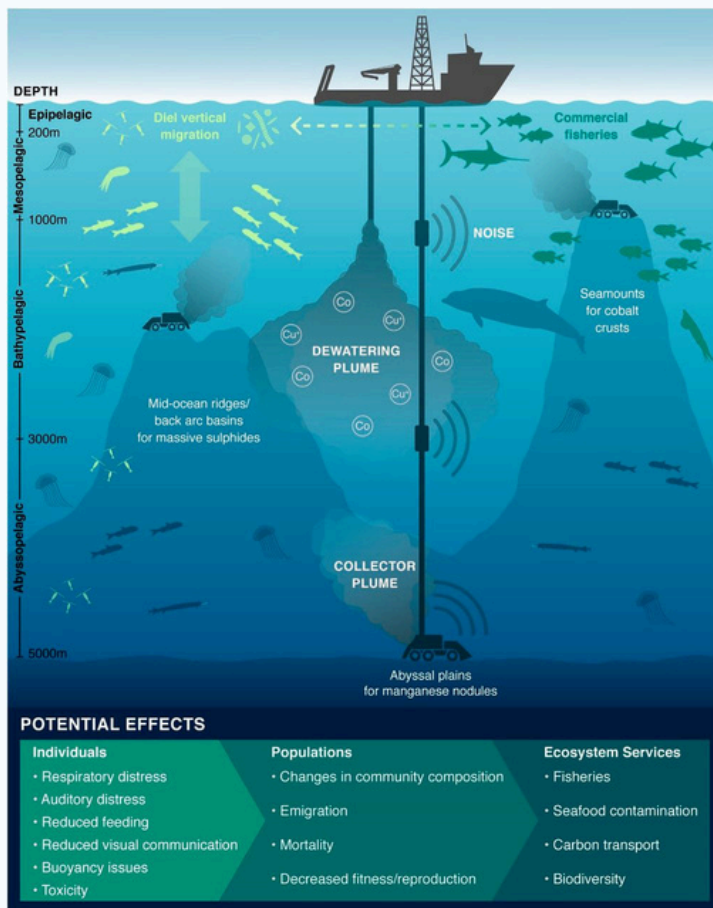
Documentary All We Have Is Us

IUCN NL supported the documentary All We Have Is Us, which follows an Indigenous radio journalist, a rural beekeeper, an academic activist and a film star as they join forces to defend their territories in Chile and Serbia against expanding lithium mining. The film highlights how local organising, food systems, and cultural practices connect distant places and peoples, and how communities are responding to pressures linked to mineral extraction. The documentary is now entering the international festival circuit, with the premiere in August at the Sarajevo Film Festival. The campaign continues through collaborations with networks such as the EU-LAT Network, linking environmental protection and a just energy transition between Europe and Latin America.

Deep Day 2025

Deep Day, held annually on 7 May by DSCC, brings together everyone who cares about the ocean to highlight the importance of the deep sea, raise awareness of the threats it faces, and celebrate collective efforts to protect the planet’s largest and least explored ecosystem.

Deep Day 2025 focused on advancing deep-sea knowledge across Indigenous, scientific and other knowledge systems. DSCC marked the occasion with the launch of the Knowledge Hub, a new digital platform supporting stronger policy and advocacy through integrated knowledge. The launch was amplified through collaborations with scientists, creative content, and original artwork, highlighting the wonder and importance of the deep sea and resonating strongly with audiences.



The effects of plumes and noise as a result of deep sea mining. A sediment plume in the deep sea potentially effects individual organisms, but also populations and ecosystem services.

Deep sea zones

The Bottom Line! story in the media

Next to publications on the websites, in newsletters, and on social media channels of the Bottom Line! partners, we have managed to secure interesting media. Highlights include:



Indonesia

- Mongabay - [Indonesia's deforestation surges 66% in 2025, reversing years of decline](#)
- Global Witness - [Indonesia's "Amazon of the Seas" threatened by EV nickel rush](#)
- The Guardian - [This is the story of Weda Bay – and how nature is being sacrificed for mining](#)
- Mongabay - [Nickel boom on an Indonesian island brings toxic seas, lost incomes, report says](#)
- Business and Human Rights Center - [Indonesia: Nickel mining industry poses threats towards Morowali's biodiversity and future economic potential from forest area](#)



Ghana

- Mongabay – ['Successful campaign proves Ghana's forests are worth more than gold'](#)
- MyJoyOnline- ['CSOs commend gov't for revoking L.I. 2462, call for stronger forest protection measures'](#)
- Pulitzer Center - [The Long Fight To Protect Ghana's Atewa Forest Goes On | Pulitzer Center](#)



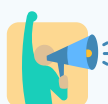
Philippines

- Rappler – ['Historic: Environmental groups hail 50-year mining moratorium in Palawan'](#)
- Mongabay - [Philippine tribes revive reforestation to defy coal mining expansion](#)
- MindaNews – ['Report links nickel mining in Dinagat, Surigao Sur to environmental damage, rights abuses'](#)



The deep sea

- Financial Times – ['Deep-sea mining: Can the US turn science fiction into reality?'](#)
- Reuters – ['White House weighs executive order to fast-track deep-sea mining'](#)
- Associated Press (AP News) – ['Canadian company turns to Trump for permission to mine international waters, bypassing a UN agency'](#)
- The Guardian – ['Deep-sea mining: environmentalists warn of ecological disaster'](#)
- Los Angeles Times – ['The most important part of the ocean you've never heard of'](#)
- Oceanographic magazine – ['COP30 overlooked the deep ocean, protecting it must be a priority'](#)



Netherlands

- Energiea: ['Inzetten op circulariteit is dé kans voor de energietransitie'](#)
- Radio 1: ['Nederland nog ver af van een circulaire economie, wat te doen?'](#)
- Volkskrant: ['Juristen demonstreren en procederen voor het klimaat: 'Best wel spannend om de straat op te gaan''](#)
- Nederlands Dagblad: ['Religies en inheemse tradities zijn opvallend eensgezind: we mogen natuur niet onherstelbaar beschadigen'](#)

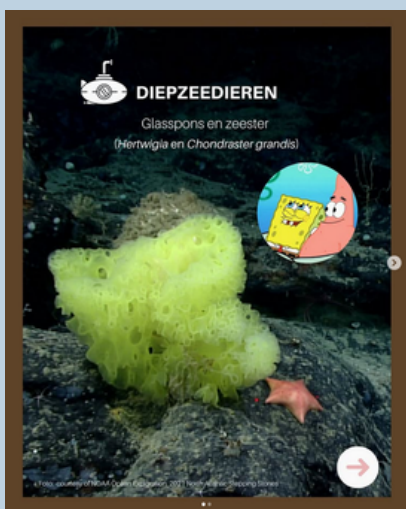
Social media highlights



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END OF PROGRAMME REFLECTION

Added value of the Bottom Line! consortium

Partners consistently highlighted the Bottom Line! consortium created a unique space to connect diverse expertise, geographies, and strategies around the impacts of mining linked to the energy transition. A key added value was the deliberate linking of issues that are often addressed separately. By bringing together partners working on both terrestrial and deep-sea mining, the consortium generated new insights and strategies that strengthened campaigns across different mining contexts. Similarly, discussions connecting transition mineral mining with emerging legal concepts such as ecocide opened up new advocacy pathways.

The consortium also significantly broadened partners' networks and access to knowledge. European partner organisations contributed policy expertise and advocacy connections, while DSCC brought global reach and specialised knowledge on deep-sea mining. This exchange enabled partners to learn from a wide range of mining landscapes and advocacy approaches, from community-based campaigning to policy engagement in Europe and the Netherlands.

Joint activities created opportunities to reach new audiences and strengthen collective visibility. Collaborative engagement at international moments such as CBD COP16 and the IUCN World Conservation Congress helped place the impacts of transition mineral extraction on the agenda of conservation and climate discussions. Several partners noted that the programme raised the profile of their work and organisations among national and international conservation, climate, and human rights networks.

Partners also valued the opportunity to work within a diverse consortium that combined legal expertise, biodiversity and policy knowledge, financial sector engagement and lived experience from affected communities. The collaboration generated richer analysis and informed partners' wider work, even when outcomes were not always directly attributable to specific consortium activities.

Importantly, the consortium strengthened the overall narrative around responsible transition minerals. While partners documented the environmental and social impacts of mining in producing regions, others contributed complementary analysis on pathways to reduce material demand within European and Dutch transition policies. Together, this helped building a more holistic message: the energy transition must address both climate goals and the environmental and social consequences of mineral extraction.



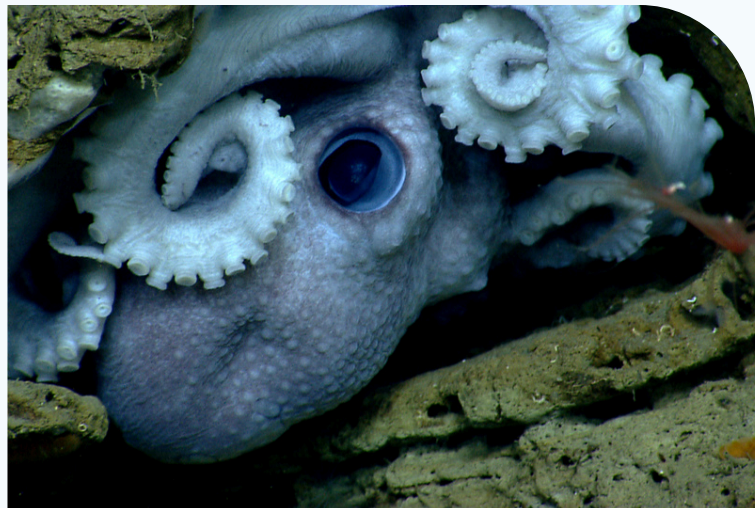
Bottom Line! speakers at the IUCN World Conservation Congress © IUCN NL

Main challenges

Bottom Line! partners operate in a rapidly shifting landscape where the global push for transition minerals increasingly collides with environmental protection, human rights, and geopolitical interests. One of the most widely shared challenges is the growing pressure to expand mining. While the shift away from fossil fuels is broadly supported, partners noted that the environmental and social impacts of transition mineral extraction are often under-recognised in public and political debates. The dominant narrative tends to frame the transition as a simple switch in energy sources, with less attention to the rising demand for materials or the need to reduce overall consumption.

This challenge is reinforced by geopolitical dynamics. Governments and companies are increasingly focused on securing access to critical raw materials, often at the expense of environmental safeguards and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In this context, responsible sourcing and strong regulatory frameworks can easily be sidelined in favor of speed and security of supply. Several partners also pointed to opaque decision-making processes around mining concessions and policies, where powerful commercial interests often hold significant influence.

The imbalance between short-term economic gains and long-term environmental protection is visible in multiple arenas. Debates around deep-sea mining, for example, reflect the broader tension between exploiting new frontiers for resources and safeguarding ecosystems that remain largely unknown. The deep ocean's 'out of sight, out of mind' nature makes it particularly difficult to mobilise public awareness and political accountability.



Deep sea octopus © NOAA Ocean Explorer: NOAA Ship Okeanos Explorer: Northeast U.S.

Political volatility has added another layer of complexity. Elections, government changes, and shifting policy priorities required partners to rebuild relationships with decision-makers and adapt their strategies. In some contexts, declining political appetite for environmental regulation or sustainability policies slowed progress and created uncertainty around long-term commitments. At the international level, growing instability in multilateral cooperation and resource allocation away from environment and development also affected advocacy efforts.

For partners working directly with mining-affected communities, the operating environment remains especially challenging. Environmental defenders continue to face risks including criminalisation, surveillance, militarisation, and strategic lawsuits against public participation. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of communities and advocates is therefore an ongoing priority. At the same time, civil society organisations face shrinking budgets and limited resources, in contrast to the financial and political power of extractive industries.

Efforts to engage mining companies yielded limited results. Frequent staff turnover, limited willingness to discuss environmental or community concerns, and the strong financial and political resources of companies made sustained dialogue difficult, with decisions largely driven by profit rather than social or ecological impacts.



Children swimming near a mine © Garry Lotulung

Several structural policy challenges also emerged. In the Netherlands, for instance, climate and energy policy and circular economy policy are often developed in separate institutional tracks. This separation can lead to short-term climate measures that increase demand for raw materials, while policies aimed at reducing material use operate on longer timelines. Without better alignment, the energy transition risks reinforcing systems that consume large amounts of raw materials.

Lessons learnt

Despite these challenges, partners identified several important lessons learnt. First, sustained and credible evidence remains the foundation of effective advocacy. Rigorous research and analysis are essential to challenge dominant narratives, support policy engagement and build credibility with diverse stakeholders. Second, legal advocacy can be a powerful long-term tool. While court cases often move slowly, they help maintain pressure on governments, establish formal accountability mechanisms and create an official record of environmental concerns.

Third, strong alliances significantly increase resilience and influence. Collaboration between civil society organisations, communities, researchers, investors, and policy actors helps bring together complementary expertise and perspectives. Broad coalitions also make it more difficult for governments or companies to dismiss concerns and can amplify calls for a just and responsible energy transition.

Another key lesson is the importance of connecting systemic narratives to concrete policy solutions. Reframing the energy transition as also a ‘raw materials transition’ proved useful in opening discussions about resource use. However, partners found that this framing only gained traction when translated into specific sectors, policy instruments, and practical pathways, such as material efficiency in electric vehicles or offshore wind.

Partners also emphasised the importance of flexibility and timing. Political and policy windows can emerge quickly, and organisations need to be prepared with well-developed proposals to respond effectively. Adaptability is therefore critical in a rapidly changing political and economic environment.

Finally, partners stressed the importance of supporting the wellbeing and resilience of staff and communities engaged in this work. Addressing the environmental and social impacts of transition minerals is a long-term effort that requires sustained commitment. Maintaining strong teams, protecting environmental defenders and empowering local communities remain essential foundations for continued progress toward a just and responsible energy transition.



AITo staff in Tompotika © Stephanie Broekarts / IUCN NL

Looking ahead

Now the project has come to an end, the Bottom Line! partners will focus on developing and fundraising for follow-up initiatives of the project, building on its momentum to expand impact, deepen partnerships, and explore new opportunities for responsible mineral governance that respects nature and human rights. To ensure that the transition to renewable energy is truly just and fair and in line with global biodiversity, climate and rights frameworks and commitments, we will:

- Intensify our advocacy **for a halt on the launch of deep-sea mining**. We work to keep biodiversity and climate risks on the international agenda. We continue to advance calls for a global moratorium or pause on deep-sea mining as the only responsible pathway that provides the legal clarity, scientific space, and institutional credibility needed to protect the ocean, uphold international law, and ensure decisions about the deep seabed serve humankind as a whole.
- Advocate for stringent **regulation of mineral extraction expanding into new, high-risk frontiers such as the shallow seabed** in coastal and offshore waters, where mining risks irreversible damage to ecosystems, local fisheries, and coastal communities.

- Step up our work to **support Indigenous peoples and local communities** facing mining expansion on land and at sea. This includes strengthening awareness, capacities, rights, and livelihoods, alongside legal assistance, protection of environmental human rights defenders, and supporting local advocacies and green economies.
- Expand our work to **secure long-term protection for critical ecosystems**, both on land and in the ocean, and deepen our efforts to translate 'no-go' or 'restricted areas' concepts into policy and practice. Momentum is growing around the idea that **certain areas should remain off limits to mining** - ongoing initiatives mapping restricted areas for mining, help to visualise risks and stimulate policy debate. As land-based mining for critical minerals often impacts coastal ecosystems and fisheries, we will also advocate for better integration between land and ocean conservation and policy, while continuing to push for ecocide to be recognised as a criminal act.
- Continue advancing **stronger environmental and social standards** in mining, including post-mining rehabilitation, and promoting responsible investment through initiatives such as the Investor Initiative on Responsible Nickel Supply Chains and the uptake of high-bar standards like IRMA.
- And last but not least, we will keep pushing for **scaling circular economy solutions** to reduce demand for primary minerals: promoting circular design and procurement in sectors such as offshore wind and encouraging mobility solutions that reduce material demand.

On, we go!



Maleo nesting site © Stephanie Broekarts / IUCN NL

BOTTOMLESS GRATITUDE TO THE POSTCODE LOTTERY

Thanks to the Postcode Lottery's generous support, Bottom Line! has achieved so much. Here's what the partners have to say:



Daryl Bosu, A Rocha Ghana: 'Thank you for your visionary support. Your funding went beyond activities; it invested in a movement that empowered communities, strengthened civil society, and gave a voice to forests and ecosystems. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and hope it will continue.'

Marcy Summers, AITo: 'Your support has been tangible and deeply meaningful, not only in helping us do this work supporting communities and biodiversity in Tompotika but in being accompanied by like-minded partners. It has helped raise the profile of this issue in Indonesia and globally. Thank you, and onward!'



Jaybee Garganera, ATM: 'We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to strengthen community action against harmful extractive practices. This support is vital to ensure that poor and marginalised communities can protect their livelihoods and lands. We hope that the Postcode Lottery can continue to support projects in regions facing climate impacts and shrinking civic space.'

Sian Owen, DSCC: 'A huge thank you to the Postcode Lottery for supporting this journey. The new ocean treaty offers a unique opportunity to protect biodiversity for current and future generations. Deep-sea mining would take us in the opposite direction.. We must ensure that resource management decisions from here forward are grounded in equity, justice and transparency.'



Shirleen Chin, EcoJustice: 'We need more cross-fertilised projects that connect production and consumption, rather than treating them in isolation. The Bottom Line! project shows how these links can be made in practice, and it has strong potential to be scaled up and applied in other contexts.'

Lotte van Grol, Natuur & Milieu: 'Thanks to your support, we were able to carry out in-depth research that would otherwise not have been possible. This contribution helped bring much-needed attention to an underexplored solution: the role of circularity in reducing demand for critical raw materials within the energy transition. It also enabled follow-up work, ensuring lasting impact on an issue that will only grow in importance in the years ahead.'



Freek van Til, VBDO: 'With the support of the Bottom Line! project and its knowledgeable partners, we've been able to more clearly highlight the financial risks associated with mineral value chains for both companies and investors, especially human rights risks and deforestation.'

Maartje Hilterman, IUCN NL: 'Your support has been fundamental and forward-thinking. The Postcode Lottery embraced a topic that is as urgent as it is complex, enabling us to help bring about lasting system change, protect biodiversity and planetary health, and empower communities in shaping responsible mineral governance for a just energy transition. Thank you for that!'





BOTTOM LINE!

TOWARDS A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

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