

Mining Transitions and Spatial Justice: Leveraging SEA for Equitable Outcomes



ANA PAULA SOARES

*Instituto Superior Técnico – University of Lisbon
Portugal*

ana.s.soares@tecnico.ulisboa.pt

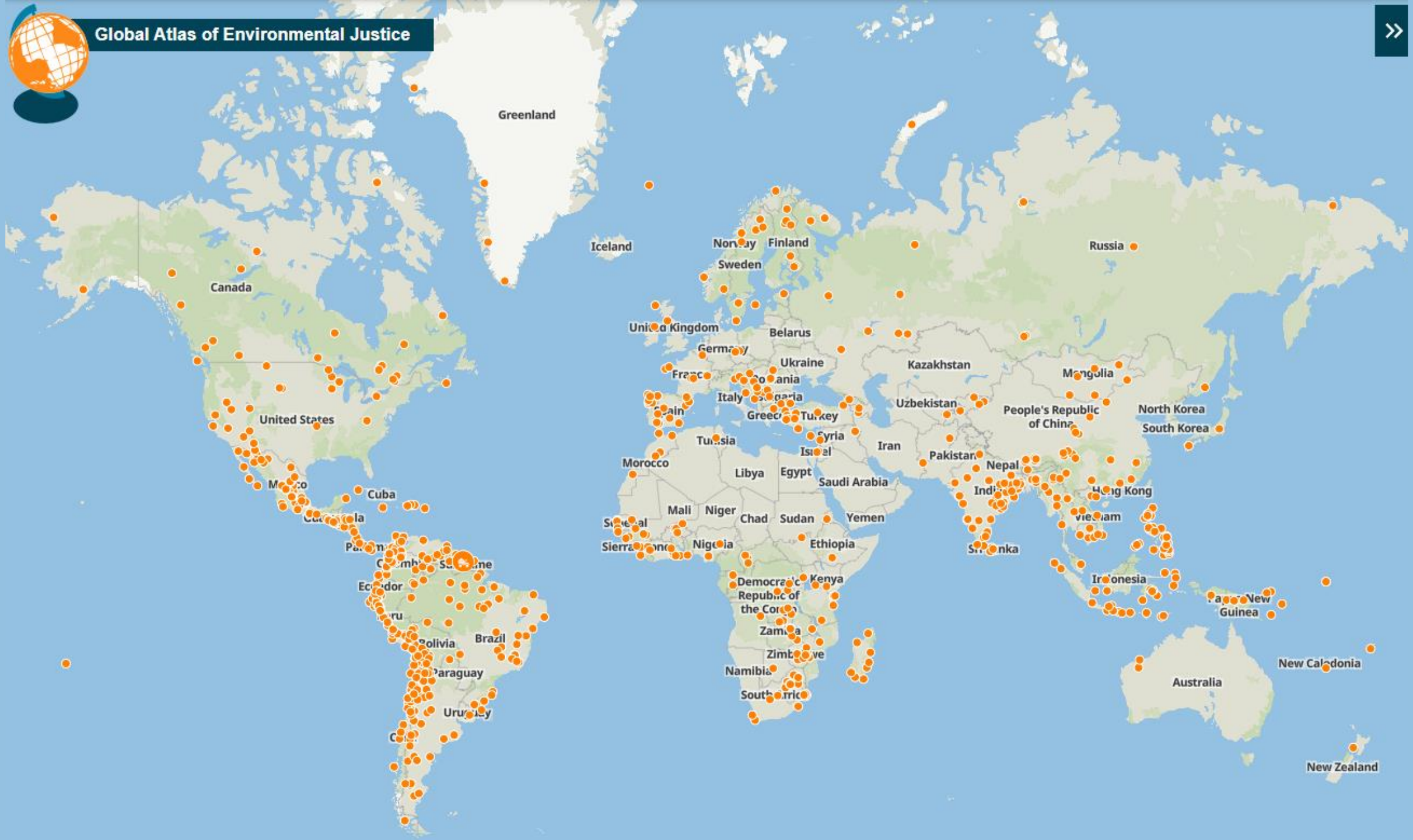


The Mining Transition Paradox

The rising demand for minerals essential to green technology sparks growing social conflicts worldwide.



Lithium mining in Tres Quebradas and defense of water
Argentina. Source: EJAtra





Dimensions of Justice in Extractive Contexts

Procedural Justice

Focuses on who participates and when; often late or symbolic in mining decisions.

Distributive Justice

Examines unfair burden sharing; profits centralize while harms stay local.

Recognition Justice

Asks whose knowledge and values shape decisions.

SEA's Potential in Mining Governance



Early Engagement

Intervenes before projects lock in decisions, allowing systemic analysis.



Systemic Thinking

Considers cumulative and sector-wide social and environmental impacts.



Justice Integration

Potential to embed equity principles into decision frameworks.



Justice-Driven SEA Principles

Map Spatial Inequalities

Identify who benefits or bears mining costs using visual tools and indices.

Ensure Iterative Participation

Make community engagement binding, continuous, and respectful of local protocols.

Adopt Equity Indicators

Measure procedural fairness, distribution of benefits, and recognition.

Link to Local Governance

Integrate Indigenous institutions and land councils into SEA processes. Long-term social safeguards.



Emerging Justice-Oriented SEA Examples

Namibia – Uranium Mining Rush

SEA prevented water resource conflicts and ensured coordinated infrastructure development, benefiting local and national interests.(Source: IGF, 2024)

Ghana – Mining Sector SEA

SEA strengthened governance by promoting local-level mining offices, improving access for artisanal and small-scale miners.(Source: IGF, 2024)

Romania – Mine Closure Program

SEA ensured socially responsible mine closures and catalyzed new environmental safety legislation.(Source: IGF, 2024)

Hard Governance Questions for SEA

Avoid or Transform Conflict?

Should SEA be about smoothing over resistance—or about changing the conditions that create it?

Whose Knowledge Counts?

Are we privileging technical experts, or elevating community worldviews in defining “impact”?

What Is Valid Evidence?

Do we treat oral histories, lived experience, and cultural values as data?

Can Justice Be Legitimate?

How do we embed justice without losing buy-in from regulators and investors?



Reimagining SEA as a Governance Platform

1

Conflict-Sensitive Scoping

Identify power asymmetries early

2

Co-Produced Baselines

Whose knowledge defines impact?

3

Mixed-Method Metrics

Quantitative + qualitative evidence

4

Legitimacy Through Governance

Binding community oversight

PhD Research on Justice in SEA

Comparative Cases

Cases to be selected focusing on mining governance challenges.

Justice Metrics

Participation depth, spatial equity, and responsiveness to community rights.

Purpose

Support adaptive reforms in SEA for socially responsive planning.



Conclusion: Governing the Mining Transition

SEA must move beyond environmental modeling — it must become a proactive governance tool for shaping socially sustainable mining transitions.

This transformation fosters legitimacy, shared planning, and meaningful accountability.



Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA25 app.

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