**The challenge of GISTM adherence for smaller mining operations in remote parts of the world**

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# ABSTRACT

This paper describes the problems facing smaller mining operations in remote parts of the globe with special reference to Air Upas and Sandai Mines in western Kalimantan, Indonesia. The Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management (GISTM) as published in 2020 references six topic areas, namely Communities, Integrated knowledge base, Design construction and operation, Management and Governance, Emergency response and Disclosure. Each of these encompass 15 Principles in turn incorporating 77 Requirements and 219 Criteria. Tailings storage facilities (TSF) are audited against these and though well-meaning and a most necessary requirement, are often difficult to adhere to in remote areas where flight access is arduous or impossible, road access is over long distance across muddy tracks with deep rutting, satellite communications often non-existent, specialised equipment necessary for geotechnical field testing unavailable or only with difficult and costly establishment, senior geotechnical staff unwilling to locate to remote sites: these to mention but a few. The paper describes where adherence *is* possible as measured against the main GISTM topic requirements, and topic areas, and perhaps more importantly - *where not*. These issues of adherence and non-adherence are integrated and presented in tabular format. The paper makes recommendations on how the most difficult adherence requirements can be overcome and concludes with suggestions of how GISTM audit requirements and processes can be softened in a ‘GISTM-light’ process where smaller remote operations can be audited against more appropriate and equitable targets.