

Early Warning System

IFC-609772

LosAzules Gaps

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Quick Facts

Countries	Argentina
Specific Location	San Juan province
Financial Institutions	International Finance Corporation (IFC)
Status	Approved
Bank Risk Rating	U
Borrower	Andes Corporacion Minera SA, McEwen Copper Inc, McEwen Inc, Nuton LLC, RIO TINTO PLC, Stellantis NV
Sectors	Mining
Investment Type(s)	Advisory Services

Project Description

As stated on the project disclosure page, the IFC entered into a collaboration agreement with McEwen Copper Inc., and Andes Corporacion Minera S.A. (ACMSA) whereby IFC will collaborate with McEwen Copper Inc. and ACMSA to enhance the standard of the Regulatory Local Environmental Impact Assessment of the Los Azules project (as further described below) and guidance on preparing an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the Los Azules project aligned with the IFC Performance Standards.

The Los Azules project is a feasibility stage copper project located in the San Juan province, Argentina, aiming to produce high-purity copper cathodes. It is regarded as one of the largest undeveloped copper projects globally. Once in operation, the Project aims to differ from conventional copper mining projects by using less water, emitting lower carbon, and being 100% powered by renewable energy.

McEwen Copper Inc. aims to create one of the first major copper projects to be designed around regenerative principles from the ground up by employing modern low-emission technologies, renewables energy and prioritizing solutions that enhance the environment and communities. McEwen Copper Inc. is a private mining company primarily engaged in the development of the Project and the Elder Creek exploration project in Nevada, USA. McEwen Copper Inc.’s interest in the Project is held through ACMSA, a wholly owned subsidiary, which owns 100% of the Project’s development rights and associated holding and mineral concessions and easements.

The environmental and social scope of work for the Collaboration Project includes:

(i) an E&S site visit and a high-level E&S risk screening of the Project by the IFC E&S team aiming to better understand the mining Project's potential environmental, health, safety and social impacts on the natural environment and surrounding communities;
(ii) the assessment of McEwen Copper Inc.’s plans and strategies to properly derisk the Project and determine if there are any gaps with respect to IFC requirements, E&S actions and conditions for investment;
(iii) development of an implementation plan by providing an initial set of E&S suggestions to reduce uncertainties around the main E&S risks of the Project, ensuring adequate prioritization of actions;
(iv) preparation of terms of reference and support in the identification and selection process of a consultancy firm to prepare a bankable ESIA;
(v) support during baseline data collection and intermediary review of impact studies and mitigation plans. IFC’s role in the Collaboration Project explicitly excludes the preparation of the IFC-compliant Environmental, Social, Impact Assessment report and/or any other Environmental and Social documentation.

People Affected By This Project

Centre for Human Rights and Environment (CEDHA) have filed complaints to Canada's Corporate Social Responsibility Counsellor accusing McEwen Mining of disregarding glacier impacts at its Los Azules Project in San Juan province. In a published study, CEDHA found McEwen Mining is intentionally misleading shareholders on its corporate website, falsely claiming "there are no ice glaciers present in the project area", while at the same time, carrying out a multi-year inventory and analysis of the glaciers for the Los Azules project.

This research found that:

- **At least 6 rock glaciers have already been directly impacted** by exploratory roads
- **Additional glaciers may have been affected** by drilling and infrastructure
- Planned mining activities pose further risks:
  - **Open-pit excavation overlaps with glacier areas**
  - Potential **melting of permafrost and rock glaciers**, altering hydrology
  - Increased **runoff and sediment flow into rivers feeding the San Juan basin**

The company McEwan mining also has a track record of corporate violations in other projects. More recently in 2025, in Canada, the company faced **legal action from the Apitipi Anicinapek Nation** over its Black Fox mine, with allegations of **breaching an Impact Benefit Agreement, unpaid obligations, and environmental harms linked to tailings seepage affecting local waterways and aquatic life**. (Mining Weekly)

Investment Description

- International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Information on the investment amount not provided at the time of disclosure.

Private Actors Description

As stated by Bloomberg, McEwen Inc. is a mineral mining company. The Company focuses on the production, development, and exploration of gold and silver assets. McEwen operates in North America and South America.

As stated on the company's website, Nuton, a Rio Tinto venture, is deploying nature-based bioleach technologies set to unlock copper resources.

Private Actor 1	Private Actor 1 Role	Private Actor 1 Sector	Relation	Private Actor 2	Private Actor 2 Role	Private Actor 2 Sector
-	-	-	-	Stellantis NV	Investor	Industry and Trade
McEwen Inc.	Parent Company	Mining	owns	Andes Corporacion Minera SA	Client	Mining
Rio Tinto PLC	Parent Company	Mining	owns	Nuton LLC	Investor	Mining

Contact Information

No project contacts provided at the time of disclosure.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

You can submit a request for information disclosure at: https://disclosures.ifc.org/#/inquiries

If you believe that your request for information from IFC has been unreasonably denied, or that this Policy has been interpreted incorrectly, you can submit a complaint at the link above to IFC's Access to Information Policy Advisor, who reports directly to IFC's Executive Vice President.

ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM OF IFC/MIGA

The Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO) is the independent complaint mechanism and fact-finding body for people who believe they are likely to be, or have been, adversely affected by an IFC or MIGA- financed project. If you submit a complaint to the CAO, they may assist you in resolving a dispute with the company and/or investigate to assess whether the IFC is following its own policies and procedures for preventing harm to people or the environment. If you want to submit a complaint electronically, you can email the CAO at CAO@worldbankgroup.org You can learn more about the CAO and how to file a complaint at http://www.cao-ombudsman.org

Campaign Documents

- Report by CEDHA on risks and impacts of Los Azules Project on Glacial ecology [Original Source]

Media

- CEDHA files complaint against McEwan mining for Los Azules project
- First Nation takes legal action against McEwan Mining in Canda