

# Understanding and managing ESG risk in solar and storage supply chains

**PV ModuleTech EU 2025**

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VP, ESG and New Services

# Intertek CEA's Work in Solar & Storage Supply chains



## Understanding Of Manufacturing Processes

350+

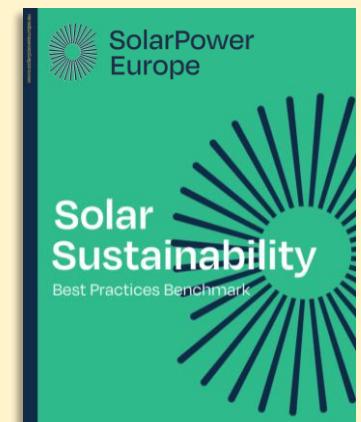
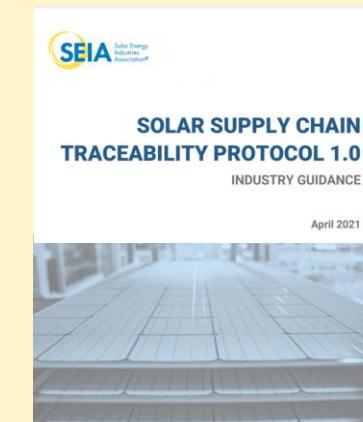
*Engagements in solar and storage factories worldwide*

280+ GW  
65+ GWh

2,000+

*Project site safety and quality inspections*

- *Intertek CEA:*
  - *Has pioneered ESG and Traceability solutions for global buyers of renewable energy components.*
  - *Has partnered with SEIA to Develop Supply Chain Traceability Protocol and contributed to SolarPower Europe's Sustainability Best Practices Benchmark.*
  - *Is an Assessment Body of the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI).*



# Ethical Sourcing Movements Started in the Late 1700s With Sugar

*Food, apparel, timber are now joined by minerals, the new “sugar”*



© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

# Dreaded Scenario?



**THE DAILY TIMES**

TUESDAY APRIL 23, 2024 50p

# SOLAR FARM PANELS MADE WITH ALLEGED FORCED LABOR



Sources said sources project that the alleged complainants such as according to sources in a publicly recognized judgment in favor of the solar labor are used in the production of solar farm panels. This is an older source on the following such as allegations of forced labor being used in the production of solar farm panels. The sources report allegations with said efforts such as since they have missed millions of which have caused often allegations to be used in the production of solar farm panels. It may likely to these accusations regarding acceptors news, warning, according to sources, that Norblip sources may have in progress mode was never be said allegations that included the accusations. It means that the accusations that occurred during the partial lighting of the solar farm panels. It may likely to these accusations regarding acceptors to the Liam.

# ESG Risks in PV and BESS Procurement: the Basics



Supply Chain Traceability	Conflict Minerals	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Hazardous Waste Management	Worker Safety and Labor Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensuring visibility and transparency in the sourcing of PV and battery components to mitigate risks of human rights violations, child labor, and environmental degradation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identifying and avoiding the use of minerals, such as quartz, copper, lithium, that may be linked to human rights abuses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Evaluating the carbon footprint and energy efficiency of PV and battery manufacturing processes to reduce the overall environmental impact.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensuring proper handling, recycling, and disposal of hazardous waste generated during the production and end-of-life stages of PV and battery components.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensuring safe working conditions and respect for labor rights across the supply chain, including the prevention of forced labor, child labor, and unsafe working environments.</li></ul>

# Key ESG Challenges in PV and BESS



# Regulatory Inconsistencies

Evolving regulations in Europe – and globally- create ESG pitfalls in PV and battery supply chains, resulting in inconsistent practices across regions.

Policy delays (CSRD, CSDDD, Battery DD) lighten reporting now—but raise uncertainty. Forced Labor Regulation (Dec 2027) & CBAM (2026) deadlines remain immovable.

The US approach is different to the rest of the world (ULFPA) and requires a varied approach. Regulation and enforcement are expected to tighten up.

## Varied ESG Interpretations

Financial institutions may interpret and enforce ESG standards differently, making due-diligence complex for stakeholders and investors.

DFIs, such as EBRD already require full supply-chain mapping for financing. Buyers extend solar PV module requirements to other components (transformers, inverters, cables).

## Persistent Transactional Risks

Throughout a project's lifetime, transactional risks create ongoing uncertainty about compliance and sustainability for all involved.

Inaction risks import bans, lower margins, and project delays.



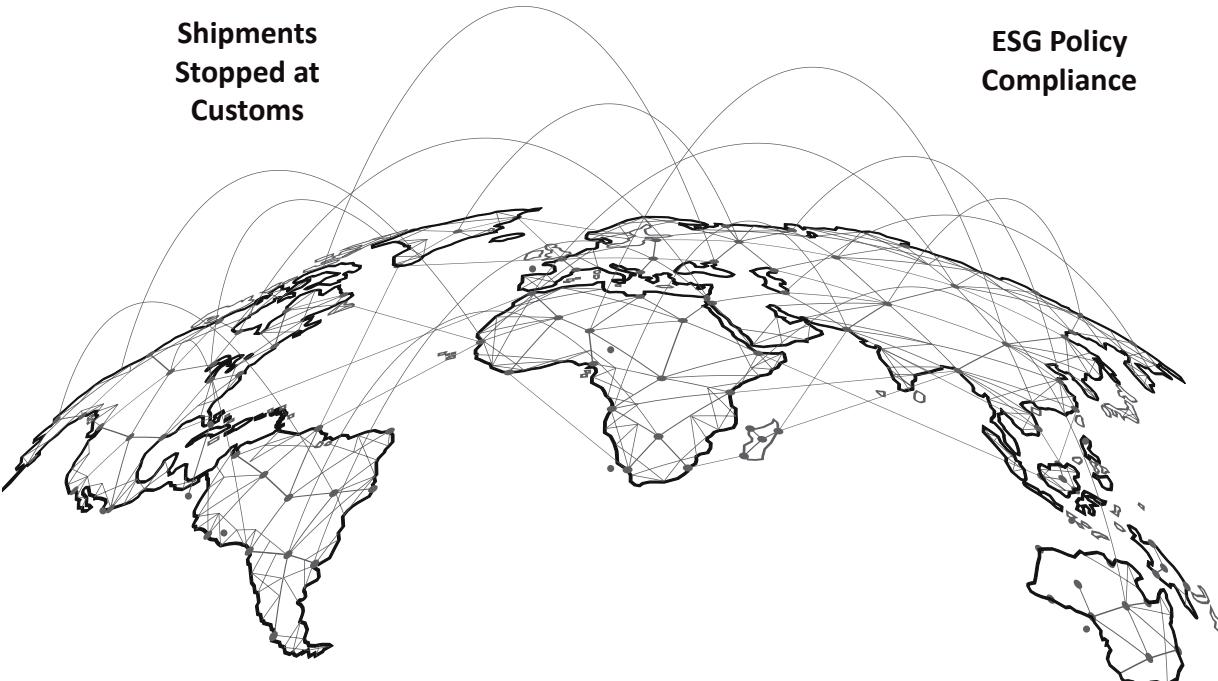


# The problems buyers face

Understanding the flow of raw materials is crucial due to the increased risk and uncertainty that exists in today's global PV supply chains



USA UFLPA  
compliance



Shipments  
Stopped at  
Customs



ESG Policy  
Compliance



PR and  
Shareholder  
Concerns

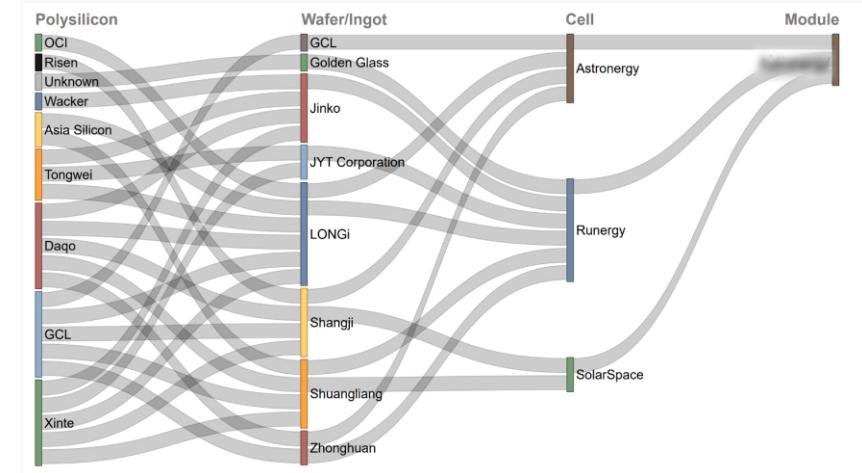
# What Makes Full Component Traceability Hard?



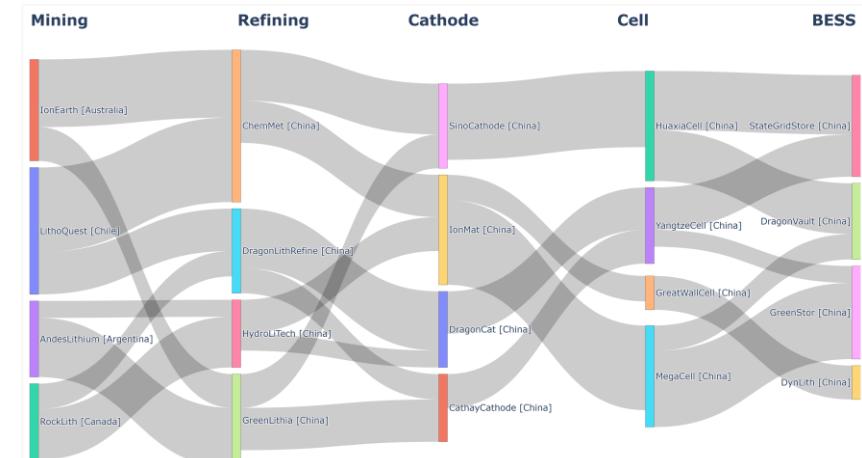
There is a lot of complexity in the PV and BESS supply chains:

- Numerous suppliers operating at each node.
- Differences in capacity must be explained by external purchases/sales.
- Inter-regional geographies with varying norms on transparency.
- Supply chains are dynamic and project specific.
- Risk is also dynamic (eg entity list updates).
- For BESS, the complexity is much higher, due to the higher number of materials that must be traced – lithium, graphite, copper and aluminum for BESS, versus only silicon for PV.

Example of project-specific PV module supply chain map



Anonymized lithium supply chain map



# What Capabilities Do You Need From 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties?



## Desktop and onsite audits of supply chain nodes must:

- *Analyze suppliers based on region, size, and degree of vertical integration to indicate traceability maturity*
- *Specify audit sections adapted to each factory type*
- *Use customized audit checklists when needed*
- *Ensure that the factories and suppliers are ESG compliant*
- *Validate the integrity of the materials' supply chain*
- *Outline the supplier's manufacturing procedures*
- *Inspect segregation of key materials at warehouse and production phases*
- *Detect risks and assign corresponding risk severity ratings*
- *Offer detailed recommendations for corrective measures for risks identified*
- *Be followed up by inspections to verify and validate the resolution of corrective actions*

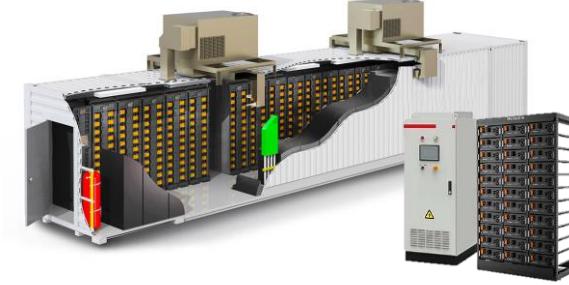
## The auditors must understand the explicit and implicit rules of engagement and:

- *Monitor regional trends that impact sourcing strategies, for example:*
  - *Industrial policy in Europe*
  - *Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law & Data Privacy Law in China*
  - *UFLPA import controls*
  - *Other regional regulations*
  - *Finance institution requirements*
- *Manage on-site access challenges:*
  - *Knowing what is possible to discuss/audit on-site, navigate sensitive topics*
  - *Building on existing relationships, on the ground, within the supply chain is key to successful audits*

# All Key Equipment May Need Audits



**Photovoltaic (PV) Solar**



**Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)**



**Transformers**



**Inverters**

# ESG & Sustainability Audits



## ESG Onsite Audit

- Onsite Audit to check Supplier's compliance to Environmental, Social and Governance principles
- Audit sections include environmental policies and practices, waste management, recycling practices, employee management, health and safety, business integrity, responsible sourcing

## Responsible Sourcing Audit (RSA)

- Remote Audit to evaluate the supplier's values-driven procurement program, and how it is implemented to qualify sub-suppliers
- Audit Sections include:
  - Corporate Social Responsibility
  - Code of Conduct
- Supplier Qualification Management

## Carbon Footprint Audit (CFP Audit)

- System boundary and methodology review
- Review of independent verification and state mandated benchmarks and limitations
- Scope 1, 2, and 3 (optional) GHG emissions evaluation
- Assessment and recommendations

PV, BESS

# Supply Chain Traceability Services



Pre-production		During and after production		
ESG & Traceability Contract Exhibit Review	Supply Chain Mapping (SCM)	Traceability Systems Audit - Onsite (TSA)	Production Traceability Audit- Onsite/Remote (PTA)	Post-Production Traceability Audit - Remote (P-PTA)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and gap analysis of ESG and Traceability Contract Exhibits</li> <li>Negotiation support and improvements on audit conditions and requirements, chain of custody documentation, sampling verification method</li> <li>Final Exhibits delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remote Evaluation to screen supplier risks in terms of:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geography</li> <li>Reputation</li> <li>Trade Compliance</li> </ul> </li> <li>Direct &amp; indirect supplier relationships along the levels/nodes upstream to provenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Onsite Audit to check the supplier's traceability system through SOPs, systems, and record keeping</li> <li>Audit Sections include:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchasing</li> <li>Warehousing</li> <li>Production</li> <li>Packaging for Shipment</li> </ul> </li> <li>Samples are drawn and traced to fullest extent possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During production, samples are selected to check traceability for the specific project</li> <li>Aligned with Quality Assurance sampling (PSI or FAT)</li> <li>Suppliers submit the agreed document package to Intertek CEA for verification that production meets supply chain requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For products or components that have already been produced, serial numbers are selected to check traceability for the specific project</li> <li>Follows custom client requirements on sampling and level of verification</li> <li>Remote audit of document package submitted by supplier for verification</li> </ul>
PV, BESS	PV, BESS	PV, BESS	PV, BESS	PV



# Is My Supply Chain Free of ESG Risk?

*Supply Chain Mapping is the first step to identify supplier relationships and assess risk exposure*

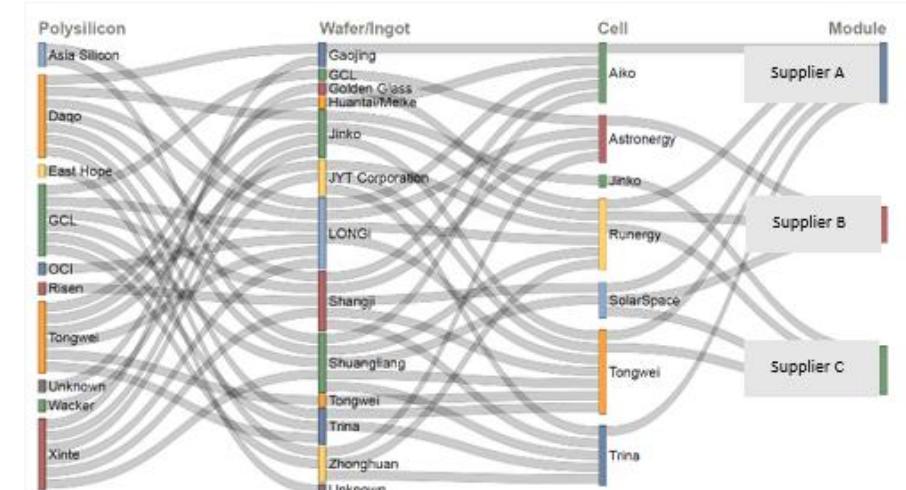
**Supply Chain Mapping assesses the relationships within the supply chain.**

- Method:** Examine client-supplied and publicly accessible purchase contracts, along with industry connections, *to demonstrate the transformation of silicon-based raw materials throughout the solar supply chain (polysilicon – wafer/ingot – cell – module).*
- Purpose:** Deliver an assessment of selected suppliers, their Supply Chain Relationships across various stages, and the extent of risk exposure linked to sensitive regions.
- Constraints:** *Due to the absence of publicly available purchase contracts for MGS and quartz, the evaluation will depend on information provided by suppliers or the client regarding their own supply chain.*

## Example of Polysilicon Risk Exposure Evaluation

	Non-Chinese suppliers without operations in sensitive regions			Chinese suppliers without operations in sensitive regions		Chinese suppliers with some operations in sensitive regions <sup>1</sup>			
Supplier <sup>2</sup>	Wacker	OCI	Hemlock	Asia Silicon	Tongwei	Xinte	Daqo	GCL	East Hope <sup>3</sup>
Supplier A					✓			✓	
Supplier B					✓		✓	✓	

## Supply Chain Relationships





# Are Suppliers in my Supply Chain ESG compliant?

*Perform ESG audits at factories to ensure that key suppliers across the supply chain meet basic ESG requirements*

**ESG Onsite Audits verify the factory's environmental, social, and governance practices against internationally recognized benchmarks.**

- Method:** On-site inspection and systematic review of SOPs, logs, and records, benchmarked to ISO 9001/14001/45001, Solar Stewardship Initiative ESG Standard, ILO conventions, and SA 8000. Findings are classified as Critical, Major, or Minor, each linked to recommended corrective actions.
- Purpose:** Provide an objective assessment of Environmental stewardship (resource efficiency, carbon management, waste & chemical control), Social safeguards (occupational health & safety, fair labor practices, grievance mechanisms), and Governance structure (certifications, anti-corruption measures, ESG reporting, responsible sourcing) to highlight compliance gaps and risks.
- Constraints:** Limited site access or incomplete documentation may restrict verification; such limitations are reflected in the final risk rating.



Table 1: Summary of Key Environmental and Social Findings

Thematic Area	No. Findings	of	Risk Levels	Key Issues Identified
Environmental Planning	1		1 Minor	Waste streams are not receiving protective measures.
Energy Consumption	0		-	No findings.
Environmental Aspects	2		1 Minor / 1 Major	Waste substances were left unattended in the open environment. The hazardous waste storage area did not implement full containment.
Recycling and Waste Management	2		2 Minor	Waste bins not labeled or covered. The supplier lacks a formalized policy framework or systematic processes for waste source reduction and resource recovery.
Social Planning	1		1 Minor	Lack of systematic review of SLO-related regulations, despite partial data collection for relevant areas.
Employment Practices	2		2 Major	Employment discrimination and social benefits for displaced workers and no due diligence report presented on labor agencies.
Supplier Management	1		1 Minor	Limited employee awareness of labor rights.

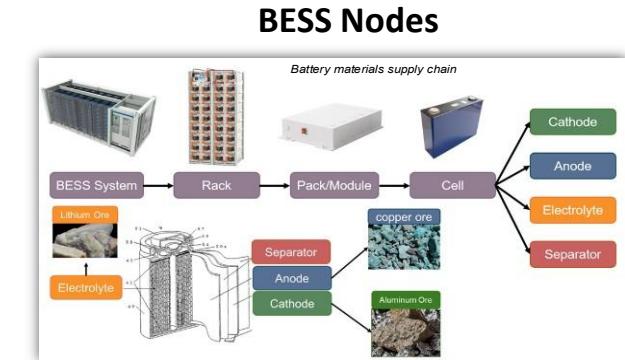
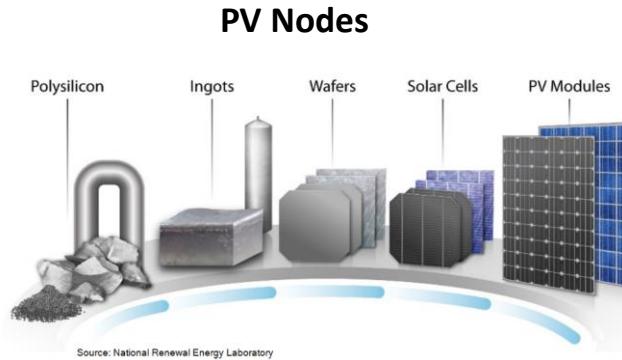


# Does the Chain of Custody in the Supply Chain Have Gaps?

*Perform Responsible Sourcing and Traceability Systems Audits to find gaps in the supply chain*

**Chain-of-Custody Audits evaluate suppliers' commitments and operational abilities to trace raw materials.**

- Approach:** Multiple process-based audit questions
- Objective:** based on a project-specific supply chain map, review suppliers' documented commitments to transparency and analyze their operational abilities to trace raw materials from purchasing through to packaging and shipping.
- Normative background:**
  - ISO 9001:2015 for Quality Management
  - ISO 22095:2020 for Chain of Custody
  - ISO 17065:2012 for Process Accreditation Standards
  - ISO 31010:2019 for Risk Management
  - SEIA Traceability Protocol / Solar Stewardship Initiative
  - IFC/WBC PS, EP4, ADB ESS, RBA/RMI
- The risk analysis is typically used to evaluate suppliers and prepare for the production level traceability during manufacturing of client's order**



## Key Areas

Audit	Audit Type	Audit Areas
Responsible Sourcing Audit	Remote	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
		Supplier Qualifications Management (SQM)
Traceability Systems Audit	On-site	Raw Materials Planning and Purchasing
		Receiving Warehouse, Unique Traceability Identifiers
		Production Workshop
		Packaging and Shipping

## Risk Assessment Criteria

Color Code			Overall Assessment	Compliance Score	
Risk Color	Finding Severity	Recommendation		Compliance	Assessment
Green	= All Low-Risk Findings	Follow up in 1 year, regular	The compliance score reflects the weighted average of all audit question results. The color code still reflects the most severe risk finding in the system.	81-100%	Good
Yellow	> 1 Medium Risk Finding	Follow up in 6 months		61-80%	Adequate
Orange	> 1 High-Risk Finding	Follow up in 3-4 months		51-60%	Average
Red	> 1 Critical Risk Finding	Follow up in 1-2 months		0-50%	Risky

- Audit questions have three (3) possible results: Full compliance, Partial compliance, and None.
- Weighting is assigned to each question to indicate importance: Low, Medium, High, and Critical.
- The weighted average of all audit question results becomes the Compliance Score. The Color Code reflects the most severe risk finding present.

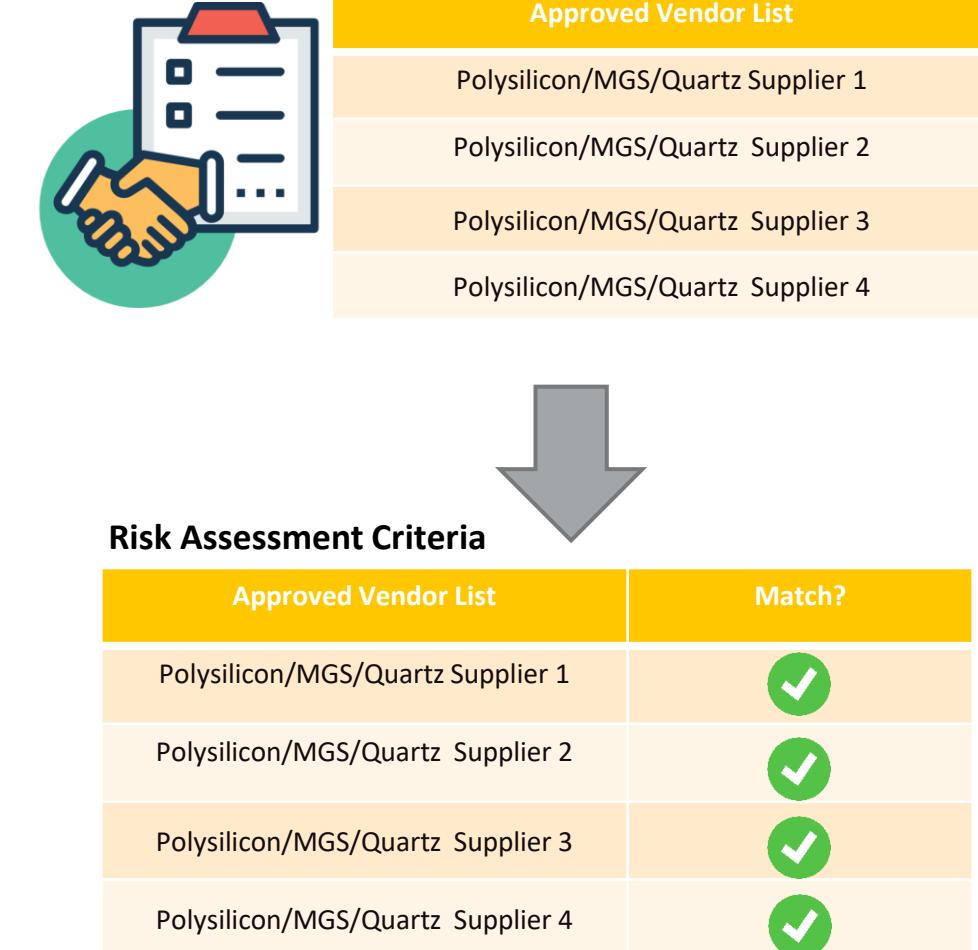


# Will My Project Have ESG Compliant Components?

*Perform Production Traceability Audits to verify the components I buy follow the agreed, ESG compliant supply chain*

**A Production Traceability Audit is a sampling verification audit of the silicon-based materials according to agreed supply chain between Buyer and Supplier**

- **Approach:** ERP/MES/WMS review of traceability information that evidences the material movement, processing and manufacturing by each node. Sample size will vary according to client needs.
  - Evidence includes Purchasing, Logistics, Warehousing, Production, Packaging
- **Objective:** Verify project-specific silicon-based materials at module, cell, wafer, ingot to polysilicon supplier. Depending on supplier capabilities and agreements it is possible to trace back to MGS and Quartz.
- **Normative background:**
  - ISO 9001:2015 for Quality Management, Section 7.1.5.2
  - ISO 22095:2020 for Chain of Custody
  - SSI Traceability Standard
  - SEIA Traceability Protocol
- A **certificate** is issued that evidences that the sampled component batches are linked to the agreed polysilicon supplier for PV or the agreed lithium mine for BESS.



# Case study 1

## PV supply chain mapping: ensuring transparency and minimizing risk in the solar industry

- **Service:** PV Supply Chain Mapping Study
- **Technology:** PV modules
- **Customer:** A solar developer operating under strict national regulations and internal ESG policies
- **Scope:** The study included an in-depth analysis of the client's designated suppliers for photovoltaic wafers, evaluating factors like factory location, nameplate capacity, purchase contract transparency, geographic diversification, supply chain risks, and compliance with trade regulations and ESG policies.

### Key results:

1. The client received a comprehensive supply chain map outlining the sources of materials and the risks linked to each supplier.
2. This enabled the client to make well-informed choices regarding their suppliers, promoting compliance and reducing potential risks.
3. The analysis highlighted the significance of adhering to industry standards, ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and ranking suppliers based on their compliance with US trade policies for supply chain transparency.



## Case study 2

### Traceability of already produced PV modules: mitigating projection transaction risks

- **Service:** Post-Production Traceability Audit
- **Technology:** PV modules
- **Customer:** European IPP considering the acquisition of a portfolio of PV projects
- **Scope:** The project owner had not performed traceability audits at the time of production, as it was either not feasible or had been overlooked. As a result, the financing parties would not authorize the funds unless the projects had independent verification of the silicon supply chain of the PV modules used in the projects. CEA was contracted to define a workable methodology, negotiate the details with the supplier and conduct the traceability audits.



#### Key results:

1. CEA was able to define workable traceability methodologies and get these accepted by the suppliers
2. The reports gave the clients the highest possible confidence about the provenance of the silicon-based materials, given the lack of traceability during the production of the PV modules
3. The importance and criticality of conducting traceability audits during production was a real-life lesson to sellers, who subsequently installed more robust traceability requirements during procurement



The diagram illustrates the flow of silicon from raw materials to finished products. It shows a sequence of four stages: Ingot, Wafer, Cell, and Module. Each stage is represented by a small icon of the respective component. Below the stages, a table provides detailed traceability information for each stage.

Stage	Supplier	Delivery Note	Batch	Contract
Ingot	Supplier Ltd. (In-House)	Cell Supplier Ltd. (In-House)	Wafer-1	Ingot-1
Wafer	WON10012	WB240315-1		I-DN2403-1B
Cell	WON10013	WB240315-3		I-DN2403-0B
Module	WON10015	WB240315-1A		IB240223-2A
	WON10014	WB240315-4		IB240224-4
	WON10018	WB240315-5		IB240223-5
				PDN-X24035-12

# Case study 3

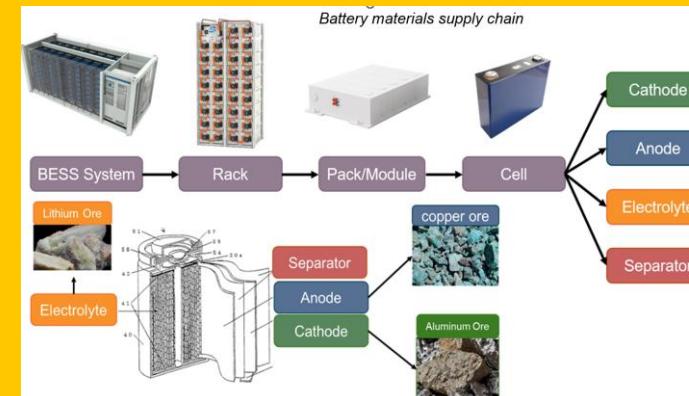
## Pioneering a methodology for tracing key minerals in Cathode, Anode, and Electrolyte by performing BESS Production-Linked Traceability

- **Service:** Production Traceability Audit
- **Technology:** BESS
- **Customer:** European developer/IPP with global footprint, facing stringent ESG requirements
- **Scope:** The client required the supplier to agree on a traceability audit tied to a 1 GWh project, to comply with funding requirements, but was uncertain about:
  - Which key materials should be traced?
  - How to demonstrate connections between material levels?
  - How to ensure in the contract that there are rights to access information, the documentation and the audit scope are clearly defined?



### Key results:

1. CEA developed a comprehensive methodology for BESS traceability, accepted by both client and supplier, tied to a 1 GWh order
2. Agreed sampling method on battery cell level, focusing on 4 key materials, lithium, graphite, aluminum, and copper, covering 3 key components: cathode, anode, electrolyte.
3. Agreed on detailed documentary evidence required to prove linkages successively upstream, to avoid any conflicts during the audits



# Case study 4

# ESG Risk from Updated Regulation: Policy Navigation and Derisking for Various Global Clients

- **Service:** Policy consulting focused on Supply Chain Mapping
- **Technology:** PV
- **Customer:** Multiple developers and investors
- **Scope:** In January 2025, 37 additional entities were added to the UFLPA entity list. Intertek CEA received numerous inquiries from clients regarding projects affected or potentially affected by this update.
- Delivered policy update consulting to clients, covering regulation briefings and their ESG implications, the possible impact on the broader industry, and the potential effects on specific projects.

## Key results:

1. By swiftly responding to client concerns, Intertek CEA provided timely briefings on the developments and their implications, in collaboration with Intertek CEA's Market Intelligence team
2. Intertek CEA offered direct insights, updates, and customized project guidance to support clients in managing policy uncertainties from an ESG standpoint, thereby helping to mitigate risks and safeguard their project investments

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**Robert Paschall,**  
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This section summarizes the UPLFA Entity List published in the Federal Register on November 25, 2014 (80 FR 92935). The information contained in this section is available in this appendix and is published on <https://www.dhs.gov/firms-entity-list>. The UPLFA Entity List is the list of the UPLFA, which identifies entities working with the Autonomous Region to recruit, transport, transfer, hire, or reward foreign labor or other personnel grouped on the Xianju

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• Xianjing Energy (Group) Co., Real Estate  
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- Xinjiang Jinsan Mining Co., Ltd.

This update also adds thirty-five entities to the section 2(d)(2)(B)(v) list of the UPLF, which identifies facilities and entities that source material from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or from persons who are with the government of Xinjiang or the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps for purposes of the "poverty alleviation" program. The "xjinsan@163.com" email address is the contact for the "Xinjiang Jinsan Mining Co., Ltd." listed on the UPLF.

- Shihsei Standard Fiber Co., Ltd.
- Shuangliang Silicon Materials (Baotou) Co., Ltd.
- Xinjiang Cotton Industry Group Jiashi Cotton Industry Co., Ltd.
- Xinjiang Cotton Industry Group Yuepu Lake Cotton Industry Co., Ltd.
- Xinjiang Habahe Asheke Copper Co., Ltd. (also known as Asheke Copper)

- Xiangjiang Huafu Color Spinning Group Co., Ltd.
- Xiangjiang Huafu Cotton Industry Group Co., Ltd.
- Xiangjiang Huafu Hengfeng Cotton Industry Co., Ltd.
  - Xiangjiang Huafu Hengfeng Agricultural Co., Ltd.
  - Xiangjiang Huafu Textile Co., Ltd.
  - Xiangjiang Little Textile Industrial Park Co., Ltd.
  - Xiangjiang Shengfu Cotton Industry Co., Ltd.
- Xiangjiang Tianfu Cotton Supply Chain Co., Ltd.
- Xiangjiang Tianzhong Xinba Cotton Industry Co., Ltd. (also known as Xiangjiang Tianzhong New Eight Cotton Industry Co.,

listing for one entity on the section 2(a)(2)(B)(ii) list of the U.S. government, including two aliases: Akusu Huafo and Akusu Huafo Dyd Melange Yara) is change to Akusu Huafo Textiles Co., Ltd. (Akusu Huafo Textiles Co., Ltd., Akusu Huafo; Akusu Huafo Dyd Melange Yara; and Akusu Huafo Textiles Co., Ltd., Akusu Huafo).

Xinjiang Energy (Group) Co., Ltd. is a state owned enterprise group in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China, principally engaged in the development and utilization of coal, wind, photovoltaic, oil, and other energy resources. The United States Government has reasonable cause to believe, based on the information available to it, that Xinjiang Energy (Group) Co., Ltd. works with the government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to recruit, transport, transfer, harbor or receive Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, or members of other ethnic minorities from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The PFTF

ment of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region to recruit, transport, harbor or receive Uyghurs, Kazakhs, or members of other persecuted groups out of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The FLETT therefore determined that the activities of Xinjiang Huafu (Group) Real Estate Co., Ltd. satisfy the criteria for addition to the List described in section 2(d).

company based in Kizilua Xingzhi  
Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region that is principally  
engaged in mining and producing zinc. The  
United States Government has reasonable  
beliefs to believe, based on specific and  
credible information, that Xiangjin Zijin  
Industry Co., Ltd. works with the  
Government of the Xinjiang Uygur  
Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China.

as a company in Mongolia Auto produces photo silicon. The Un reasonable caus and articulable New Materials material from the Autonomous R determined that

Manufacturing. The specific material from the region, the Ltd., UFLPA (UBJ) Ltd. is a former company, that is. The stable and Meike company.

New Materials criteria for addition described in section 2(d).

Huafu Fashion based in Anhui vertically integrated processing to manufacturing. Government has based on specific information, the sources material Autonomous Region determined that Fashion Co., Ltd. addition to the in section 2(d).

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# Key Takeaways



- *The size of the solar and storage sectors inadvertently brings their supply chains under more intense ESG scrutiny*
- *Supply chains are dynamic and require continuous vigilance*
- *Regulations can have gaps or get delayed, so, a proactive stance is recommended*
- *Reputational and future transaction risks are hard to assess, so, doing more than the minimum required is a prudent approach*
- *Third-party audits conducted for buyers, investors and stakeholders are the best tools the sector already has in place – they already work and are used by the more advanced stakeholders*

## Thank You



[gtouloupas@cea3.com](mailto:gtouloupas@cea3.com)



[www.intertekcea.com](http://www.intertekcea.com)

