

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+

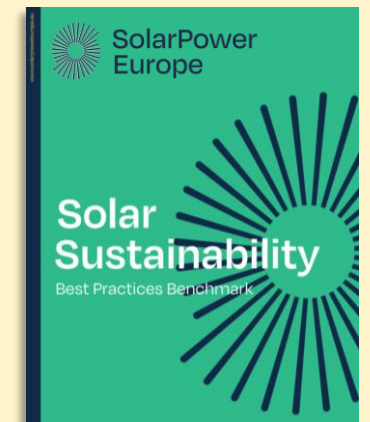
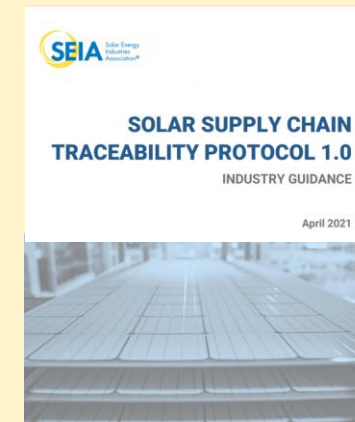
*Engagements in solar
and storage factories
worldwide*

**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

TUESDAYAPRIL 23, 202450p

SOLAR FARM PANELS
MADE WITH ALLEGED
FORCED LABOR



Sources said...complaints...publicly...in...of the solar...are used in...solar farm...panels. Ti am...sources on...such

allegations of forced labor being used in the production of solar farm panels will of the production of solar farm panels

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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">• Ensuring visibility and transparency in the sourcing of PV and battery components to mitigate risks of human rights violations, child labor, and environmental degradation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying and avoiding the use of minerals, such as quartz, copper, lithium, that may be linked to human rights abuses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluating the carbon footprint and energy efficiency of PV and battery manufacturing processes to reduce the overall environmental impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring proper handling, recycling, and disposal of hazardous waste generated during the production and end-of-life stages of PV and battery components.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.



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.

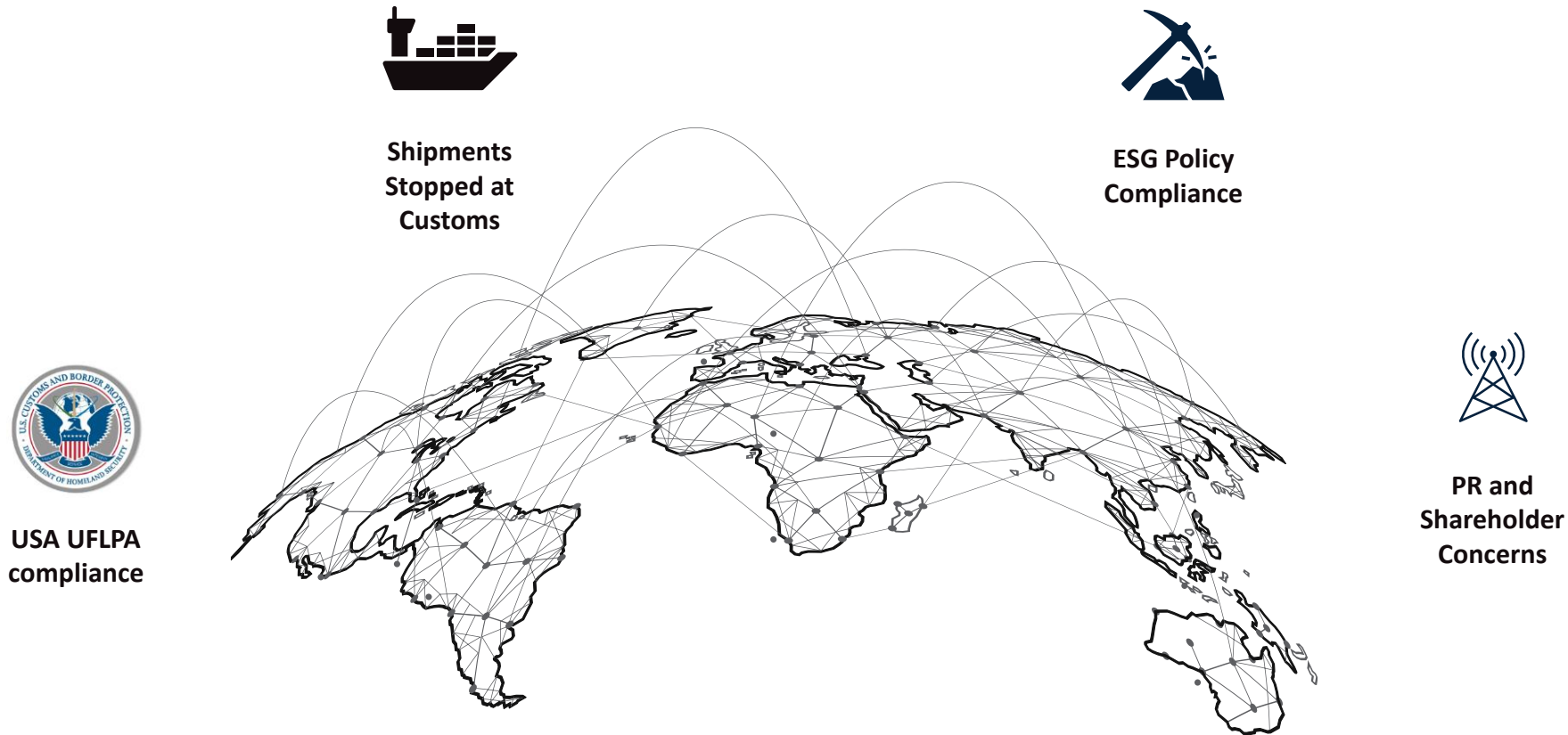
Inaction risks import bans, lower margins, and project delays.





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

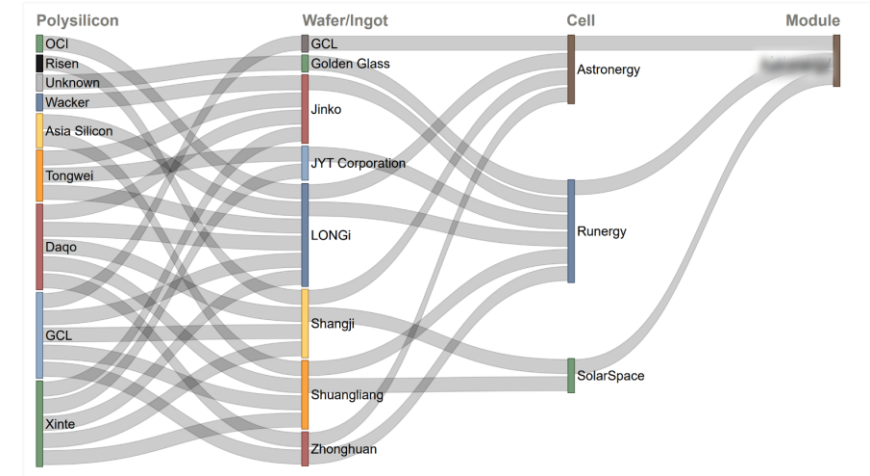


What Makes Full Component Traceability Hard?

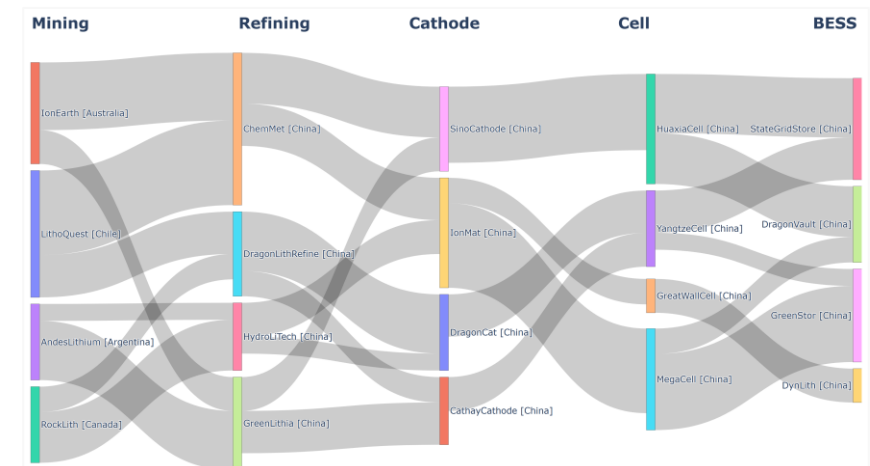
There is a lot of complexity in the PV and BESS supply chains:

- 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 3rd 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*

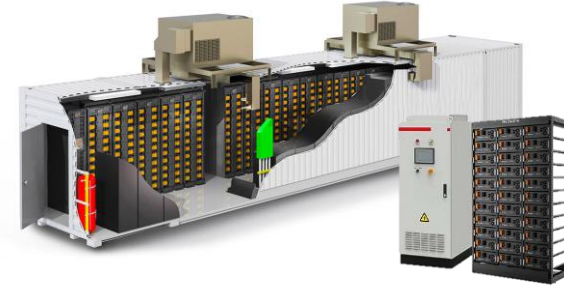
The auditors must understand the explicit and implicit rules of engagement and:

- *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

- Review and gap analysis of ESG and Traceability Contract Exhibits
- Negotiation support and improvements on audit conditions and requirements, chain of custody documentation, sampling verification method
- Final Exhibits delivered

PV, BESS

Supply Chain Mapping (SCM)

- Remote Evaluation to screen supplier risks in terms of:
 - Geography
 - Reputation
 - Trade Compliance
- Direct & indirect supplier relationships along the levels/nodes upstream to provenance

PV, BESS

Traceability Systems Audit - Onsite (TSA)

- Onsite Audit to check the supplier's traceability system through SOPs, systems, and record keeping
- Audit Sections include:
 - Purchasing
 - Warehousing
 - Production
 - Packaging for Shipment
- Samples are drawn and traced to fullest extent possible

PV, BESS

Production Traceability Audit- Onsite/Remote (PTA)

- During production, samples are selected to check traceability for the specific project
- Aligned with Quality Assurance sampling (PSI or FAT)
- Suppliers submit the agreed document package to Intertek CEA for verification that production meets supply chain requirements

PV, BESS

Post-Production Traceability Audit - Remote (P-PTA)

- For products or components that have already been produced, serial numbers are selected to check traceability for the specific project
- Follows custom client requirements on sampling and level of verification
- Remote audit of document package submitted by supplier for verification

PV

Is My Supply Chain Free of ESG Risk?

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



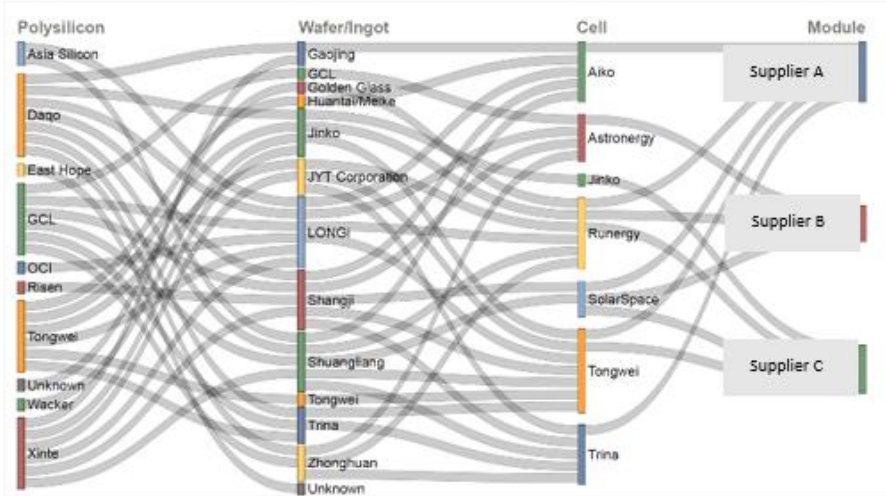
Supply Chain Mapping assesses the relationships within the supply chain.

- 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 ¹			
Supplier ²	Wacker	OCI	Hemlock	Asia Silicon	Tongwei	Xinte	Daqo	GCL	East Hope ³
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	Risk Levels	Key Issues Identified
Environmental Planning	1	1 Minor	Workers are not wearing protective masks.
Energy Consumption	0	-	N/A
Environmental Aspects	2	1 Minor/ 1 Major	Flammable substances were left unattended in the open containers. The hazardous waste storage area did not separate full containers. Flares have not started or covered.
Recycling and Waste Management	2	2 Minor	The supplier lacks a formalized policy framework or systematic procedure for solid waste reduction and resource recovery.
Social Planning	1	1 Minor	Lack of systematic review of all related allegations, despite partial data collection by regional teams.
Employment Practices	2	2 Major	Unusual compensation and social benefits for dispatch workers and no due diligence report presented on labor agencies.
Supplier Management	1	1 Minor	Limited employee awareness of labor union. Conflict interests due diligence failed. Responsibility of some sub-tier suppliers.

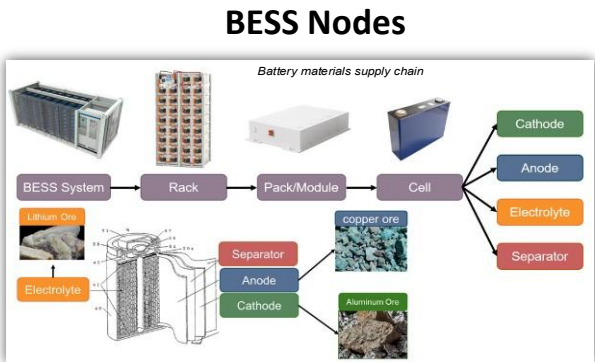
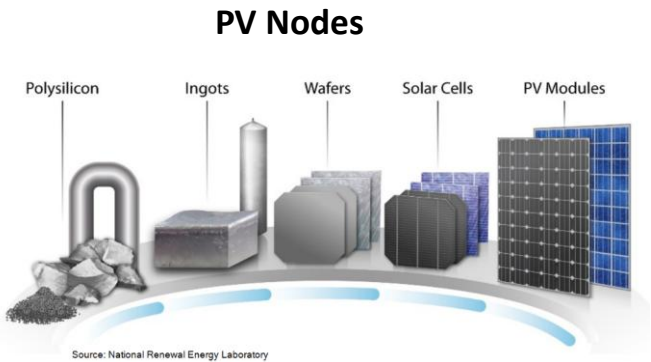
Does the Chain of Custody in the Supply Chain Have Gaps?

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	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.	Compliance	Assessment
Green	= All Low-Risk Findings	Follow up in 1 year, regular		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

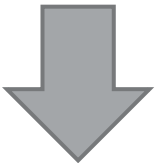


A Production Traceability Audit is a sampling verification audit of the silicon-based materials according to agreed supply chain between Buyer and Supplier

- **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.



Approved Vendor List
Polysilicon/MGS/Quartz Supplier 1
Polysilicon/MGS/Quartz Supplier 2
Polysilicon/MGS/Quartz Supplier 3
Polysilicon/MGS/Quartz Supplier 4



Risk Assessment Criteria

Approved Vendor List	Match?
Polysilicon/MGS/Quartz Supplier 1	
Polysilicon/MGS/Quartz Supplier 2	
Polysilicon/MGS/Quartz Supplier 3	
Polysilicon/MGS/Quartz Supplier 4	



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.





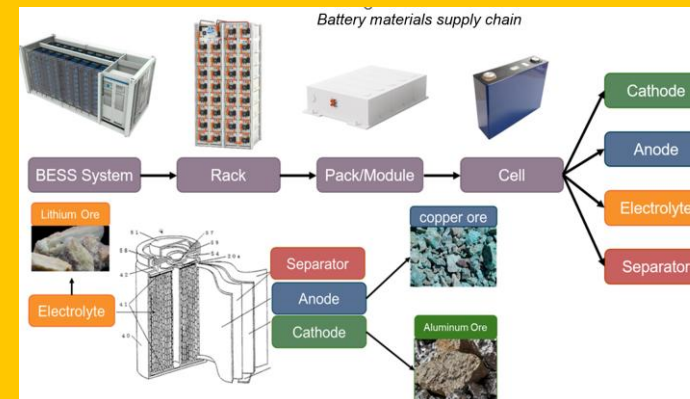
Case study 3

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



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

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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

[illegible][illegible]

Mongolia Autonomous Region produces photos of the company's reasonable care and articles and materials. The Autonomous Region determined that the company's materials met the criteria for a second-hand item described in an advertisement. Huafu Fashion Co., Ltd. was vertically integrated into the processing of goods for the Government but based on specific information, the Autonomous Region determined that Huafu Fashion Co., Ltd. was not engaged in activities in section 2(d)(1).

Huyanghe Hongyuan Co., Ltd. is located in Huayuan Autonomous Region engaged in cotton spinning activities. The reasonable care and articles and materials of the company's sources material. The Autonomous Region determined that the company's materials met the criteria for a second-hand item described in an advertisement. Huafu Hongyuan Co., Ltd. was vertically integrated into the processing of goods for the Government but based on specific information, the Autonomous Region determined that Huafu Hongyuan Co., Ltd. was not engaged in activities in section 2(d)(1).

Yongjiu Milk Co., Ltd. is known as Jiang Development Unit. The company is engaged in the production of silk and wool. The Government has based on specific information, the Technology Co., Ltd. is engaged in activities in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The company's materials met the criteria for a second-hand item described in an advertisement. Huafu Hongyuan Co., Ltd. was vertically integrated into the processing of goods for the Government but based on specific information, the Technology Co., Ltd. was not engaged in activities in section 2(d)(1).

Kuche Zongzi Co., Ltd. is a material for the production of silk and wool. The Government has based on specific information, the Technology Co., Ltd. is engaged in activities in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The company's materials met the criteria for a second-hand item described in an advertisement. Huafu Hongyuan Co., Ltd. was vertically integrated into the processing of goods for the Government but based on specific information, the Technology Co., Ltd. was not engaged in activities in section 2(d)(1).



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



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www.intertekcea.com

