

Marketing Socially Responsible Brands through Multinational Enterprises' Governance of Conflict Minerals and Global Sustainable Development

Sourav Borah

Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad

Anirban Adhikary

Indian Institute of Management Udaipur

Amalesh Sharma

Mays Business School, Texas A&M University

Cite as:

Borah Sourav, Adhikary Anirban, Sharma Amalesh (2026), Marketing Socially Responsible Brands through Multinational Enterprises' Governance of Conflict Minerals and Global Sustainable Development.

Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy, 55th, (134319)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



Marketing Socially Responsible Brands through Multinational Enterprises' Governance of Conflict Minerals and Global Sustainable Development

Abstract

Responsible sourcing has become integral to how global brands signal integrity, cultivate trust, and differentiate themselves in increasingly sustainability-conscious markets. Conflict minerals, including tin, tungsten, tantalum, and gold, remain embedded in complex supply networks and are frequently linked to human rights abuses and violent conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Although Section 1502 of the U.S. Dodd-Frank Act mandates disclosure, most multinational enterprises report that they cannot determine whether their supply chains contain conflict minerals, undermining the credibility of sustainability-oriented brand claims. This research examines how governance mechanisms within multinational enterprises, specifically organisational effort, supply-base collaboration, and network influence, shape their ability to detect conflict minerals. Drawing on Natural Language Processing of 8,276 SEC reports, supply network data from 1,161 firms, and econometric modeling, the study demonstrates that governance mechanisms significantly enhance detection, while supply base diversity weakens these effects. Detection is associated with higher ESG transparency, stronger financial performance, and improved international business outcomes. The findings position responsible sourcing not as a compliance task but as a strategic marketing capability central to building credible, socially responsible brands.

Track: International Marketing & Marketing in Emerging Countries