



COLUMBIA GLOBAL ENERGY DIALOGUE

Improving Critical Mineral Mining Negotiations in Chile: Toward Clearer and More Robust Frameworks for Benefit Sharing with Local Communities

By Juan Pablo Escudero, Diego Rivera Rivota, Juan Carlos Jobet, and Dr. Tom Moerenhout

Top discussion points

- Chile is the world's largest producer of copper, a key player in lithium production, and the country with the largest reserves of both—materials necessary for the global energy transition.
- Two roundtables in the summer of 2025 highlighted the absence of a coherent, long-term state strategy in Chile for resource governance and the lack of formal regulation of negotiations between mining companies and communities, resulting in case-by-case arrangements.
- Participants noted the limited presence of the Chilean state in planning, regulating, and coordinating such negotiations, as well in providing an independent third-party assessment of hydrological balances and water use, particularly for lithium production.
- These roundtable discussions suggest the need for a more active presence of the Chilean State, including to frame a long-term resource strategy and a clear legal and regulatory framework for benefit-sharing mechanisms involving state institutions, companies, and host communities.
- Roundtable participants said that new benefit-sharing mechanisms and processes in the case of lithium are more advanced than legacy copper projects, and that a review of best practices of lithium negotiations should be done to inform a more comprehensive benefit-sharing framework applicable to other mining sectors as well.

This task force report reflects the authors' understanding of key points made in the course of the roundtables. It does not necessarily represent the views of the Center on Global Energy Policy. The piece may be subject to further revision.

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Introduction

Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez (UAI) Business School, in collaboration with the Center on Global Energy Policy (CGEP) at Columbia University SIPA, organized two closed-door roundtables in the summer of 2025 to discuss local community engagement in the context of lithium and copper extraction within the global energy transition. The roundtables took place in Santiago and in San Pedro de Atacama, near Chile's most significant lithium and copper operations. The roundtables brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from local and Indigenous communities, the private sector, academia, and public institutions. To encourage open and honest dialogue among participants, both roundtables were conducted under the Chatham House Rule, in which participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of participants may be revealed.

This task force report presents a synthesis of the two high-level roundtables, focusing on the governance, environmental, and socio-political dimensions of lithium and copper mining because of their critical importance to benefit-sharing with local and Indigenous communities. After offering some background and reviewing the main themes raised in each session, this report identifies key takeaways from the gatherings and proposes actionable policy recommendations.

Context: Chile's Role in the Global Energy Transition

Chile is the world's largest producer of copper, a key player in lithium production, and the country with the largest reserves of both of these critical materials necessary for the global energy transition.¹ As the planet moves away from fossil fuels, the demand for critical materials required by low-carbon technologies is expected to surge dramatically, especially for lithium and copper.² To combat climate change, the world needs large-scale mining.

To gain on-the-ground insight into the issue at hand, teams from the UAI Business School and Columbia's CGEP visited the Chuquicamata copper mine near Calama, which is the property of state-owned mining company Codelco, and lithium extraction operations in the Atacama Salt Flat of SQM, a Chilean company and one of the largest lithium producers in the world.

At Chuquicamata, one of the world's largest copper mines, the transition from open-pit to underground mining reflects both technological advancements and the physical limits of traditional extraction methods. Meanwhile, in the Atacama Salt Flat, lithium is pumped from underground brine deposits and separated from other minerals through an evaporation process that spans over 40 square kilometers—an operation that, while low in visible impact, raises questions about brine and water use and long-term sustainability.



Mining companies in Chile consume large amounts of water, including fresh, recycled, and desalinated seawater. In recent years, copper mining operations have increasingly used desalinated water in mining processes to limit use of freshwater.³ Lithium production in the Atacama Salt Flat is a relatively less water-intensive activity than copper mining,⁴ but local communities have voiced concerns about the intensity of brine extraction and are calling for independent hydrological studies to accurately determine current brine levels and the maximum extraction capacity it can sustain.⁵

These two sites underscore the magnitude of the challenge: how to meet soaring global demand for these critical minerals while ensuring environmental protection as well as benefit sharing and territorial integrity.

Santiago Roundtable Summary

The Santiago roundtable focused on the broader institutional and regulatory challenges facing Chile's mining sector, particularly in relation to copper, lithium, and rare earth elements (REEs). Participants included industry leaders, legal experts, and academics. The discussion centered on the disconnect between Chile's national policy frameworks and local realities, especially regarding land use, permitting, and benefit sharing.

Property Rights and Land-Use Planning

The conversation addressed the ambiguity of property rights, particularly in relation to Indigenous communities. In Chile, the state holds ownership of mineral resources in the subsoil. In practice, the Chilean state grants exploitation concessions to private companies for mining operations, but the underlying resource is state property. Some participants argued that, in strict legal terms, Indigenous communities in Chile do not own the subsoil and cannot claim royalties or a share of profits as a right of ownership of the minerals beneath their lands, in contrast to Canada, where Indigenous or local landowners often have recognized property rights. However, some participants argued that there are tension and uncertainty around this ownership right.

Local and Indigenous communities demand participation in decisions that affect the areas within and near the territories where they live. This demand is supported by international treaties, specifically Articles 13 and 15 of the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention.⁶ The lack of a clear definition of property rights and representation mechanisms has led to disputes with communities, delayed processes, rent dissipation, legal battles, and physical protests including road blockades.

A key related topic was the lack of a national land-use planning framework, which creates uncertainty for both communities and investors. Having clearer land-use regulations would help

prevent conflicts between companies, authorities, and communities by defining ownership rights and methodologies for providing transparent data on territories impacted by mining operations, especially with regard to water access and pollution. Company participants at the roundtable argued that clarity on property rights would help them focus their efforts in places where projects could be feasible.

Permitting

Another crucial issue is the permitting process, which was described by participants as overly complex and slow, taking up to 138 months for a large-scale project. Permitting process complexity leads to legal uncertainty and project delays. Participants noted that the environmental impact assessment (EIA) system is overburdened and often expected to resolve issues beyond its environmental scope, such as territorial planning, consulting Indigenous communities, and social compensation.

For example, participants said benefit-sharing negotiations in Chile have occurred within the framework of the EIA process. After Chile ratified ILO's Convention 169 in 2009, the government formalized the integration of consultation of Indigenous Peoples as part of the EIA process through the Ministry for Social Affairs and Development's Supreme Decree 66 and Supreme Decree 40, among other regulations.⁷ Chile's Environmental Evaluation Service is in charge of conducting the EIA and the consultation, which must take place before it issues the environmental license (RCA – Resolución de Impacto Ambiental), a key permit in Chile's mining sector.

Participants thought that consultation with communities and benefit sharing with them should not be included within the EIA process but should instead have its own framework and process.

Rules for Negotiating Benefit Sharing

Participants highlighted the need to establish clear and enforceable rules to guide negotiations between mining companies and local communities, particularly regarding benefit-sharing mechanisms, which do not currently have a specific legal framework or mandate. This, in practice, has meant that agreements are reached on a case-by-case basis, driven mostly by the power, negotiation, and willingness dynamics between mining companies and local communities. Participants noted that the state has at times played a role in these negotiations, but on an ad-hoc basis.

Participants said current frameworks are often inadequate, especially for small- and medium-sized companies that struggle to match the offers made by larger competitors. To address this, participants suggested setting transparent procedures with defined timelines and binding commitments, to prevent excessive delays and reduce the likelihood of legal conflicts.



Some participants pointed to international models, such as Canada’s First Nations coalitions, as examples of more structured and transparent engagement. In particular, they mentioned that some communities in Chile have expressed interest in acquiring equity stakes in projects—a trend that has increased in Canada for infrastructure projects but that lacks regulation in Chile.⁸ Other participants noted that in mining royalty schemes, only a small portion of the proceeds end up going back to the community. Such funds are collected by the National Treasury in Chile and then redistributed, and sometimes communities do not see any or many benefits from these mining operations.

Additionally, some participants raised concerns about representation, especially regarding the emergence of advisors, attorneys, and some non-governmental organizations that do not participate in good faith in negotiation processes. Participants said some of these actors use delay tactics and act in their own self-interest, and not necessarily to mitigate environmental or social impacts or maximize the benefits to impacted local and Indigenous communities. Most participants thought these negotiations undermined affected local and Indigenous communities that are legitimately seeking to be compensated for negative externalities from mining activities. Clearer legal and regulatory mechanisms as well as increased transparency in negotiation processes could help ensure that communities, companies, and third-parties participate in a process that creates mutual trust and leads to honest dialogue and more solid agreements

Participants also discussed the distinction between compensation and benefit sharing with communities. They referred to compensation as essentially the payments of mining companies in an effort to mitigate negative externalities such as environmental degradation, pollution, water depletion, and social disruption. In contrast, benefit sharing was broadly characterized as ongoing contributions that can leave an impacted community better off than it would have been without the mining project in question. This may include revenue sharing, local jobs, business opportunities, and community programs—all intended to ensure the community truly gains from the project. However, participants noted that experience from around the world and in Chile indicates that improvements in community governance, transparency, and capacity are still key challenges to translating mining compensation into genuine social welfare gains.

The roundtable concluded with a call for institutional reform, including clearer governance structures, streamlined permitting, and frameworks that recognize the rights and roles of local communities. Transparency, legal certainty, and inclusive dialogue were identified as essential pillars for the future of Chile’s mining sector.

San Pedro de Atacama Roundtable Summary

The roundtable in San Pedro de Atacama brought together representatives from local and Indigenous communities, lithium producing companies, academia, and public institutions to discuss the governance of lithium extraction in the Atacama Salt Flat.

Government Involvement

The conversation revealed concerns about the current governance model, which some community members see as fragmented and lacking a long-term vision. While participants recognized the work that companies have done with local communities, they noted a very limited presence of the Chilean State. Participants described this as an absence or “abandonment” of the state, leaving a vacuum. This limited presence means not only the absence of some basic social services but also a lack of clear frameworks for discussing pathways for mitigating negative impacts of lithium production as well as benefit sharing. Participants emphasized that the governance framework should reflect the cultural, territorial, or environmental realities of the region.

Participants noted that the relative absence of the Chilean State means that companies are often pressured to fill the vacuum, sometimes showing more presence and execution capabilities than public institutions. Lithium producing companies have ended up providing basic public services—such as sanitary, health, and educational infrastructure—in places where the state, in principle, would. These dynamics create interdependencies between the communities and the companies, while the state often relies on the same companies to deliver those services. Some participants reported that they have often visited government officials to discuss these problems, and that more than once the response they received was to “ask the companies.”

Water Impacts

Water emerged as the central issue. Participants commented about a lack of independent and reliable hydrological data to understand and monitor the impacts of brine extraction on the Atacama Salt Flat. They argued that there was a perceived impact of lithium extraction on this fragile ecosystem. They called for an independent and thorough study on the current hydrological balance of the salt flat, science-based monitoring, and greater transparency.

Although companies that attended both roundtables argued that they produce and share reliable data, they agreed that there should be an independent third-party source of information so that it can be more easily trusted by all stakeholders. Most participants agreed that this is an area where the Chilean State should play a more active role, making sure that the proper institutional arrangement and technical resources are available to conduct a thorough assessment on the



hydrological balance of the Atacama Salt Flat. Right now, joint monitoring by companies together with Indigenous and local communities plays a key role in building trust in data. In the absence of trusted external scientists, this is considered a best practice.

Local Participation: Decision-Making and Benefits Distribution

Regarding the development of mining operations and rising lithium production, community participants mentioned moving from consultation to co-design with local actors. They seek binding participation in decision-making processes, including contract negotiations, benefit distribution, and environmental oversight.

Some participants noted the fact that these communities were being consulted in the context of the SQM-Codelco partnership, and considered it positive, though regretted that it was motivated by markets forcing the companies to conduct such consultations. Participants agreed that the Chilean State should have consulted local communities at some previous stage, and said the different Chilean presidential administrations of the last few decades have lacked a long-term and comprehensive strategy for lithium production. Multiple consulted stakeholders stated that, ultimately, the obligation to conduct consultations belongs to the state, under ILO 169, not directly to the companies. Under the current policy ecosystem, however, it appears a balance is being struck with more proactive behavior from companies, especially in the lithium sector.

The distribution of benefits was a point of contention among community participants. Deciding which communities receive the benefits is a delicate issue. While participants agreed that the most affected communities should receive most of the benefits, opinions differed on whether and to what extent communities relatively distant from the lithium operations should be compensated.

Participants discussed the role of the state-owned mining company Codelco entering the lithium sector through a partnership with SQM but did not find a common position on what this could mean for benefit sharing with neighboring communities. Participants voiced mixed levels of optimism and uncertainty about Codelco's participation. The discussion included what participants perceive as a poor track record of Codelco's copper operations and what that might imply for lithium operations. For example, would having Codelco as a representative of the Chilean State enhance negotiation processes in regions with otherwise very little presence of the state, and could Codelco be a reliable third-party for data-information, especially regarding brine intensity and freshwater consumption between the companies and the communities.

Key Takeaways from Roundtable Discussions

The Chilean State is largely absent in affected communities.

The relative absence of the Chilean State in communities that are near or potentially affected by mining projects was one of the few points in which there was consensus among participants. Attendees said the Chilean State has been slow to reach some of these communities, many of which have very limited infrastructure for basic services such as drinking water, healthcare, and education. Some of these communities are in remote, hard-to-reach areas, often lacking piped water and sewage,⁹ and may be located in very arid conditions, exacerbating the competition between mining activities and local residents for a limited resource.

Under these conditions, private companies, through direct agreements with the communities, have stepped in to address and solve some of these problems by injecting money into the communities or directly building basic infrastructure such as water treatment plants as well as schools and hospitals.

This scenario can be problematic. As participants noted, when private companies carry out these types of tasks, they assume a role that in principle belongs to the state. The relative absence of the state can create an unhealthy dependency of communities on mining companies. Participants noted that this dynamic of quasi-substitution of the state has sometimes resulted in the redirection of public funds to other communities that are not as impacted by mining operations. Other participants said these practices amount to a de facto net increase in the tax burden for mining companies.

Governance gaps create uncertainty in negotiations and benefit sharing.

Both roundtables highlighted the absence of a coherent, long-term state strategy for resource governance.

Negotiation processes between mining companies and communities are not formally regulated. Several participants noted a high degree of uncertainty in these processes, as they can take an indefinite amount of time, may become subject to legal proceedings, and often lack transparency. The lack of transparency is a key issue, as it can be used by either party in the negotiation to conceal critical aspects or to favor certain factions within the negotiating entities over others, among other problems.

Although excessive regulation can also pose challenges that hinder investments, project development, and minerals production, participants thought it would be prudent to adopt some type of general framework for negotiation. These rules could establish a maximum duration for negotiations, measures to ensure transparency of the information shared, and a commitment to uphold and comply with agreed provisions.



Furthermore, a key issue with benefit sharing is precisely how the resources emanating from these agreements are spent. For example, the money, infrastructure, and other projects that stem from specific agreements between companies and the affected communities do not feed into a comprehensive development plan for the region. As a result, one community might end up with more services and infrastructure than it can use, while another that may have greater needs may not get any benefits because it was not part of or did not exercise enough leverage in negotiations.

Copper and lithium operations provide significant amounts of resources to the national, regional, and local governments in the form of taxes, royalties, lease agreements, and other benefits. While this is in principle positive for the Chilean authorities and the public, participants noted that in practice there needs to be a clearer plan for how to spend that money so that communities receive a fair share of these benefits.

Communities seek a decision-making role.

Participants recognize a strong demand among communities to move beyond only consultation toward a framework of co-governance, with community members playing a central and active role in institutional design, monitoring, and strategic decisions.

Representatives from both communities and mining companies in Chile agreed that their relationship has transitioned from one of conflict and exclusion to one of negotiation and benefit sharing. This has often happened by going beyond minimum legal requirements in an ad hoc fashion with the relative absence of the state. Participants concurred that while reaching agreements between both parties can be complicated, projects are proceeding with fewer disruptions and communities are receiving compensation from the impacts of mining activities.

Roundtable discussions revealed that transparency, early dialogue, and inclusive participation processes tend to improve community perceptions of companies and their projects.

Water is a core concern for communities in lithium extraction.

In the Atacama region, water scarcity and the lack of reliable hydrological data are central to community concerns. Participants described a pressing need for independent, science-based monitoring systems and reliable hydrological data to better understand and monitor the impacts of brine extraction on the Atacama Salt Flat.

Participating companies involved in lithium extraction claim to have allocated significant resources to hydrological studies and to have reliable data. However, company participants agreed that it is essential to have impartial and reliable third-party information, as they understand that stakeholders may question whether their information is unbiased.

Although the Chilean State is making efforts to produce such reports, participants have found the attempts so far to be unsatisfactory. Most participants emphasized that the Chilean State should take a stronger role in ensuring proper institutions and resources, building on existing joint monitoring with Indigenous and local communities to strengthen trust. Impartial, scientific information is critical to facilitate understanding on the impacts and benefits of lithium production projects.

Institutional reform of planning and permitting can address process bottlenecks.

Participants said the lack of a land-use planning framework and inefficiencies in permitting processes are major bottlenecks. Institutional reform is necessary to streamline approvals and clarify roles and responsibilities.

Participants expressed concerns about including the consultation process as part of the EIA, effectively using the EIA for a purpose different than initially conceived. Moreover, participants worried that the current permitting process seems to be overloaded, creating delays.

In the view of participants, these issues create the opportunity to rehaul the EIA as well as consultations with Indigenous Peoples toward a more streamlined, effective, and efficient process. Participants agreed that government should improve the framework, resources, and speed of the environmental and consulting aspects of the permitting processes to avoid bottlenecks and lengthy delays for complying mining projects.

Policy Recommendations

Building on the insights of the two roundtable discussions, the following policy recommendations aim to improve planning, permitting, and negotiation processes among the Chilean State, companies, and communities. If implemented, these policies may result in more transparent schemes of benefit-sharing and the increase of sustainable mining of lithium and copper, both key raw materials for the energy transition. The Chilean State should consider the following:

- Creating an institutional and legal framework for mining benefit sharing for local or Indigenous communities affected by mining operations. This framework, instead of the current case-by-case approach, would serve as a minimum set of standards for negotiations among local communities, companies, and the Chilean State. Building on that set of standards, project-specific arrangements would be negotiated.
- Developing a long-term, state-led strategy that integrates environmental, social, and economic dimensions with clear, delimited roles for public institutions, companies, and communities. This framework should also define general conditions and timelines that must guide negotiations between mining companies and local communities, ensuring transparency,



accountability, and mutual respect throughout the process.

- Establishing independent monitoring bodies, impartial institutions to oversee the collection and dissemination of scientific data, especially on water use and hydrological balances.
- Accelerating permitting reform to streamline environmental and land-use permitting processes that reduce uncertainty and delays while maintaining high environmental standards.

Notes

1. US Geological Survey, Mineral commodity summaries 2025, January 31, 2025, <https://www.usgs.gov/publications/mineral-commodity-summaries-2025>.
2. International Energy Agency, *Global Critical Minerals Outlook 2025*, May 21, 2025, <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-critical-minerals-outlook-2025>.
3. Cochilco, “Consumo de agua en la minería del cobre,” 2024, <https://www.cochilco.cl/web/cochilco-lanza-estudio-consumo-de-agua-en-la-mineria-del-cobre-2024/>. In fact, Codelco pledged investments to switch to 100% desalinated water at its Chuquicamata operation by 2026. For more on this, see: Codelco, “Incorporación de agua desalada para disminuir en 27% el uso del recurso continental,” <https://www.codelco.com/incorporacion-agua-desalada-para-disminuir-27-el-make-up>.
4. Sylvia Marinova, Lindsey Roche, Andreas Link, and Matthias Finkbeiner, “Water footprint of battery-grade lithium production in the Salar de Atacama, Chile,” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 487, January 5, 2025, 144635, ISSN 0959-6526, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959652624040848?utm_. Between 2021 and 2024, SQM increased its lithium carbonate production by 67%, indicating a significant reduction in water intensity; see SQM, *Sustainability Report 2024*, <https://sqmlitio.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/report-sustainability-sqm-2024.pdf>.

In the context of the SQM–Codelco agreement, SQM initially committed to reducing its use of water in its lithium extraction facilities to a maximum of 120 liters per second by 2028. This goal had already been achieved by SQM in 2020, and 2024 marked the fifth consecutive year of operation in the Atacama Salt Flat with 50% less water than environmentally authorized. For more details, see: SQM, *Agua Industrial*, <https://www.sqmsenlinea.com/agua-industrial>.

As part of a SQM–Codelco agreement, the 2025 Indigenous consultation process, and the Salar Futuro project, the ambition was put forward to eliminate use of continental water at the end of the fifth year from the date on which the environmental permit and the sectoral permits

- required for the operation of the project are approved and finalized; see CORFO, “Informe Sistematización Consulta Indígena Contratos Salar de Atacama,” August 2025, https://saowcsblobassets.blob.core.windows.net/assets/PG/1476738230165/Informe_Sistematizacion_Consulta_Ind%C3%ADgena_Contratos_Salar_de_Atacama.pdf.
5. SQM aims to decrease net brine withdrawal by 50% compared to permitted levels. In 2024, a 32% reduction in brine withdrawal compared to 2020 was already achieved; see SQM, *Sustainability Report 2024*, <https://sqmlitio.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/report-sustainability-sqm-2024.pdf>.
 6. International Labor Organization, C169 – Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:55:0::NO::P55_TYPE%2CP55_LANG%2CP55_DOCUMENT%2CP55_NODE:REV%2Cen%2CC169%2C%2FDocument.
 7. Teresa Bornschlegl, Diego Ocampo, and Isabel Urrutia, “Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) in the Mining Sector: Solution-oriented approaches from Canada and their implications for strengthening Indigenous Peoples’ right to consultation in Chile and Peru,” Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR), 2021, <https://rue.bmz.de/resource/blob/100568/fpic-in-the-mining-sector.pdf>.
 8. Indigenous Clean Energy, “Waves of Change: Indigenous clean energy leadership for Canada’s clean, electric future, Canadian Institute for Climate Choices, 2022, <https://climatechoices.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ICE-report-ENGLISH-FINAL.pdf>.
 9. Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Sistema de indicadores de calidad de vida rural, 2026, <https://www.ine.gob.cl/herramientas/portal-de-mapas/sicvir>.

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geopolitics in Latin America, particularly on natural gas and LNG markets, critical minerals supply chains, and their role in the low-carbon energy transition.

Prior to joining CGEP, Diego was a visiting researcher at the Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (APERC) based in Tokyo, Japan for five years. He was a lead author of the APERC Gas Report and also co-authored several other APEC reports and publications, including the 7th and 8th editions of the APEC Energy Outlook, APERC's flagship publication. Diego also coordinated cooperative projects related to natural gas, LNG markets, energy security and energy efficiency. He presented APERC's research extensively across the Asia-Pacific region.

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He led Chile's successful energy transition, including a thorough carbon neutrality plan for the energy sector, a phase out plan for all coal power plants, the accelerated deployment of solar and wind capacity, the development of key transmission infrastructure, Chile's first energy efficiency law, and an ambitious green hydrogen strategy to position Chile as a top global producer and exporter. In the mining sector, he developed Chile's first comprehensive mining policy: a long-term strategy built with participation of all relevant stakeholders, that sets a vision for a sustainable, competitive and green mining.

He successfully managed several crises after the social unrest of October 2019 and during the pandemic. Both the energy and mining sectors operated without disruptions, jointly represented over 50% of Chile's investment and played a key role in the economic recovery.

As energy minister, he played leadership roles in several international organizations and initiatives, including as chair of the Clean Energy Ministerial and Mission Innovation 2021, and as co-chair of the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition.

Throughout his career, he has held several positions in both the public and private sector. He was undersecretary of housing and minister of labor and social security during president Piñera's first



government. He has also worked as investment banker and in private equity. He has held several executive and board positions in industries including pension fund management, real estate, forestry, fin tech, infrastructure and waste management.

He holds an MBA and an MPA from Harvard University, and a bachelor in business and economics from the Catholic University of Chile. He is married and the proud father of three daughters.

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Tom specializes in the intersection of geopolitics and industrial policy, particularly as they relate to energy, critical minerals, and battery supply chains. His work focuses on integrating the interests and influence of multiple actors across complex political economies to improve supply chain security and resilience. Tom has published extensively on sustainable development and energy policy reforms, specifically on energy subsidies, critical materials, and the economic development of resource-rich countries.

He has advised and consulted for various stakeholders, including the White House, Departments of Energy and State, USTR, and policymakers in several other countries, including the EU, Canada, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, DRC, Egypt, Iraq, Chile, and Brazil. His collaborative efforts span organizations such as the OECD, IEA, World Bank, UNCTAD, UNEP, OPEC, IRENA, and several philanthropic foundations.

Tom holds two master's degrees and obtained his PhD at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. This academic background includes fellowships at LSE and the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. He was also a Fulbright and Albert Gallatin Fellow, and a Swiss National Science Foundation Scholar.



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