



## Responsible Jewellery Council

# NEWS RELEASE

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### **COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY PRACTICES ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF CERTIFICATION SYSTEM DOCUMENTS, NEW LOGO, AND TRADING NAME OF RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY COUNCIL**

The Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices today released the implementation documents for the Council's system for certifying responsible ethical, social and environmental practices throughout the diamond and gold jewellery supply chain. The Council also today released its new logo and announced the adoption of the simpler trading name, "Responsible Jewellery Council" ("RJC").

The Responsible Jewellery Council's certification system, also known as the "RJC System", requires Members of the Responsible Jewellery Council to be audited by accredited, third party auditors to verify their conformance with the Council's standards, which are set out in its Code of Practices. Members who have been independently verified as conforming to the Code of Practices will become Certified Members of the Responsible Jewellery Council.

The RJC System is expected to become fully operational in the 2nd Quarter of 2009, once independent auditors have been trained and audit firms accredited.

Current RJC Members as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 are required to undergo independent verification by December 2010. Companies that join the RJC after 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 will need to undergo independent verification within two years of becoming Members.

RJC Members with mining facilities will be required to undergo independent verification within two years of the release of the "Mining Supplement", which will expand the Code of Practices with additional provisions specific to the mining industry. The Mining Supplement is undergoing a public consultation process and is expected to be finalised by March 2009.

The certification system is set out in five core implementation documents that will guide Members and accredited auditors through the certification process. The documents, listed below, are publicly available on the RJC's web site: <http://www.responsiblejewellery.com>

- *RJC Principles and Code of Practices*, which defines the standards for the RJC System, against which Members are to be certified.
- *RJC Standards Guidance*, which provides general information and advice about the standards in the RJC's Code of Practices (COP).

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

- *RJC Certification Handbook*, which provides an overview of the RJC System and the requirements for achieving certification.
- *RJC Assessment Manual*, which sets out detailed instructions for Members to complete Self Assessments, and Auditors to conduct Verification Assessments.
- *RJC Assessment Workbook*, which provides the forms and detailed questions required to conduct assessments and perform audits.

“We are acutely aware that our industry is facing extremely challenging times and that companies must focus their immediate attention on financial and operational issues. Nevertheless, the over eighty members of the Responsible Jewellery Council, from miners to manufacturers to retailers, remain committed to the importance of ethical business practices and reinforcing consumer confidence in the gold and diamond jewellery supply chain. Now more than ever, the industry must demonstrate responsible practices and protect its reputation,” says Matthew Runci, Chairman of the Responsible Jewellery Council and President and CEO of Jewelers of America.

“The certification system is rigorous and thorough, but it is not onerous. By providing a common, widely recognised set of standards that will be familiar to a large pool of competitive, accredited auditors, the RJC System will drive continuous improvement and allow companies now operating their own social responsibility auditing programs to avoid duplication and expense. We therefore expect that the certification system will serve to streamline work and reduce costs,” adds Robert Headley, Co-Chair of the Standards Committee of the RJC and Vice President of Technical Services, Tiffany & Co.

“We extend our sincere thanks to all those Members and stakeholders who contributed to the development of the Code of Practices and to the design of the RJC System over the past few years. The Council has succeeded in creating a unique certification system for responsible business practices based on third party auditing that applies throughout the supply chain, from mine to retail. No other industry has achieved this,” says John Hall, Chair of the Communications Committee of the RJC and General Manager External Relations for Rio Tinto Diamonds.

The release of the system documents marks the conclusion of a critical development phase for the Council, after which its efforts will focus on the implementation and continual improvement of the certification system.

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