



Aboriginal *Participation* in Mining

The Minerals and Metals Sector of Natural Resources Canada promotes the sustainable development of Canada's natural resources and Aboriginal participation in minerals and metals activities.

Contributing to Sustainable Communities

The minerals and metals industry is a major contributor to Canada's economic well-being and is also vital to the economic and social cohesion of many rural and remote communities. Exploration and mining activities can generate wealth and socio-economic growth in many Aboriginal communities through partnerships, employment, skills development, business and spin-off opportunities, and participation in decisions and activities undertaken to protect the environment. A mine can generate benefits that outlive the mine itself and therefore can help build the community's self-reliance.

For information on the activities involved in each phase of the mineral development cycle and opportunities for Aboriginal communities to participate, please consult the **Exploration and Mining Guide for Aboriginal Communities** at www.nrcan.gc.ca/minerals-metals/aboriginal/bulletin/3059.



Partnering Together for Mutual Benefits

- Early community engagement and meaningful dialogue between Aboriginal communities and exploration companies are key to establishing successful working relationships and partnerships. The agreements signed at the early exploration phase (e.g., Memoranda of Understanding, Exploration Agreements) serve to establish a mutual understanding between a community and a company and define the principles for working together for mutual opportunities.



- For the last decade, Aboriginal-industry relationships and partnerships have evolved tremendously through the conclusion of agreements related to mine development, such as Impact and Benefit Agreements. These agreements typically contain provisions for employment and training, business opportunities through set-aside contracts and joint ventures, social and cultural considerations, environmental monitoring, funding arrangements, and other provisions.
- Agreements at both the exploration and development stages have proven to be successful in securing benefits for some Aboriginal communities. Through the negotiation of agreements, Aboriginal communities are directly involved as early as the exploration stage, during operations, and during mine closure and rehabilitation of the site. To see the map of **Agreements Between Mining Companies and Aboriginal Communities or Governments**, please visit www.nrcan.gc.ca/minerals-metals/sites/www.nrcan.gc.ca/minerals-metals/files/files/pdf/abor-auto/aam-eac-e2012.pdf.



Aboriginal Employment in Mining

- The minerals and metals industries are among Canada's largest employers in rural and northern regions, offering short- and long-term, as well as part-time and seasonal, employment opportunities. These industries provide some of the highest weekly earnings in the economy.
- The mining industry is experiencing a shortage of skilled workers due to an aging work force. The proximity of Aboriginal communities to potential exploration and mining development and the rapidly growing Aboriginal youth population represent a largely untapped local labour force that can help meet this demand.
- During operation, mining companies can implement a range of training initiatives, such as stay-in-school programs, scholarships, apprenticeships, and workplace literacy programs, that promote the building of educational and other capacities in Aboriginal communities. Through training and work experience, the skills acquired through participation in mining can be transferred to other sectors of the economy, and to the local community economy, following mine closure.





- There are more than 120 different careers in mining, with entry-level, semi-skilled trades, and skilled jobs available throughout all stages of the mining sequence. For more information on careers in the mining industry, visit the Mining Industry Human Resources Council at www.aboriginalmining.ca/en.

Business And Economic Opportunities

- Mining can provide significant economic and business opportunities for local communities and regional economies at each phase of the mineral development cycle. For example, business opportunities can include:
 - **Exploration:** drilling, expediting, transportation/freight services, line cutting, accommodations, and catering;
 - **Development:** construction services, security, trucking, road maintenance, airport and aircraft maintenance, and recycling/waste disposal;
 - **Operations:** contract mining, supply of goods, site services, surveying, laboratory services, and environmental services;

- **Closure and reclamation:** demolition, site reclamation services, landscaping, ongoing site security, water sampling and analysis, and possible ongoing water treatment.

- Each community is unique and will be equipped differently to capture potential economic opportunities. Aboriginal communities may want to develop joint-venture businesses with established companies. Joint ventures are an excellent way to develop local business capacity to prepare for and take advantage of the business opportunities related to mine development.



- It is vital that communities look beyond the life of the mine for economic growth and to diversify their economic activities. They could use the skills and capacity gained from participating in the mineral development cycle for new beginnings whether the future economic base is tourism, manufacturing, agriculture, or any other activity.
- The diamond mines in Canada's North are good examples of mining's contribution to the creation of more self-reliant communities. Aboriginal businesses and joint ventures directly support the

diamond mining sector, but also expand into food services, construction, trucking, transportation, and communications, which could be applied to other industries. This entrepreneurial spirit has allowed the local economy to stretch and build capacity for a sustainable future.

Environmental Practices

- Industry and governments are committed to ensuring that mineral development in Canada is conducted in an environmentally responsible way at all stages of the mining sequence. Laws and regulations at the provincial, territorial, and federal levels ensure that the natural environment and public health and safety are protected.
- Consultation is an important part of the environmental assessment process of mining projects. Through the review of project studies and documents, Aboriginal communities can express concerns, provide input, and develop shared solutions. Furthermore, the use of traditional knowledge can assist in identifying potential environmental impacts and the mitigation measures necessary to reduce or eliminate those impacts.
- While some of its activities are regulated, the Canadian mining industry has also adopted voluntary guidelines to ensure a safe and healthy environment, such as the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's **e3Plus: A Framework for Responsible Exploration** and The Mining Association of Canada's **Towards Sustainable Mining**. For more information, visit www.pdac.ca/e3plus/index.aspx and www.mining.ca.
- The environmental performance of the mining industry has greatly improved over the last few decades as there is increased effort to find innovative ways to minimize waste, transform it for other uses, and leave behind only clean water, rehabilitated landscapes, and healthy ecosystems. One of these proactive efforts is the **Green**



Crops of corn and canola on the former Copper Cliff mine tailings site near Sudbury, Ontario

Mining Initiative (GMI) led by Natural Resources Canada (www.nrcan.gc.ca/minerals-metals/technology/4473), which aims to improve the mining sector's environmental performance and create green technology opportunities.

- Under existing legislation, mine owners must submit a mine closure and reclamation plan to the provincial/territorial and/or federal government that details how the mine site will be cleaned up and restored once mining operations are completed. Some mines may require long-term care and maintenance after closure. With a wealth of local knowledge, input from Aboriginal communities is crucial to developing rehabilitation plans and monitoring programs, and to ensuring that the rehabilitation is successful.

For more information on Aboriginal Communities and Mining, please visit www.nrcan.gc.ca/minerals-metals/home or email info-mms@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca.

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