



Action Plan 2004

Status Report

Reports on the activities of working groups arising from Action Plan 2004 of the Mines Ministers' Conference submitted for consideration at the 62nd Mines Ministers' Conference

St. Andrews, New Brunswick • September 2005



Introduction

The Status Reports contained hereunder reflect the actions taken on the major issues affecting the mining industry in Canada under the direction of the provincial, territorial and federal ministers of Mines at the Mines Ministers' Conference 2004.

The reports were prepared either by working groups established by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Mineral Industry (IGWG) or by officials responsible for a specific issue. Therefore, the views contained in the reports do not necessarily reflect those of IGWG as a whole.

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Orphaned and Abandoned Mine-Site Rehabilitation

Ministers agreed to approach Environment Canada to seek program funds as part of the recently announced funding for contaminated sites, specifically for the development of F/P/T cost-sharing arrangements for the remediation of orphaned/abandoned mines.

Ministers agreed to proceed with the guidelines for legislative review tabled by the National Orphaned/Abandoned Mines Initiative (NOAMI) and instructed their respective ministries to complete the review and report results back.

Ministers agreed to support the ongoing activities of NOAMI as outlined in their detailed work plan (2003).

BACKGROUND

The legacy of orphaned/abandoned mines (O/AMs), with the associated environmental liability, human health concerns and the financial costs of clean-up, continues to be a serious issue facing Canada.

Since 2002, Mines Ministers have signaled their commitment to address this serious environmental issue with continued support for the National Orphaned/Abandoned Mines Initiative (NOAMI).

NOAMI is a cooperative Canadian program that is guided by an advisory committee consisting of the mining industry, federal/provincial/territorial governments, environmental non-government organizations and First Nations.

The committee's role is to assess key issues and put forward recommendations to Mines Ministers concerning collaborative approaches and partnerships in the implementation of remediation programs across Canada.

At their annual meeting in Iqaluit in 2004, Mines Ministers agreed to support the ongoing activities of NOAMI as outlined in its detailed work plan (2003), so long as human and financial resources permit. More specifically, Ministers recognized the opportunity to approach Environment Canada to seek program funds as part of the federal funding program for contaminated sites announced in 2003, specifically for the development of F/P/T cost-sharing arrangements for the remediation of orphaned/abandoned mines. Mines Ministers also agreed to proceed with guidelines for legislative review instructing their respective ministries to complete the review and report back results.

STATUS

A report entitled *Capacity Building for a National Inventory of Orphaned/Abandoned Mines in Canada* was completed and published on the NOAMI web site (www.abandoned-mines.org). A key recommendation is for an inventory that includes all inactive mineral sites, is web-based and has a map interface. An

assessment of options for hosting a portal site is currently being finalized. It is recommended that NOAMI proceed with implementation once complete.

A review of all legislation that is relevant to the remediation of orphaned/abandoned mine sites has been commissioned and is currently completed in draft for most jurisdictions. Consultation with and review by F/P/T agencies responsible for various legislative instruments is under way. Once complete, the consultant will produce a final report providing a synthesis of the legislative framework for the remediation of orphaned/abandoned mines, including an assessment of gaps, limitations, barriers and opportunities, including summary observations and recommendations for policy development.

In November, NOAMI is hosting a workshop on “Assessing Liabilities and Funding Approaches” to be hosted in Ottawa. The workshop will focus on technical standards for assessing liability, accounting for and reporting on liability, assessing community and health impacts, and funding options. The target audience is government officials from mines and environment, and provincial auditors and finance departments, with the objective of providing terms of reference for the assessment, reporting and funding of liabilities associated with orphaned/abandoned mines.

In February, NOAMI will host a best practices workshop, highlighting successful approaches in the remediation of orphaned/abandoned mines in Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Mines Ministers agree to encourage respective F/P/T audit and finance officials to participate in the November workshop;
- Ministers endorse the ongoing work of NOAMI, in particular the development of:
 - a portal site for a national inventory of inactive mine sites, and
 - recommendations for the development of policies/legislation with respect to orphaned/abandoned mine-site remediation; and
- Continuing financial support for the work of NOAMI.