



# Giant Mine Environmental Assessment

## IR Response

Round One: Information Request - Review Board #27

June 17, 2011

### INFORMATION REQUEST RESPONSE

**EA No: 0809-001**

**Information Request No: Review Board # 27**

**Date Received**

February 14, 2011

**Linkage to Other IRs**

Alternatives North IR #02

**Date of this Response**

June 17, 2011

**Request**

***Preamble:***

Considering the multiple roles of INAC and the public concerns expressed regarding this project, the Review Board is interested in INAC's views on establishing an independent monitoring agency for the duration of the Giant Mine Remediation Project, to provide stakeholder involvement in overseeing environmental management.

***Question:***

1. Please describe any plans being considered for establishing an independent monitoring agency for the duration of the Giant Mine Remediation Project, specifying who might participate, and in what capacity.
2. How might such [an] agency be engaged in any future examination of emerging technologies (as per IR#19 above)?

**Reference to DAR (relevant DAR Sections)**

14.1.6, Aboriginal and Public Input and Engagement

"(I)input from Aboriginal communities and the public will continue to be sought throughout the life of the Remediation Project... As the implementation of the Remediation Project advances, and in response to monitoring results, the public and Aboriginal communities will be engaged in the review of monitoring results and the identification of adaptive management approaches needed to address any environmental issues identified through the monitoring program".

S.6.2.2.4 Future Re-Consideration of Alternatives





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“The Project Team remains open to improvements in the frozen block method, and will re-evaluate alternatives if technologies advance or if monitoring data indicate unforeseen emerging risks to the environment and/or humans”.

### Reference to the EA Terms of Reference

#### ***ToR 3.6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Management***

The continued surveillance of the environment at and around the Giant Mine site was a source of interest for participants throughout the scoping phase of the environmental assessment. To address this concern the developer shall provide:

1. A detailed description of the monitoring program proposed by the developer, including at a minimum a description of:

- Plans to periodically review of the efficacy of the proposed monitoring program and technologies used and a re-evaluation of the goals and benchmarks of the monitoring program
- Plans to engage with local communities in the development, implementation and review of monitoring activities

### Summary

The Giant Mine Remediation Project Team (Project Team) is committed to developing and managing the long term monitoring in a manner that is:

1. Adaptive
2. Objectives Based
3. Credible
4. Inclusive
5. Transparent
6. Cost Effective
7. Accountable

The response below to Question 1 speaks to each of these principles and how the Project Team plans to undertake its commitment to developing and implementing an Environmental Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (EMEF) and an Environmental Management System (EMS). The EMS will describe the core approach to managing, monitoring and reporting on environmental issues – it is a central component of the EMEF. As the Government of Canada holds financial responsibility for the Giant Mine Remediation Project (Remediation Project), it is essential that it retain ultimate authority for the expenditure of funds. This speaks to the last of the seven principles listed above - accountable. In terms of plans to establish an Independent Monitoring Agency as used for example with the NWT diamond mines, we do not intend to establish such an independent agency.

For the response to Question 2 on future examination of emerging technologies, the reader is respectfully directed to the Response to Review Board Information Request #19.





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### Response 1

Monitoring is a fundamental and essential component of the Remediation Project. The Project Team is committed to developing and managing the long term monitoring program in a manner that is:

1. Adaptive
2. Objectives Based
3. Credible
4. Inclusive
5. Transparent
6. Cost Effective
7. Accountable

The principles of the Remediation Project monitoring approach includes: a performance monitoring program to confirm that the objectives are being met; and the development of an adaptive management plan to allow the Remediation Project to adapt to changing conditions as required.

As part of the EMEF, an Environmental Management System (EMS) will describe the core approach to planning, managing, monitoring, reporting and reviewing environmental issues – it is a central component of the EMEF. An EMS is used by governments and companies worldwide to achieve environmental goals through consistent control of operations. This includes the establishment of objectives, targets and environmental management plans to achieve the objectives and targets, the monitoring and evaluation of performance, and the implementation of corrective action where targets are not being met (towards continuous improvement), and regular evaluation to assess compliance with regulatory requirements and the overall functioning of the management system. The approach will build in a periodic review or evaluation of the efficacy of the proposed monitoring program and technologies used, as well as a re-evaluation of the goals and benchmarks of the monitoring program.

It will be a credible approach, in part by including best available technology and scientific information as well as Traditional Knowledge and undergoing regular re-assessment and re-evaluation.

As there are a variety of options to operationalize these operating principles, the Project Team is prepared to work with potentially affected groups to develop an approach that will meet the needs of the parties. This applies to developing and implementing the EMEF and the EMS as described in Chapter 14 of the DAR. The proponent is committed to establishing an EMEF to monitor and evaluate environmental protection and regulatory responsibilities throughout the remediation of Giant Mine. The proponent will use the EMEF to establish the blueprint for how environmental protection and regulatory responsibilities will be monitored and evaluated throughout the stages of remediation<sup>1</sup>.

The Project Team is committed to involving the public in the design and implementation of the monitoring program in a manner that is inclusive. It will be done in a manner that is transparent and

<sup>1</sup> As defined in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA), 'Environment' includes air, land, water and all living organisms, which includes socio-economic and health and safety issues.





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meets the other principles listed above, including accountable, adaptive and credible. It will involve an effective approach to long term monitoring that is appropriate to such a large-scale, publically funded remediation project. It will involve stakeholders in design and implementation and will provide the public with a transparent and timely view of monitoring plans and results.

As described in Section 14 of the Developer's Assessment Report (DAR), the Project Team will be developing the EMEF and the EMS over the next year or two and will be engaging stakeholders throughout on their development. The intent of the engagement regarding the EMS and its adaptive management programs include:

- developing agreed upon environmental targets and criteria, and Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) to achieve these;
- developing a monitoring program;
- developing mitigation measures and strategies; and
- providing a coordinated approach to analysis and interpretation of monitoring data where applicable, facilitating collaboration with First Nations, Yellowknife public, regulators and others.

Engagement is a core element of the EMEF and transparency will be part of the approach to monitoring taken by the Project Team. Aboriginal communities and the public have provided important input into the design of the Giant Mine Remediation Plan, and continue to provide input through the EA process. The Project Team intends to regularly engage with Aboriginal communities and the public on this EMEF, on the development and implementation of the EMS and EMPs, on shaping specific environmental monitoring activities, and in response to monitoring results throughout the life of the project.

The format and content of the Giant Mine Remediation EMEF, EMS and EMPs is not presently developed. They will be developed and finalized in response to the detailed project design (which is currently under development); pursuant to direction from the Review Board; and in conjunction with the requirements of relevant regulatory instruments. Drafts will be shared as they become available throughout the EA and regulatory review process.

As the Government of Canada holds financial responsibility for the Remediation Project, it is essential that it retain ultimate authority for the expenditure of funds. The Project governance and management structure must be designed to incorporate this important factor. This speaks to the last of seven principles listed above - accountable.

In terms of plans to establish an Independent Monitoring Agency as used for example with the NWT diamond mines, we do not intend to establish such an independent agency.

### Response 2

For the response to the question of future examination of emerging technologies please refer to the Response to Review Board Information Request #19.