

Canada's mineral and metals sector also supports product stewardship through commodity associations such as the International Lead Management Centre, which was formed to work with national governments, industries, and the international community to manage the risk of lead exposure.

Local Communities and Sustainable Development

Responsibly managed, mineral development activities make a valuable contribution to the social and economic well-being of local communities, particularly those in remote areas.

Sustainable development acknowledges the need to work with all stakeholders to address issues related to land and resource use, to increase their participation in economic activity, and to ensure that the benefits of natural resource development are shared equitably.

Aboriginal people have a particular interest in these issues because they often live in areas where mineral development takes place. Canada, through its minerals and metals policy, encourages partnerships between Aboriginal communities and the industry. Work is under way to identify Aboriginal communities near existing mines and upcoming mining projects in Canada to assist in the early identification of potential opportunities and benefits for these communities. Statistics are also being developed that will assist governments, Aboriginal communities, and industry to better understand the opportunities for, and barriers to, Aboriginal participation in mining projects, as well as industry participation in Aboriginal communities.

Land Use and Protected Areas

With a land mass of almost 10 million square kilometres, Canada is second only to Russia in size. Current mining operations take up less than 1 percent of Canada's land. More than 60 percent of production is concentrated in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia, but producing mines are found in all provinces and territories.

Although mining operations occupy only a small percentage of Canada's land mass, land access has been a major issue for the Canadian minerals and metals industry for several years. The amount of land closed to mineral exploration and development in Canada has risen over the last 30 years.

Traditional Knowledge

Aboriginal traditional knowledge can provide valuable insights to enhance resource management decisions. Canada has produced, in partnership with stakeholders, a brochure outlining how traditional knowledge can be used to inform natural resource decision making. It includes examples of its application to Canadian mining projects.