

Industry Commitment

Canada's mining industry is committed to enhancing environmental performance and supports research and partnerships to improve understanding of the potential health and environmental effects of minerals and metals.

The Metals in the Environment (MITE) Research Network is an example of a partnership approach to scientific research by the public and private sectors. Formed in 1998 to improve Canada's understanding of the sources, pathways, fate, and environmental and health effects of metals in the environment, MITE is supported by the Mining Association of Canada, Ontario Hydro, and the federal government.

Members of the Mining Association of Canada and other industry organizations are also involved in many voluntary initiatives that support sustainable development. From 1992 to 1995, the association cosponsored, with federal and provincial mining ministries, the Whitehorse Mining Initiative (WMI), an extensive multistakeholder process to develop a strategic vision for sustainable mining. Land access and use, specifically protected spaces, mineral tenure, and land use planning processes, formed one of the major elements of the WMI process and underscored the importance of stakeholder involvement in subsequent policy development and corporate decision making.

The Accelerated Reduction/Elimination of Toxics (ARET) program is an example of a successful voluntary initiative. The program was established as a consensus-based, multistakeholder group with the aim of achieving a 50 percent reduction in emissions for target substances, using good science. By 1996, five years ahead of time, 31 Canadian mining companies had achieved a 68 percent reduction in releases from all sources, using 1988 as the base year. A further 19 percent reduction was targeted for 2000. In addition, the original goal of 50 percent reduction for most of the more than 100 target substances included under ARET has been met or exceeded.

In 1998, the Mining Association of Canada published *A Guide to the Management of Tailings Facilities*, which encourages environmentally responsible management of tailings facilities through the development of customized, site-specific management systems.

Other voluntary initiatives include industry support for Canada's Aquatic Effects Technology Evaluation Program, revision of the Metal Mining Liquid Effluents Regulations and ongoing participation in the Mine Environment Neutral Drainage (MEND) Program and its successor program, MEND 2000.