

Introduction

Canada's history demonstrates that the extractive sector can help build a country. Our extractive companies in the mining, oil and natural gas industries make a major contribution to Canadian prosperity, and are making substantial contributions to economic development in other countries in which they operate. Canadian extractive sector activity abroad can result in a win-win outcome both for the Canadian economy and that of host countries.

In 2009, the Government of Canada launched its first Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategy, "[*Building the Canadian Advantage: Canada's Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy for the Canadian International Extractive Sector*](#)." It outlined Canada's commitment to promoting CSR, defined as the voluntary activities undertaken by a company, over and above legal requirements, to operate in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

Canada: A Strong Player in the Global Mining Industry

In 2013, Canadian-headquartered mining and exploration companies accounted for nearly 31% of global exploration expenditures. In 2013, over 50% of the world's publically listed exploration and mining companies were headquartered in Canada. These 1500 companies had an interest in some 8000 properties in over 100 countries around the world.

Canada is strengthening its commitment to enhance the ability of Canadian extractive sector companies to integrate CSR into their practices through a renewed Strategy, building on experience gained since 2009. The updated Strategy makes clear the Government's expectation that Canadian extractive sector companies reflect Canadian values in all their activities abroad. While its primary audience is intended to be Canadian extractive sector companies, the Strategy is also meant to provide a more general audience with an overview of Canada's approach to promoting and advancing CSR abroad. For Government of Canada representatives, the Strategy provides a framework to guide their efforts to promote CSR policies, tools and guidance.

CSR Strategy Review

The CSR Strategy launched in 2009 included a commitment that it be reviewed after five years. The review was conducted over several months by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), with partners across government. Review activities included an internal evaluation, based on Treasury Board guidelines; behavioural surveys of Canadian extractive sector companies on CSR awareness; an NRCan research project on inclusion by mining companies of CSR and related issues in their reporting to securities exchanges; consultations on the CSR Strategy with industry and civil society representatives; and an online public consultation. The 2013 consultations on the Government's Extractive Sector Strategy also fed into the CSR Strategy review, as many submissions related to the CSR Strategy.

Review findings indicated that the CSR Strategy has played a valuable role in focusing the Government's efforts related to encouraging CSR among Canadian extractive sector companies operating abroad. Provision and promotion of CSR tools, guidance and advice were identified as core activities that should be carried forward to assist Canadian companies in enhancing their CSR efforts.

The review also highlighted increased recognition by companies of the need to consider CSR in planning and operations, and heightened awareness of CSR guidelines and standards. However, managing environmental and social risks of operations abroad remains complex. These ever-present challenges demonstrate the ongoing need for a CSR Strategy focused on the extractive sector.