



Sustainable Economies:
Aboriginal Participation in the
Northwest Territories
Mining Industry
1990 - 2004

NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines



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Introduction

Although the mining industry has been active in the Northwest Territories (NWT) for more than a century, there has been a marked change in the participation of Aboriginal peoples in the industry over the last decade. Much of the increase in Aboriginal participation is attributed to the collaborative efforts of communities, governments, educational institutions and the mining industry to build local capacity. It is recognized that in order for the progress to be sustained, the growth in capacity must be multi-dimensional, encompassing economic, environmental, and social aspects.

The recent experience of the mining industry in the NWT offers insight for communities, governments and the mining industry operating around the world. The exciting new discoveries of minerals and metals are most often in remote locations, with indigenous peoples, cultures and environments that are unfamiliar to those already engaged in the mining industry. In Canada's north, the mining industry has shown that it is possible, and profitable, to work in partnership with local communities. Forging a lasting relationship requires mutual respect, active participation and long-term commitment.

Much of the mining activity in the NWT over the last decade is related to diamonds given the market volatility in prices for precious and base metals and other minerals. The discovery of diamonds in the early 1990s, reinvigorated the northern mining industry and created an unprecedented level of mining investment in exploration and development. It is recognized that the local capacity that has been developed will benefit the mining industry broadly as well as other resource development activities including petroleum and natural gas.

The following description of the important social and economic trends, the challenges and opportunities that have been identified and the collaboration between communities, governments, education institutions and the mining industry will hopefully serve to guide all involved in the mining industry along a path of continued sustainable development.

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A Time of Change

The People

The people living in the NWT come from a wide range of backgrounds. There are six First Nations within the NWT including the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Dogrib Treaty 11 Nation, the Treaty 8 Dene and the Deh Cho. There are also a number of North Slave Metis people.

The population of the NWT has increased by 10.5% from 38,746 in 1991 to 42,810 by the end of June in 2004. Currently about half the population in the NWT is Aboriginal and in 2001, 51% of the Aboriginal population was under the age of 25 while 28% were from 25 to 44 years of age. The relatively young age of the Aboriginal population means that there will be a growing demand for employment opportunities over the coming years.

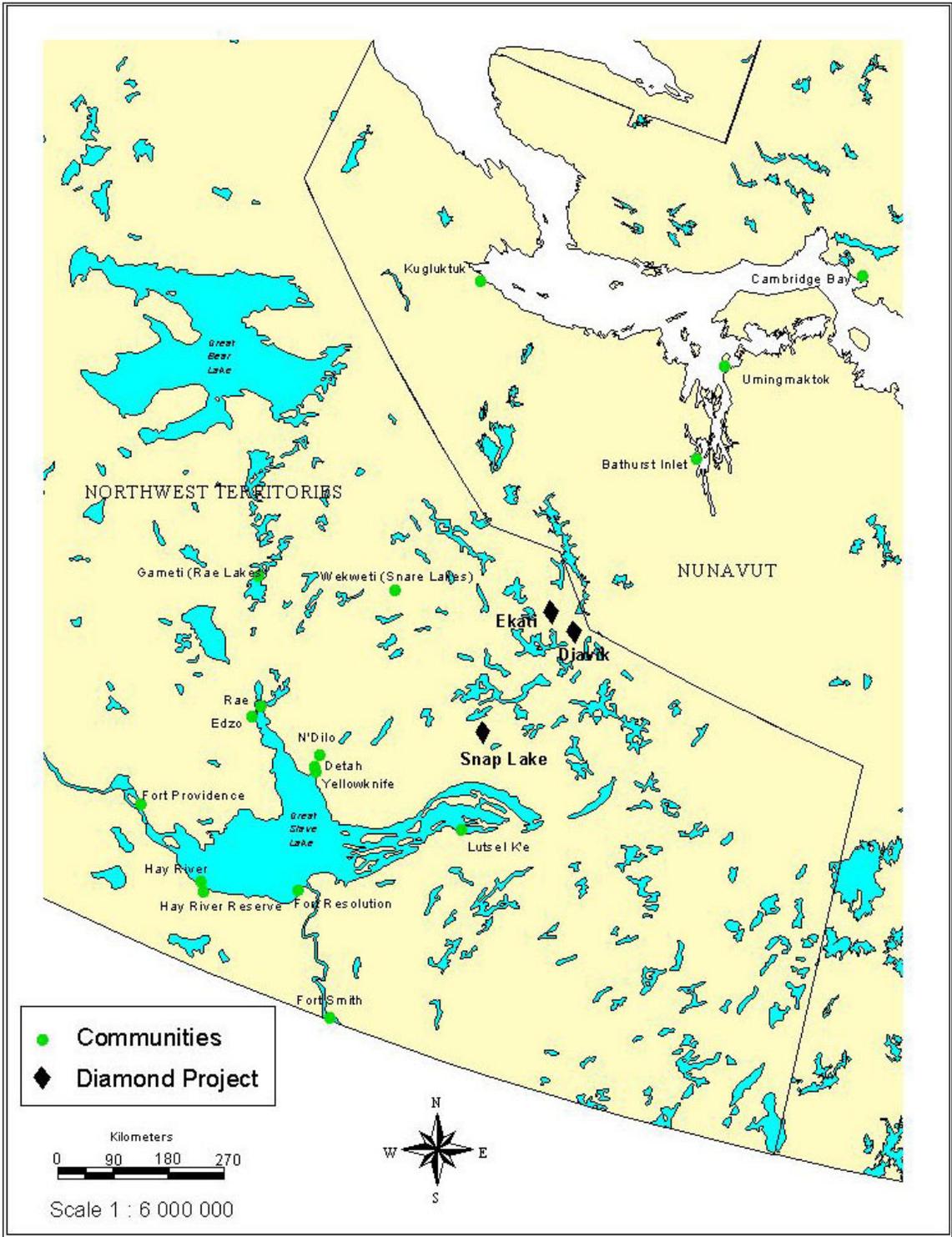
The education level of NWT residents has been increasing. In 1991, 60% of the NWT population aged 15 and older had completed at least a high school education; increasing to 65% in 2001. From 1992 to 2001, the average number of students to receive financial assistance for post secondary education in the NWT was 1,400. Almost half of this group was Aboriginal students.

From 1991 to 2001, the overall average employment rate (the number of people employed as a percentage of the population 15 and over) in the wage economy in the NWT increased from 63% to 70%. For Aboriginal people it rose from 46% in 1991 to over 53% in 2001. In 1991, 26% of the Aboriginal persons engaged in the wage economy in the NWT were unemployed compared to only 4% for non-Aboriginal persons. In 2001 the number of Aboriginal persons unemployed fell to 18% while the non-Aboriginal unemployment rate remained at 4%.

In the early 1990s, northerners accounted for 60% of all full time positions in mining, with 12% being Aboriginal persons. But by the end of 2004, NWT employment in the mining sector surged with two producing diamond mines employing 1,300 people northern residents directly and another 1,900 indirectly.

Over this time period, there is an increasing recognition that local community economies cannot be self-sustaining without participating in the larger economy such as resource development.







The Communities

The communities that have been most involved in the mining industry are all situated in the North Slave Region of the NWT. The four communities of Wha Ti (Dogrib Dene), Wekweti (Dogrib Dene), Gameti and Rae-Edzo (Dogrib Dene) comprise the Dogrib Treaty 11 Nation. The three Treaty 8 communities include Dettah (Yellowknives Dene), N'Dilo (Yellowknives Dene) and Lutsel K'e (Akaitcho Dene). The North Slave Metis Alliance, formed in 1996, also has an interest within the region. Other local communities within the region include the Town of Hay River and the City of Yellowknife. Two Inuit communities in Nunavut that also participate in the activities related to mining are Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay.

In the NWT, the distribution of persons living in small, medium or larger communities has been more or less constant and is expected to remain so. About a third of people live in small communities, a quarter in mid-sized communities like Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik, with more than 40% living in Yellowknife, the largest community in the NWT.

There has been significant progress in the settlement of Aboriginal land claims in the NWT. The Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Sahtu First Nations and the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council have all settled land claims. The creation of Nunavut in 1999 was agreed to by the Inuvialuit people under the terms of their land claim settlement. The Deh Cho and Akaitcho both have interim measures agreements in place.

Northern Decision Making

The land claim settlements with Aboriginal peoples and the implementation of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* significantly affected the mining industry. These changes resulted in the creation of new northern decision-making bodies to govern and oversee land, water and resource use and extraction.

The transfer of decision-making authority resulted in the emergence of seven new local Boards within the NWT - all with Aboriginal representation - to deal with land, water, and the environment. The official mandates of the Boards reflect the shared intent of all levels of government to:

- enable residents of the Mackenzie Valley to participate in the management of the natural resources for the benefit of the residents and of other Canadians;
- protect the environment from significant adverse impacts of proposed developments;
- protect the social, cultural and economic well-being of residents and communities in the Mackenzie Valley; and
- develop and implement land use plans within the land claim settlement areas that provide for the conservation, development and use of land, water and other resources.

For the first time, Board members nominated by First Nations have an opportunity to assess and make recommendations on the impacts of mine exploration and development



proposals. Although the endorsement of the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is required on major initiatives, and other federal legislation related to water, surface rights, the protection of fish habitat, pollution prevention, navigable waters and explosives continue to apply in specific circumstances, the interests of northern peoples are better reflected through the northern decision-making processes. For example, incorporating both traditional and scientific knowledge is key to the economic, social and environmental decisions that are reached.

Entrepreneurship

During the 1990s, the Aboriginal population has made strides in developing partnerships with industry and improving their economic situation. Many Aboriginal communities have put in place appropriate business structures in a move to become more self-reliant. This entrepreneurial spirit has allowed the overall economy to stretch and build capacity for a sustainable future.

A significant trend in support of Aboriginal participation in mining has been business partnerships and joint ventures between Aboriginal organizations, mining and mining services companies. Leaders within the Aboriginal communities have built a solid understanding of where opportunities exist or are likely to emerge that align with the aspirations and potential of the community. A number of government programs are available to assist Aboriginal organizations to capitalize on opportunities presented by the mining industry.

The relationships that have been forged between Aboriginal people and the private sector representatives are based on a common vision of what sustainable development means at the community level, a respect for the legitimate interests of each of the parties and a shared belief that there will be mutual benefit in both the short and longer term.

Currently, the NWT Aboriginal business directory lists over 200 Aboriginal owned businesses. Aboriginal businesses and joint ventures have expanded in the food services, construction, trucking, transportation services, communications, and more recently, businesses to support the diamond mining sector. The number of Aboriginal persons employed within these newly created companies is estimated to be upwards of one thousand with company revenues in excess of \$100 million.

Most recently, some major Aboriginal organizations have been exploring the potential for taking equity positions in mining exploration and production companies.





The Mining Industry

Prior to the creation of Nunavut in 1999, there were eight mines operating in the NWT:

- four major gold mines (Giant, Con, Colomac and Lupin);
- two smaller gold mines (Mon and Ptarmigan/Tom); and
- two lead-zinc base metal mines (Polaris and Nanisivik).

During the 1990s, fluctuations in world prices for gold, and excess supplies of other metals such as tungsten, forced the temporary closure of some of the mines in the NWT. As a result, the NWT economy declined and became sluggish. At the same time, diamond exploration and discovery introduced new hope for the struggling northern economy.

The discovery and opening of the Ekati™ and Diavik™ diamond mines pushed export values to over \$2.1 billion in 2004, launching the NWT economy back into the global arena.

In the next few years it is estimated that the NWT will be producing 15% or more of the world's annual supply of diamonds by value, ranking it third after Botswana and Russia, and ahead of South Africa. Recent (2004) annual exploration expenditures for prospective new mines in the NWT, valued at approximately \$111 million, were 11% of exploration expenditures in Canada.

Mineral extraction has played a large part in the development of the NWT and continues to be a key driver in shaping opportunities for the future. The impact of diamond mining not only reintroduced the NWT to the global arena as a major international player, but stretched the capacity of the NWT socio-political-economic landscape, stimulating improvements in geoscience databases, improved infrastructure and extending new opportunities to the workforce, particularly among northerners and Aboriginal peoples.

Ekati

The Ekati™ diamond mine is located near Lac de Gras, NWT, approximately 300 km northeast of Yellowknife.

The mine is a joint venture between BHP Billiton Diamonds Inc. and the exploration geologists Charles Fipke and Dr. Stewart Blusson .

Diavik

The Diavik mine is located on East Island at Lac de Gras. Diavik Diamond Mines Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto PLC owns 60% of the project and Aber Diamonds Corporation owns the remaining 40%.

Snap Lake

DeBeers Canada received a Class a Class A Water License on May 31, 2004 which paved the way for the Project to proceed. Construction is planned to start in early 2005 with production beginning in 2007. The mine has a planned life of 22 years of operation.





The Global Mining Initiative

One of the significant trends in mining that has built on the experience of the NWT is for the mining industry to be leaders in sustainable development. The Global Mining Initiative (GMI) is an international initiative whose purpose is to develop a better understanding of the positive role that the mining and minerals industry can play in generating a transition to a sustainable pattern of economic development. The initiative is led by presidents and CEOs of most of the world's largest mining and mineral companies.

The companies most closely involved with the initiative are members of the Mining and Minerals Working Group of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development – a project that is run by the International Institute for Environment and Development. Members of the Mining and Minerals Working Group include companies active in the NWT, such as Anglo American, BHP Billiton, Noranda, Rio Tinto and Placer Dome.

The GMI is concerned with the full range of issues in the mining, minerals and metals cycles, including governance of mining projects, their place in social and economic development, and issues of capacity building. This initiative has resulted in mining companies taking a longer-term perspective on their activities, and in particular, into their relationships with the communities where their mining activities are located.

Sustainable Development

Based on the recent experience in the NWT, it is clear that much of the progress is linked in support of a shared vision of sustainable development. Based on an unparalleled resource base of minerals, clear waters, fresh air, vast lands and abundant wildlife, the people of the NWT value their natural heritage. With the settlement of land claims, much of the responsibility and decision-making authority for managing these resources now rests with northern peoples.

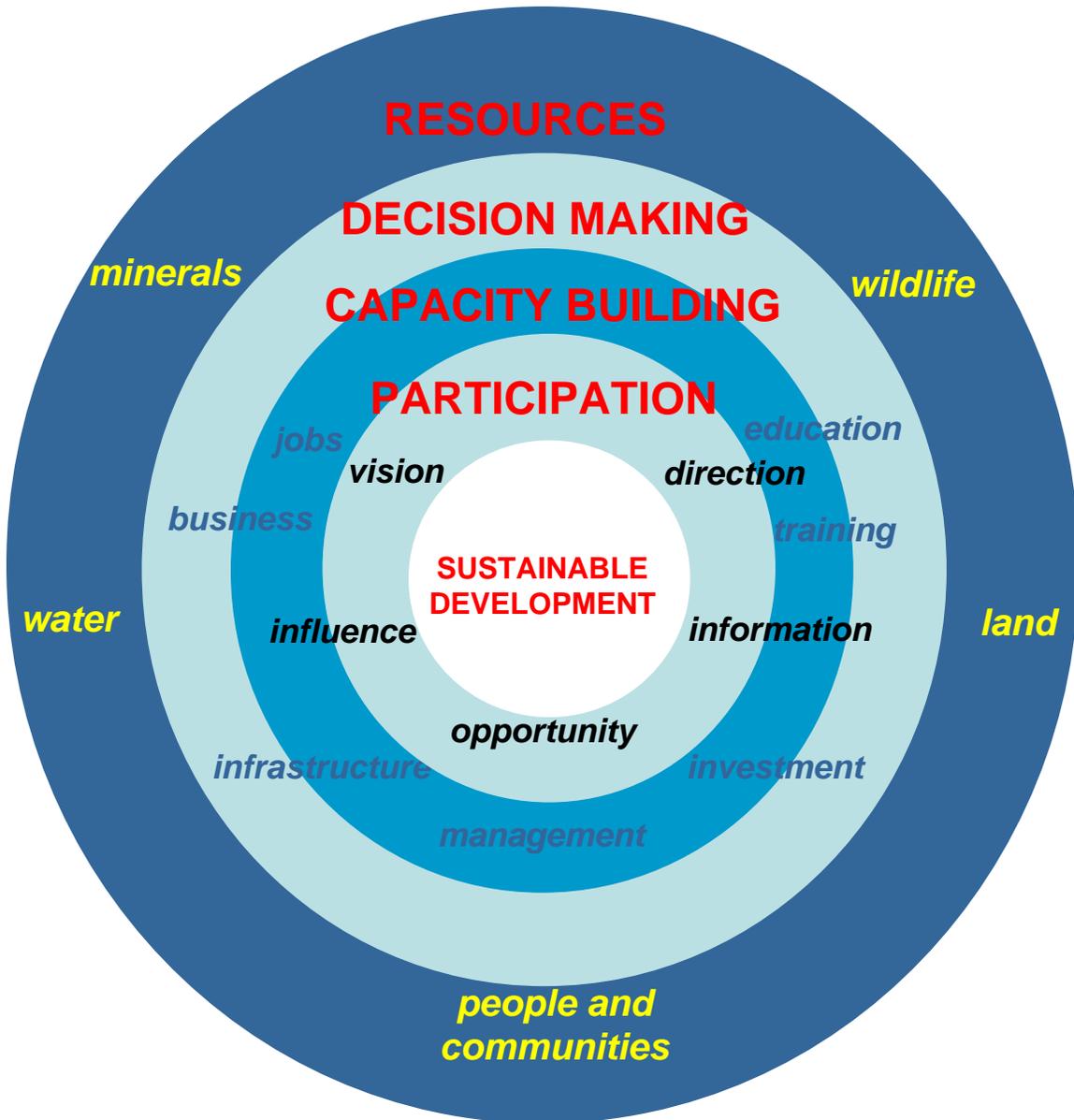
In order to fully capture the potential of the North, a lot of effort has been focused on building the capacity of northern communities and local peoples. To date the initiatives have focused on employment-related training and education, as well as business development and management experience. The investment and infrastructure required to support a vibrant local economy requires ongoing commitment in order to sustain healthy communities that can effectively manage the growing number and range of opportunities. Continued collaboration between individuals, communities, governments, educational institutions and the mining industry is important to maintaining measurable results.

In order to ensure sustainable development, the local communities must actively participate in determining the strategic direction that will be pursued. As we have seen in Canada's north, the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations requires that people are well-informed, their cultural values are respected and they are able to influence the decisions respecting their future and that of future generations.





*Moving Towards Sustainable Development
in Canada's North*





Working Together

In the years from 1990 to 2004, the course of Aboriginal participation in mining has changed significantly from passive participation in the industry as individual employees to a more active role played by Aboriginal communities. The change has been achieved, in part, through partnerships, mutually beneficial agreements and the establishment of Aboriginal businesses serving the mining industry. The future envisioned by industry and Aboriginal communities alike is one of equity, in which Aboriginal peoples are partners with industry in establishing sustainable development in the north.



Based on the fact that healthy, well-governed communities, a well-trained work force, competitive local business capacity and supporting infrastructure all reduce the economic risk associated with a mining project, the industry has recognized that capacity building is a strategic investment that will contribute over the longer term to the profitability of a mining project. Although much of the forward-looking investment in capacity building is aligned with the growing expectations of investors with respect to corporate social responsibility, the northern mining industry has seized the opportunity to build local capacity because it is “good for business.”

Similarly, governments have also taken an active role in developing the capacity of Aboriginal communities and businesses. In order to maximize the benefits for the people, families and communities of the NWT on an ongoing and sustainable basis, Northerners must have access to training, job experience and career development





opportunities that anticipate the emerging needs of the industry. Working closely with Aboriginal communities and the mining industry, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada:

- monitors resource development activities and helps to identify associated economic opportunities;
- promotes and participates in the planning, funding and implementation of strategic partnerships, joint ventures and innovative business approaches; and
- provides guidance, technical support and strategic advice to Aboriginal organizations seeking to maximize the socio-economic benefit of mining industry activities.

Overcoming the Barriers

Aboriginal participation in the mining industry has faced multiple challenges related to cultural differences, variances in educational qualifications, lack of experience in mining, discrimination at the workplace and difficulty in making adjustments to a non-traditional lifestyle.

Opportunities for gaining employment related skills and education have been extremely limited or entirely lacking in many Aboriginal communities. This contributed to the fact that during the early 1990s, opportunities for Aboriginal persons to be involved in mining were limited and usually consisted of labour positions. At this time, there were no full-fledged partnership arrangements between Aboriginal and established (non-Aboriginal) exploration and mining companies. As well, there were fewer resources available to assist Aboriginal persons entering the mining workforce.

During the mid-1990s, the mining industry encouraged the emergence of Aboriginal-owned businesses and entrepreneurship in the mining-related businesses such as trucking, air transportation, road construction and maintenance. However, the more technically oriented support services used by mining companies, such as drilling, blasting, assaying, project and environmental engineering, were beyond the capabilities of most Aboriginal groups and organizations.

For many Aboriginal persons, participation in the mining industry in the early part of the 1990s was unrewarding as it required extended time away from home and community, shift work, and doing lower level activities for lower wages. In many cases, Aboriginal employees not only experienced segregation at particular mine sites, but suffered the social consequences of shifting to a non-traditional lifestyle in their community. Social impact studies conducted in the latter part of the 1990s cite many examples of dysfunctional behaviour as a result of the shift away from non-traditional ways.

Another significant barrier has been a reluctance to engage permanently in the wage economy: some Aboriginal persons employed in mining prefer to work in the mines intermittently, with seasonal participation in the traditional economy between mining jobs. This preference has traditionally been perceived as unfavourable from the



perspective of the non-Aboriginal mining management, which prefers to hire workers who will stay on the job for years at a time.

The combined efforts of mining companies, the communities and governments, have led to many of the challenges being tackled head-on from the mid-1990s to today. In the past decade, First Nations, industry and governments have been working to provide leadership and coordination in the development of educational, training and capacity building programs to increase access to employment and business opportunities in the mining industry.

A Shared Commitment

Also in the mid-1990s, many mining companies took the initiative to negotiate agreements with First Nations for the purpose of enhancing the socio-economic benefits for local communities. These formal agreements have not only helped foster Aboriginal employment, but provide needed educational, business and community support to Aboriginal peoples. The inclusion of joint venture and business partnership clauses in various agreements have become the norm in the past five years and as a result, the number of opportunities for Aboriginal businesses has been increasing.

Agreements between various Aboriginal groups and the major diamond mines like Ekati™ and Diavik™ contain very specific provisions regarding the employment of Aboriginal peoples. Provisions within the agreements typically contain:

- a hiring policy that gives preference to Aboriginal persons (target number is usually specified);
- recognition of traditional lifestyles, including provisions for leave of absence for traditional activities, and country food available at the work site; and
- training and apprenticeship programs, and in some cases, policies for career advancement with the company.

Priority has been given to Aboriginal persons under the agreements to undertake training and apprentice programs either at mine sites or related operations, as is determined appropriate by the mine. In the past decade, there has been a number of government assistance programs made available to support the training commitments made by the mining companies. Some of the programs offered include pre-employment training programs sponsored by the GNWT, partnership training at Aurora College in Yellowknife, work site night school and career counseling. In the latter part of the 1990s, training opportunities emerged through Aboriginal owned businesses.

The Aboriginal employment provisions contained within the agreements are specific and in all cases require that the company monitor, calculate and publish information that describes the results achieved under the agreement.





Building on Success

Employment

Prior to the establishment of the Ekati™ mine, it was estimated that 60% of the workers in the NWT mining industry were northern residents, but only 10% of those northern workers were Aboriginal persons.

The Ekati™ mine has had considerable success in providing employment for local people, as 55% of current employees are northerners, and 27% of employees are Aboriginal. In 2003, 418 indigenous northern Aboriginal employees worked to support the operations of Ekati™ mine.

During the construction phase, Diavik exceeded its northern employment target of 40 per cent in every year, reaching 55 per cent in 2000, 41 per cent in 2001, and 43 per cent in 2002. During those years Diavik employed 165, 427, and 482 northerners respectively.

In 2004 during the operations phase, 271 (38%) of the total 713 Diavik Diamond Mine (including contractors) employees were Aboriginal. An additional 228 other northerners were also employed at the mine resulting in northerners comprising 70% of total employment.

In January 2005, DDMI reaffirmed its commitment to employment as outlined in the Socio-Economic Monitoring Agreement in a public news report. DDMI stated that the company is committed to hiring 40% northerners during construction and 66% during mine operations. DDMI is working toward the goal that at least 50 % of the northern workforce will be Aboriginal.

Direct employment at the proposed Snap Lake mine is estimated to be 220 full-time equivalents, of which DeBeers has committed to giving employment priority to Aboriginal peoples and northerners. As part of the commitment, DeBeers will also be hiring two full-time community liaison personnel to serve as a link between DeBeers and the primary employment communities.

In addition to hiring community liaison personnel to assist in the cross-cultural adjustments of mine employment, DeBeers is committed to providing other important types of community skill development programs. The first is the provision of money management training for primary communities for both employees and spouses. Second, they will provide parenting training and family services counseling. The provision of these extra services and programs is seen as an important step to developing a long term commitment to Aboriginal participation in the mining industry.





Training

The mining industry has implemented a range of training initiatives, many in cooperation with partners such as Aurora College, the NWT Ministry of Culture and Education, Human Resources Development Canada, the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and construction contractors. The programs include pre-employment training, apprenticeship, workplace literacy, and academic scholarships.

In 2000, Diavik supported the development and implementation of pre-employment training modules with partners such as Aurora College, GNWT Culture and Education, the mining industry, construction contractors, Human Resources Development Canada and the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The programs established for potential entry level workers included aircraft handling, welders helper, carpentry helper, concrete handler, clerk, plumbing helper crusher helper, camp attendants and mechanics helpers. DeBeers has committed to be a partner in similar pre-employment initiatives.

Ek'ati Services Ltd. has one of the largest apprenticeship programs in the NWT, with a capacity for 30-40 apprentices in trades such as carpenter, plumber and electrician. Nahanni Construction provides training programs to people in Aboriginal communities. In late 2001, Diavik and partners concluded a heavy equipment operator training course in Lutsel K'e. In the same timeframe, they supported a cooking and housekeeping course in Kugluktuk.

At the Ekati mine, there are a total of 92 apprentices enrolled across 12 different trades. Priority in filling apprenticeship positions are given to northern Aboriginal persons. 73% of the apprentices are from the north and 32% are Aboriginal. All warehouse employees are enrolled in the Industrial Warehouse Technician program through Fairview College in Alberta. Full completion of this three-year program will give them certification in this occupation. All entry level employees into the Ekati Processing Plant and Pit Operations follow a progression plan which is designed to fully train them in the different aspects of each of these areas. Milestones are recognized both financially and with certification in these areas. BHP Billiton was instrumental in successfully pursuing the development of the Mill Operation occupation with the GNWT and has given the GNWT full support to develop this program. DeBeers has committed to provide 10 apprentice positions for Aboriginal persons and will set up a mine training program in which 20 positions will be available to Aboriginal individuals.

A full scale Workplace Literacy program is in place at the Ekati mine to meet the needs of employees who have a low literacy level. More than 80 Aboriginal employees are currently participating in this very successful program. In addition, Ekati has received funding from the GNWT to further enhance the program by hiring a third adult educator





to assist Aboriginal employees who are close to meeting the exam requirements to enter the trades. DeBeers has also committed to providing on-site literacy programs for Snap Lake mine employees and work with the NWT and federal governments to encourage continued literacy programs.

In addition to all of the initiatives underway on site, BHP Billiton has given more than 120 individual scholarships.

Northern Business

The target for northern spending for the Ekati™ mine was 28% during the construction phase. During construction Ekati™ exceeded this target achieving 48% northern spending. Cumulative spending through northern owned business from the start of construction to the end of 2003 exceeded \$1.9 billion and represented 74% of total expenditures.

BHP Billiton's expenditures to support operations at Ekati™ mines in calendar year 2003 were \$419 million. Of this amount, 85% was spent on northern and northern aboriginal businesses. In 2003, BHP Billiton's spending through northern aboriginal-owned businesses was \$123 million and represented 29% of total expenditures.

Diavik undertook that throughout the construction phase of the project that at least 38 per cent of the total expenditures, including contractors, would be with northern businesses. The value of contracts during the construction phase from 2000 to 2003 to northern businesses was just over \$874 million or 74 per cent of the value of all committed contracts of \$1,184 million. The northern share of 74 per cent was almost double the objective of 38 per cent that DDMI committed to in the Diavik Socio-Economic Monitoring Agreement. During construction, northern Aboriginal spending was \$604 million, or 51 per cent of the total.

During the operations phase, Diavik set a target of 70 per cent northern for business expenditures. Diavik's operating expenditures in 2003 and 2004 were \$402 million with \$292 million, or 73 per cent, with northern businesses. This also exceeded DDMI's target of 70 per cent committed to in the Diavik Socio-Economic Monitoring Agreement. Some \$145 million, or 36 per cent of the total, was with northern Aboriginal businesses.

During the operations phase in 2003 and 2004, Diavik also spent \$120 million on ongoing capital expenditures. Of this total, \$93 million, or 78 per cent, was with northern businesses. Some \$22 million, or 18 per cent of the total, was with northern Aboriginal businesses.

In summary, over the period 2000 to 2004, total construction and operations expenditures were \$1,706 million. Of this, 74 per cent, or \$1,259 million, was with northern businesses. Some \$771 million, or 45 per cent of the total, was with northern Aboriginal businesses.





Leading the Way with Aboriginal Business

Trucking

Kete Whii, a joint venture between the Yellowknife Dene (25%), the Dogrib Treaty 11 (50%) and the Lutsel K'e Dene (25%), holds a nine year contract for \$30 million to truck kimberlite from the Ekati Misery Pit to the processing plant.

Specialized Explosives Management

Denesoline, wholly-owned by the Lutsel K'e Dene Band, through a joint venture with Calgary-based Western Explosives, provides explosives manufacture, transportation and storage.

Diamond Cutting and Polishing

Deton'Cho Diamonds (50% Yellowknives Dene First Nation) has established diamond cutting and polishing facilities in the NWT.

General Services

Ek'ati Services Ltd, a Yellowknives Dene First Nation (51%) joint venture with Edmonton-based PTI Group, holds the \$4.6 million contract to supply labour, materials, camp management, food, environmental services, accommodation facilities and equipment to the Diavik 650 person construction camp.

Employee Recruitment

NSR Employment Solutions Inc., a wholly-owned company of the Dogrib Rae Band, provides workers for the mining industry. I&D Management Services has the mine labour contract for Diavik.

Manufacturing

In 1999, Diavik awarded a \$1.9 million contract to Northern Transportation Co. Ltd. of Hay River to manufacture fuel storage tanks.

Mine Earthworks

Lac de Gras Contractors, a joint venture between Nuna Logistics (25%) and Peter Kiewit Sons Ltd. (75%), was awarded the \$262 million contract for mine earthworks at the Diavik Project. Nuna Logistics is owned by a number of Inuit companies.





Construction

Metcon, a joint venture between the North Slave Metis Alliance, Tercon Contractors and Rowe's Construction have employed 80 people installing piping at Diavik.

Freight Delivery and Maintenance

Tli Cho Logistics, a Dogrib Rae Band company, has joint ventured with Atco Frontec Services Ltd. to deliver freight to Diavik as well as supply trained staff to maintain the water treatment plant and minesite airstrip.

Diamond Valuation

Diamonds International Canada (DICAN) holds the federal contract for diamond valuation for royalty purposes. DICAN is a Yellowknife-based company that is 51% owned by Aboriginal Diamonds Group (ADG) and 49% owned by WWW International Diamond Consultants Limited. ADG is an equal partnership between Nishi Khon Enterprises Inc. (Dogrib Nation), Deton'Cho Corporation (Yellowknife Dene First Nation), and Kitikmeot Corporation (Kitikmeot Inuit Association).

Professional Services

Nishi Khon Engineering and Environmental Services (51%), a Dogrib Treaty 11 company, and SNC Lavalin (49%), provide engineering, environmental, project management services to the mining industry.

Skilled Labour

Dillon Consulting and Golder Associates, through the Denesoline company, have people from Lutsel K'e as part of their core sampling team. Aboriginal Engineering 1995 Ltd., with over 85% Aboriginal employment, has also provided services to Golder Associates and Diavik.

Looking Forward

The future of the mining industry in northern Canada will be enhanced as the capacity of local communities continues to grow. It is expected that northern communities will have an increasing role in determining the type and speed of developments in the north. The Aboriginal peoples of the north have traditionally practiced sustainable development of their natural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations. As partners, they have welcomed the mining industry from around the globe to share their vision and opportunity.





“The future of our people will depend on the development of our resources and lands. We can no longer rely on trapping as a way of supporting our families and communities. Very few people trap because of many reasons, including the low fur prices and high costs of going out on the land. More and more young people are becoming better educated as time goes on, and we can’t expect them to have a good living trapping.

It just can’t be done anymore.

What we need is to create more jobs that our young people can fill – jobs that are long term. We know these jobs cannot be created just by what’s happening in our communities. Jobs will have to be created by other activities such as mining and other things that are going on outside our homes.

This, we know for sure.

What we really need is stronger corporate capacity and this is where the federal government can really help us in the future.

We are interested in construction, trucking businesses, petroleum distribution enterprises, facility management, catering and aviation, all of which is related to resource development. We need to focus on developments which have the opportunity to create long term wealth for our people.

This is where the government can really work with us.”

*Joe Rabesca
Grand Chief Dogrib First Nation*

