

EA of Mining Projects

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Topics I will address

- The Need and Purpose of a project: Socio-Economic Impact Assessment as integral to EA
- The need for a proper risk-benefit analysis of proposed mining projects
- Voluntary and involuntary stakeholders: time and onus issues
- Problems with the registry and the need for a proper archival retrieval system
- Regional EA: recognizing perpetual care and the need to heal “sacrifice zones”

The Need and Purpose of the project: What's wrong?

- Currently only addresses the market need for the metal
- “Benefits” are based on gross figures for jobs, GDP and “revenues to government”
- Important that sustainability of the environment (and the humans living in it) be the key factor in “Need and Purpose”.
- Cannot be done without a state of the art Social Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA).

Guidance available on SEIA

Until 2006, the Government of Canada was a world leader in SEIA.

- The studies and consultations that led to the Mackenzie Valley Impact Review Board and the Yukon Economic, Environmental and Social Assessment Process are a treasure trove of analysis and guidance
- The Voisey's Bay, Mackenzie Gas, Kemess North Panel Reviews, Whites Point and Prosperity Mine panel review decisions provide important precedents.

The Canadian Handbook on Health Impact Assessment, Volume 3: A Report of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee on Environmental and Occupational Health, 2004

- Detailed guidance on economic and health benefits and risks and its integration into EA.
- A result of over ten years of study and consultation with governments, indigenous organizations, communities and professionals.
- <https://www.scribd.com/document/26192925/Canadian-Handbook-of-HIA-Vol-3-Multidisciplinary-Team-HC-Canada-2004>

The need for a proper risk-benefit analysis of proposed mining projects

- Mining is a waste management industry that most frequently will require maintenance, monitoring and emergency response in perpetuity.
- Short term jobs and GDP (with no debit column) are insufficient to do a risk/benefit analysis of its socio-economic effects
- EA must take into account lost opportunity costs, community values, long-term risk, cultural and social changes
- Voluntary and involuntary stakeholders

Precedents from previous panel decisions

- Whites' Point Quarry at Digby Neck
- Prosperity and New Prosperity
- Kemess North
 - Environmental Stewardship;
 - Economic Benefits and Costs;
 - Social and Cultural Benefits and Costs;
 - Fairness in the Distribution of Benefits and Costs; and
 - Present versus Future Generations

The Registry is broken

- Archived submissions are very difficult to find and/or retrieve, and in fact, many are no longer available.
- Important data and analysis in EA submissions becomes unavailable
- Requires an effective search engine
- Requires oversight of submissions that are refused.

The Need to Heal Sacrifice zones and perpetual care of contaminated places

- Any discussion of regional and strategic EA has to address sacrifice zones.
- Cumulative effects needs to acknowledge inequitable burden of these zones
- Two approaches to the EA of new projects in these areas:
 - The project is considered to be an expansion of an existing project and does not require an EA, or
 - The baseline environmental data is already so debased by pre-existing industrial pollution that the proponent is granted an exemption to water quality objectives, etc.

Flin Flon mercury contamination

