

Restor-Action Nunavik Fund

Context

Many former mineral exploration sites located in northern Quebec were left in need of cleanup and reclamation. This situation created an opportunity to establish partnerships with regional stakeholders so the cleanup work could go ahead and, at the same time, it created employment opportunities for the local population.

The Restor-Action Nunavik Fund was thus created through funding from the Government of Quebec and the financial contributions of participating mining companies. This initiative, which also involves the Kativik Regional Government, was instrumental in the reclamation of several mine sites and in the creation of jobs in the local communities.

Description of Measures Implemented

The Government of Quebec allotted a budget of \$4.1 million to implement Phase I of the Restor-Action Nunavik Fund, which involved the reclamation of major sites between 2007 and 2012. The Kativik Regional Government is responsible for managing and coordinating the cleanup, including the removal of hazardous waste, the combustion or removal of non-toxic waste to a landfill site, and the transportation of heavy equipment to recycling facilities.

The original agreement was extended to 2017, enabling the cleanup of additional sites. Further cleanup operations will be carried out with the funding from the initial government budget as the costs to date have been lower than anticipated.

Results

From 2007 to 2013, the cleanup of most major sites and a few medium-sized sites involved, in particular, the removal of approximately 7 500 barrels, 24 000 litres of diesel fuel, 2 000 litres of motor oil, 250 propane cylinders, 30 pieces of heavy equipment, and 20 tonnes of metal waste. The cleanup operations created 100 seasonal jobs for the local communities. The initiative also led to the following results:

- A positive impact on the environment;
- Local workers gained valuable experience in the cleanup of abandoned mining exploration sites and more general experience that may be transferable to other sectors;
- A feeling of pride among the Inuit communities due to their involvement in the project and in the achievement of positive results; and
- Helped foster a sense of responsibility among land users.



In addition, the Fund has become a reference point in the rehabilitation of abandoned mine sites in Canada and has inspired similar initiatives in other regions of Quebec and in other provinces. It has been awarded the following:

- The Environmental Excellence Award for mineral exploration in Quebec in 2007; and
- The Environmental Excellence Award for mineral exploration in Canada in 2008.

Lessons Learned

The Fund contributes to community readiness by reinforcing the capacities of local populations. The participation of local communities in the cleanup of abandoned mine sites also helps foster confidence among the community in the development of mineral resources.

For more information:

Mine-Site Rehabilitation Branch

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