



# Action Plan 2005

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## Status Report

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Reports on the activities of working groups arising from Action Plan 2005 of the Mines Ministers' Conference submitted for consideration at the 63rd Mines Ministers' Conference

**Whitehorse, Yukon • August 2006**



# Introduction

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The Status Reports contained hereunder reflect the actions taken on the major issues affecting the mining industry in Canada under the direction of the provincial, territorial and federal Ministers of Mines at the Mines Ministers' Conference 2005.

The reports were prepared either by working groups established by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Mineral Industry (IGWG) or by officials responsible for a specific issue. Therefore, the views contained in the reports do not necessarily reflect those of IGWG as a whole.

Enquiries about these reports should be directed to:

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# National Orphaned/Abandoned Mines Initiative in Canada

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*Ministers agreed to encourage respective federal/provincial/territorial audit and finance officials to participate in the November workshop.*

*Ministers endorsed the ongoing work of the National Orphaned/Abandoned Mines Initiative (NOAMI), in particular the development of:*

- *a portal site for a national inventory for inactive mine sites, and*
- *recommendations for the development of policies/legislation with respect to orphaned/abandoned mine-site remediation.*

*Ministers agreed to continue financial support for the work of NOAMI.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The legacy of orphaned/abandoned mines (O/AMs), with the associated environmental liability, human health concerns and the financial costs of clean-up, continues to be a serious issue facing Canada and all Canadians.

Since 2002, Mines Ministers have signaled their commitment to address this serious issue with continued support for the National Orphaned/Abandoned Mines Initiative (NOAMI). NOAMI is a unique cooperative Canadian program that is guided by an advisory committee consisting of the mining industry, federal/provincial/territorial governments, environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS) and Aboriginal Canadians.

The committee's role is to assess key issues and put forward recommendations to Mines Ministers concerning collaborative approaches and partnerships in the implementation of remediation programs for orphaned and abandoned mine sites in Canada. At their annual meeting in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, in 2005, Ministers agreed to support the ongoing activities of NOAMI as outlined in its detailed work plan (2004), as long as human and financial resources permit.

More specifically, Ministers agreed to encourage their respective federal/provincial/territorial audit and finance officials to participate in the November 2005 NOAMI-sponsored Assessing Liabilities and Funding Options workshop. They also agreed to the development of a portal site for a national inventory of inactive mine sites, and recommended the development of policies/legislation with respect to orphaned/abandoned mine-site remediation.

## **INTERIM RESULTS**

A mandate was given to the Mineral and Mining Statistics Division of Natural Resources Canada to develop a working model of the national inventory. To date, the database is in the process of being populated and currently contains orphaned and abandoned mines data from several jurisdictions (i.e., Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba, the Yukon and Northwest Territories). The database is intended to be Web-enabled and will be demonstrated in 2006.

A report on all legislation relevant to the remediation of orphaned/abandoned mine sites is currently in final review by federal/provincial/territorial agencies responsible for various legislative jurisdictions. Once complete, the report will include a synthesis of the jurisdictional analyses, including an assessment of gaps, limitations, barriers to and opportunities for remediation, along with a summary of observations. The completed review is to be released in late 2006 in CD-ROM format.

In November 2005, NOAMI hosted a multi-stakeholder workshop on Assessing Liabilities and Funding Options. Key themes of technical site assessments, accounting for and reporting on liabilities, assessing community and health impacts, and funding options were examined through Canadian and international case studies and panel presentations. A roll-up discussion summarized the highlights of the discussions on each of the key themes and identified gaps and future priorities for NOAMI. These recommendations will help to develop terms of reference for the assessment, reporting on and funding of liabilities associated with O/AMs. Workshop proceedings are posted on the NOAMI web site ([www.abandoned-mines.org](http://www.abandoned-mines.org)).

One recommendation from the workshop was the production of a guidance document on funding options. This would be a resource document for use by jurisdictions across Canada to help guide the establishment of potential funding options for the remediation of O/AMs. This work has been commissioned and a summary document has been produced.

In October 2006, NOAMI will host a workshop in Winnipeg on Orphaned/Abandoned Mines: A Workshop to Explore Best Practices. The premise of the workshop is to explore and understand the best existing, emerging and innovative practices relating to the management of orphaned/abandoned mines.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ministers agree to encourage their respective jurisdictions to integrate (if they have not already done so) their datasets to produce a nation-wide inventory.

Ministers endorse the ongoing work of NOAMI, in particular the development of:

- a guidance document to guide jurisdictions in the establishment of potential funding options for the remediation of O/AMs; and
- a “toolkit” of best practices, based on results from the Winnipeg 2006 workshop, to address the legacy issues associated with the management of orphaned/abandoned mine sites.

Ministers continue to financially support the NOAMI workplan.