

Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency



Communications Plan

Version 1.0 (October 2011)



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BACKGROUND

The Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency (the Agency or IEMA) was established in January 1997 under the *Environmental Agreement* for the Ekati diamond mine. This document was negotiated to ensure that BHP Billiton (BHPB) and the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories (NWT) respect and protect the land, water, wildlife and land-based way of life essential to the Aboriginal Peoples of the area.

The Agency was incorporated as a non-profit society under the *Societies Act* of the Northwest Territories in February 1997. Society members include the three Parties to the *Environmental Agreement*: BHPB, Government of Canada, and Government of the NWT, who jointly appoint three of the Directors. As well, it includes the four Aboriginal groups whose traditional territory includes the Ekati area, each of whom appoints one Director: Tłıchǫ Government (formerly referred to as Dogrib Treaty 11 Council), Akaitcho Treaty 8 (specifically Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation), Kitikmeot Inuit Association and North Slave Métis Alliance.

The Agency began development of a Communications Plan in 2010. A background paper (also available from the Agency) was prepared which outlined the Agency's communications responsibilities and protocols, such as its mandate as stated in the *Environmental Agreement*. Agency policies and procedures, recommendations from external reviews conducted in 2000 and 2009, and recommendations from Society members (primarily given at Annual General Meetings) from 1997 to 2010 were also documented.

Work on the Communications Plan continued throughout 2010-11. Current Agency communications initiatives were summarized, including progress on recommendations. Key messages were reviewed, communications objectives and outcomes were defined, and options for improving existing tools and products were examined along with potential new ideas.

This Communications Plan will allow the Agency to review initiatives, evaluate their effectiveness, respond to suggested improvements, and focus on priorities to ensure the Agency continues to fulfill its mandate.



KEY MESSAGES, TARGET AUDIENCES AND INFLUENCES

KEY MESSAGES

What does the Agency wish to communicate?

The Agency's slogan is "A public watchdog for environmental management at Ekati diamond mine". Other key messages include:

- The Agency is independent of BHPB, governments and regulators.
- The Agency makes recommendations to BHPB, governments and regulators to best protect the environment at Ekati.
- The Agency strives to have a constructive relationship with BHPB, governments and regulators and to work together to best protect the environment at Ekati.
- The Agency is an important source of information for communities and the general public on environmental issues at Ekati.
- The Agency encourages input from communities and the public on environmental management at Ekati, and conveys input and concerns to BHPB, governments and regulators.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Who does the Agency need and want to communicate with?

The target audiences, listed in priority order, are as follows:

- Society members
- Aboriginal organizations (e.g. Land and Environment Committees)
- Regulatory authorities and policy makers
- Internal (Directors and staff)
- Other diamond mine environmental monitoring agencies
- General public (e.g., media, academic organizations)

INFLUENCES

Which factors influence how the Agency will or can communicate?

These include but are not limited to:

- The Agency has a limited budget and human resource capacity. The Agency's mandate requires a balance between the review of technical documents and community consultation and engagement activities.



- Community and Aboriginal organizations are faced with numerous other priorities and a high workload.
- Many of the regulatory and other processes have short timelines for the preparation of comments. It is not always possible for the Agency to communicate its position on issues in time to provide assistance to other organizations preparing comments of their own.
- There is a wide variation among target audiences in terms of technical knowledge, English literacy skills (oral and written), and computer skills. Agency information needs to be provided in a wide variety of formats to meet the needs of these audiences.
- Ever-changing technology requires the Agency to continually evaluate the effectiveness of its communications methods.

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The Agency wishes to achieve the following objectives and outcomes through its communication activities:

1. Active and empowered Directors and staff

- Directors and staff have the tools in hand to communicate IEMA activities
- Directors and staff have the information, in appropriate form, to answer Ekati- related questions
- Directors and staff enjoy a positive public profile
- Directors and staff support IEMA initiatives

2. Informed communities

- Affected communities are informed about Ekati including:
 - the state of the environment at Ekati
 - how to access information about Ekati
- Affected communities are informed about IEMA including:
 - IEMA's role in watching BHPB, governments and regulatory bodies
 - IEMA's assessment of BHPB's monitoring reports
 - IEMA activities, including activities involving communities
 - IEMA's mandate
 - the Environmental Agreement
 - how to access information about IEMA and the Agency's expertise and knowledge
 - how to reach Directors and staff

3. Informed parties (BHPB, regulators, government agencies)

- Parties recognize IEMA's role and understand IEMA's priorities
- Parties have access to the Agency's expertise and knowledge



4. Informed public

- The public is informed about Ekati including:
 - the state of the environment at Ekati
 - how to access information about Ekati

- The public is informed about IEMA including:
 - IEMA's role in watching BHPB, governments and regulatory bodies
 - IEMA's assessment of BHPB's monitoring reports
 - IEMA activities
 - IEMA's mandate
 - the Environmental Agreement
 - how to access information about IEMA and the Agency's expertise and knowledge
 - how to reach Directors and staff

TOOLS AND PRODUCTS

Communication tools and products used by the Agency involve all written, spoken and electronic interactions with audiences including but not limited to: periodic print publications, online communications, meetings, workshops, media releases, legal documents, internal Board and staff communications, corporate identity materials such as the Agency logos and letterheads, annual reports, signage, and promotional materials.

The tools and products currently used by the Agency are:

- **Public registry and resource library** in the Yellowknife office of all Ekati-related materials such as:
 - Environmental assessment documents and transcripts
 - *Environmental Agreement*, Agency policies and bylaws
 - Annual reports, meeting materials, newsletters, and brochures
 - Incoming and outgoing correspondence
 - BHPB-produced reports, studies, management plans, maps, etc.
 - Government and regulator-produced reports and documents
 - Photos taken during site visits to the Ekati mine

- **Technical reports and reviews**
 - Interventions at public hearings and other legal/regulatory processes respecting Ekati environmental matters
 - Technical reviews of BHPB reports, studies and plans (e.g. Environmental Impact Report, Environmental Agreement and Water Licence Annual Report, environmental monitoring program reports, etc.)



- Commissioning and release of independent peer reviews related to BHPB reports, studies and plans
- Distribution of Agency comments to Society members in advance of deadlines, where possible, to allow groups to benefit from Agency expertise when preparing their own comments
- **Print and/or electronic publications**
 - Annual Report with recommendations published in technical and plain language versions as well as a summary brochure (wide distribution including brochures as unaddressed ad mail)
 - “Ekati Monitor” newsletter, published twice per year and including updates on Agency activities, contact information, and photos (distributed in hard copy to Society member communities, e-mailed to distribution list, available in office and on website)
 - Summary brochures after community visits, providing photos and details of topics discussed (distributed in hard copy to community, available in office and on website)
 - Summaries of discussion for Board of Directors’ meetings (full versions available in office and on website, short summaries distributed by e-mail to Society members)
 - Presentations tailored to specific topics, forums and audiences (amounts of visuals vs. text and technical details vary depending on the type of information to be communicated, audience and presenter)
 - An up to date master list of acronyms compiled from Annual Reports (available in office and on website)
 - An up to date glossary of technical terms compiled from Annual Reports (available in office and on website)
- **Online/electronic communications**
 - A well maintained website with information on Ekati and Agency activities, correspondence and essential documents, biographies of staff and Directors, etc.
 - A web-based Ekati Timeline, a visual presentation of significant Ekati events (operations, regulatory and environmental) with documents, photos and links to additional information
 - An up to date distribution list for Agency correspondence
 - Responses to information requests from researchers, students and other members of the general public
 - Photos taken during site visits to the Ekati mine (available in office and on website)
- **Meetings**
 - Annual General Meeting with invitations to all Society members, government representatives, and regulatory agencies
 - Regular Board meetings held in Yellowknife



- Regular correspondence and meetings with BHPB, Wek'èezhìi Land and Water Board (WLWB) staff and the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) inspector for Ekati
 - Participation on the Inter-Agency Coordinating Team (IACT), including preparation of meeting summaries (posted on the website)
 - Participation in *Environmental Agreement* implementation meetings twice yearly (as specified in the 2006 Resolution Agreement)
 - Collaborative work with Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board (EMAB) and Snap Lake Environmental Monitoring Agency (SLEMA), e.g. on diamond mine wildlife monitoring program review
 - Ensuring that translation services for Aboriginal languages are available at all Agency-sponsored events
 - Providing copies of Annual Reports, brochures, and promotional materials at meetings
- **Community visits**
 - Community visits which typically involve meetings with environment staff and committees, meetings with leadership, presentations at local schools, and a public meeting with refreshments provided
 - Special emphasis placed on reporting back to communities on actions taken on priority items, as well as following up on any requests for information
 - At least one Board meeting per year is held in a community other than Yellowknife
 - Director visits to communities (upon request) to provide updates on Agency activities and environmental issues at Ekati
 - Ensuring that translation services for Aboriginal languages are available at all Agency-sponsored events
 - Providing copies of Annual Reports, brochures, and promotional materials during community visits
- **Workshops and conferences**
 - Annual environmental workshops to discuss results of BHPB environmental monitoring programs and provide feedback for the upcoming year (hosted by BHPB every third year in conjunction with release of the Environmental Impact Report, and by the Agency in other years)
 - Attendance and presentations at conferences, workshops, and other organizations' events
 - Ensuring that translation services for Aboriginal languages are available at all Agency-sponsored events
 - Providing copies of Annual Reports, brochures, and promotional materials at workshops and conferences



- **Corporate identity materials**
 - Distinctive logos (wolverine image and paw prints) printed on all published materials, correspondence papers, and promotional items
 - Promotional items (caps, water bottles, mugs, pens, etc.) available in the office and distributed at community meetings and Agency-sponsored events
 - Agency poster in plain language detailing “Who We Are”, “What We Do”, and “The Key Issues” (displayed in large format in the office and in community buildings, as well as posted on the website)
 - Contact information (physical and mailing addresses, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses) for the Yellowknife office and the Board of Directors, posted on the website and on all printed materials

- **Internal Board and staff communications** (e-mail and telephone)

- **Other**
 - Christmas open house, hosted jointly with EMAB and SLEMA

EVALUATION AND REVISION

The success of communications initiatives will be evaluated annually through internal Board planning sessions, and based on feedback from Society members and the general public. Specific evaluation tools such as surveys or questionnaires will be developed if required.

New communications tools and products, as well as improvements to existing tools and products, will be considered with a cost-benefit analysis. Revisions to the plan will be completed annually as required.

