

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	4.0	Community Relations
Sub Program:	4.1	Developing Framework Agreements
Template:	4.1.4	Athabasca Working Group
Sponsor(s):	<i>COGEMA Resources Inc., Cameco Corporation, and the Athabaskan communities in Saskatchewan</i>	

1. Objective

To establish a process for managing the concerns identified by Aboriginal and other northern communities and sharing in the benefits resulting from development of the mining industry in the region.

2. Description

The Athabasca Working Group (AWG) is comprised of representatives of Saskatchewan's uranium mining companies (COGEMA Resources Inc. and Cameco Corporation) and the seven Athabasca communities. This group created the Impact Management Agreement signed in 1999 that covers such issues as employment, training and business development, environmental protection, and benefits to the communities. The AWG also provides a forum for communicating and discussing issues and for building long-term trust. The program relates specifically to the McClean Lake, Cigar Lake and Rabbit Lake mines. Funding is provided by the mining project partners, primarily Cameco and COGEMA.

3. Implementation

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are:

- **Environmental protection and monitoring:** The companies commit to taking all reasonable measures required to prevent emissions and agree to compensate residents who suffer losses as a result of any emissions.
- **Employment:** The companies commit, for example, to filling all job vacancies with residents as long as suitable candidates are available; to ensuring that the education, qualification and/or experience requirements for job vacancies are set to reasonable standards so as to maximize the potential for local hiring; and to providing a summary of project recruitment activities and those of permanent contractors to the AWG on a quarterly basis. The communities commit, among other things, to ensuring access to a full high school program for residents; to cooperating in establishing career counselling services in the region; and to implementing stay-in-school programs. The parties agree to cooperate in development of programs to assist employees in job retention. The companies shall sponsor an employee relations counsellor to act as a liaison between the

communities and the companies and to be responsible for providing support to employees and their families.

- **Training:** The parties agree to cooperate in identifying future training needs in the region and ensuring that pre-employment training for residents is timely and effective. The companies commit to providing qualified residents priority access to all trade apprenticeships and to providing on-the-job training opportunities to facilitate advancement of those residents seeking job promotions.
- **Business development:** The parties commit to cooperating in and cost-sharing a study of business opportunities in the region, with an emphasis on potential businesses that can provide support to the mining industry. The companies commit to giving special consideration to existing contractors located within the region, and will work with potential new contractors to assist them to develop viable businesses that can provide services to the companies. The companies will also consider legitimate and viable contract opportunities for residents that may be available through fragmentation of their current and future in-house operations and, where possible and reasonable, will support the development of a regional business infrastructure.
- **Benefit-sharing:** These initiatives are intended to enhance the educational, training, health, cultural, recreational and economic development of the region. There are a number of specific commitments made on:
 - Education: summer employment, scholarships, education awards to recognize achievement, cultural camps (to support cultural retention by school-age children)
 - Skills training: training using the operating site facilities, work placements, special apprenticeships, supervisory development
 - Health: sponsoring initiatives to support community and family wellness, donations and fundraising for the new Stony Rapids health care facility
 - Culture: support for cultural events, language retention, elder counsellors, and the Pine Channel Retreat on Lake Athabasca
 - Recreation: support for recreation facility development, sponsorship of recreation and sport development and events
 - Economic development: agreement by the companies to underwrite the costs of conducting a business study (Athabasca Regional Business Study) that will focus on opportunities that provide direct support to the companies' operations and areas of business that could be made viable in the region through the creative intervention of the companies.

4. Timeframe for Results

The AWG was established in 1993 and the Impact Management Agreement was signed in 1999. The AWG produces an annual report on its activities and results achieved from implementation of the Impact Management Agreement.

5. Measurable Criteria

The Impact Management Agreement sets out a number of commitments and best effort undertakings that are reported on a quarterly or annual basis. These include:

- Company and contractor employment
- Multi-party training plan participants
- Apprentices, summer student employment, post-secondary scholarships
- Student awards, donations and sponsorships

6. Budget

All costs for the AWG are sponsored by the companies including an employee relations counsellor, environmental studies, community representative expenses, training and other expenses associated with developing and implementing the Impact Management Agreement.

7. Partners and Sponsors

COGEMA Resources, Cameco Corporation, Black Lake Denesuline First Nation, Northern Settlement of Camsell Portage, Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation, Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation, Northern Hamlet of Stony Rapids, Northern Settlement of Wollaston Lake and Northern Settlement of Uranium City.

8. Experience with the Program

The parties generally see the program as building effective consultation and positive relationships between the mining industry and communities in the region. The industry reports significant results in employing locally and developing local business. Cameco, for example, reports that over 40 per cent of its mine site workforce in 2002 was of Aboriginal ancestry. Cameco has a “buy northern Saskatchewan” policy that resulted in the company spending \$50 million in northern Saskatchewan goods and services in 2002 including almost 60 per cent of all service contracts. COGEMA reports that 39 per cent of its mine site workforce in 2002 was of Aboriginal ancestry and \$17 million in expenditures for goods and services went to northern Saskatchewan-based businesses under its northern tendering policy.

9. General Applicability

This program is generally applicable to resource industries with a relatively stable “footprint” and provides a framework within which to negotiate industrial benefits and impact mitigation on a regional basis. As well, the specific program elements may be of interest to companies wanting to develop less comprehensive agreements.

10. Additional Information or Support

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