

The Mining for Development Initiative — harnessing Australia's expertise

For many years, mining has been an important part of Australia's development as a nation. The sector has operated in a stable regulatory environment and has been backed by a highly-skilled workforce, sophisticated education and training systems, and policies that promote the principles of environmental responsibility and sustainable development.

The mining sector makes a major contribution to Australia's economic and social growth and development. For example, mining contributed more than \$113 billion to Australia's wealth in 2010–11 and employed more than 220 000 Australians, many of whom live in remote and regional areas.

The success of Australia's mining sector has been made possible by world-class geological information that encourages investment in mining exploration and development. A highly skilled workforce, supported by leading education and training institutions, is another strength. So too are Australia's laws, policies and regulations which seek to balance the interests of miners with other land users, ensuring the environment is handled responsibly and with respect, and that the mining industry remains sustainable. Importantly, Australia's mining sector operates with respect for the rights and wishes of this country's Indigenous people.

The Mining for Development Initiative is a collaboration between the Australian Government and some of the country's leading academic institutions, the mining industry and non-government organisations. It has been designed to work in partnership with developing countries, as well as non-government organisations, other donors, and development institutions.

The Mining for Development Initiative has six components.

1 International Mining for Development Centre

The International Mining for Development Centre provides assistance on a broad range of issues in the mining, oil and petroleum sectors.

Through the centre, developing countries have access to education and training, as well as technical and other advice.

The centre will build capacity in three core themes through the provision of short course training in Australia and overseas, through fellowships in Australia, through mentoring and building the capacity of local institutions, through publishing guides and tools, and through conference and alumni events and support.

Governance and regulation: the governance and regulation of mining sectors in developing countries should garner and deploy resource rents in a safe, healthy, and socially and environmentally responsible way.

Community and environmental sustainability: there is a significant opportunity to make significant contributions to local and regional development, before, during and after mine operations.

Operational effectiveness and safety: the generation and management of public knowledge on mining is essential; including the generation of exploration information and management of exploration processes using appropriate technology and tools.

The centre is hosted by the Energy and Minerals Institute at the University of Western Australia in partnership with the Sustainable Minerals Institute at the University of Queensland.



Dr Stuart Bull (from the ARC Centre of Excellence in Ore Deposits) explaining drill core logging to geologists at Kinsevere, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Australian Government has provided financial support to the West African Exploration Initiative managed by AMIRA International. Aid program support is aimed at improving the capacity of four universities in West Africa to undertake mining-related research and teaching including in geosciences (photo courtesy of Dr Alan Goode, AMIRA International)



Above: Photo courtesy of Peter Garside from GARSIDEIMAGES WA

2 Engaging with communities

A Community and Social Development Program will support non-government organisations and multilateral organisations that foster social and environmental responsibility in mining in developing countries.

The program will help identify and manage the impacts of mining on the community, identify opportunities for community participation, encourage community engagement in decision making and help the benefits of mining to be shared among all members of the community.

3 Bringing international best practice to the table

Through an Economic Capacity Building Program, Australia will provide technical assistance to developing countries to strengthen their mining approvals, regulations and macroeconomic policy frameworks. The program will also provide support for negotiating contracts with industry.

This component will be delivered through existing partnerships such as with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

4 Promoting transparency

Australia will continue to support developing countries to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) which increases the transparency of transactions between governments and companies operating in this sector. This involves publishing payments made by companies to governments and publishing all revenues received by governments from the extractives industry.

EITI is an international coalition of countries, donors and multilateral organisations, extractive industry companies, investors and civil society. Australia is, and will continue to be, a leading supporter of EITI through its funding and its membership on the board.

5 Supporting partnerships

Through a Government Linkages Program, Australian federal and state government authorities and universities will work with counterparts in developing countries to improve their skills in areas such as mining regulation and administration for the long term.

Operations in the mining sector are capital-intensive and investors look for long-term investment opportunities. They are attracted to opportunities backed by sound legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks designed around fairness and stability—frameworks that protect the interests of the country, community and environment.

These frameworks are critical as they are the primary means by which governments can maximise social and environmental benefits and minimise and manage costs.

6 Building skills and knowledge

As part of the broader Australia Awards scholarships program, Australian Mining Awards will provide scholarships to post graduate and undergraduate students in fields such as engineering, geosciences, public administration and finance, community and environmental management, resource economics, and regulation and governance.

The awards will promote knowledge, education links and enduring ties between Australia and developing countries.



NGIS Australia training manager, Nathan Eaton, works with an Australia Award participant in Burkina Faso. NGIS Australia staff travelled to Africa as a follow up to a short-course program on geospatial information systems run for participants from Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Liberia and Mozambique (photo courtesy of NGIS Australia).



The University of Western Australia's Centre for Offshore Foundation Systems houses the only centrifuge modelling facility in Australia, photo courtesy of UWA.