

PLANNING FOR CLOSURE

THE IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT OF THE MMSD PROJECT

BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING MEETING

There are important reasons to start talking now about how any positive outcomes from the MMSD project might be practically implemented. Among these are:

- It is questionable how much of the project's resources should be committed to lines of research or analysis in the absence of some sense that we can do something practical about the problems we are studying. In other words, we want to identify the areas where clear mechanisms of change are visible and concentrate resources there.
- It is questionable how long the various actors are likely to stay engaged unless they see that the project is serious about change. Starting now is a way to ensure that the project does not end with the "what" without addressing the "how."
- There is a whole separate body of knowledge about the "how" questions, which deserves to be developed, understood, and synthesized for the project purposes. We are looking at a project with multiple and potentially quite different outputs and we need to develop a variety of possible tools to carry these results forward.
- The project may be able to create a certain amount of momentum on some issues. Once a consensus is reached on what the problem is, that momentum can be lost in some protracted discussion of what tools to use to do the job. Previously identified tools to implement the solutions need to be ready for the problems that are found.

WHY AN IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT IS IMPORTANT

The objectives of the MMSD project include becoming a positive driver of change in the way some things are currently done. Since the various actors in and around the mining and minerals industry all play a part in the way that things are now, we presume that *all of them have a role in the transition toward greater sustainability*, and that *all of them will have to adapt* to ensure that transition is successful. These actors are interlocked in a complex social matrix, changes in the way one set of participants functions will therefore probably be dependant of simultaneous changes in the way other actors function.

During the life of the project, we have planned an ongoing set of activities under the heading "implementation."

The purpose of this implementation element is to supply a concrete and practical link between identified opportunities or problems and the concrete processes which can change the way the relevant actors behave in ways which reduce or eliminate the problem, or which take advantage of opportunities.

Without this element, MMSD runs the risk of becoming “just another study”, rather than a process of change, telling us for example that artisanal mining in the Amazon Basin is causing environmental problems, but without setting in motion the forces to address them.

MMSD has the capability to do research and analysis for change, to identify and understand issues. It also has a major stakeholder engagement component, capable of bringing together the relevant actors in that process.

The implementation component is what links the analysis and the stakeholders behind not just the “what” needs to be done but the concrete and practical “how” that can happen.

GENERAL CONCEPTS

MMSD envisions that it will be not a single monolithic process but a series of interlinked and related activities which address different aspects of the sustainability challenge. The output will not be a single product, but a heterogeneous series of products. It may well be therefore that the best approach to ongoing implementation of one project element may *not* be the best way to implement the outcomes of other project elements. We envision that many different actors will have to take a role in implementation. Yet the means appropriate to one may not be appropriate for others. MMSD is intended to be responsive to many different stakeholders.

Given the diversity of stakeholders, actors, and outputs, the project’s best approach is to look carefully at the range of potential mechanisms for implementing the outcomes of the project, whether they are standards, identification of best practice, certification systems, financial incentives, negotiated stakeholder agreements, or any of a dozen or more other approaches which have been suggested by one or another party in one or another circumstance.

We intend to start by a planning meeting looking at this issue in a general sense, before any specific outcomes or results of the project processes become clear.

Once this has been done, meetings will be held during the last quarter of 2000 with small groups from each of the different stakeholder communities separately to gauge their reactions, ideas and preferences. The next step will depend on this reaction, but is currently envisioned to be a multi-stakeholder workshop in late 2000 or early 2001.

The ultimate goal is that as each of the issue driven processes started by MMSD begins to yield results, the discussion of implementation mechanisms will begin to merge with these more substantive discussions so that the ultimate result has the opportunity to become:

- A set of clear and focussed ideas of the type of change which should occur and the different tools to bring about these types of changes
- Backed by solid and rigorous analysis
- Understood and supported by a variety of stakeholders
- With a clear and agreed path to practical and effective systems of implementation