



## Mining Companies Recognized for Excellence in Responsible Mining

**OTTAWA, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024** – The Mining Association of Canada’s (MAC) [Community of Interest Advisory Panel](#) has selected Rio Tinto IOC, Agnico Eagle’s Laronde Mine, and Eldorado Gold’s Lamaque Mine, to receive this year’s prestigious [Towards Sustainable Mining®](#) (TSM) Excellence Awards. The three projects were recognized this week at the CIM Awards Gala in Vancouver.

“Mining companies recognized by the TSM Excellence Awards represent the best of the best when it comes to exemplary responsible practices and strong commitments to ESG,” said Pierre Gratton, MAC’s President and CEO. “Our industry has a particularly important role to play in ensuring the minerals and metals needed for the technologies we rely on are readily available and it is essential that they be mined using the highest standards in the world, like TSM.”

A mandatory component of MAC membership, TSM is driving performance improvement across a range of social and environmental issues where it matters most — at the mine site level. This focus on mine site performance makes TSM a go-to system for investors and manufacturers looking to invest in and purchase responsibly mined materials. A national independent Community of Interest Advisory Panel oversees the program, including representatives from Indigenous communities, environmental organizations, labour, finance, local mining communities, social and faith-based organizations and academia.

TSM performance is evaluated across a set of detailed environmental and social performance standards, including tailings management, climate change, water stewardship, Indigenous and community relationships, safety and health, biodiversity conservation, equity, diversity, and inclusion, crisis management and preventing child and forced labour.

“We are proud that TSM, a made-in-Canada standard, is now being implemented by 14 mining associations around the world, making it the most widespread ESG program of its kind,” said Gratton. “We applaud the work being done by this year’s Excellence Award winners as it showcases the positive results that can be achieved when environmental stewardship and community engagement are prioritized.”

Established in 2014, the [TSM Excellence Awards](#) include the TSM Environmental Excellence Award and the TSM Community Engagement Excellence Award. To be eligible for the awards, mining companies must be actively implementing TSM and demonstrate exceptional achievements in environmental and/or community engagement. The Community of Interest Advisory Panel provides guidance and advice on the development and implementation of TSM and selects the winners of the TSM Excellence Awards.

### **2024 TSM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER –Eldorado Gold Planning for Social Closure at Lamaque**

Advanced planning to address the social impacts of a mine closure is a nascent practice. While the profound social impacts that a mine’s closure can have on communities are well-known, they are often not addressed until the mine is nearing the end of its operating life.

Eldorado Gold Québec is demonstrating exceptional forethought and proactivity in the development of its mine closure plan for the Complexe Minier Lamaque. Despite the fact that the mine’s operating life is projected to be

at least 8 more years, the company has already drawn up an action and public participation plan for the social aspects related to the closure of its Lamaque mine.

A working group has been created, with a mandate to establish the vision, identify the risks and opportunities to be considered, create an action plan and identify measurable success factors for the six planning components identified by the Monitoring Committee: Community Contributions, Future Site Uses, Employment and Lifestyle, Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation, Landscape and Heritage, and Safety.

Eldorado is welcoming the active involvement of all stakeholders, including local communities, employees, regional authorities, and environmental groups, at a very early stage in its planning process, enabling various viewpoints to be considered and ensuring that all decisions are acceptable and beneficial to all parties.

Eldorado's early approach to the social closure of Lamaque is an exemplary practice for all mine operators to include social considerations in reclamation and rehabilitation plans.

### **2024 TSM ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD WINNER – Filtered Tailings Management at Agnico Eagle's Laronde Mine**

Since its inception in 1988, the LaRonde Mining Complex had been utilizing slurry tailings deposition, reaching maximum storage capacity over the years. Seeking additional storage space became imperative, leading to the launch of a transformative project. The transition to filtered tailings management was aimed at addressing environmental concerns, while also ensuring operational efficiency and community well-being.

A comprehensive comparative study conducted by a dedicated task force assessed various storage approaches, considering operational, investment, and rehabilitation costs. All factors combined, even though the capital investment was higher, the transition to filtered tailings emerged as the most viable option on the long term. The transition to filtered tailings represents a paradigm shift in mining practices. Notably, the LaRonde Complex stands as the first Canadian mine to complete the transition of stacking tailings on top of slurry beaches inside of existing tailings storage facilities, thereby minimizing its environmental footprint.

Key innovations include the utilization of waste rock between the filtered tailings and the slurry beaches to reinforce them. This process eliminates the need for costly ground improvement measures. Additionally, a storage basin was built to store process water and manage rainfall, eliminating the need to store large quantities of water in the tailings pond, and thereby reducing associated risks. Finally, filtered tailings can also be repurposed, for example, to facilitate the reclamation of old tailings storage facilities, enhance progressive rehabilitation or be used as backfill material.

Stakeholder engagement emerged as a driving factor of success with this project, with Agnico Eagle actively involving community representatives and regulatory bodies throughout the project lifecycle. This collaborative approach fostered transparency and ensured that sustainability goals were aligned with local concerns and regulatory requirements.

While each mining site presents unique challenges, the success of the LaRonde Complex project underscores the potential for broader applicability. By considering operational costs, as well as rehabilitation and environmental factors, mines worldwide can explore similar transitions to filtered tailings management.

## **2024 TSM ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD - Rio Tinto IOC - Abandoned Site Rehabilitation Partnership: Nitassinan Cleanup**

In partnership with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI), IOC is helping to clean up old outfitting facilities and legacy dumpsites on Nitassinan, the ancestral homeland of the Innu. By using IOC rail cars to recover and transport the discarded materials along the 418-km stretch of QNS&L Railway to Sept-Îles, Rio Tinto has found a unique way to rebuild lasting relationships with members of the Uashat Mak-Mani Utenam community and offer an expanded approach to environmental reclamation and remediation.

As part of this project, FNQLSDI environmental specialists, members of the Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam community and machinery operators are dismantling decommissioned buildings and infrastructure and cleaning up abandoned sites and facilities. The goal is to restore the land as close to its original state as possible. The team at QNS&L Railway, which is owned by IOC, handles the logistics of transporting the materials and provides all the necessary equipment.

Once the FNQLSDI team has prepared the materials, the QNS&L team loads the materials into railway cars for shipment by train to Sept-Îles. IOC's Environment Department ensures the materials are transported and disposed of in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations (e.g., by providing collection containers). The safe transport and disposal of residual hazardous materials is all handled free of charge.

The QNS&L railway is the only link between Sept-Îles and northern communities, both for passenger services (Tshiuetin Rail Transportation) and the transportation of goods and ore. The railway is also the only overland route into Nitassinan. It's a very busy railway and adding this type of project to the already complex logistics during the summer maintenance period requires significant coordination between the various teams, particularly since the equipment used for recovery and transportation is generally used only for the railway maintenance program.

Rio Tinto IOC's role in the FNQLSDI's program for the restoration of abandoned sites meets well defined goals for Indigenous communities, particularly that of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam. It increases the company's understanding of Innu land use and traditional knowledge and allows IOC to build connections and deepen relationships with various communities of interest.

Building strong collaborative relationships in a context that extends beyond IOC's regular operations has been a key component in the creation and maintenance of trusted relationships with communities. Rio Tinto believes that all mining companies have a role to play and need to broadly support their local communities, even if that means stepping outside the usual framework.

For more information about the TSM Excellence Awards and past winners, please visit [www.mining.ca/tsm-excellence-awards](http://www.mining.ca/tsm-excellence-awards).

*The mining industry is a major sector of Canada's economy, contributing \$161 billion to the national GDP and is responsible for 21 percent of Canada's total domestic exports. Canada's mining sector employs 694,000 people directly and indirectly across the country. The industry is proportionally the largest private sector employer of Indigenous peoples in Canada and a major customer of Indigenous-owned businesses.*

## **About MAC**

The Mining Association of Canada is the national organization for the Canadian mining industry. Its members account for most of Canada's production of base and precious metals, uranium, diamonds, metallurgical coal, mined oil sands and industrial minerals and are actively engaged in mineral exploration, mining, smelting, refining and semi-fabrication. Please visit [www.mining.ca](http://www.mining.ca).

-30-

**For more information, please contact:**

Paul Hébert, Vice President, Communications

613.292.2876

[phebert@mining.ca](mailto:phebert@mining.ca)