

MINING NETWORK

HOW ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IS INTEGRATED IN MINING MANAGEMENT, IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVEMENT

Nickel industry in New Caledonia is the country's main resource.

Although mining methods became less polluting for the environment in the 1970s site rehabilitation is still in its infancy..

This rehabilitation includes the revegetation of vast areas with very severe ecological constraints (granulometry, slope, nature and heterogeneity of the substrate, climate,etc.).

The adopted approach consists in planting a resistant perennial vegetation of native species, most of which are endemic to the country and found in mining areas. It involves adapting proven revegetation techniques to the local edaphic and bioclimatic conditions and requires setting up a chain for the large scale production of these species .

This experiment illustrates an ecological approach that, of necessity, includes a desire by the local population to be involved.

The current mining projects development is expected to give a strong interest to research issues, in order to implement more efficient restoration programmes.

The papers presented by the New Caledonian scientists and engineers and their guests during the 6-8th November 2002 seminars in Noumea showed a great concern by all the countries represented for environment and social issues and the opportunity to collaborate .

The others key issues and principles proposed during this session was to show a similar down to earth approach in certain areas to solve difficult site problems and the possibility for these countries to set up and share best practices principles in environment management.

The next meeting organised by the Australian Committee for PECC in November this year , will be the opportunity to pursue and finish this topic and propose new ways of sustainable development for the mining network.

Mining and local communities

Integration of mining activities in their local socio-economic environment is paramount for the success of any new mining project and the stability of their ongoing operations.

The New Caledonia mining operators and Project sponsors have based their development on a specific approach to the local communities in a context where the local regulations do not put any specific obligation on them. Recognising

the need to address in a dedicated manners the issues of jobs and training, economic development and environment monitoring, companies have sought to enter into good neighbour agreements with established and representative entities, combining these existing under the context of the legal framework of local Provinces and local Municipalities with these representative of the customary traditions such as the “ Senat Coutumier” and the tribal “grands chefs”. The next meeting of the PECC should provide mining companies with an opportunity to exchange their experiences and benchmark themselves against world practices