

Community Consultation

A Guide for Prospectors and Mineral Exploration Companies Working in Nova Scotia



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Introduction

The exploration phase of the mining cycle offers the earliest opportunity to begin the process of working to achieve a social license for mineral resource development. Working to make your project part of the community at the exploration stage is a wiser business decision than attempting to impose your project on a resistant community later on. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and resources to assist prospectors and exploration companies with community consultation. The document is not intended to be a step-by-step guide, but it does outline in general terms the Nova Scotia government's expectations for when and how exploration companies engage with individuals and communities.

This document provides no guidance with respect to consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, and is not intended to replace existing consultation processes. To obtain more detailed information about best practices for engagement with the Mi'kmaq please contact the Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

Why Should I Consult?

Beginning the process of community consultation before disputes arise is the right thing for prospectors and exploration companies to do and it makes good business sense. Being able to advise potential investors that you are using leading practices for community engagement adds value to your project.





What Are the Goals of Consultation?

- Learn about the community and understand its values
- Identify concerns and work with communities and individuals to develop solutions

What Are the Community Values that I Should Understand?

Community values can be broadly included under the following four categories:

- General quality of life values (e.g. desire for peace and quiet),
- Recreational values (e.g. snowmobiling, camping, hiking, golf course, shooting range),
- Environmental values (e.g. water supply, wilderness areas, air quality), and
- Community development values (e.g. residential development, industrial development, retirement community).

Who Should I Consult With and When?

Any person or community that is affected by or interested in your project is a potential candidate for consultation. For the purposes of this document we define a community as a group of people with common interests and shared values. Under this definition it is not only the persons that live in the exploration area that define a community. For example the Nova Scotia Salmon Association, Ecology Action Centre and Mining Association of Nova Scotia are all “communities of interest/special interest groups” that could potentially wish to be consulted.

Who you consult with and when depends on the impact that the exploration activity will have on a community. Table 1 categorizes the various impact levels of exploration on the basis of the scale of operations, effect on the community and types of activities. As the scale, effects and intensity of exploration increase, so does the need for higher levels of consultation (see Appendix 1 for more detail).

Table 1. Definition of exploration impact levels based on scale, impact and types of activities.

	Definition of Exploration Impact Levels		
	Low	Intermediate	High
<i>Scale</i>	Small crew (1-3) undertaking work Short duration (days to weeks) Low visibility (work restricted to limited area)	Moderate size survey crew (4 - 10) Longer duration (weeks to months) Moderate visibility (regional survey(s), crew staying in the community for extended period)	Large crew (10 +) Long-term duration (months to years) A lot of work focused in a specific location (i.e. no longer a regional program)
<i>Effects and Issues</i>	Minimal land disturbance No concerns expressed by landowners	Low level of land disturbance Work is on lands that have important (non-mineral related) economic, environmental or social values Concerns are being expressed by community or landowners	Moderate to high disturbance (drilling to define resource, trenching, test pits) Work is being undertaken on lands that have important (non-mineral related) economic, environmental or social values Concerns are being expressed by community or landowners Likelihood of project proceeding to development is moderate to high
<i>Types of Activities</i>	Walking the ground Sampling Panning	Mapping program Geophysical surveys Large-scale sampling programs Limited drilling and trenching	Significant drill program Road construction Significant trenching Site clearance

Irrespective of the impact of the planned activity you must always obtain landowner permission before undertaking any work and you should always contact the local Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (NSDNR) office. For low-level prospecting activities, getting landowner permission and contacting the local DNR office is usually sufficient. Staff members that work in NSDNR offices live in the community and can be a great source of guidance regarding who you should speak with. Municipal officials (e.g. community planners and municipal councilors) and the local MLA should be consulted if the scale of the project grows to include more detailed surveys and a significant presence in the community. Advanced exploration projects that include drilling and trenching typically require that you expand your consultation to include local community groups, communities of interest and the broader geographic community.

Table 2 provides an overview of who to consult based on the impact of an exploration project on a community.

What Are Some of the Mechanisms that I Can Use for Community Consultation?

- Face-to-face meetings with individuals and groups
- Supplementary information provided through brochures and web-based information

Table 2. Who to consult based on the exploration program's level of impact.

Consultation Guide for Mineral Exploration Based on Impact Levels			
	Low	Intermediate	High
<i>Who to consult</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Landowner(s) •Local DNR Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Landowner(s) •Local DNR Office •Municipality (municipal councilor and/ or planner) •Member of Legislative Assembly •General geographic community •Local community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Landowner(s) •Local DNR Office •Municipality (municipal councilor and/ or planner) •Member of Legislative Assembly •General geographic community •Local community groups •Communities of interest

What Are the Basic Principals for Successful Consultation?

- Begin the process of consultation early, before concerns arise
- Keep your promises; manage expectations
- Learn about the community. What are their values? Identify who you should consult.
- Have a consultation plan and the resources required to execute the plan
- Seek the assistance of experts when necessary
- Continue the consultation process throughout the project
- Be honest and open about your project
- Be inclusive
- Always respect community values

What to Avoid?

- Promoting unrealistic expectations about the potential benefits of your project
- Only consulting with those who you feel will support you

Where Can I Get the Information that I Require for Developing a Community Engagement Plan?

The following is a list of some of the organizations that can provide you with information that will help guide your engagement planning:

Ecology Action Centre: <http://www.ecologyaction.ca/>

Mining Association of Nova Scotia: <http://tmans.ca/>

Municipal offices: <http://novascotia.ca/snsmr/municipal/government/contact.asp>

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources: <http://novascotia.ca/natr/>

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources field offices: <http://novascotia.ca/natr/staffdir/offices.asp>

Nova Scotia Environment: <http://novascotia.ca/nse/>

Nova Scotia Environmental Network: <http://www.nsen.ca/>



Nova Scotia Nature Trust: <http://www.nsnt.ca/>

Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs: <http://novascotia.ca/abor/office/>

Sierra Club Atlantic: <http://atlantic.sierraclub.ca/>

Where Can I Find More Information about Community Consultation?

There are abundant resources available online that discuss how to achieve effective community consultation. The three references listed below provide a good starting point.

PDAC e3 Plus- A Framework for Community Consultation

The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's e3 Plus Program was developed to help exploration companies improve their social, environmental, and health and safety performance, and to comprehensively integrate these three aspects in to all their exploration programs. The program provides a comprehensive review and discussion of best practices for community engagement related to mineral exploration.

<http://www.pdac.ca/e3plus/English/toolkits/sr/index.aspx>

<http://www.pdac.ca/pdf-viewer?doc=/docs/default-source/e3-plus---principles/engage-host-communities-and-other-affected-and-interested-parties.pdf>

Canadian Wind Energy Association: Best Practices for Community Engagement and Public Consultation

Although this document focuses on consultation for wind energy, the suggested principals and practices are applicable to mineral exploration.

<http://www.canwea.ca/pdf/canwea-communityengagement-report-e-final-web.pdf>

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

The IAP2's mission is to advance and extend the practice of public participation in decisions relating to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public interest. Their website has some very useful tools that can assist with community consultation. The IAP2 also offers courses on community consultation.

<http://www.iap2.org/>

http://iap2.affiniscape.com/associations/4748/files/06Dec_Toolbox.pdf

http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf

<http://iap2canada.ca/>

Where Can I Find More Information about Consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia?

Proponents' Guide: Engagement with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs has prepared a proponents, guide for engagement with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. The guide provides practical assistance to companies considering development or other activities that may impact Mi'kmaq interests in Nova Scotia.

<http://novascotia.ca/abor/docs/Proponents%20Guide%20November%202011%20ecopy.pdf>

Acknowledgments

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Appendix 1

Recommended Elements of Community Consultation for Each Exploration Impact Level

Low Impact

- Research community values
- Obtain landowner(s) permission. Provide a description of the planned activities, a map showing where you will be working, and contact information.
- Inform the local DNR field office when and where work will be undertaken
- Notify the local DNR office when the work is completed

Intermediate Impact:

- Research community values
- Ensure that a project description is made available to the local DNR field office, landowners, the municipality, community groups and property owners before the intended start date. The project description does not need to be detailed but it should outline the type(s) and general location(s) of the activities you will be undertaking.
- Provide a means for individuals, the municipality and community groups to comment on your project. Preferably this would be done through community meetings.
- Keep a record of community consultation activities, comments and concerns as well as mitigation efforts and results
- Engage with the community to learn about their values and mitigate any concerns and impacts
- Inform the local DNR field office and the community when the work has been completed

High Impact:

- Research community values
- Ensure that a detailed description of the planned activities is provided to the local DNR field office, landowners, the municipality, community groups and property owners before the intended start date. The project description should outline where you will be working and how you plan to mitigate any potential negative impacts caused by these activities.
- Host community meetings to identify concerns, seek input and discuss potential impacts of your project. At this point you should be including communities of interest in addition to groups located within the geographic community.
- Create a publicly accessible website and post regular updates about project status
- Establish a formal Community Advisory Committee
- Keep a record of community consultation activities, comments and concerns as well as mitigation efforts and results
- Continue to work with the community to mitigate any concerns and impacts