

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	4.0	Community Relations
Sub Program:	4.2	Building and Sustaining Positive Community Relationships
Template:	4.2.3	Community Vitality Monitoring
Sponsor(s)	<i>COGEMA Resources Inc. and Cameco Corporation and Government of Saskatchewan</i>	

Objective

To monitor and manage the impact of mining on the vitality (social well-being and quality of life) in northern Saskatchewan communities.

Description

The surface leases for uranium mining projects in northern Saskatchewan require the companies to participate in a community vitality monitoring program. The scope and definition of the program are developed on a partnership basis with the Northern Mining Monitoring Secretariat, northern regional Health Boards and other northern organizations.

The work of the Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership Process began in late 1998 to show that monitoring information related to mining impacts and other community influences can be used to address and act upon issues of priority to northern communities. The goal is to identify and track indicators that provide insight into community vitality such that stakeholders can use that knowledge to improve and maintain the quality of life in northern communities.

“Companies spend millions on monitoring the environment but hardly anything on impact of activities on communities.”

The concept of community vitality deals with the social well-being and quality of life experienced by northern residents and how a community could respond to change such as those that may be caused by an industrial project. In general, community vitality requires adequate formal services, a strong network of social supports, effective political leadership and a viable local economy that is both diverse and resilient.

Northerners identified five priority areas for research and potential program support: environment and land, economic/social infrastructure, health, communication dynamics and relationships, and special topics such as youth, out migration and poverty.

Implementation

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are set out below:

- The key principles underlying the program are:

- a) community vitality should be monitored;
 - b) the monitoring should be as a collaborative partnership of stakeholders (industry, northern communities, northern agencies, etc.);
 - c) monitoring is a developing process of addressing issues of concern rather than simply collecting information; and
 - d) this process can help to build research in the north.
- the Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership Process is managed by a committee of major stakeholders called the Community Vitality Coordinating Committee. The direction set by the Coordinating Committee is that information should contribute to resolution of issues and not be collected for its own sake;
 - the first project completed in 2000 was a study of outmigration which looked at the dynamics associated with northern residents leaving the north to live in southern urban communities. Northern communities, the Saskatchewan government and the uranium mining companies were partners in this project;
 - more recently, the program focused on youth and healthy foods including a survey on the costs of healthy store-bought foods in northern Saskatchewan. Other potential projects include looking into social indicators and investigating the potential of workplace wellness programs to promote healthy lifestyles at home;
 - at a Community Vitality Youth Workshop in 2002, a vision statement was adopted that said “we may not be able to change the world, but we can change our communities by starting with ourselves.”
 - Youth focus groups throughout the north and another Youth Workshop and follow-up activities took place in 2004-2005

Timeframe for Results

The program started in 1998 and will be reviewed in 2003 to assess the program’s effectiveness and direction.

Measurable Criteria

These include:

- providing information related to uranium mining impacts on community vitality that is useful to northern community stakeholders;
- facilitating partnerships that work cooperatively on specific community vitality monitoring activities of common interest;
- developing communication activities that assist northern communities to use monitoring information; and
- applying the monitoring information by northern community stakeholders to improve and maintain the quality of life in northern Saskatchewan. An annual report is prepared on the activities and results achieved under the program.

Budget

COGEMA Resources and Cameco Corporation fund the activities of the Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership Process. The Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat, the northern Regional Health Authorities, Environmental Quality Committees and other northern organizations also provide assistance.

Partners and Sponsors

COGEMA Resources, Cameco Corporation, Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat, northern Regional Health Authorities, Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority and Saskatchewan Health.

Experience with the Program

The activities have generally focused on long range projects involving a number of communities and agencies. This has been important in order to provide meaningful results and the flexibility to use the approach that best suits the needs of northern Saskatchewan communities.

General Applicability

This program may be of interest where resource companies and Aboriginal communities agree to work together to monitor changes in social well-being and quality of life caused by an industrial project, and use this information to address issues of priority to these communities.

Additional Information or Support

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