

GETTING THE DEAL THROUGH

# Mining

in 28 jurisdictions worldwide

# 2014

Contributing editors: Michael Bourassa and John Turner



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**Mining 2014**

**Contributing editors:  
Michael Bourassa and John Turner  
Fasken Martineau**

*Getting the Deal Through* is delighted to publish the fully revised and updated tenth edition of *Mining*, a volume in our series of annual reports, which provide international analysis in key areas of law and policy for corporate counsel, cross-border legal practitioners and business people.

Following the format adopted throughout the series, the same key questions are answered by leading practitioners in each of the 28 jurisdictions featured.

Every effort has been made to ensure that matters of concern to readers are covered. However, specific legal advice should always be sought from experienced local advisers. *Getting the Deal Through* publications are updated annually in print. Please ensure you are referring to the latest print edition or to the online version at [www.gettingthedealthrough.com](http://www.gettingthedealthrough.com).

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**Getting the Deal Through**

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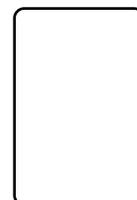
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# Canada

Michael Bourassa and John Turner\*

Fasken Martineau

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## Mining industry

- 1** What is the nature and importance of the mining industry in your country?

Mining accounts for a significant portion of Canada's economy. Natural Resources Canada pegged domestic mineral production at C\$45.9 billion in 2012, with production value declining 5 per cent to C\$43.6 billion in 2013.

The Canadian mining industry employs more than 387,000 people in mineral extraction and related support activities, smelting, fabrication and manufacturing. It also accounts for more than half of Canada's rail freight revenues and high portions of the country's port and marine revenues.

Canada's mining and exploration companies are also dominant players in the global mining industry. Canadian companies have interests in over 9,000 properties in more than 100 countries, including projects held domestically and those in locations such as the USA, South America, Africa, Australasia and Europe. Canadian mining companies' assets abroad total an unprecedented C\$148.7 billion.

Close to 60 per cent of the world's public mining companies are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) and the TSX-Venture Exchange (TSX-Venture), with 73 new mining listings in 2013. In the last five years (2009 to 2013) 44 per cent of global mining equity financings value was raised on the TSX and the TSX-Venture, while in 2013 they handled 46 per cent of financing transactions.

- 2** What are the target minerals?

Canada is a leading global producer of several minerals and metals, ranking at the top in the global production of potash, and is a major producer of primary aluminum, cobalt, diamonds, molybdenum, nickel, platinum group metals, salt, titanium concentrate, uranium, and zinc. Key exports include aluminum, nickel, copper, gold, uranium, coal, potash, zinc, iron ore and steel.

- 3** Which regions are most active?

All provinces and territories produce minerals, but Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Saskatchewan are the largest producers.

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## Legal and regulatory structure

- 4** Is the legal system civil or common law-based?

Canada's legal roots are firmly entrenched in the systems of its founding nations: England and France. The federal government, nine of the 10 provinces, and the three northern territories have adopted a common law legal system similar to the common law systems in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia.

Quebec has adopted a civil law system (Civil Code) similar to the legal system used throughout most of Europe, Asia, South America and parts of Africa.

- 5** How is the mining industry regulated?

Canada's legal, regulatory and policy environment promotes mineral exploration, mining operations and investment. Mining law is divided between the federal and provincial governments. Ownership of lands and minerals generally belongs to the province in which they are situated. The provinces have jurisdiction over mineral exploration, development, conservation and management. The federal government shares jurisdiction with the provinces on some related matters (for example, taxation and the environment) and has exclusive jurisdiction over areas such as exports, foreign investment controls and nuclear matters.

The exception is uranium, which is a strategic mineral regulated by federal laws. Exploration is a provincial matter, but the federal government regulates all downstream aspects, including mining and milling, processing, transporting and export of uranium.

- 6** What are the principal laws that regulate the mining industry? What are the principal regulatory bodies that administer those laws?

Federal and provincial legislation affecting mining operations tends to fall into two main categories. The first relates to the essentially private matters of title and taxation, while the second concerns economic, social and environmental policies. Significant decision-making powers are delegated to subordinate bodies or officers to deal with the complexity of the various matters dealt with under the second category.

Each province and territory has its own laws regulating mining activity (with varied names such as Mineral Act, Mining Act, Mineral Resources Act, and Mineral Exploration and Tenure Act). Some provinces have recently amended their legislation to reflect current attitudes related to sustainable development and consultation with aboriginal communities (for example, the November 2012 regulations to Ontario's amended Mining Act and the new regime which came into force on 1 April 2013).

Federal and provincial or territorial laws and regulations related to environmental protection, labour and employment relationships, occupational health and safety matters, etc, also apply to mining activities.

- 7** What classification system does the mining industry use for reporting mineral resources and mineral reserves?

Canada adheres to the CIM Standards (Canada), which were adopted in 2005 to establish definitions and guidelines for the reporting of exploration information, mineral resources and mineral reserves in Canada. They are incorporated by reference into the Canadian Securities Administrators' National Instrument 43-101 (NI 43-101), which sets the standards for all technical public disclosure for mineral projects. Mining companies listed on the TSX and TSX-Venture must comply with NI 43-101. The CIM is a member of the Committee for Mineral Reserves International Reporting

Standards and the CIM Standards are consistent with other members: Australia, Chile (National Committee), South Africa, USA, UK (National Committee) and Western Europe.

### Mining rights and title

**8** To what extent does the state control mining rights in your jurisdiction? Can those rights be granted to private parties and to what extent will they have title to minerals in the ground? Are there large areas where the mining rights are held privately or which belong to the owner of the surface rights? Is there a separate legal regime or process for third parties to obtain mining rights in those areas?

All lands and minerals that have not been granted to private persons are owned by the Crown (which in Canada refers to either the federal or provincial government in the name of Her Majesty the Queen). Ownership rights to these 'Crown minerals' are vested by the Canadian Constitution in the province where the minerals are located. The federal government owns minerals underlying reservations for aboriginal peoples, national parks and other federally owned lands (for example, certain public harbours), and in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and underlying Canada's territorial sea and continental shelf.

Rights to Crown minerals are obtained through mining statutes (see question 6), often by staking claims, performing assessment work and then obtaining leases or similar forms of tenure to conduct mining operations. The provincial governments (and in some cases the federal government) set out operating terms and conditions on alienated Crown mineral lands and impose taxes and royalties. The contractual capacity of the Crown as owner provides a means by which governments supplement their authority as legislators.

Once private parties obtain the rights to Crown minerals through the legislated leasing process, such minerals are held by the private party for the tenure of the lease. Subject to compliance with general laws and in some instances, obtaining government consents, the leases can be encumbered for security purposes in financings, transferred and renewed.

There are significant areas where mining rights are privately held, either because of land grants made in the 1800s and early 1900s when mining rights were attached to surface right grants; or earlier mining legislation that provided for grants of 'freehold' tenure or outright ownership of mineral rights. In those instances, if a company is interested in acquiring rights to explore or develop such private lands, it is a matter of private negotiation with the owner. Mining activities on those lands are subject to the same environmental, labour and other laws as activities conducted on Crown leases.

**9** What information and data is publicly available to private parties that wish to engage in exploration and other mining activities? Is there an agency which collects mineral assessment reports from private parties? Must private parties file mineral assessment reports? Does the agency or the government conduct geoscience surveys which become part of the database? Is the database available online?

Information and data related to exploration and mining activities in Canada is available through:

- provincial and territorial mining recorders' offices – these provide services related to staking ownership and mining claim maintenance, including receiving 'assessment work' reports and filings of exploration activities;
- provincial geological surveys – most provinces gather geological information, and may conduct broad ground or aerial surveys and publish maps, reports and digital data on geology and other technical information (eg, [www.geologyontario.mndm.gov.on.ca](http://www.geologyontario.mndm.gov.on.ca));

- provincial and territorial land title and registry offices – these record information about the title of leasehold and freehold property (including minerals). This information is available (usually online) for a fee; and
- Natural Resources Canada – publishes Commodity Reviews ([www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/markets/commodity-reviews/8360](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/markets/commodity-reviews/8360)) and maintains a detailed listing of Canada's operating mines and mineral processing facilities ([www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials)).

**10** What mining rights may private parties acquire? How are these acquired? What obligations does the rights holder have? If exploration or reconnaissance licences are granted, does such tenure give the holder an automatic or preferential right to acquire a mining licence? What are the requirements to convert to a mining licence?

Prospectors can explore 'open' Crown lands with a prospecting permit and can 'stake' the mineral rights if the land has not already been staked and recorded by another party. These rights are acquired on a first come, first served basis. Land can be staked on the ground through traditional methods (namely, cutting claim posts and blazing claim lines) but the provinces are moving towards 'map staking' where claims are delineated online and located through global positioning system technology.

Mining claims that are staked and recorded are generally referred to as 'unpatented mining claims' and are subject to certain payments and assessment work obligations. Failure to meet such requirements on an annual basis can result in automatic forfeiture of the claim and the area will become open for staking by others (a 'use it or lose it'-type regime). The conversion of an unpatented mining claim to a lease varies by province, but generally can be done after a specified assessment work requirement has been met (the need for a discovery prior to lease conversion is no longer required in most provinces). No other party can acquire a mining lease over the particular area other than the unpatented claim holder. Leases are usually for 21 years or longer with an opportunity to renew if mining activity is occurring or if it can be shown that the lessee is committed to developing the mineral potential on the leased area.

**11** What is the regime for the renewal and transfer of mineral licences?

In most provinces unpatented mining claims can be transferred by filing a simple transfer form and paying a fee to the government. The transfer and new owner would then be noted on the abstract for the mining claim. For lease transfers, consent of the government may be required from the particular mining department (eg, in Ontario, Section 81(14) of the Mining Act restricts transfer of a lease until the consent of the Minister of Mines is obtained).

**12** Is there any distinction in law or practice between the mining rights that may be acquired by domestic parties and those that may be acquired by foreign parties?

There is no distinction in Canada between the acquisition of mining rights by domestic parties and by foreign parties.

**13** How are mining rights protected? Are foreign arbitration awards in respect of domestic mining disputes freely enforceable in your jurisdiction?

Mining rights are protected by independent administrative tribunals. Appeals from these tribunals' decisions lie with the Canadian courts. Mineral tenures are generally granted by Canada's free-entry mining system, which limits the government's involvement in disputes over mining rights. In all other situations, the exercise of governmental

discretion over mining rights and disputes is subject to the rules of Canadian administrative law.

The provinces have broad jurisdiction over most international arbitrations and have passed legislation governing the conduct and enforcement of international arbitral proceedings. Canada's federal Commercial Arbitration Act applies to arbitrations involving the federal Crown and Crown-owned corporations as well as to maritime and admiralty matters. In 1986, Canada adopted the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration and signed the United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (the New York Convention). Canada signed the International Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID Convention) in December 2006. After a seven-year delay, Canada ratified the ICSID Convention on 1 November 2013 and it came into force on 1 December 2013.

**14** What surface rights may private parties acquire? How are these rights acquired?

In all but some very remote parts of Canada, the Crown lands available through the claim-staking and leasing process consist only of the mining rights because the surface rights are owned privately by another party. The owner of the mining rights is nevertheless entitled to conduct exploration and even mining activities on the leasehold interest, subject to compensation to the surface rights owner. Disputes arising in these situations can be settled through special tribunals (for example, the Mining and Lands Commissioner in Ontario) or through the courts. However, a mining rights lessee would be well advised to negotiate the acquisition of the surface rights privately.

**15** Does the government or do state agencies have the right to participate in mining projects? Is there a local listing requirement for the project company?

Governments do not participate in mining projects in Canada and limit their role to one of regulation.

**16** Are there provisions in law dealing with government expropriation of licences? What are the compensation provisions?

There are general statutes dealing with expropriation in Canada which provide for compensation. Mining tenure cannot be expropriated or cancelled unilaterally by governments. Instances of expropriation might include land needed for transportation corridors (road and rail), transmission lines and parkland.

**17** Are any areas designated as protected areas within your jurisdiction and which are off-limits or specially regulated?

Responsibility for environmental protection, including setting aside areas as parks and other forms of protection from development, is shared by the federal and provincial or territorial governments. Local governments can also protect certain areas from development by creating parks or specifically protected areas, or by limiting development through the enactment of by-laws and official community plans. Development is restricted according to the level of protection assigned to a protected area.

As of 2012, 10 per cent (over 1 million km<sup>2</sup>) of Canada's terrestrial area and 0.7 per cent of Canada's marine territory is protected, most of which (93 per cent) is 'strictly protected' (meaning it is included in parks or other areas protected by law). Larger protected areas are typically located in northern Canada.

Canada is contributing to the 2010 target set by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to protect at least 17 per cent of terrestrial areas and inland waters and at least 10 per cent of marine areas by 2020.

## Duties, royalties and taxes

**18** What duties, royalties and taxes are payable by private parties carrying on mining activities? Are these revenue-based or profit-based?

Corporations carrying on mining activities in Canada are subject to the general income tax rules applicable to all corporations. Federal income tax is levied under the Income Tax Act (Canada); the provinces and territories also have their own income tax statutes. A number of unique tax measures and rules also apply specifically to Canada's mining industry.

As a general matter royalties and mining taxes are imposed separately from income taxes by the province or territory in which the minerals are mined. The rates and basis for calculation of royalties and mining taxes vary depending upon the type of mineral and the jurisdiction. In some jurisdictions, many minerals are not subject to provincial mining taxes or royalties. In other jurisdictions, the mining tax is levied on the basis of a progressive-rate system based on the mining profits or value of output, depending upon the particular jurisdiction. When the tax is computed by reference to mining profits, the rules for computing mining profits generally differ significantly from those applicable for income tax purposes. In many cases, an attempt is made to roughly calculate the mining profits at the pithead by permitting a processing allowance.

**19** What tax advantages and incentives are available to private parties carrying on mining activities?

Recognising that mining is a highly cyclical and capital-intensive industry with a long lead time between initial investment and commercial production, the income tax systems and provincial mining taxes provide a generous treatment of exploration and other intangible expenses. They allow mining companies to recover most of their initial capital investment before paying a significant amount of taxes.

Canada's Income Tax Act segregates exploration and development expenses into various pools and permits deductions for the pools in a specified order. The classification of an expense into a particular pool depends upon the date the expense was incurred, the nature of the expense, and certain other considerations. Precise rules govern how these exemptions can be calculated:

- Canadian Exploration Expenses (CEE) – expenses incurred to determine the existence, location, extent or quality of a mineral resource in Canada and expenses incurred prior to the commencement of commercial production to bring a new mine into production;
- Canadian Development Expenses (CDE) – expenses incurred prior to the commencement of commercial production to bring a Canadian mineral resource into commercial production;
- earned depletion allowance – certain depletion allowances are permitted as deductions from income since mineral resources are wasting assets;
- purchase and sale of resource properties – the cost of acquiring a Canadian resource property is generally deductible on an annual 30 per cent declining balance basis as a CDE; and
- flow-through shares – corporations carrying out exploration in Canada can pass on the deduction associated with certain types of expenses to shareholders by issuing flow-through shares.

Most machinery, equipment and structures used to produce income from a mine or an oil or gas project are currently eligible for a capital cost allowance (CCA) rate of 25 per cent on a declining-balance basis.

In addition to the regular 25 per cent CCA deduction, accelerated CCA is provided for certain assets acquired for use in new mines or eligible mine expansions. The accelerated CCA takes the form of an additional allowance that supplements the regular CCA deduction.

The Income Tax Act was amended (subsequent to Budget measures released on 21 March 2013 as part of the Budget 2013), to phase out the additional allowance available for mining (other than for bituminous sands and oil shale, for which the phase-out will be complete in 2015). The additional allowance will be phased out over the 2017 to 2020 calendar years. A taxpayer will be allowed to claim a percentage of the amount of the additional allowance otherwise permitted under the existing rules according to the following schedule:

Transition schedule						
Year	2013–2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	After 2020
Percentage	100%	90%	80%	60%	30%	–

The definition of CEE in the Income Tax Act was amended in accordance with Budget measures announced as part of Budget 2013, to gradually remove certain pre-production mine development expenses from the definition of CEE and gradually treat such expenses as CDE.

**20** Does any legislation provide for tax stabilisation or are there tax stabilisation agreements in force?

Canada does not have legislation for tax stabilisation and no tax stabilisation agreements are in force.

**21** Is the government entitled to a carried interest, or a free carried interest in mining projects?

That is not the practice in Canada. The federal and provincial governments do not get involved by holding any interests in mining projects.

**22** Are there any transfer taxes or capital gains imposed regarding the transfer of licences?

Canadian residents are subject to income tax on gains arising from the transfer of leasehold interests.

**23** Is there any distinction between the duties, royalties and taxes payable by domestic parties and those payable by foreign parties?

Canadian residents are subject to tax on their worldwide income. A non-resident of Canada is subject to Canadian income tax on income from employment exercised in Canada, income from carrying on business in Canada, and gains arising from the disposition of 'taxable Canadian property', which includes any interest in resource properties in Canada. A non-resident corporation that carries on business in Canada is also liable to pay branch taxes equal to 25 per cent of its profits, to the extent such profits are not reinvested in the Canadian business.

Certain types of property income paid to a non-resident by a Canadian resident (including rents and royalties) are subject to 25 per cent non-resident withholding tax. Canadian income taxes payable by a non-resident of Canada may be reduced or be eligible for exemptions under an applicable tax treaty. In some provinces, there is potential for non-residents to be subject to land transfer taxes and equivalent duties on the acquisition of mining properties in Canada at tax rates that are higher than those imposed on Canadian residents.

## Business structures

**24** What are the principal business structures used by private parties carrying on mining activities?

Canada's open, free-market economy allows for a wide range of business structures and forms, including corporations, partnerships, limited partnerships, joint ventures and trusts.

Corporations are popular with offshore investors because they are relatively simple to establish, can grow with the business, and offer flexibility in terms of business and tax planning. Corporations can be incorporated under the federal Canada Business Corporations Act or the laws of a province (each province has its own business corporations legislation).

Offshore investors typically prefer to carry on business in Canada through a Canadian subsidiary because of concerns about limited liability, privacy, creditor protection and a local preference for dealing with a Canadian company. Financing options from Canadian lenders tend to be more favourable for locally incorporated subsidiaries compared to branch offices of foreign business concerns.

**25** Is there a requirement that a local entity be a party to the transaction?

There is no such requirement, although for tax planning or other reasons, a foreign entity may choose to conduct Canadian activities through a local entity.

**26** Are there jurisdictions with favourable bilateral investment treaties or tax treaties with your jurisdiction through which foreign entities will commonly structure their operations in your jurisdiction?

Canada has developed an extensive network of bilateral and multilateral free trade and investment protection treaties, together with a network of double taxation agreements to promote and encourage foreign investment in the Canadian mining sector.

Canada is an original member of the World Trade Organization and is a signatory to numerous bilateral and multilateral free-trade agreements most of which contain both trade and investment protection provisions. The most notable is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the USA and Mexico. Canada has nine other free-trade agreements (FTAs) that are in force. In October 2013, Canadian and EU officials announced they had reached an agreement in principle on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). CETA will contain a chapter protecting investors and their investments in Canada and the EU. While the final text has yet to be concluded, senior officials on both sides of the Atlantic predict that it may come into force as early as 2015. In March 2014, after almost 10 years of negotiations, Canada finally signed an FTA with South Korea. The agreement is broad, covering much more than simply trade in goods, and it contains a chapter protecting South Korean and Canadian investors and their investments in the other Party's country.

While Canada's FTA template calls for the inclusion of investor protection provisions in all such agreements, Canada has also concluded stand-alone foreign investment and protection agreements (FIPAs) with 40 countries, 26 of which are in force. It is currently negotiating FIPAs with 11 additional countries including India, Indonesia and Vietnam. In late 2012, Canada concluded a FIPA with China, however, the agreement has yet to come into force.

Canada has 90 bilateral taxation treaties with other countries, eight treaties that are under negotiation or re-negotiation, and 11 treaties signed but not yet in force. Such treaties are generally based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) model tax convention and alleviate double taxation of companies doing business in both jurisdictions. Among treaties of interest for foreign investors in the Canadian mining sector are the

Canada–Barbados Double Taxation Agreement signed in 1980 and the Canada–Cyprus Double Taxation Agreement signed in 1984.

### Financing

**27** What are the principal sources of financing available to private parties carrying on mining activities? What role does the domestic public securities market play in financing the mining industry?

At the exploration stage, mining activities not financed by ‘grub-stakers’ (a term used by Canada’s mining industry for private funds) or under a farm-in arrangement are often financed by the issuance of common shares (stock exchange listed or otherwise), the sale of limited partnership units, or the sale of flow-through shares.

At the extraction stage, financing is more frequently by debt instruments, which are often in the form of syndicated loans from chartered banks or their overseas agencies. Some production financing is also done by means of business unit, unit issuance, production payments, advances against the purchase price and royalties.

**28** Please describe the regime for taking security over mining interests

The land registry and title regimes are regulated by province and are similar in many respects. The following is an example from Ontario – in respect of patented freehold and leasehold title, the land registry system governs title and registration matters. A lender can take security over the subject property and register a mortgage, charge or debenture against the subject property in the relevant land registry office by submitting a mortgage, charge or debenture electronically together with the requisite fee. Under the Mining Act (Ontario), there is an additional requirement in connection with charging leasehold interests. Prior to registration, a lender is required to submit a full copy of the executed mortgage, charge or debenture together with the requisite fee and confirmation that all rents have been paid to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) and obtain the consent of the Minister or an officer duly authorised by the Minister prior to registration of a mortgage or charge over the subject leasehold property. The consent process generally takes between four and six weeks. In respect of unpatented mining claims, a lender can record a mortgage/charge or debenture over the subject property with MNDM by submitting a fully executed copy of the mortgage/charge or debenture together with the requisite fee.

### Restrictions

**29** What restrictions are imposed on the importation of machinery and equipment or services required in connection with exploration and extraction?

Canada does not control or restrict the importation of industrial machinery or equipment. Most goods from most countries of origin can be imported upon the payment of the applicable customs duties and taxes. As a general rule, the applicable customs duties are relatively low or, in many cases, no duty is assessed. The exact amount of duty payable is a function of the classification of the equipment and its value.

Anyone importing goods into Canada must register with Canada Border Services Agency to obtain an importer number. A non-resident can register and can act as the importer of record into Canada.

Foreign workers coming to perform work in Canada require permits from the Federal Government and, if coming to provide services in the Province of Quebec, an authorisation from the latter. The requirements vary depending on the nature of the work and the nationality or country of permanent residence of the incoming worker. Qualified technical workers are exempted from the requirement to obtain a work permit if they come temporarily to perform particular work in association with the sale of equipment

to a Canadian company. Certain professionals from countries with which Canada has signed a free-trade agreement, such as NAFTA, benefit from facilitative provisions to obtain work permits.

**30** What restrictions are imposed on the processing, export or sale of minerals? Are there any export quotas, licensing or other mechanisms that prevent producers from freely exporting their production?

Some provinces require extracted minerals to be processed domestically, notably in Canada by Ontario’s Mining Act (section 91), and in-province by Newfoundland’s Mineral Act (sections 31(5) and 31.1) and as a requirement of the lease.

In the absence of legislation, some provinces may attempt to negotiate processing requirements for a specific period of time as part of the general approvals process.

**31** What restrictions are imposed on the import of funds for exploration and extraction or the use of the proceeds from the export or sale of minerals?

Canada imposes no controls on the import or export of capital and no repatriation, domestic use or export performance requirements.

### Environment

**32** What are the principal environmental laws applicable to the mining industry? What are the principal regulatory bodies that administer those laws?

Both federal and provincial environmental (and in Canada’s North – territorial) laws apply to the mining industry.

The federal government has legislative jurisdiction over fisheries, navigable waters, federal lands (including Indian reserves and national parks) and environmental matters of international and inter-provincial concern. Certain types of projects may be required to complete a federal environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 (CEAA 2012). The CEAA 2012 is administered by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency).

The provinces and the territories are generally responsible for matters within their boundaries. Each province and territory has adopted laws dealing with environmental protection and regulating effluent discharges, atmospheric emissions, water resources, waste management, and other environmental impacts. These laws are supported by a regulatory scheme to prohibit and limit contaminants to the environment and by a permitting system which authorises activities that impact the environment. Most also have legislation requiring a provincial or territorial environmental impact assessment of certain types of projects.

Whether a project will be subject to assessment under provincial/territorial or federal assessment laws typically depends on the type and size of the project, the types of approvals required for the development of the project, and the significance of the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts that could arise from the project.

The provinces and territories have also adopted requirements with respect to mine reclamation and closure as well as the requirement to provide financial assurance. Generally these are administered by provincial or territorial ministries responsible for mines or natural resources.

**33** What is the environmental review and permitting process for a mining project? How long does it normally take to obtain the necessary permits?

Depending on the type, location and size of a mining project, it may be subject to both federal and provincial or territorial permitting

requirements and environmental assessment processes. In Canada's North (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut), federal environmental assessment legislation generally does not apply.

In all jurisdictions, where a proposed project is subject to environmental assessment, the project may not proceed before the environmental assessment process is completed and a positive determination is granted.

The environmental assessment process typically requires preparation of an environmental study (potentially also a social impact study) and public information or consultation. The thresholds for triggering the process and requirements for information disclosure and public consultation vary depending on the particular jurisdiction(s) in which the assessment must occur. Generally, the process seeks to identify impacts so that they can be addressed through the implementation of mitigation measures. The provincial and federal governments are also required to consult with aboriginal communities whose rights may be impacted by the proposed project.

The time required to complete the process varies depending on the location and can be lengthy in certain jurisdictions. Generally it takes at least two years to complete, although the timing can vary depending on the level of assessment required and the complexity of the proposed project.

The federal government has introduced measures to avoid duplication in circumstances where both federal and provincial environmental assessment process are triggered with respect to the same project. Nine provinces and territories (not including Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) have entered into cooperation agreements with the federal government with a view to avoiding duplication. British Columbia and Canada have a Memorandum of Understanding in place to facilitate substitution of the British Columbia environmental assessment process for the federal one.

In 2012, the CEAA was overhauled with supporting regulations to establish a regulatory framework towards a 'one-window approach' for the assessment of 'major economic projects'. Under the new CEAA 2012, only 'designated projects' will require an environmental assessment.

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**34** What is the closure and remediation process for a mining project? What performance bonds, guarantees and other financial assurances are required?

Canada's provinces and territories impose mine closure and reclamation obligations. Generally this requires the preparation and filing of a mine closure plan before mine production can proceed. As part of the plan, mine-closure costs are estimated and financial assurance must be provided to the government to cover the closure costs. Increasingly, progressive reclamation obligations are being considered. The method of calculating the amount and the acceptable forms of financial assurance (for example, letters of credit, government bonds, cash, mine-reclamation trusts) varies depending on the jurisdiction.

In addition, a federal environmental assessment may be required for the decommissioning and abandonment of projects that meet the 'designated project' thresholds under the CEAA 2012.

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### Health & safety, and labour issues

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**35** What are the principal health and safety, and labour laws applicable to the mining industry? What are the principal regulatory bodies that administer those laws?

Canada's constitution divides the authority to enact labour and employment laws between the federal government and the provinces and territories. Approximately 90 per cent of employees in Canada fall under the jurisdiction of provincial or territorial laws. While the laws and statutes vary between jurisdictions, there is a fair

amount of uniformity across the country regarding basic labour and employment matters.

Employment statutes regulate matters such as minimum employment standards, labour relations, human rights, occupational health and safety, workers' compensation, universal health insurance and privacy.

Minimum employment standards laws cover minimum wages, hours of work, overtime hours and premiums, rest and meal periods, mandatory holidays, vacation periods and pay, leaves (pregnancy, parental, emergency, family medical), termination notice and severance pay, and unjust dismissal hearings (in some jurisdictions).

Labour relations statutes govern how employees may become represented by a trade union, as well as the rights and obligations of unions and employers once a union is designated to represent a group of employees. Such union 'bargaining units' are generally limited to a particular business establishment in a defined location or locations.

In addition to these statutes, many non-union employment rights are governed by the common law and enforced through the courts. Unionised employees' rights are generally enforced through tribunals.

The principal federal law governing occupational health and safety matters is part II of the Canada Labour Code. Most of the provinces and territories have specific statutes and regulations dealing with mining operations. Those operations governed by federal law follow part II of the Canada Labour Code and the regulations thereunder.

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**36** What restrictions and limitations are imposed on the use of domestic and foreign employees in connection with mining activities?

Canada's rules for foreign workers and business visitors apply to the mining industry. To work in Canada, a foreigner needs to apply for a work permit. The federal government administers the Temporary Foreign Worker Program through Immigration and Citizenship Canada, the Ministry of Employment and Skills Development Canada (ESDC) and the Canada Border Services Agency.

Generally a labour market opinion (LMO) from the ESDC is needed before issuance of a work permit. The ESDC ensures that the employment of foreign workers supports economic growth and helps create more opportunities for all Canadians. (Quebec Immigration also participates in decisions in Quebec.) There are several exemptions to the LMO requirement, including the intra-company transfer exemption and the NAFTA professionals' exemption. In the latter cases, issuance of a work permit follows a simpler procedure.

Business visitors from visa-exempt countries can be admitted to Canada to participate in business meetings without having to go through any particular formalities. Those from non-visa-exempt countries need to apply for a temporary resident visa to a Canadian embassy or consulate abroad.

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### Social and community issues

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**37** What are the principal community engagement or CSR laws applicable to the mining industry? What are the principal regulatory bodies that administer those laws?

While Canada does not have an overarching CSR law, myriad federal, provincial and territorial laws apply, including: health and safety, labour relations, environmental protection and assessment, and in a few rare cases agreements with aboriginal people. Some form of environmental assessment is usually required to develop a mining project. When First Nations communities assert aboriginal rights, aboriginal title, or treaty rights to a particular area, the Crown may owe a duty to consult with them or seek a workable accommodation in respect of any Crown decisions that may infringe those rights. While the duty to consult or seek a workable accommodation

with aboriginal peoples is a legal duty imposed on the Crown and not on private parties, many private parties have consulted with and sought to accommodate aboriginal peoples' interests by entering into agreements with them. A number of jurisdictions have legislated the requirement for private parties to consult and even enter into agreements. More still are contemplating regulations that will try to push some of the Crown's obligations onto project proponents.

On 1 November 2012, the Ontario government's new consultation regulations under the Mining Act came into effect. Mining companies are required to submit exploration plans or obtain exploration permits prior to conducting activity on mining claims or leases as of 1 April 2013. A necessary component of such plans or permits is to satisfy the government that the company has consulted with aboriginal peoples in the vicinity of the property. Ontario is the first Canadian jurisdiction to incorporate consultation requirements in its mining statute.

**38** How do the rights of aboriginal, indigenous or currently or previously disadvantaged peoples affect the acquisition or exercise of mining rights?

While many aboriginal peoples have signed treaties with the Crown and have constitutionally protected treaty rights, many have not. Large parts of Canada are therefore subject to claims based on aboriginal title or aboriginal rights. Although mineral rights can often be obtained without involvement of aboriginal people, in most of Canada any exercise of mining rights will involve a Crown licence or permit, which in turn is likely to engage the Crown's duty to consult with any affected aboriginal group.

Additionally, there are specific (and usually not expansive) areas of Canada set aside for the use and benefit of aboriginal communities (also known as First Nations) called Indian reserves. There are Indian reserves in most parts of Canada. Management and control of the reserve land is provided for under the Indian Act, with some powers being vested in the band and some powers in the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Property rights and rights to minerals on reserves are governed primarily by two provisions of the Constitution Act, 1867. The pattern of rights to minerals on Indian reserves is complicated and very uneven – both between and within provinces. The various federal-provincial agreements affecting minerals were concluded more for administrative expedience than for legal clarification. Provincial assertions add to the doubts that the agreements leave unresolved.

Moreover, the returns to Indian bands from mineral development, to the extent that development occurs, are often meagre.

The combination of complexity, contested legal entitlement, and inadequate returns has had a dampening effect on mineral exploration on reserves.

**39** What international treaties, conventions or protocols relating to CSR issues are applicable in your jurisdiction?

Canada has adopted a number of voluntary aspirational conventions regarding CSR that, because of their nature, are not directly applicable within Canada, including:

- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007);
- Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (2000); and
- OECD – Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (1976).

These documents are used as touchstones by civil society in judging mining operations within Canada and mining operations undertaken internationally by Canadian companies.

Canada has also signed the OECD International Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Officials (1997), which, although not directly applicable, is the genesis for the Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act, 1999 that criminalises the bribing of foreign officials.

#### Foreign investment

**40** Are there any foreign ownership restrictions in your jurisdiction relevant to the mining industry?

The Investment Canada Act (ICA) is a law of general application. While it does not set out specific foreign ownership limits or restrictions, it contains provisions to allow for review of certain investments in Canada by non-Canadians. Under the ICA, acquisitions of Canadian businesses by non-Canadians may be subject to: a 'net benefit to Canada' review if certain specified thresholds are exceeded; and a national security review at the discretion of the Minister of Industry.

The Non-Resident Ownership Policy in the Uranium Mining Sector as set out in a letter issued by the Minister of Natural Resources in 1987 remains the current statement of Canadian policy with respect to the foreign ownership of Canadian producing uranium mining properties. The policy provides that:

- a minimum 51 per cent Canadian resident ownership is required for producing uranium mining properties in Canada;
- resident ownership for producing uranium properties in Canada of less than 51 per cent may be permitted if control in fact by Canadians can be established (as defined in the ICA); and
- exemptions to the ownership restrictions may be granted by Cabinet only if Canadian partners in a mining development cannot be found.

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The policy does not apply to foreign participation in uranium exploration in Canada but will apply if such exploration activities result in a producing uranium mine.

While comments have been made from time to time regarding the need to liberalise the policy, there has been no formal announcement by Canada that it has any immediate intention to do so. However, notwithstanding the policy, Rio Tinto's purchase of Hathor Exploration (Roughrider Deposit) may suggest that at least one non-Canadian investor sees a possible change in policy. Because the Roughrider Deposit is not a producing operation, Rio Tinto is not subject to the 49 per cent limit; however under the current uranium policy once production begins Rio Tinto will be required to comply with the policy. The fact that Rio Tinto has been willing to make this investment might be taken as an indicator of what its view is on the possible liberalisation of the uranium policy in the future.

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#### International treaties

**41** What international treaties apply to the mining industry or an investment in the mining industry?

Canada is a signatory to numerous FIPAs and many of its FTAs, including NAFTA and the latest agreements with the EU and South

Korea, contain investment protection chapters. As a general rule, these provisions protect investments in the mining industry by requiring national treatment for foreign investments and prohibiting expropriation without compensation, restrictions on the repatriation of funds, and performance requirements. As noted in the answer to question 26, Canada has 26 bilateral FIPAs now in force and an additional 14 (including one with China) that are signed but not yet in force.

Some of the information contained in this summary was drawn from Fasken Martineau's 2014 Canadian Mining Law, which was edited by Chuck Higgins ([www.fasken.com/canadian-mining-law-book](http://www.fasken.com/canadian-mining-law-book)).

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