

Press release

Rio Tinto scoops prestigious Nedbank award

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Rio Tinto's QIT Madagascar Minerals (QMM) in Madagascar has won the 2009 Nedbank Environmental Award. The award was presented at a ceremony at Nedbank headquarters in Sandton, Johannesburg on Thursday, 22 October 2009. The Environmental Award honours a company, which has made a significant effort in terms of protecting or improving the biophysical environment in which it operates. QMM was recognized for its groundbreaking work and commitment in environment and biodiversity especially its net positive impact.

Said Manon Vincelette, head of Community Affairs, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development at QMM: "We are very proud to be a recipient of this esteemed award. More importantly, we are pleased that QMM has been recognised for protecting and conserving the unique biodiversity of the mining sites and other related infrastructures and for building capacity for better use of the natural resources."

"I share this award with our hardworking employees at Rio Tinto and QMM as an affirmation that our dedication and effort to address the issues of biodiversity and ecosystem service degradation will have long reaching and positive effects for society and present a benchmark for the mining industry."

"Of course we have not done this alone. Active engagement with local, national and international stakeholders has been fundamental to the success of the project. We engaged extensively with aid agencies and international institutions to build capability in the areas of communities, education and health. QMM also worked with numerous specialist environmental organisations researching the region's biodiversity. I also thank our former managing director Gary O" Bryan for his support and direction on the project."

"An independent biodiversity advisory committee was formed in 2001 to review the biodiversity strategy and on-the-ground conservation action which consists of biodiversity experts in various fields of longstanding experience and globally renowned research credentials in Madagascar," said Vincelette.

Rio Tinto recognises that biodiversity and ecosystem service degradation are issues of global significance that will have long reaching, negative effects for society if not addressed promptly and effectively. These issues present new challenges to the mining industry as a whole.

Noteworthy characteristics of QMM'S biodiversity programme include identifying opportunities to enhance biodiversity conservation and promote fast growing plantations for

community use, biodiversity conservation, rehabilitation and dune stabilisation. It also seeks to restore the natural ecosystems and rehabilitate the land.

The adjudication of the awards was extensive and involved a detailed submission form, interview with an expert panel of adjudicators and a site visit to QMM in Madagascar. Three independent and expert adjudicators in consultation with Nedbank were appointed to peruse and evaluate all submissions and the award winner selected based on the “best-in-class” principle.

Ny Fanja Rakotomalala, president of QMM in Madagascar on being informed of the award added his congratulation to Vincelette and the Biodiversity and environment team, consisting of 85, all Malagasy. “We at QMM are proud of this international recognition of our achievement in Environment and Biodiversity,” said Rakotomalala.

The award was handed over by Tom Boardman, CEO of Nedbank, in his speech he said: “For the last two years, the Awards have been open to nominations for Green Mining from across the African continent and one of last year’s winners was from Ghana. This year, we are happy to say that applications were again received from outside South Africa’s borders. The Nedbank Group - as the first African Bank to become a signatory to the Equator Principles - is committed to responsible and constructive development across the continent. On the 15th of September, this year, the Nedbank Group took this commitment a giant step further by announcing our decision to achieve carbon neutral status. We are the first South African bank to do this and our green status will put us on a par with the likes of HSBC and Deutsche Bank.”

“I am also happy to say that Nedbank Group recently won “Socially Responsible Bank of the Year” at the African Banker Awards, which are designed to recognise the reforms, rapid modernisation, consolidation, integration and expansion of Africa’s banking and financial system. Through our involvement in the Princes Rainforest Project, we are actively contributing towards the preservation of Africa’s tropical rainforests by seeking forestry carbon offsets on the continent. Although the rainforests might feel very far away from South Africa, their destruction through slash-and-burn agriculture and commercial logging will have adverse effects on the life of every person who calls Africa home.”

“Nedbank Capital is privileged to partner with mining companies across the full spectrum of mineral resources. It is encouraging to note that in our dealings with these companies that play such a crucial role in driving South Africa’s economy, is that they are increasingly cognizant of their own sustainability and impact on the environment. This has seen us not only funding much of the activity in the sector but also becoming the partner of choice in Mining Rehabilitation Fund management. A notable example of this is the recent conclusion of an agreement to manage the Harmony Rehabilitation Trust and the Cooke Rehabilitation Trust for Rand Uranium,” said Boardman.

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and NYSE listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange.

Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly

represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in South America, Asia, Europe and southern Africa.

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