



Rio Tinto Water Engagement Initiative Process

Guiding Principles

1.0 Introduction

Rio Tinto initiated the Water Engagement Initiative (WEI) to collaborate with organizations and individuals with interests in its operations as it relates to management of the Nechako Reservoir. Discussions with Indigenous communities; municipal, regional, provincial, and federal levels of government; and stakeholders have occurred to determine their willingness to help identify ways of improving Rio Tinto operations in the Nechako region. This document presents the Guiding Principles that will be used to guide the WEI Process.

2.0 Water Engagement Initiative Process

2.1 Mandate and Purpose

The WEI Process is intended to provide a vehicle to share interests, review information, develop alternative operating options, and select a preferred option for Rio Tinto to implement in the Nechako region. This option will remain responsive, rather than a plan that “sits on a shelf”.

The WEI Process builds on principles and approaches outlined in the Province of British Columbia’s Water Use Plan Guidelines (1998).

Throughout the process, the WEI will build on available information and data previously developed by other organizations and initiatives.

2.2 Future Positions

Participation in this initiative does not affect positions participants may currently have or take in the future related to Rio Tinto operations.

2.3 Planning Area

As a starting point, the planning area for the WEI is the Nechako Reservoir and the area downstream of the reservoir. It should be noted that boundaries of the planning area are not presently specifically defined and will be determined by the participants based on the interests presented. It may be determined that boundaries will be specific to each of the identified interest.

2.4 Regulatory Context

Rio Tinto currently operates within an established regulatory framework. The key components of this framework include legal agreements, a water management flow schedule, and the Final Water License.



The Process will focus on gaining an understanding of the interests of participants, followed by developing objectives, generating operating alternatives, assessing the trade-offs between the operating alternatives, selecting a preferred option, and defining mechanisms to ensure operations remains responsive.

Formal government-to-government consultation with Indigenous communities could be required if the outcome of this process requires regulatory revisions or considerations related to Aboriginal Rights and Title.

2.5 Inclusiveness

The process is meant to be inclusive to incorporate the broad range of interests in the Nechako region.

Active participation in the Process is open to Indigenous communities; municipal, regional, provincial, and federal levels of government, stakeholders, and the public.

3.0 Process Guidelines

The Process is expected to identify options to improve Rio Tinto operations in the Nechako region and will:

- Support collaboration, cooperation, and inclusiveness
- Recognize that trade-offs and choices may need to occur
- Embody science and continuous learning
- Focus on issue resolution and long-term benefits
- Adapt to changing conditions

3.1 Forward-Looking Process

The Process is a forward-looking, collaborative effort focused on identifying Rio-Tinto operational initiatives that will improve the health of the system. This process is not meant to address accommodation or compensation related to historical activities or related claims.

3.2 Process Scope

Examples of topics that could be considered as part of the Process were provided as context during the WEI communication phase. These topics included:

- Spillway discharge schedules
- Flood management measures
- Reservoir levels
- Downstream flow and water temperature targets
- Fisheries and monitoring plans
- Infrastructure



- Research
- Communication

It should be noted that as part of the Process, other interests brought forward by participants will be considered.

4.0 Structure and Process Involvement

Participants have a broad range of interests in the Nechako region that interact with Rio Tinto operations. The following sections provide an overview of the process structure and outline the details regarding participant's involvement in the process.

4.1 Structure

The Process is expected to involve regular face-to-face meetings over an estimated 18-month period. The frequency and location of the meetings will be determined by the participants.

4.2 Participants

Throughout the WEI process, participants in the process will:

- Share their knowledge and experience of the Nechako region
- Participate in an open, inclusive and engaged manner with the goal of working collaboratively.

4.3 Alternate Members

Participants are encouraged to identify Alternate Members to act on their behalf in their absence, for process continuity. It is the responsibility of the Alternate Member to:

- Be aware and act according to these Guiding Principles,
- Inform themselves of past discussions and the progress of the Process,
- Respect previous decisions made in the Process.

4.4 BC and Canada Participation

Provincial and federal government representatives will take part in the Process and may be available to provide resources and technical support, such as supplying data and technical information. Government representatives are expected to help identify regulatory issues throughout the process.

4.5 Rio Tinto's Involvement

Rio Tinto will be an active participant in the Process. They will represent their interests in the same manner as other participants.



4.6 Transparency and Accountability

The WEI Process will be transparent. During the Process, efforts will be made to share information with the public, based on input from participants. It is envisioned that these could include:

- Website posting of approved meeting summaries, which document discussions held, and decisions made.
- Media can be used to share information about the process. The form of media used could include radio, television, print, or social media. The information content and form of media will be approved by participants prior to release. Rahul Ray will be the media spokesperson for the Table.

4.7 Team Building

Various team building activities will be conducted as part of the Process to help build understanding among the participants. Participants should be willing to participate in various field trips.

4.8 Technical Working Group

A Technical Working Group will be formed to analyze and evaluate different options as determined by participants. Subject matter experts will be recruited to consider technical issues raised by participants. Ecofish Research will be the Technical Working Group (TWG) coordinator and will evaluate analyses, and present results to participants in the process.

Participation in the Technical Working Groups will be open to interested participants in order to enhance transparency.

4.9 Participant Funding

Funding will be provided by Rio Tinto to support participation in the process. Administration of the funding will be handled by EDI Environmental Dynamics Inc., and will include reimbursement for costs for meeting attendance, preparation time, travel, lodging, and food.

To access funding, participants are asked to complete a Travel Claim Form on a per meeting basis, which will detail the specifics of the costs incurred by the participant to attend meetings. Details on how to complete the form and additional information will be available from the Facilitator.

Efforts will be made to provide payment at the subsequent meeting.