

## **Minimum Conditions for A Regional Process**

### **Friday, August 18, 2000**

When the MMSD project was established, it was considered essential that the process be decentralised as much as possible [See the Work Plan for more detail on Regional Processes]. It was important at that stage that IIED and the Work Group provide some options for the way in which this decentralisation should be implemented. The initial concept was that using IIEDs extensive contacts with international organisations, NGOs, corporations and others, that key contacts be identified in each of six regions. The regional contacts would then be used to identify a suitable person or institute to conduct a scoping study of the region.

The purpose of the scoping study, amongst other things, was to define the region, identify a partner institute or institutes with the capacity to oversee research and regional stakeholder engagement, and to scope on key issues related to mining, minerals and metals. The partner would also select a number of key stakeholders for membership of a regional assurance group which would act as the peer review body for the regional process. Once identified, the partner institute(s), under the guidance of the assurance group, would also conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise to select representatives to participate in a major stakeholder meeting aimed at defining key issues for the region and major regional research themes. The governance structure that was envisioned was in effect a mirror of the structure established for MMSD at a central level.

However, as the regionalisation process begins to gain momentum, project experiences from the regions are introducing new and very constructive elements to the MMSD conceptual framework for decentralisation. The MMSD project both welcomes and encourages all initiatives which help to democratise the process of stakeholder involvement. However, the diverse nature of the regions and the differences in approach also mean that the regional processes will have different characteristics and the core Work Group in London will have differing roles in each region. It is therefore a useful juncture at which to define some minimum criteria which regional partners should adhere to when advancing the regionalisation process. These guidelines should be considered as a set of minimum criteria which must be met within the mandate of the project. These criteria while not meant to restrict innovation at the regional level, do provide a clear set of guidelines within which all project activities should fall.

At a minimum the process should be,

#### **1) Transparent**

The process for selection of stakeholders, research themes, partner institutes and assurance groups or steering committees must be transparent. To this effect, any stakeholder must be able to follow the rationale behind decisions to select particular individuals, companies, institutes or groups to conduct project work, take positions of influence with respect to the assurance group or partner institute(s) and participate in

other project activities. All documentation relating to regional meetings and processes should be in the public domain and made accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

## **2) Inclusive**

Regional partners must make every effort, though the advice of the regional assurance group or steering committee, to scope as widely as possible among stakeholders for input into regional dialogue and selection of research issues. No group or individual should be excluded or disregarded in the process, but particular effort should be made to balance the input from a broad range of ethnic, cultural, religious, political and socio-economic backgrounds. Every effort should also be made to ensure equivalent representation in terms of gender. No interested persons should be actively excluded from the process where they wish to have input. Input from any group or individual will not automatically be construed as an endorsement of the process.

## **3) Consultative**

The appropriate regional body such as the assurance group or steering committee must endorse decisions made by partner institutes. It is essential that the themes and topics for dialogue in major stakeholder meetings be selected after due process has been followed in terms of consultation with key stakeholders. The method and degree of consultation should be made explicit in the regional reporting process that is endorsed by the regional body.

## **4) Clearly defined regional outcomes**

It is apparent that given the breadth and scope of MMSD, the outcomes in different regions may differ substantially. Nevertheless, it is necessary that within each region sets of deliverables are clearly defined. These must be specified, and endorsed by the regional steering committee or other regionally elected group, they must be explicit and auditable in terms of process and cost.

## **5) Timely**

Regional partners are encouraged to scope widely in their respective efforts to identify stakeholders and research issues. Nevertheless, the regional processes must move forward within a timeframe that mirrors the overall project timeframe. To this effect, there are some core requirements of the regional partners, including the definition of milestones that must be made explicit at the start of the process which will be endorsed by the appropriate regional body (assurance group, steering committee, or other duly selected group). However, the regional processes will be encouraged to continue in some form after the two-year mandate of MMSD.

## **6) Contributory**

While the focus of the regional processes is to scope for, identify and address key regional issues in the domains of research, stakeholder dialogue and concrete action, MMSD is a project of global significance. To this extent, regions should bear in mind, that an important element of their engagement with the project is the contribution to a global dialogue on issues related to mining, minerals and metals. The expression of this involvement will be through discussion of these global issues at the regional level, through research that will contribute to our understanding of global issues and through cooperative engagement with the Work Group in London.

### **The Importance of a Flexible Approach to Regionalisation**

The point of the regionalisation process is that each region should adopt structures and processes that are regionally appropriate to the institutional and resource capacities, and political realities of the area. The approach outlined in the introduction to this document is not intended to be prescriptive – different regions are likely to adopt different approaches. The experiences of the Work Group in Southern Africa are very instructive with regard to the democratising influence of multi- stakeholder input. The process in Southern Africa is outlined briefly below.

As in Latin America, MMSD in London had held discussions with various organisations in South Africa about the possibility that they might become the regional partners for the process. On 7 August, a meeting comprising representatives from some of the different stakeholder groups in Southern Africa was held. It became clear at the meeting that it is not acceptable for the core MMSD Work Group simply to select a regional partner without much more comprehensive stakeholder consultation within the region and consideration of a range of possible partners and structures for the process. The meeting therefore decided that:

- 1) An ‘Interim Work Group’ should be established comprising an NGO and University to prepare for the first large-scale multistakeholder meeting, to be held in November 2000. This meeting will decide which institution(s) should form the partnership, as well as selecting priorities for research etc. It seems likely that the partnership will involve organisations from more than one country in the region.

The ‘Interim Work Group’ will carry out the preparatory work for the November meeting. This will include:

- Identification and engagement of regional stakeholders
- Prioritisation of issues and identification of gaps
- Proposing realistic outcomes for the regional process
- Identification of organisations that could play a part in the regional process following the multistakeholder meeting (e.g. in the Work Group, the Steering Committee, contracted research, organisation of workshops)
- Organisation of the multistakeholder meeting

- 2) An 'Interim Steering Committee', composed of representatives from different stakeholder groups from various countries within the SADC region has also been established. Many of the members of this committee have been drawn from participants at the August 7 meeting. This Committee will function until the November meeting and has the following key functions:
- To provide general advice and support to the Interim Work Group
  - To peer review and approve the outputs of the Interim Work Group
  - To make decisions on key aspects of the process leading to the multistakeholder meeting and to contribute to the preparatory work for the November meeting by engaging with stakeholders in their 'constituencies', contributing to the discussion on research priorities, etc.
  - To approve Terms of Reference for a Project Co-ordinator, and to appoint that person