QIT Madagascar Minerals (QMM) Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management Committee
Key Recommendations – February 12-16, 2018

Recommendations

The QMM Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management Committee (BNRMC) met for the first time during four days in Ft. Dauphin. During this time, open and constructive discussions were held with QMM staff and advisors covering a wide range of topics that relate to the Committee’s Terms of Reference. The members of the Committee appreciated the availability and engagement of QMM personnel, from senior management to technical and operational staff. The quality and relevance of the presentations and information provided to the BRNMC were appreciated, as were the frank and open nature of the discussions. This provided a good basis for the work done by the Committee.

Based on the discussions that took place during the BNRMC meeting, the following key recommendations were formulated and conveyed to QMM staff in the closing session:

1. QMM has a diverse array of obligations and commitments that require appropriate strategies and actions in order to achieve project success. Best performance of QMM’s Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management Team requires a comprehensive synthesis in which QMM describes its legal, corporate, and social obligations and commitments, and related goals, indicators, risks and assumptions. The BNRMC recommends that QMM describe each of these elements at the local, regional and national levels, prior to the next Advisory Committee meeting.

2. The Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management Strategic Plan (BAP) and the Communities and Social Performance Plan are operationally interdependent. The BNRMC recommends that both plans be placed under an integrated “Biodiversity and Communities Action Plan (BIOCAP).” Doing so would strengthen QMM’s ability to meet its commitments and obligations, and would help clarify the scope of the Committee’s activities as well as its membership.

3. A clearly articulated, long-term vision that describes project success at closure and beyond is needed. This should be defined in terms of what the landscape will look like and the roles of different stakeholders. An appropriate participative process should be used to determine this vision.

4. QMM’s most recent Net Positive Impact (NPI) Forecast dates from 2014. Many key parameters have changed significantly since then, necessitating a revision of the Forecast using updated information.

5. Harvest of wood from plantations of fast-growing non-native tree species will begin shortly and will expand rapidly over the coming decade. Careful thought and planning should be undertaken prior to the start of harvest to ensure that community engagement and participation are well aligned from the start with a long-term vision of how the project’s extensive plantation areas could ultimately be managed sustainably and equitably in the coming decades, and following closure.
6. Several topics discussed during the Committee’s meeting are of particular importance for providing needed strategic and technical advice to QMM. The members of the Committee suggest that mini-workshops on four key subjects be organized immediately before our next meeting, as follows:

- Management plans for the New Protected Areas (NAPs) (Mandena, Petriky and Ste. Luce),
- Indicators and monitoring,
- QMM’s strategy for community engagement, and
- Species action plans.

7. Two important areas of expertise were identified as being insufficiently covered by the current membership: 1) sustainable management and valorization of natural resources, and 2) social and community engagement. QMM should consider expanding the Committee’s membership to include persons with expertise in these areas.

The following technical recommendations were provided to QMM in writing:

1. QMM published a monograph summarizing significant accomplishments in the biodiversity sector in 2007. QMM should publish an updated summary of accomplishments and lessons learned in both the biodiversity and natural resource management sector, and the communities and livelihood sector.

2. Mining in close proximity to the limits of the Mandena NAP could have impacts on the health of the forest resulting from a temporary lowering of the water table. It would be useful to measure the horizontal extent, depth and duration of changes in the water table associated with mining so that it informs planning and possible mitigation when mining comes close to the protected area.

3. There is potential risk associated with growing monocultures of fast growing non-native trees in large areas using a genetically uniform seed source. QMM should explore options to maximize the generic diversity of seed material for these key species.

4. Plantation in woodlots will cover a large portion of the area of the Mandena mine site. Local communities would likely get increased value from these areas by developing and implementing methods to incorporate other species suitable for grazing livestock or other needs/uses.

5. Living material of priority plant species is available from bush clearing of areas with remnant littoral forest prior to mining. QMM should maximize the diversity of ways in which these living plants are used, including an experimental program to assess the best stage to plant material during ecological restoration. QMM should also consider the potential risks associated with possible excessive enrichment planting in the Mandena NAP.