Australian Mining Management Tools and their Applicability Towards the Sustainable Development of Chocó-Colombia

This investigation, part of a Masters of Environmental Management, sought to show how management tools used in mining can achieve sustainable development in a global market by balancing human health and safety, environmental sustainability and the socio-economic effectiveness of mining operations, in particular artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM). The research was undertaken in the Colombian region of the Chocó-Manabí Corridor, which incorporates “Los Katios”, area declared by the UNESCO as world heritage status and under threat.

The investigation was undertaken from January to June 2014 through a series of semi-structured interviews with the different and main stakeholders and by analysis of other relevant information.

The main findings related to the following areas:

- Better government policy and enforcement, including better communication between the Mining and Environment ministries
- Exploration companies can have a role to act between community, government and big mining companies, improving foreign investment
- Sharing/partnering between ASM and large scale mining (LSM); for example two mining titles covering a mining operation, with ASM miners working the alluvial deposit and LSMs working the bedrock
- LSM including local miners in their projects by employing them on the project or partnering with them
- LSMs organising meetings where they show the community the processes they are going to undertake before any activity commences
- The need to educate the public and companies in responsible mining.
- Prior Consultation is a way of bringing personnel from the government and the companies together with members of the community
- Processing plants where there is no use of mercury located in an area where many ASMs can bring their ore to be processed would be ideal
- Educate the educators/trainers in the real issues for small, medium and large scale mining; not only the engineers, geologists, economists, but also people with experience in living at a minesite
- Develop a national strategy for monitoring Colombian biodiversity; the main cause of loss of biodiversity is the decreasing quality and quantity of available habitats and lack of local biodiversity data