



Independent Review Board recommendation progress update

September 2026



Context

The Government of Yukon is improving its regulatory and enforcement oversight of mining in Yukon, following the heap leach failure that occurred at the Eagle Gold Mine.

An Independent Review Board (IRB) of mining experts examined the failure and produced [a report](#) with recommendations. We've committed to implementing all the report's recommendations.

Of the 56 recommendations, 52 are implemented and four are in progress. We expect all recommendations to be completed by spring 2027. Going forward, we will work to ensure our regulatory and enforcement programs meet evolving best practices.

The recommendations fall under three broad categories:

- **Improving corporate governance and project management.** The Government of Yukon is working with companies to ensure they are applying these recommendations. This work includes establishing independent reviews and inspections and ensuring defensive designs and robust performance monitoring systems.
- **Improving technical and prescriptive requirements.** These recommendations are being actively implemented through licence amendments and will be formalized through updates to the Guidelines for Mine Waste Management Facilities.
- **Improving regulatory and enforcement oversight of mining.** The Government of Yukon is working to strengthen these systems. Much of this work is complete, with details outlined in the section below.

Work Completed and Underway

- Established the Major Mines and Technical Services (MMTS) branch to increase regulatory oversight for major mines.

- Increased funding so branches responsible for regulatory reviews and enforcement can hire external technical experts for project reviews and oversight.
- Strengthened licensing criteria to ensure all new and existing licences meet the IRB's safety standards. Existing licences have been amended to address IRB recommendations, and licence applicants must demonstrate how they will apply these recommendations. Examples include:
 - New licence holders must undertake a hazard classification of their facility and ensure their design and operations reduce the risks of these facilities.
 - All facilities must be designed and built to withstand extreme weather events and manage impacted water and solutions responsibly.
 - All licensed engineered facilities must undergo an annual independent review by qualified experts.
 - Operators must have independent review boards established for all significant engineered structures on site.
- Many of the recommendations implemented through updated licences will be formalized through an update of the Guidelines for Mine Waste Management Facilities. We have established an independent panel of experts to review and update the guidelines by Spring 2027.
- Compliance Monitoring and Inspections (CMI) is strengthening its systems as it addresses the IRB recommendations. This work includes:
 - Continuing to strengthen CMI's culture and organizational structure following the streamlining of major mines compliance. This approach allows a team of natural resource officers to dedicate their time, training and knowledge to major mine projects.
 - In addition to the extra positions announced in the April IRB update, CMI is increasing the capacity of their major mines team by reallocating existing positions and resources within the branch.
 - Continued and expanding classroom and field training of CMI staff.
 - Technical experts are now being used in both field inspections and compliance desktop reviews of major mine project components.

- Increased interagency cooperation, especially with MMTS, to ensure compliance involvement.
 - Increasing desktop monitoring of mine reports and technical submissions to improve compliance oversight, identify risks in mine plans and improve enforcement of reporting requirements. One of the new positions has been dedicated to this role.
 - Improving use of data for issue tracking and compliance management to better monitor and analyse trends and emerging risks. This includes a project to significantly upgrade the database system for major mines.
 - Increasing input from CMI on regulatory decisions throughout the mining lifecycle, with particular attention to early decisions that later impact monitoring and enforcement.
 - Completed a further review of compliance and enforcement to identify gaps and ways to strengthen processes to build on the IRB recommendations. Based on the review, CMI is developing a more structured, proactive, risk-based approach to help identify, evaluate and mitigate risks, and are creating a risk-based toolkit for natural resource officers.
- Completed updates to the guidelines for reclamation and closure planning and financial security estimates. Cost estimates now consider the possibilities of unplanned work and of work being performed by contractors in the event of the operator failing or abandoning the site.
 - Continuing work with industry groups and mine operators to ensure the recommendations are being implemented correctly and ensure compliance. Before licensing new projects, we require companies to show how their mine designs and operating plans meet the IRB recommendations. You can find how we're corresponding with mine proponents to ensure their plans incorporate the IRB's recommendations, plus other [mine licensing information at Yukon.ca](https://www.yukon.ca/mine-licensing-information).

Next Steps

- The four recommendations that remain in progress will be implemented in licensing, compliance and enforcement processes for new major mines by Spring 2027. These recommendations are:
 - Regulators should either have access to reports from an Independent Tailings Review Board (ITRB) during the design, construction and commissioning of the mine, or require annual summaries of the ITRB activities, a statement whether the work reviewed meets the ITRB expectations of good practice, and a signed acknowledgment by the ITRB members.
 - Licensing documents should expressly address monitoring systems and other critical controls.
 - The compliance reporting process should be streamlined to provide more frequent but less bulky submittals, with a focus on deviances from the design, critical controls, standard operating procedures, and licensing criteria.
 - Periodic reporting should include the construction phase, with summary documents detailing any deviances or unexpected conditions.

Following the complete implementation of the ITRB's recommendations, the Government of Yukon will continue to work to improve its regulatory and enforcement oversight of the mining industry to ensure we are aligned with evolving global best practices.