Voisey's Bay Project

The Voisey's Bay Project was given official sanction on October 7, 2002 with the signing of the Development Agreement between the provincial government and Inco, the project developer. Inco will construct a mine and mill/concentrator at Voisey's Bay in Labrador and a nickel processing facility at Argentia. The processing facility will be preceded by a hydrometallurgical (hydromet) research and development program that will see the construction of a demonstration plant at Argentia. Inco will also establish an Innovation Centre at the St. John's campus of Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Development and operation of the project will provide substantial economic benefits to the province. Twelve contracts, totalling more than $30 million, were awarded in 2002 to provide the necessary infrastructure for development of the mine, including construction of an airstrip, a dock and a road network. At Argentia, construction commenced on the Argentia Project Office and a $2 million office/warehouse. In addition, research began on the hydromet program and on design work for the Inco Innovation Centre at Memorial University. Project activity will ramp up in 2003 with increased construction at the mine site in Voisey's Bay, commencement of construction of the Innovation Centre, and continued effort on the research and development program at Argentia.

Direct employment in 2003 is expected to be 320 person years. In total (including spinoffs), the project is expected to add 750 person years of employment in 2003 and $60 million in real GDP. By 2015, commercial production at Argentia will reach capacity, and at that time, direct annual impacts will include over 1,000 person years of employment and $500 million of real GDP. Total impacts at that time, which include both direct and spinoff impacts, are projected to be 3,000 person years of employment (roughly 1.5% of total) and $600 million in real GDP (roughly 4% of total).

Innovation Centre



Credit: John Hearn Contemporary Architects Incorporated, courtesy of Voisey's Bay Nickel Company Limited
Architectural concept sketch of the proposed Inco Innovation Centre

Innovation Centre Facts

- Centre to be established at Memorial University, St. John's campus by Inco and Memorial.
- Construction will begin in the spring of 2003
- Centre will focus on education and research in mining, exploration and metallurgical processing techniques
- 50-60 students will receive world-class education, research and training related to the mining industry each year
- Inco will work with Memorial University to develop related hydromet courses to ensure a supply of qualified engineers, metallurgists and technicians for Voisey's Bay Nickel Company Limited

Voisey's Bay Timelines

2003

- Construction begins on open pit mine and mill/concentrator processing plant at Voisey's Bay
- Construction begins on Innovation Centre in St. John's

2004

- Completion of Innovation Centre
- Design, engineering and construction of demonstration hydromet processing plant in Argentia

2006

- Concentrate production begins
- Argentia demonstration hydromet plant receives first concentrate

2007

- Testing and optimization of hydromet process at Argentia

2008

- Decision to construct a commercial scale hydromet concentrate processing plant or a hydromet matte processing plant

2009-2011

- Construction of commercial nickel processing facility at Argentia

2011

- Commencement of commercial processing in Argentia

2018

- Underground mine development and expansion of mill/concentrator processing plant