

2025

Annual Report

THE YUKON MINERALS ADVISORY BOARD



Chair's Message

The Yukon Minerals Advisory Board's (YMAB) 2025 Annual Report and recommendations were developed during what the Board views as a significant window of opportunity for the Yukon mining sector.

Global attention on critical minerals continues to accelerate, including through Canada's Critical Minerals Strategy, backed by major federal investment. At the same time, the federal government has moved to accelerate and streamline approvals for projects deemed to be in the national interest through mechanisms such as the Major Projects Office and related federal initiatives. Commodity markets have also strengthened materially, with recent record-setting price performance across gold, silver, and copper. As Pierre Lassonde observed in a recent keynote address at the 2025 Yukon Geoscience Forum, "The stars for the Yukon are aligned, and the time is now."

This moment presents both opportunity and responsibility. YMAB has considered its recommendations this year through an aspirational but achievable lens: the potential to advance up to five quartz mine projects to construction or commissioning within five years, should key structural barriers be addressed. Comparable jurisdictions have demonstrated that this level of advancement is possible when policy, regulatory, and infrastructure frameworks are aligned.

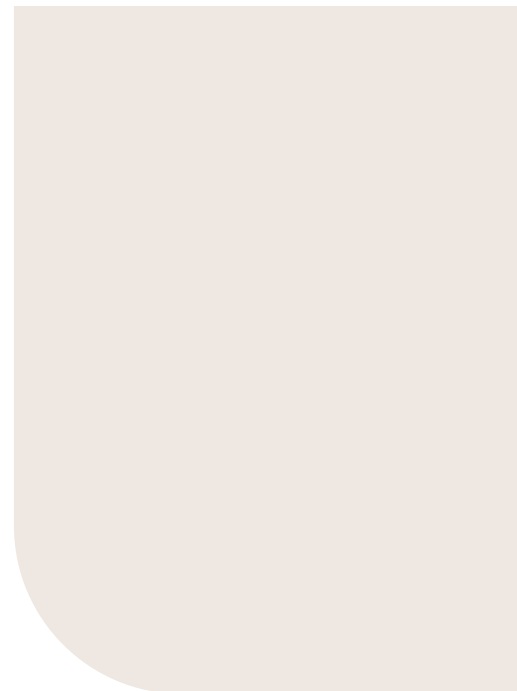
YMAB remains committed to its mandate under the Yukon Economic Development Act to provide clear, unbiased, technically informed advice to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. This report outlines the barriers currently limiting progress and presents recommendations intended to strengthen the Yukon's competitiveness, regulatory certainty, and long-term economic resilience.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our shared goals.

Respectfully submitted,

Shena Shaw

Chair



Mandate and Role of the Board

The Yukon Minerals Advisory Board is established under Section 6 of the Yukon Economic Development Act and is charged with providing advice and recommendations to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on matters related to:

- Increasing mineral exploration and development in the Yukon
- Attracting capital for exploration and mine development
- Ensuring feasible and timely development of mines
- Improving viability of producing mines
- Supporting participation by Yukon residents and businesses
- Reducing constraints, including governmental constraints, on mineral development
- Engaging with First Nations regarding mineral development opportunities

This report is intended to inform and guide decision-making by the Minister and Legislature and to provide a clear account of YMAB's advisory priorities for 2025.

2025 YMAB Board Members | Term Expiry

- Brad Thrall March 2026
- (James) Scott Berdahl December 2026
- Loralee Johnstone December 2026
- Neil Loveless May 2027
- Scott Donaldson May 2027
- Shaun Rudolph May 2027
- Wendy Tayler March 2026
- Shena Shaw July 2027
- Kelly Constable July 2027
- Liam Ferguson July 2027



Unlocking the Yukon's Mineral Potential

Five operating quartz mines in the Yukon would generate significant economic activity, strengthen territorial GDP, and generate billions in taxation revenues and royalties for the Territory. These revenues are directly relevant to addressing territorial priorities including housing shortages, health-care system pressures, and education funding requirements.

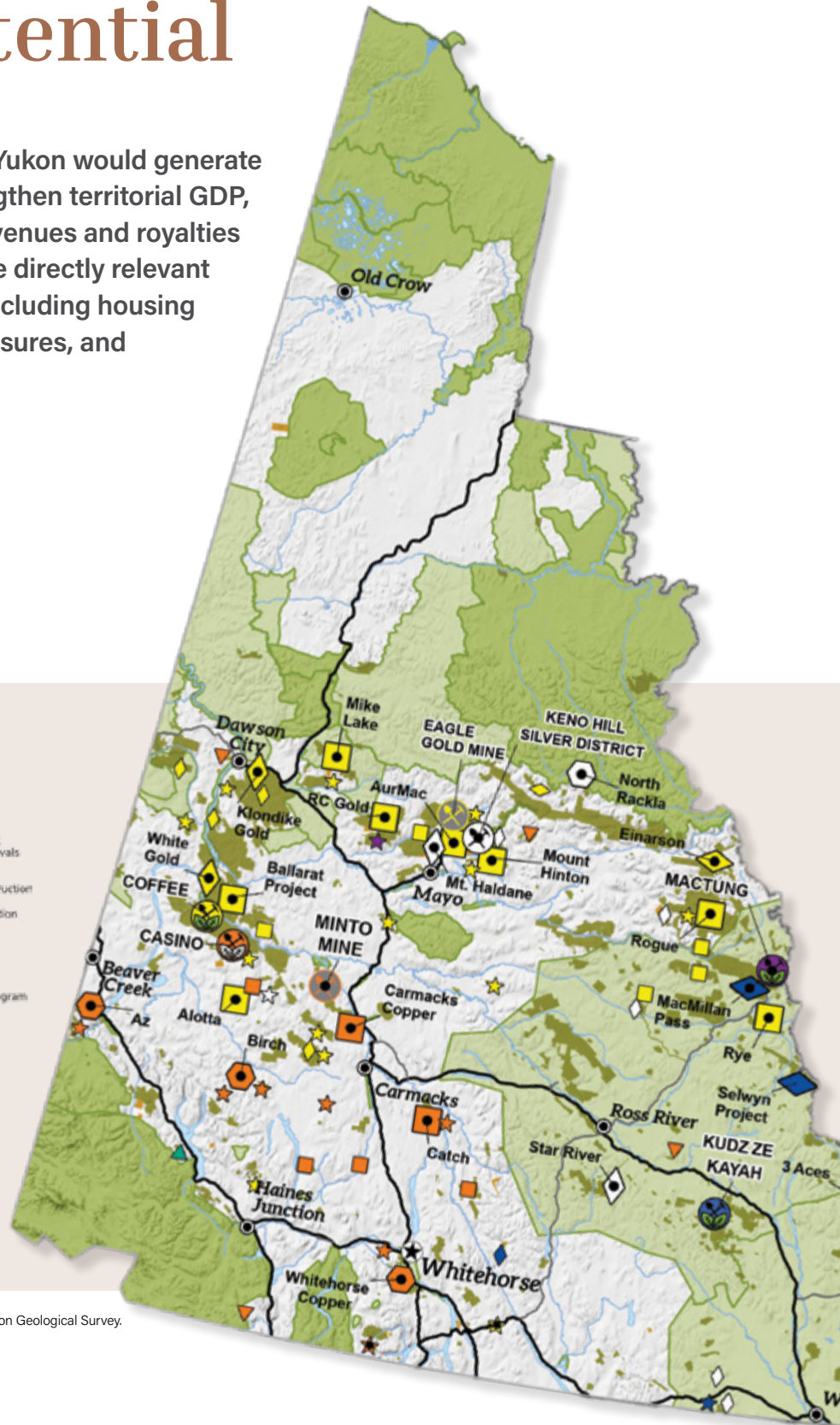
Mining remains uniquely positioned among industries in the Yukon to generate the scale of private capital investment and public revenue required to benefit all Yukoners and support long-term fiscal stability.

MINING AND EXPLORATION PROJECTS

Commodity	Exploration projects deposit type	Mining projects development phase
○ silver	⊕ iron oxide breccia/vein	🌐 planning, design and assessment
● gold	△ mafic/ultramafic associated	🌐 assessment complete, may proceed to approvals
● copper	⬜ mississippi valley type	🏗️ fully permitted, may proceed to construction
● nickel +/- PGE	⬜ porphyry/sheeted vein	⊗ operation and production
● lead/zinc	⬜ skarn/replacement	⊗ temporary closure
● tungsten	◇ sediment associated	🔍 Drilling program
● unknown	◇ vein/breccia	• indicates drilling program
	▽ volcanic associated	
	☆ unknown	

MAP FEATURES

● community	🌳 Parks and protected areas
★ capital city	🌿 national/territorial park
🚢 deep water port	🌿 interim staking prohibition
🛣️ Transportation routes	📄 Mineral tenures
— primary highway	📄 staked in 2025
— secondary highway	📄 active and pending



The exploration activity data represented on this map were compiled by Yukon Geological Survey. Please contact Mining@yukon.ca for further information.

YMAB remains committed to its mandate of providing clear, unbiased, technically and experientially informed advice to the Minister. Through the lens of achieving five operating quartz mines within five years, YMAB has identified several structural barriers that require attention:

Strengthening Yukon Government (YG) capacity

Completing new minerals legislation

Clarifying consultation processes and decision-making roles

Advancing regional land use planning

Addressing infrastructure constraints

Improving public understanding and economic transparency of the mineral industry



Strengthening Yukon Government Capacity

To support a competitive and efficient mineral development environment, YG must maintain sufficient technical, regulatory, and scientific capacity. Increased project complexity, higher permitting volumes, and heightened public scrutiny require appropriately resourced institutions.

YMAB has identified three priority areas for capacity enhancement.

Investing in Internal Training and Institutional Continuity

YG must strengthen internal institutional capacity within regulatory and compliance functions. Recent discussions between YMAB and the Minister highlighted ongoing concerns regarding permitting backlogs, repeated information requests, water licensing delays, inconsistent processes and lack of process clarity.

Internal capacity challenges are not solely a matter of staffing numbers. Institutional continuity, role clarity, and knowledge retention are equally critical. Frequent leadership transitions, shifting internal teams, and unclear procedural responsibilities contribute to inefficiencies and prolonged timelines.

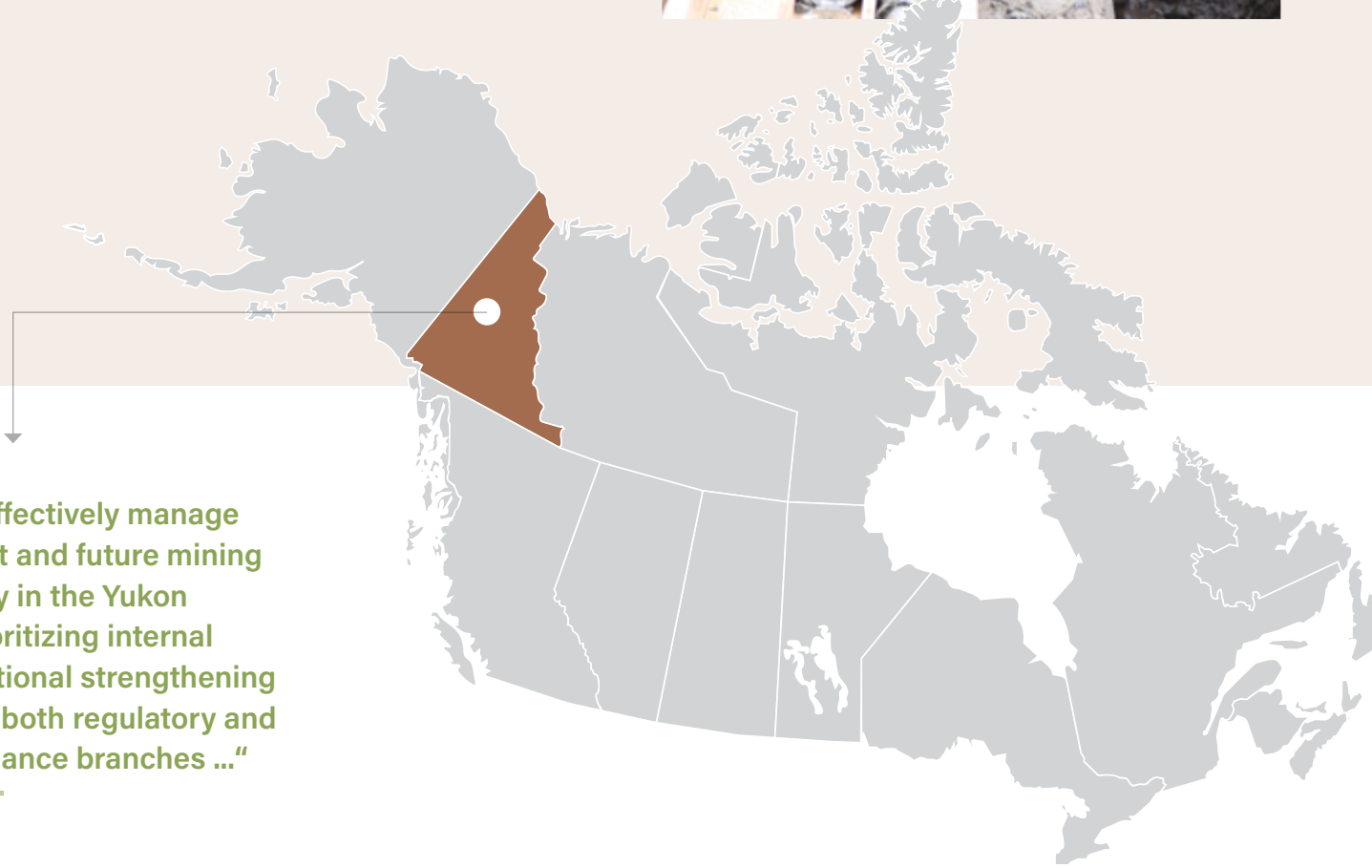
Well-trained and stable teams reduce duplication, improve coordination between branches, and strengthen consistency in decision-making. Enhanced professional development and clear internal process frameworks would support more predictable permitting outcomes and more effective collaboration with industry and First Nations governments.

Strengthening internal capacity also includes better utilization of advisory board expertise, improved inter-branch coordination (including water licensing and mineral permitting processes), and clearer articulation of departmental roles. This would increase the effectiveness of the Yukon's regulatory regime for mining and strengthen both public and investor confidence in the Territory.



RECOMMENDATION

YMAB recommends that the Minister strengthen the capacity of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources (EMR) to effectively manage current and future mining activity in the Yukon by prioritizing internal institutional strengthening within both regulatory and compliance branches, including investment in professional development, knowledge retention, process clarity, and interdepartmental coordination to improve permitting efficiency and decision-making consistency.



“...to effectively manage current and future mining activity in the Yukon by prioritizing internal institutional strengthening within both regulatory and compliance branches ...”

Strategic Use of External Technical Expertise

EMR requires enhanced technical capacity to manage increasing permitting volumes, larger and more technically complex mineral projects, and evolving regulatory demands. The issue is not solely staffing levels. Current teams must have both the authority and the budget to engage experienced regulators from other jurisdictions and specialized subject-matter experts in order to perform their roles efficiently and effectively.

YMAB's view is that this need applies to both the Mineral Resources Branch (as regulator) and the Compliance, Monitoring and Inspections Branch (as enforcer). Access to senior technical expertise can assist in prioritizing complex issues, evaluating highly technical components of permit applications, strengthening inspection decision-making, and supporting internal capacity through knowledge transfer.

The Independent Review Board established following the Eagle Gold Mine incident demonstrated the value of bringing independent external expertise into complex regulatory situations. That process illustrated how targeted, specialized review can strengthen regulatory oversight, improve transparency, and enhance public confidence. Adoption of the Board's recommendations, through policy or legislative action, would support the restoration of public and First Nations confidence in heap leach technology and reinforce YG's commitment to technically sound oversight.



RECOMMENDATION

1. YMAB recommends that EMR's capacity to engage external specialists be strengthened to address the increasing complexity and demands of a modern resources industry.
2. YMAB recommends that the Minister adopt the recommendations of the Eagle Gold Mine Independent Review Board and use that process as a model for proactively engaging external technical and strategic expertise in complex or high-impact regulatory situations.

Increasing Support for the Yukon Geological Survey

The Yukon Geological Survey (YGS) is a key component of the Yukon's geoscience infrastructure and plays a critical foundational role in both generating and sustaining a pipeline of mineral exploration and development projects. A technically robust YGS not only strengthens exploration activity and investment confidence but also contributes meaningfully to regional land use planning and long-term resource stewardship.

In recent years, YMAB observes that a greater proportion of YGS programming has focused on regional geology and tectonic studies. While these programs provide important scientific value, additional targeted technical initiatives that directly support exploration and mine development would further strengthen the Yukon's competitiveness and mineral development pipeline. Annual expenditures should include expanded development and digitization of data that directly supports mineral assessment and exploration decision-making.

There remains a lack of comprehensive, readily accessible pre-competitive geological data in the Yukon. This gap becomes particularly relevant if the Yukon advances toward online staking models that require consultation prior to physical land access. In such a framework, regulators must ensure that sufficient geological information is available to enable companies to assess mineral potential before committing to significant permitting and land access processes.

Comparable datasets in the Yukon could include:

- **Standardized digital compilation** of historical surface sampling, drilling, geophysical, and geochemical data across the Territory
- **Statutory submission** of all new exploration data in standardized digital formats, subject to defined confidentiality periods with sunset clauses
- **Completion and public release** of regional aeromagnetic surveys with processed data products
- **Digitization and publication** of raw field data from geological mapping programs
- **Standardized** regional surface geochemical datasets
- **Development** of detailed three-dimensional geological models of key mineral provinces
- **Focused geological mapping** and technical reporting in areas of strategic economic interest



The collection and compilation of third-party exploration data is a low-cost, high-impact initiative and an area where the Yukon has previously excelled. Comprehensive pre-competitive datasets are typically made available either free of charge or at nominal cost. Improved compilation and accessibility of industry-generated data can also have long-term environmental benefits, reducing unnecessary duplication of drilling, trenching, and land disturbance.

Where entry onto land is subject to increased regulatory or consultation requirements, the availability of high-quality geological information becomes essential to informed investment decisions. Ensuring access to standardized and reliable data strengthens both regulatory integrity and exploration efficiency.

RECOMMENDATION

YMAB recommends that the Minister support YGS in expanding its technical programming and implementing a robust and fully budgeted framework for the standardized collection, mandatory digital submission, compilation, and dissemination of geological and exploration data, including clearly defined confidentiality timelines.

3



Completing New Minerals Legislation

Completing new minerals legislation is a critical step in modernizing and strengthening the Yukon resources industry to ensure its long-term competitiveness and stability. Modern legislation would support and strengthen the Yukon's relationships with Indigenous governments, improve regulatory tools, provide greater certainty to industry participants, and increase public confidence across communities in the Yukon in both quartz and placer mining operations.

As an advisory body, it is not YMAB's role to directly participate in the development of new legislation. However, where invited, YMAB has participated in ongoing discussions and engaged with YG and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN). Substantial foundational work has already been undertaken. YMAB recommends that YG build upon this existing work rather than reset the process.

At the same time, YMAB recommends that YG review progress to date, the direction of the proposed legislation, and the alignment of the recent draft framework with the shortcomings identified in existing legislation. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the path forward delivers on the original intention of creating a modern, simple, and effective minerals legislation framework that supports responsible mining and exploration without discouraging investment and development.

To improve efficiency while respecting Indigenous rights and interests, engagement should be structured in a manner proportional to the level of impact that mineral activities may have within respective Traditional Territories.

YMAB recommends that the Minister consider maintaining separate legislative frameworks for placer and quartz mining. Separate acts would allow each sector's regulatory regime to be tailored to its operational characteristics, improve legislative clarity, and reduce the need for ongoing compromise. Completion of new legislation also presents an opportunity to enable the Yukon to access appropriate royalty revenues from the placer mining sector, which represents a significant component of the Territory's mineral economy.

Given the complexity of this file, YMAB recommends appointing an experienced external facilitator to support structured dialogue, maintain continuity, and assist in achieving timely resolution. In addition, a dedicated and suitably qualified YG lead should be assigned for the duration of the process to ensure institutional consistency and accountability.

RECOMMENDATION

YMAB recommends that the Minister advance completion of new minerals legislation through a structured review of progress and objectives, the engagement of a qualified external facilitator, and the appointment of a dedicated government lead to oversee the process to conclusion.



Clarifying Consultation Processes and Decision-Making Roles

YG does not have a publicly available policy outlining its consultation obligations or the framework it applies as a Decision Body in fulfilling those obligations. The absence of a publicly articulated consultation framework contributes to uncertainty, extended timelines, and inconsistent expectations across mineral project files.

Consultation is frequently identified as a key factor influencing the timing of Decision Documents and permitting outcomes. Clear, accessible guidance outlining YG's roles, responsibilities, and procedural expectations would support transparency and improve predictability for all parties.

Additionally, greater clarity is required regarding the interaction between Crown consultation processes and the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) assessment framework. Consultation processes should complement, not duplicate, matters addressed through YESAB recommendations.

Crown consultation from the Yukon and Canada should build upon the assessment record and focus specifically on potential impacts to Indigenous rights and title. Establishing clear procedural boundaries and sequencing would improve efficiency while maintaining legal defensibility.

RECOMMENDATION

YMAB recommends that the Minister develop and publish a clear consultation policy outlining YG's obligations and the process to be applied by its Decision Bodies, including clarification of roles, responsibilities, and coordination with federal consultation processes and YESAB.



Advancing Regional Land Use planning

Unfinished regional land use planning continues to create uncertainty within the Yukon's regulatory environment. In the absence of completed plans, land use conflicts are frequently addressed within project-specific assessment and permitting processes. This can result in expanded consultation scope, delayed decision-making, and reduced predictability for all parties.

Where regional plans are incomplete, mineral projects are often required to resolve broader land-use questions during assessment that extend beyond the individual project footprint. This places additional pressure on regulatory processes designed to evaluate specific project impacts rather than territory-wide land designation issues. The duplication of policy-level debates within project assessments increases regulatory burden and weakens long-term investment confidence.

Meaningful progress on regional land use planning is essential to rebuilding trust with First Nations and improving permitting timelines. Completed plans would provide greater certainty to First Nations governments, industry proponents, and YG alike. They also support reconciliation by ensuring that Indigenous governments are engaged in strategic land-use decisions at the planning stage, rather than through reactive, project-by-project negotiations.

Regional land use plans should also include appropriate consideration of potential mineral endowment within each region to ensure that future generations retain opportunities

for economic prosperity through mineral production. While mineral potential can be difficult to quantify, maintaining access for low-impact, early-stage mineral exploration remains important to informed long-term land-use decision-making.

RECOMMENDATION

YMAB recommends that the Minister prioritize completion of regional land use planning.



Addressing Infrastructure Constraints

The Yukon's ability to capitalize on current mineral development opportunities is directly tied to infrastructure readiness. As national focus on critical minerals intensifies and commodity markets remain strong, additional projects will advance toward development.

Without timely improvements in power capacity, transportation access, and regional infrastructure readiness, these constraints will increasingly affect project viability and investment decisions. Already, these concerns represent material headwinds to project advancement within the Territory.

The Yukon Resource Gateway Program, with \$398 million approved, represents a significant but time-limited opportunity to unlock access to mineral-rich regions. To date, only a portion of these funds has been deployed. With federal funding set to expire in March 2031, accelerated implementation is required to ensure the Yukon does not forfeit this strategic advantage.

Long-term solutions such as a potential British Columbia grid connection may provide future stability; however, these developments remain years away. The Yukon must allocate resources strategically and advance near-term infrastructure priorities now in order to capitalize on the current window of opportunity within Canada's mineral sector.

RECOMMENDATION

YMAB recommends that the Minister prioritize advancement of the Yukon Resource Gateway Program and allocate appropriate resources to ensure timely expenditure of approved funds prior to the March 2031 deadline. YMAB further recommends active support for strategic infrastructure initiatives that address power and access constraints, enabling the Yukon to capitalize on current mineral development opportunities.



Improving public understanding and economic transparency

Public understanding of the mining sector’s economic contribution to the Yukon economic prosperity remains limited. Detailed and accessible data regarding Yukoners’ employment in mining, Indigenous participation rates, and the sector’s contribution to territorial GDP is not consistently aggregated or communicated in a centralized and transparent manner.

Improved and routine data collection and public reporting would support informed public discourse and ensure that policy discussions are grounded in accurate, comprehensive information.

Recent events illustrate both the economic significance of the sector and the broader impacts when projects encounter serious challenges. In 2024, the closure of Victoria Gold’s Eagle Gold Mine following a heap leach failure coincided with a measurable decline in the Yukon’s GDP. This underscores the scale of mining’s contribution to territorial economic performance, while also reinforcing the importance of strong oversight, regulatory clarity, and public confidence.

Conversely, positive examples demonstrate the sector’s long-term potential when challenges are addressed constructively. In the case of Minto Mine, despite complex circumstances, coordinated engagement supported site stabilization, meaningful reclamation progress, and a sale process that included participation by Selkirk First Nation within existing security arrangements.

This outcome reflects the value of structured collaboration, regulatory diligence, and timely advisory input.

At a community level, placer and quartz mining operations continue to generate employment, local procurement opportunities, and direct contributions to Yukon communities. Transparent and balanced reporting of both economic contribution and regulatory performance is essential to maintaining informed public dialogue.



RECOMMENDATION

YMAB recommends that the Minister collaborate with colleagues in Economic Development and Finance to improve the collection of relevant data and public reporting on mining sector employment, economic contribution, and Indigenous participation, and to proactively communicate balanced, factual information regarding the sector's role in the Yukon's economy.



Conclusion

The Yukon stands at a pivotal moment.

Global demand for critical minerals, strong commodity markets, and national investment priorities present a rare convergence of opportunity. However, realizing this opportunity requires coordinated action to address structural barriers within legislation, land use planning, regulatory processes, institutional capacity, public communication, and infrastructure development.


Through the aspirational lens of achieving five operating quartz mines within five years, YMAB has identified practical and achievable steps that would strengthen the Yukon's competitiveness and regulatory certainty.

YMAB remains committed to providing informed, technically grounded advice in support of responsible mineral development. With timely and focused action, the Yukon can reinforce its position as a competitive and resilient mining jurisdiction, delivering long-term economic benefits for all Yukoners.

Respectfully submitted,

The Yukon Minerals Advisory Board



A wide-angle photograph of a rugged mountain valley. The landscape is dominated by steep, rocky slopes and a large, irregular snowfield in the center. In the foreground, a group of about six people, dressed in outdoor gear, stands on a rocky, sparsely vegetated slope, looking towards the snowfield. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, and the overall lighting is diffused, creating a somber and majestic atmosphere. The image has a slightly desaturated, earthy color palette.

The Yukon
stands at a
pivotal moment.



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