

Iron ore 2019 - Abstract

Collaboration delivers value to the mining industry

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The challenges now facing the mining industry are becoming increasingly complex (e.g. spatial resolution geometallurgy, tailings management, mine closure etc), ranging from license to operational issues to declining ore grades, increasing development costs and so on. Companies do not have all the necessary expertise to address all these challenges in-house. In fact, during the recent downturn, reduction in commodity prices and focus on cutting costs and improving efficiency has resulted in internal capacity being lost. These were accompanied by significant cuts to R&D funding, and in particular to collaborative R&D. Indeed, there has been a switch from the traditional peer-collaborative model to the one-on-one OEM collaborative model, as companies have shrunk their time horizon for ROI to one to two years or less. The latter model effectively shifts the risk from companies to the OEMs.

In implementing new digital technologies, companies are largely relying on adapting off-the-shelf solutions. However, many of the challenges being faced by companies are deep-rooted problems that are common across all sectors of the industry, whether iron ore or base metals, and can only be addressed through sustained multi-company support. Industry's long term challenges include transforming the way it does business, achieving the zero-waste mine, converting post-closure into an asset rather than a liability, faster process and project development, and the realising the invisible mine. The only sensible way of tackling many, if not all, of these challenges, is through multi-peer collaboration.

Peer to peer collaboration is not easy, and despite an appreciation that the Iron ore business is quite competitive by its nature, there is definitely room for multi-party collaboration. Some recent completed AMIRA International projects serve as good examples of this, and the outcomes from these projects have delivered multi-million-dollar savings to our Members, in addition to capacity building within research institutions around the world.

AMIRA International is a global broker of collaboration. Created by industry 60 years ago, it serves the mining community by providing a collaboration model that helps reduce risk/cost, enables the leveraging of funding and other industry knowledge/expertise. AMIRA International provides excellent project management and protection of sensitive information amongst competitors, as well as offering diverse skills and capability. In addition, AMIRA International provides the framework that enables companies to achieve something beyond which they could do on their own, as well as access a greater range of experience and quality research providers.