

Press release

Rio Tinto's Business Excellence Model paves the way for new industry standard

Antwerp, February 23, 2010 – Rio Tinto's Antwerp based sales and marketing organisation has announced its intention to work with its customers to ensure they are certified members of the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) by 2011.

Rio Tinto is a founding member of the not-for-profit RJC, established in 2005 to provide a single industry standard for responsible business practices across the entire diamond and gold jewellery supply chain. The RJC Code of Practices covers a wide range of business, human rights, environmental and management criteria.

According to Jean-Marc Lieberherr, General Manager of sales and marketing for Rio Tinto's diamonds business,

"We believe there is great value in supporting the RJC as the industry standard, in order to avoid duplication, maximise reach for the programme, and provide clarity and confidence to consumers and the trade alike."

The majority of Rio Tinto's diamonds are cut and polished in India where Rio Tinto launched its ground-breaking BEM initiative in 2003. The BEM provided a unique set of tools to enable Indian diamond companies to manage their business risks, and improve their performance. As well as giving practical support to Indian companies to improve their workplace practices, the BEM provided assurance to potential customers or business partners that the manufacturing unit met appropriate international standards, and that its diamonds had been ethically sourced.

In the wake of the implementation of RJC Code of Practices, the BEM in its current form will be discontinued. Past involvement in the BEM will be invaluable for customers as they transition to the RJC model.

"In the seven years since the BEM was launched, the importance of this type of governance for the global jewellery supply chain has been widely acknowledged. The BEM has effectively paved the way for the introduction of the RJC. We look forward to working closely with our customers to take the next steps towards full RJC certification." said Jean-Marc Lieberherr.

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Notes to Editors:**About Rio Tinto's diamonds business**

- Rio Tinto has a global diamond exploration portfolio encompassing six continents and including projects in Canada, India, southern and western Africa, Brazil, Russia and Australia.
- Currently, Rio Tinto is one of the world's major diamond producers through its 100 per cent control of the Argyle mine in Australia, 60 per cent of the Diavik mine in Canada, a 78 per cent interest in the Murowa mine in Zimbabwe and a 100% ownership of the Bunder Project in India.
- The sorting, valuation, sales and marketing of all diamonds from Rio Tinto's mines is located in Antwerp, Belgium, with representative offices in Mumbai and New York and a niche polished pink diamond business in Perth, Western Australia.
- Rio Tinto is a leading supporter of the Kimberley Process as well as a founding member of the Responsible Jewellery Council.

Website: www.riotintodiamonds.com

About the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC)

The RJC is a jewellery industry trade association dedicated to consumer confidence in diamond and gold jewellery. Members of the RJC represent all parts of the jewellery supply chain from mine to retail, including trade bodies and grading laboratories. The RJC has established a Code Of Practices which sets standards for the industry covering environmental, social and governance requirements.

Website: www.responsiblejewellery.com