



Engr. Allan Allatis, CDO III from NCIP Atok, Vice Mayor Angelito Galao Sr. of Atok, Benguet, and Dr. Arnel Beltran, Bio+Mine PH team lead, sign the Memorandum of Agreement, formalising the partnership between the Bio+Mine team and the Caliking community.

On September 1, 2023, the Bio+Mine team attended the NCIP-facilitated Consensus Building and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing with the Atok IP elders and community members at Sitio Damsite Multi-purpose Hall, Sitio Damsite. This activity is in accordance with the team's application for a Certification Precondition (CP) to conduct sampling activities at the Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) located in Sitio Damsite, Caliking, Atok.

The activity was participated by the Hon. Danny Sucdad, barangay captain of Caliking, Atok, Hon. Angelito Galao Sr., vice mayor of Atok, Benguet, Engr. Allan Allatis, CDO III of NCIP-Atok, representatives of the other barangays in Atok, elders and community members of Caliking, and members of the Bio+Mine PH team.

Prior to the commencement of the MOA signing, the local community offered a pig as an integral part of the IPs' religious ritual. The observance of this traditional practice stems from the community's belief that ceremonial offerings bestow reverence and good fortune to activities conducted within their ancestral lands.

The activity started with the introduction of the barangay representatives and the Bio+Mine team by Engr. Allan Allatis from NCIP-Atok who served as the facilitator. Hon. Danny Sucdad, barangay captain of Caliking, Atok, then gave his welcoming remarks followed by a message from Vice Mayor Angelito Galao Sr.



Engr. Allan Allatis facilitates the consensus building activity by asking the community members for further clarifications prior to signing the MOA.

Engr. Allatis reiterated the project's purpose to clarify concerns of the community. These concerns include the frequency of sampling and the amount of samples to be taken. Mr. Abner Lawangen, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer and a member of the Bio+Mine team, explained how the issues raised will be addressed by the project in the community's native language to ensure better understanding.



Mr. Abner Lawangen, PDRRMO and member of the Bio+Mine team, addresses the concerns of the community members.

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Moreover, the activity also served as a platform to address questions from those who were absent during the Conference and Disclosure activity previously held. Mr. Suelio L. Cariño expressed a concern regarding the overarching purpose of the research and enquired about the research leads' previous experience in investigating legacy mines. Dr. Arnel Beltran and Dr. Aileen Orbecido discussed the composition of the team and how their diverse skill sets and interdisciplinary expertise synergistically facilitated in coming up with a collaboration to rehabilitate the Sto. Niño mine site.



Dr. Arnel Beltran, the Bio+Mine PH team lead, explains how the research team was formed.

Engr. Allatis delivered a comprehensive explanation of the Memorandum of Agreement to the Bio+Mine team and the community members. The MOA was written in English translation and Ibaloi languages, highlighting the role of the NCIP in monitoring customary practices and addressing any potential violations that may arise.

During the drafting of the MOA, it was mutually agreed that the study and validation activities shall be promptly undertaken following the issuance of the Certification Precondition. Furthermore, the community members strongly advocated that the handling of material samples should remain within the confines of the present organization and should not be disseminated to external entities.

After all concerns were addressed, the final version of the MOA was signed by more than 30 community members in the presence of Engr. Allan Allatis, representing the NCIP; Vice Mayor Angelito Galao Sr., representing the Atok community; and Dr. Arnel Beltran, the Bio+Mine team lead.

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Engr. Allan Allatis of NCIP Atok, Vice Mayor Angelito Galao Sr. of Atok, Benguet, and Dr. Arnel Beltran of Bio+Mine sign the Memorandum of Agreement which establishes the partnership between the team and the Atok community with their teams present.

The signing of the MOA formalises the agreement reached between the Bio+Mine team and the Caliking community members, establishing the scope of sampling activities within Sitio Damsite, Caliking, Atok.