

## Vale's mine closure and rehabilitation centre - Corrego do Meio



A Centre for Biodiversity Research and Conservation was created at the *Córrego do Meio* mine in order to support the project planned when the mine was closed in 2005. Located in Sabará, Minas Gerais, Vale began a revegetation project in the former mining sites of *Córrego do Meio* and, in August 2007, added new activities to the original project to intensify the efforts to recover the local scenery and promote new usage of that land. Everything that has been built or rebuilt within the project has used recycled material and industrial residue from the mine. By 2009, Vale will have spent around US\$8 million on the project.

### The Centre for Biodiversity Research and Conservation

The Centre for Biodiversity will rehabilitate and transform Vale's *Córrego do Meio* mine into a space for research development and activities around environmental conservation and recovery. While some activities, such as research and seedling production, are already under way, the centre is expected to be fully functional by 2011.

Any flora that has been removed from its original habitat as a result of mining activity will be replanted. The Centre will also cultivate approximately one million seedlings per year by the end of 2009, with a projection of 3 million in the future. The seedlings will recover both Vale mines and other areas impacted by human activity in Minas Gerais.

The initiative includes diverse projects - water, waste and revegetation will be monitored. Scientific research will be conducted by specialists in fauna and flora in laboratories, with the use of an herbarium, and a library open to the public. The flagship project will receive endangered plants and seeds collected from the mines, constituting the germplasm database that will prove essential for research in flora reproduction, and will also produce seedlings.



Finally, large spaces of the unused mine will be turned into a museum. Visitors will be able to see the mining pit, the processing plant and the machinery, and to gain an understanding of the history of mining and the processes involved.

### Community outreach

The Centre began its activities in August 2007 and employs 40 workers from the city of Sabará. Vale aims to employ approximately 100 further people to help carry out remaining projects. This includes people with physical disabilities, so the mine facilities have been adapted for their use. Employees are currently involved in all phases of the production of seedlings. They will also work at the museum due to open in 2010. The new jobs will substitute labour lost when the mine activities were interrupted.

Besides the job openings, the community will benefit from the museum, access to the library and scientific collections, and will be able to take part in technical courses training that will become available as soon as the educational plan is put in action.

Partnerships with environmental government institutions were established, including the State Institute of Forests of Minas Gerais (IEF) and the Zoobotanical Foundation of Belo Horizonte. Other local partnerships are being negotiated with social development agencies and the government to further develop the projects planned by the Centre.