What makes organisational culture in the mining sector more innovative?

Mining corporates and mine-sites have well-established operational systems and processes. These systems and processes are complex and often inflexible:

- Even short periods of interruptions to operations are associated with high risks
- As in other industries, managers and employees create and follow routines that are difficult to modify — because “that’s the way we do things”
- Large and well-established firms, such as in the mining sector, often are reluctant to implement changes

These factors can create barriers to innovation and make the application of new technologies or other innovations more challenging. However, creativity and the facilitation of innovation are at the cornerstone of success in the new knowledge economy. This understanding needs to be embedded within an organisation’s culture.

What is the Innovation Diagnostic Tool?

The Innovation Diagnostic Tool for METS and mining firms enables innovation in mining by:

- Diagnosing barriers to innovation and innovative culture
- Developing change management strategies to help firms adopt and utilise new technologies and other innovations

The Innovation Diagnostic Tool captures key elements of an innovative culture in METS and mining firms.
What are the elements of an innovative culture in METS and mining firms?

Values
Explores the extent that organisations value elements such as:
- being receptive to new ideas
- flexibility of employees to solve problems in different ways
- exercise creative problem solving

Resources
Explores the levels of resources related to:
- having experts in the organisation to guide innovation
- having systems that support recruitment and interaction
- having time, finances, and physical or virtual spaces for innovation

Processes
Explores the extent to which processes within the organisation are related to an innovative culture.

Leaders
Explores leader visioning, support, and enabling of innovation.

Climate
Explores perceptions of employees related to organisational contexts that support innovation including:
- collaboration
- safety to communicate ideas and opinions that could foster innovation
- simplicity of moving initiatives forward
- acknowledgement and reward for innovation
- tolerance for innovation-related risk-taking
- communication about innovation and associated activities
- entrepreneurial attitudes
- creativity relating to encouragement of diversity of ideas and freedom to explore

Performance
Explores innovation-related performance:
- relative to other external players
- internally for the enterprise as a whole
- for the individual within the organisation

What to do with these insights?
Insights gained with the help of the Innovation Diagnostic Tool assist organisations with identifying those areas that need to be the focus of interventions. This will be different for different METS and mining firms – and may vary for different work units and departments within an organisation.