

For immediate release

## Montréal Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium Architectural Competition Launched

**Montréal, October 22, 2008** – The future Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium will be a new star in Montréal's creative, design and cultural sky. The executive committee has given the go-ahead for the launch of an international architectural competition, to design this new scientific museum scheduled to open in spring 2012.

“The proposed new Planetarium is in keeping with Montréal's character as a cultural metropolis, city of knowledge and a UNESCO city of design. Architectural firms from around the world will be able to enter the competition provided that they meet the requirements of the Ordre des architectes du Québec. The new Planetarium will be built in line with our family policy and our commitment to make all our public buildings universally accessible, while meeting our sustainable development objectives by incorporating LEED standards. Once again, I salute the participation of our government partners and the exceptional involvement of Rio Tinto Alcan,” said Montréal Mayor Gérald Tremblay.

There will be two phases to the architectural competition. First, a public call for tenders will be issued, inviting architectural firms to submit anonymous architectural concepts for the new Planetarium. A nine-member jury will examine the proposals and recommend five of them. The finalists will then work with a team of experts to develop and fine tune their concepts. The same jury will choose a winner next spring.

The jury members are Nils Larsson, architect and Director of iiSBE (International Initiative for Sustainable Built Environment); Lise Anne Couture, architect with Asymptote, a New York firm; Marc Boutin, architect and Associate Professor at the University of Calgary; Stéphane Roy, set designer for Cirque du Soleil; Luc Courchesne, Full Professor with the Faculty of Environmental Design at the Université de Montréal; Maya Raic, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Olympic Installations Board; Louise Bédard, architect with Stoa architecture; Pierre Lacombe, Director of the Planetarium; and Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, Director of Montréal's Nature Museums. “There is only one public planetarium in Quebec, and we want a design that reflects our uniqueness, our daring and our vision – humankind at the heart of the Universe. That is why the jury members come from different backgrounds and from different parts of North America,” explained Mr. Brunelle.

The proposal for a new Planetarium, announced on December 10, 2007, is being supported financially by all three levels of government and Rio Tinto Alcan. “We are pleased to be part of creating an institution that will contribute to the social fabric and prosperity of Quebec and to advancing scientific literacy among the general public,” emphasized Dick Evans, Chief Executive of Rio Tinto Alcan.

Raymond Bachand, Quebec Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Montréal region, added: “We are taking another step on the way to completing this huge project. With a highly creative and environmentally friendly architectural concept, and drawing on its variety of spaces and different learning approaches, the new Montréal Planetarium is sure to touch all its visitors’ hearts and encourage them to explore and enhance their understanding of the fascinating science of astronomy.”

The Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium will be located on the Olympic facilities site, next to the Biodôme – the perfect location to benefit from economic, tourism, scientific and cultural synergy with its sister institution. The federal government chose to provide financial support for this project, of such importance for the east end of the city, in view of the economic spinoff it promises. This support will contribute to promoting Canadian know-how and creativity on the national and international scene.

The Planetarium is one of Montréal's Nature Museums, and its mission is to make astronomy accessible to everyone. Since it opened in 1966, the Planetarium has educated and entertained over six million visitors.

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