

Armando Canales

# THE COST



Rules





# THE COST

A game by Armando Canales  
for 2 - 4 players

## CONTENT

- 1. Introduction ..... 2
- 2. Game Components ..... 3
- 3. Set Up ..... 6
- 4. Sequence of Play and General Concepts ..... 8
- 5. Game End and Scoring ..... 18

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Asbestos and its use have a long history. A naturally occurring mineral, asbestos was once celebrated for its seemingly wondrous resistant and strengthening properties until it was declared a human carcinogen by the World Health Organization's *International Agency for Research on Cancer* in 1987.

However, as recently as 2011 asbestos was still mined and used in Canada. Import of asbestos-containing materials continued for several years, and in 2016 the Canadian Federal Government announced a plan to ban asbestos and asbestos containing products by 2018. It was not until a general ban (which contains exemptions) went into effect on December 30, 2018 that Canada effectively eliminated the importation, use, sale or trade of the mineral or products made with the mineral.

This odd dichotomy between the recognition of the harmful effects of the mineral and lure of the potential to make a profit on it is by no means new to industry or unique to asbestos. As game designers and game players, however, this is thought provoking. What was especially eye-opening to us was the fact that when the design of this game began in 2017, the Canadian ban still had not gone into effect, and in the United States a ban on asbestos still did not exist (nor does as of 2019). This is not "ancient" history, like the ban of PCB or DDT, but rather a process of regulation, lobbying, and legislation still being played out today.

**The Cost** is a challenging economic board game putting players in the role of a company whose interest is in the asbestos industry around the world. Players compete to make their fortune by concentrating or diversifying in the various aspects of the industry such as mining, refining, and shipping. The player who ends the game with the most money wins.

## Definition

Technically speaking, asbestos is not a mineral itself, but rather is the term given to a group of minerals whose crystals occur in fibrous forms. It is derived from metamorphic rock and naturally occurs in every continent around the world. It is resistant to heat, fire, and electricity.

### There are six types of asbestos:

- Chrysotile "white asbestos"
- Amosite "brown asbestos"
- Crocidolite "blue asbestos" – the most hazardous to humans
- Anthophyllite
- Tremolite
- Actinolite

### A few historical facts:

- Between 3000-2000 BC, Egyptian pharaohs were wrapped in asbestos cloth.
- Finnish clay pots dating to 2500 BC contained asbestos fibers, probably used to strengthen them and provide fire resistance.
- In 456BC the Greek historian Herodotus referred to the use of asbestos shrouds in funeral pyres.
- In 1095, the knights of the First Crusade flung burning materials wrapped in asbestos bags over the walls of besieged cities.
- In 1280 Marco Polo wrote about a Mongolian cloth that would not burn and later visited a Chinese asbestos mine.
- In 1725 Benjamin Franklin took a purse made of fireproof asbestos to England. The purse is now in the collection of London's Natural History Museum.

### Common products that contained or contain asbestos:

Cement, wiring insulation, roofing and flooring tiles, thermal insulation, automotive and airplane clutches, brake pads and linings, soundproofing material, fireproof gloves, fire-resistant fabrics (like curtains and blankets), artificial ashes and embers used in gas-fired fireplaces.



## Health effects of asbestos exposure

There is a long delay between exposure and diagnosis, usually between 10-40 years. Some of the health effects are:

- Asbestosis, which results in permanent lung damage (a scarring of the lung tissue)
- Lung cancer
- Mesothelioma, a cancer of the chest and abdominal linings
- Other cancers, including those of the larynx, oropharynx, gastrointestinal tract, and kidney
- Pleural plaques that result in scarring of the lining of the lung
- Small pleural effusions (collections of fluid around the lung)

*The Cost* is played over four game rounds, but it is possible for the game to end early due to health and safety regulations shutting the industry down and eventually eliminating all areas in which to act.

In each round, every player begins their turn by selecting a country in which to execute their actions. The selection of a country both triggers an event within it as well as having an effect upon the country's economy. Players will then use a unique system to draft three actions at once for the round. The actions can be a mix of building mines, building mills, gaining government subsidies, establishing railroads, and establishing ports.

When all players have executed their actions, the players may convert their money into specific country resources with each country having its own conversion rate. The players' industries then go into motion, with mines producing raw asbestos, mills milling that asbestos, and railroads and ports transporting these goods around the world. The players may also have a chance to invest in their own companies to gain an edge.

When players mine or mill asbestos, they must choose to either maximize profits for short term gains or sacrifice their hard won money to minimize deaths thus sustaining the industry. Once all the asbestos has been sold for the round, players cleanup and set the new turn order according to any players who chose short term gains.

*The Cost* is a serious game that makes you think.

## 2. GAME COMPONENTS

Each *The Cost* copy contains:

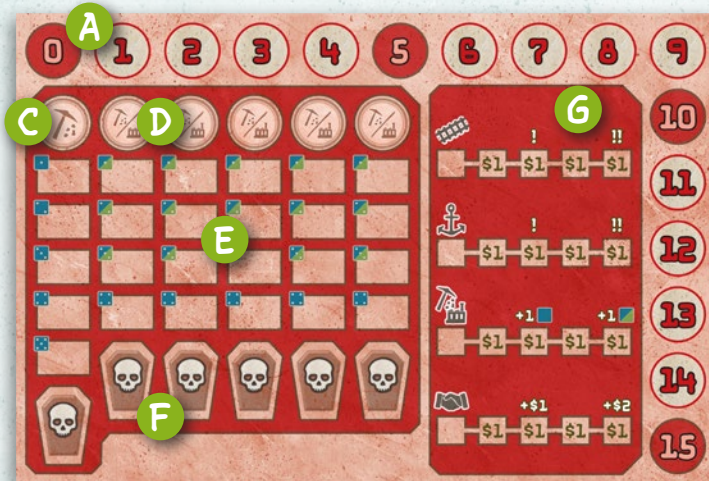
- 4 player boards
- 4 country boards
- 1 action board
- 12 blue dice ("raw" asbestos)
- 12 green dice ("refined" asbestos)
- 60 coins in 4 denominations (1, 5, 10, 20)
- 50 orange workers
- 4 player tokens (1 each in 4 player colors)
- 16 red political climate markers
- 16 blue political climate markers
- 4 grey political climate trackers
- 16 invest markers (4 each in 4 player colors)
- 1 grey emerging market tracker
- 4 grey demand trackers
- 32 national markers (8 ports, 24 rails)
- 6 action markers (2 mine actions, 2 rail actions, 1 mill action, 1 port action)
- 4 "player sets", each with 32 markers (4 resource trackers, 12 rails, 6 mines, 5 mills, 5 ports)
- 4 "country sets", each with 13 markers (7 mines/mills, 6 events: 3 rails, 2 ports, 1 support)
- 8 play aids (English and German)
- 2 rule books (English and German)





## The Player Boards

Each player has their own **player board** in *The Cost*. At the top and the right side there is the resource track **A** for listing the number of resources a player has for each of the countries in the game. The number of resources is noted on the player board by the **resource trackers B** of the countries (showing their respective first letters). If a player has more than 15 resources of a country, their resource tracker is flipped over showing a "+" **F**.



The left side depicts the mine/mill area **C**. Each player may operate up to six mines, five mills, or some mixture of mines and mills during a game. At the top, mines and mills of the countries are placed **D**, below workers are placed working in the mills or mines **E**, and are buried if they die **F**.

To the right of the mine/mill is the investment area **G**. Each player may improve in four sectors: rails, ports, mines/mills, and the emerging market. At each of the four tracks an **invest marker H** shows the progress of a player's investments.



## The Country Boards

There are four **country boards** in *The Cost*. Each one represents a different country. Per player one country is in the game; i.e., in a 4-player game all four boards are used, in a 3-player game three and in a 2-player game two.

The lower part shows the "spaces" of the country with its port triangles **A**, rail triangles **B**, industrial triangles **C** and the asbestos market space **D**. At the start of the game the seven mill/mine markers **E** of each country are placed on the spaces with the matching number, together with blue and red **political climate markers F**.

The upper part has the exchange rate track **G**, where the six **event markers H** are placed, and the demand track **I**, where the **demand tracker J** is placed.

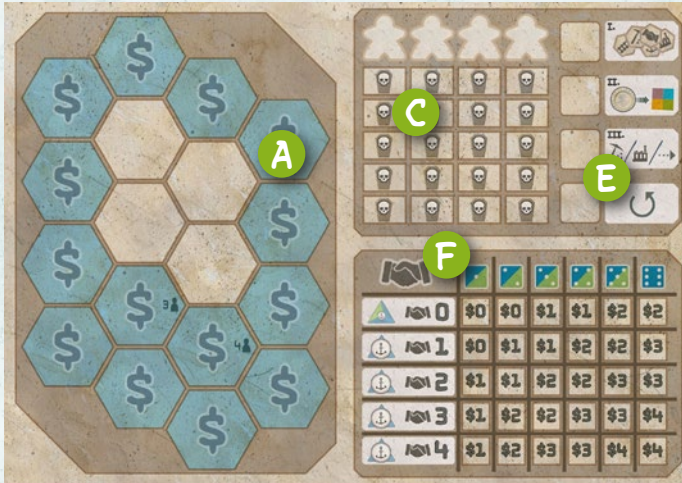
The political climate chart **K** of the country is on the right side. Here the **political climate tracker L** marks the active effects and the political climate markers are placed on the holding area below the two columns (when removed from the industrial sites).





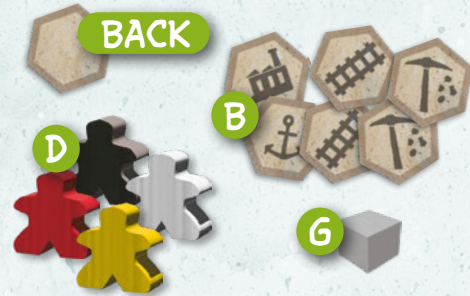
## The Action Board

The **action board** consists of three different areas. To the left is the action display **A**. Here the players plot their actions to be conducted in a player turn. The **six action markers B** are placed on top of the four inner hexagons plus on top of the hexagons marked with a small **B** (in a 3-player-game) and **4** (in a 4-player-game).



In the top-right of the board the turn order track **C** is located. The players determine their turn-order here with their **player tokens D** and mark the current game phase on the phase track **E** with one of the dice.

Below is the emerging market **F**. It is a possible place to sell raw and refined asbestos for all players. The **emerging market tracker G** marks the current economic state of the emerging market.



## The Player Sets & Play Aids

Besides their resource trackers each player receives a set of 28 **player markers**: 12 rail **A**, six mine **B**, five mill **C**, and five port markers **D** in their player color. Only the mines have a different back **E**. In addition, each player gets a **play aid F**. It lists the sequence of play and various important reminders.



## The Dice

**The Cost** includes 24 **asbestos dice**: blue raw asbestos and green refined asbestos.



## The Money

There are 60 **coins** of four denominations (1, 5, 10, 20) in the game. Money gained comes from the bank (the supply), while money spent is returned to the bank. Money can be spent across all countries for their respective resources and also determines the winner of the game. Players never pay each other and may not trade money or resources during the game.



## The Workers

The **workers** work in the player mines and mills and are placed on their player boards. There are 50 workers in **The Cost**.



## National Markers

If non-player **national ports A** and **national rails B** need to be placed, these markers are used.





# Example for 3 players

**PECORA**

Player Pecora's board features a purple player mat with a resource track (0-5) and a 5x5 grid of resource icons. A purple player piece is positioned on the track. The board is a triangular grid of hexagonal tiles with various resource icons and numbers. A purple cube is placed on a tile, and a red cube is on another. A green 'D' is on a tile, and a green 'F' is on a tile. A green 'G' is on the resource track.

**RUTLAND**

Player Rutland's board features a yellow player mat with a resource track (0-5) and a 5x5 grid of resource icons. A yellow player piece is positioned on the track. The board is a triangular grid of hexagonal tiles with various resource icons and numbers. A yellow cube is placed on a tile, and a red cube is on another. A green 'D' is on a tile, and a green 'F' is on a tile. A green 'G' is on the resource track.

**Resources:**

- Yellow player pieces (K)
- Grey coins (1, 2, 5, 10, 20)
- Green cubes (E)
- Blue cubes (E)

**UGL**

Player UGL's board features a blue player mat with a resource track (0-5) and a 5x5 grid of resource icons. A blue player piece is positioned on the track. The board is a triangular grid of hexagonal tiles with various resource icons and numbers. A blue cube is placed on a tile, and a red cube is on another. A green 'D' is on a tile, and a green 'F' is on a tile. A green 'C' is on the resource track.

**Player 1 (Red)**

Player 1's board features a red player mat with a resource track (0-9) and a 5x5 grid of resource icons. A red player piece is positioned on the track. The board is a triangular grid of hexagonal tiles with various resource icons and numbers. A red cube is placed on a tile, and a red cube is on another. A green 'I' is on the resource track.

**Player 2 (Grey)**

Player 2's board features a grey player mat with a resource track (0-9) and a 5x5 grid of resource icons. A grey player piece is positioned on the track. The board is a triangular grid of hexagonal tiles with various resource icons and numbers. A grey cube is placed on a tile, and a red cube is on another. A green 'I' is on the resource track.

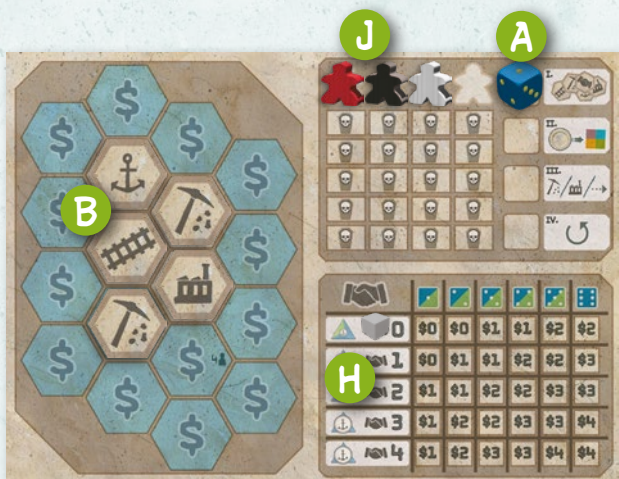
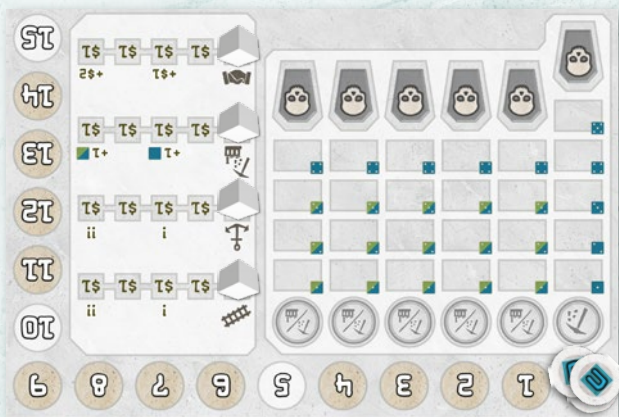
**Resources for Player 1:**

- Red player pieces (I)
- Grey coins (1, 2)

**Resources for Player 2:**

- Grey player pieces (I)
- Grey coins (1, 2)





### 3. SET UP

**A** Place the **action board** on the table. Place a **die** of either color on the top space of the phase track showing "1" to indicate the game is in the first round.  
*Always set the die value to the current game round.*

- B** Shuffle the **action markers** facedown and place them randomly and face up onto the action hexes as follows:
- In a 2-player game, remove one **mine** action and one **rail** action marker before placement. The action markers are placed on the four blank hexagons only.
  - In a 3-player game, remove one **rail** action marker before placement. The action markers are placed on the four blank hexagons and the \$ space marked **3**.
  - In a 4-player game, the action markers are placed on the four blank hexagons, the \$ space marked **3**, and on the \$ space marked **4**.

Unused action markers are returned to the box.

**C** The number of players determines how many **country boards** are in play. In a 4-player game, all four country boards are used. In a 3-player game, only three country boards are used; in a 2-player game only two. The players either choose the countries to be in play randomly or select them. Countries not in play are returned to the game box.

**D** Each country has its own designated color. For each country in play, a player takes up the seven color-matching two sided **mine/mill markers**. They are placed on their respective numbers (1-7) in their country. It does not matter which side is face up.

**E** Take the country's six **event markers**. The markers of each country are shuffled separately face down. Randomly one marker is put on the spaces of the country's exchange rate track, face up and right to left. Each country's leftmost number remains uncovered and visible after placement.

**F** For each country in play, take four blue and four red **political climate markers** and mix them. One cube is randomly placed on top of each mine/mill marker on the country's map. The final leftover cube is placed in the holding area at the bottom of the political climate. The **political climate tracker** is placed on the bottom space of the political climate track corresponding to the same color as the cube in its holding area. This marked political climate effect will begin the game active for its respective country.

**G** Place the **demand tracker** on the leftmost space on each country's demand track.

**H** The **emerging market tracker** is put on the "0" support space on the emerging market table.

**I** Each player chooses a player color and takes the **player board** and all pieces in that respective color. They place all **rail, mine, mill, and port markers** next to their player board. Each player places the **resource trackers** of the countries in play on their resource track space marked "0". Resource trackers from countries not in play are returned to the game box. Then the players each place one of their **invest markers** on their investment area on the leftmost spaces of the four tracks. Finally, each player receives **\$2 in money**.

**J** Take all **player tokens** and mix them. Afterwards, they are randomly placed on the turn order track, establishing the turn order for the first game round. Play order is from left to right.





**K** The players put the remaining **dice, coins, the workers, national rail & port markers** in separate piles as supply on the table. All components are not limited except for player mines and mills. The number of player mines and mills supplied is a limit to how many each player has available per game. For all other components, should they run out, please use any applicable substitute.

**L** You are now ready to start *The Cost*.



## 4. SEQUENCE OF PLAY AND GENERAL CONCEPTS

A game of *The Cost* is played over four game rounds. Each game round consists of four phases:

-  **Phase 1:** Select Actions
-  **Phase 2:** Convert Money into Resources
-  **Phase 3:** Mine, Mill, or Move Asbestos / Make an Investment or Pass
-  **Phase 4:** Clean Up

In the determined player turn order, the players pass through each phase then move to the next one.

When **clean up** has been finished, a new game round begins. After four game rounds, the game is over and the winner is determined. In rare cases, the game can end early, if all countries regulate out the asbestos trade within their borders, see below for The Demand Track.

First, the two important general concepts of *The Cost* have to be explained: the *political climate* and the *demand tracks* of the countries.

### Political Climate



Building mines and mills through actions has effects on the political climate of a country. Any changes in the political climate take effect or lose their effect immediately upon completion of assessing the political climate.

The political climate of each country is recorded on the political climate table. Effects from either the left column or the

right column may be active but never both columns at once. All political climate effects are active from the column of the climate tracker from the space in which it resides and below cumulatively. It is possible that no effects at all will be active in a country. All countries will start the game with one effect active, see setup.

The different political climate effects are explained in the chapters of the affected player actions.

**Example:** As marked by the climate tracker, the players can use the active effects *Surplus resources* (1) and *High demand for mining asbestos* (2) of the red column.




### The Demand Track



The demand track for each country has a few functions.

One function is to track the demand for green refined asbestos dice within that country. The total demand is the number directly to the right of the demand tracker. As green refined asbestos dice are sold to that country, they are placed on the numbered spaces of the demand track starting at the space marked "1" and continuing up with the next die placed on "2", then "3" etc. When the space directly to the right of the demand tracker is filled, this country will buy no more refined asbestos this game round. The asbestos dice sold and placed onto this track are removed during clean up in phase 4 so that more asbestos dice may be possibly sold in the next round.

Every time a worker dies in this country, the demand tracker is moved one space to the right. This immediately and permanently lowers demand in that country. If the demand tracker reaches a space with a delivered asbestos die, this has no effect on the former sale.

 As the death toll rises, however, there will be more consequences. When demand is at 0 (the token resides on the space marked "1"), this country will purchase no more refined asbestos and no more subsidies will be paid by this country (resources or money). If a player would receive a subsidy action for this country, the options are to pay \$3 to change the action to any other action or forfeit this action.

When the demand tracker moves onto the space marked "0" of the track, the country has realized *The Cost* and immediately regulates out the asbestos trade within its borders.

The country board and all markers at the top of the country are placed back in the box or into the supply for national rails and ports. Player mine and mill markers in this country are returned to the game box and are no longer available. All player rail and port markers are returned to their respective players. Finally, the players return to the box all numbered mine/mill markers of that country from their player boards, and place all living workers from these columns back into the supply, but keep the dead workers next to their player board until the end of the game. This country and all locations within it are now no longer in play, but if required players can use the emptied columns on their player boards for new mines or mills.

Thus, if there are many deaths in the players' mines and mills, resulting in all countries stopping the asbestos trade, the game can end early.

**Example:** In Pecora, the players already let two workers die **A** while mining and milling asbestos. A player already delivered a green refined asbestos die to Pecora's market **B**, so if no worker dies during this round, the players can deliver another two green refined asbestos dice.





## Phase 1: Select Actions



In this phase, in the designated player turn order, the players will each perform an event and then may take up to three actions in one of the countries of their choice.

First the player selects one of the countries in play. They then take the leftmost event marker from the exchange rate track of the selected country.

**Note:** If all event markers of a country have already been taken, the player may still select this country. In this case, any spare token is used. In this instance, there will be no event to be resolved.

### A) SELECTING THREE ACTIONS

The country whose event marker was chosen is now referred to as the active country. The player places this marker onto an empty corner of three connected action hexes on the action board, partially covering three action icons. Event markers may never be played on top of another event marker. Played event markers will remain on the action board till the end of the game, blocking that spot. In games with 2 or 3 players there will be corners that feature three subsidy actions. These corners are not legal for play.

**Example:** Marion chooses Rutland, and picks up the national rails marker **A**.

She places it on a corner of the action board, so she will get the actions to build a mine, to build rails, and to get subsidies **B**. Marion, Angelika, and Nicole play a 3-player game, so they are not allowed to choose the corners with three subsidy actions **C**.



**Open and Built Triangles:** In all four countries, the players will build national rails and ports and their personal rails, ports, mines, and mills. To build markers, the players usually must choose open areas. An open area is any triangle in a country that does not contain a player's marker (mine, mill, rail, or port) or a national marker (rail or port) and is also not the country's market triangle. The country's mine/mill markers numbered 1 to 7, which are placed on the industrial sites at game preparations, are only placeholders and are not considered to be built mines or mills! Once a player's or a national marker has been placed into a triangle, it is considered built.

**Example:** In UGL there are already two national rail markers **A** and Nicole's mine marker **B**. All other triangles are still open, including the industrial sites with UGL's numbered mill/mine markers **C**.



### B) PERFORMING THE EVENT

The player then performs the event depicted on the chosen event marker in the active country. If the Event cannot be performed due to insufficient open space in the country, simply place as many markers as possible. This may mean that no markers are placed.

**BUILD NATIONAL RAILS** (this marker is available three times per country): The player places two grey national rail markers onto open rail triangles in the active country. Alternatively, the player may choose to place one national rail marker onto an open industrial triangle in the country. If any rails are placed in an open industrial triangle, the player returns both the country mine/mill marker and its political climate marker to the box. These markers will no longer be used in this game.

**Political climate effect:**

When active, the player has the following option:



**Effective infrastructure:** When the player builds a national rail in one of the active open country's industrial triangles, they may place another national rail marker on an open rail or industrial triangle in the country.

**Example:** When performing the event **A**, Marion builds two national rail markers in Rutland **B**.



**BUILD A NATIONAL PORT** (this marker is available twice per country): The player places a single grey national port marker onto an open port triangle in the active country.

**SUPPORT THE EMERGING MARKET** (this marker is available once per country): The player moves the emerging market tracker down to the next row on the emerging market table. This increases payouts when asbestos is sold on the emerging market.



**Example:** Nicole chose Pecora and placed the support the emerging market marker on the action board. She moves the tracker down to the second row of the emerging market.

	0	\$0	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$2	\$2
	1	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$2	\$2	\$3
	2	\$1	\$1	\$2	\$2	\$3	\$3
	3	\$1	\$2	\$2	\$3	\$3	\$4
	4	\$1	\$2	\$3	\$3	\$4	\$4

**Example:** As her subsidy action, Marion chooses to take resources in Rutland **A**. Sadly for her, the surplus resources effect is not active **B**, so she receives 3 Rutland resources **C**. She moves her Rutland resource tracker to space 3 **D**.



### C) PERFORMING THE ACTIONS

Once the event has been completed, the player is free to perform any, all, or none of the actions depicted by the three action icons in the hexagons where the event marker has been placed. Each action may only be performed once per action icon covered. Actions may only be repeated if multiples of the same action icon are covered or purchased (see below). **The actions may be performed in any order.** Any action effects take place immediately and may affect subsequent actions on a player's turn.

**Note:** A player may pay \$3 to perform any action they desire in lieu of the action that could have been taken from one of the Action Icons beneath their played event marker. The action taken will still be performed in the active country. This may be done for each of the possible actions if desired (each time costing \$3).

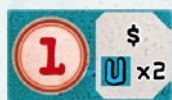
The following five actions can be performed.

**\$ SUBSIDY:** The player may either take \$1 from the supply or may receive resources of the active country. The number of resources received is equal to the current exchange rate of the active country. The exchange rate for a country is the first number depicted to the left of its leftmost available event marker or the final number if no markers are available anymore. The player marks the resources received on their player board with the resource tracker of the active country.

**Note:** As stated above for the demand track, countries no longer paying subsidies will also not pay subsidies even if a player has paid \$3 to change an action icon into a subsidy action icon.

#### Political climate effect:

When active, the player has the following option:



**Surplus resources:** When taking resources from a subsidy action in the active country, double the number of resources gained.

### Mining and Milling

After extracting the mineral deposits, usually via open pit mining, the asbestos fibers must be extracted from the ore. Asbestos usually comprises only about 10% of the mined ore. The separation and extraction or refining process is called dry milling, and involves several steps in which the ore is carefully broken up and the asbestos fibers are freed.

In **The Cost**, mines are used to create raw (blue dice) asbestos in order to sell it for money or have it refined at a mill. Each mine may only be used once per game round. Mills are used to convert raw (blue dice) asbestos into refined (green dice) asbestos in order to sell it for money. A mill may be used any number of times per game round.

**T BUILD A MINE:** This action allows the player to build a single mine in the active country.

1. The player must first pay for their new mine. A mine costs 2 resources of the active country. This cost is reduced to 1 resource of the active country if this is the very first mine built by the player this game.
2. Once this price has been paid and the resource tracker on the player board adjusted accordingly, the player chooses where to build the mine by designating an open industrial triangle in the active country. The player takes the country's mine/mill marker from the triangle and places it into a mine/mill slot on the player board, mine side up. If this is their first mine in the game, the first column is used, otherwise any empty column. The first column is used only for a player's first mine of the game.
3. The political climate marker that was on the mine/mill marker is placed into the holding area at the bottom of this country's political climate track. The political climate is immediately assessed as follows:
  - a) If there are both red and blue political climate markers in the holding area, they will "eliminate" one another on a 1:1



basis. The player returns to the box the pair of red/blue cubes. Thus, only one color remains.

b) Now the number of cubes remaining and their color is noted. The political climate tracker is placed in the column that matches the color of the remaining cube or cubes a number of spaces up from the bottom equal to the number of cubes left in the holding area. If there are no cubes left in the holding area due to "elimination", the political climate tracker is set onto the holding area for now.

c) All political climate effects are now active and in effect in the associated country from the column with the political climate tracker from the space in which it resides and below cumulatively. If the tracker was set onto the holding area due to no cubes in the holding area, then no political climate effects are active for this country currently.

4. In each mine, only a certain number of workers are allowed to work. At the start of the game, the employment capacity for each mine is three workers. The employment capacity can increase to four workers, if the matching political climate effect is active (see below).

Workers may be hired and placed in their slots beneath the mine marker on the player board. The player must hire at least one worker, but can hire up to the allowed employment capacity of three workers. **There is never any cost to hire workers.**

**Exception:** The first mine of each player built in the game has an employment capacity of four workers as long as it is operational (which increases to five workers when the matching political climate effect is active). There is an additional worker slot in the first column of the player board expressly for this. If that mine is removed during the game because that country has outlawed the asbestos trade, the player may use the column for another mine. However, that new mine again costs 2 resources and has the same lower employment capacity of three workers as all other mines.

*Note: All mines must always have at least one living worker in them after any option to hire workers.*

#### Political climate effect:

When active, the player has the following option:



**High demand for mining asbestos:** The employment capacity for mines in the active country is increased to four workers (or to five workers for the first mine of any player).

*Note: Other than a worker dying, there is no way to remove workers once they are in a mine. What this means is with the increased employment limit the player can hire four workers, and they do not lose the excess worker, if the employment limit decreases back to three workers (four workers are still allowed to be in the mine).*

5. The player now puts one of their mine markers onto the designated open industrial triangle, active side up . This triangle now holds a player mine.

**Example:** 1. Marion builds a mine in Rutland **A**. As it is her very first mine of the game, she only pays 1 of her Rutland resources **B**. 2. Marion chooses the industrial site "5" and places the country's mine/mill marker "5" with the mine side face up on her first mine slot **C**. 3. Marion places the blue political climate marker on the holding area **D**, and moves the political climate tracker one space up **E**, so both the effects "1" and "2" are now active. 4. She hires 3 workers (even as the employment capacity for the first mine is four workers), and places them on the spaces of her mine **F**. 5. Finally, Marion places one of her red mine markers on the industrial site **G**.



**BUILD A MILL:** This action allows the player to build a single mill in the active country.

1. The player must first pay for their new mill. A mill costs 4 resources of the active country.
2. Once this price has been paid and the resource tracker on the player board adjusted accordingly, the player chooses where to build the mill by designating an open industrial triangle in the active country. The player takes the country's mine/mill marker from the triangle and places it into a mine/mill slot on the player board, mill side up.
3. The political climate marker that was on the mine/mill marker is placed into the holding area at the bottom of this country's political climate track. The political climate is immediately assessed (see Step 3 of Build a Mine above).
4. Similar to the mines, only a certain number of workers are allowed in the mills. At the start of the game, the employment capacity for each mill is two workers.

Workers may be hired and placed in their slots beneath the mill marker on the player board. The player must hire at least one worker, but can hire up to the allowed employment capacity of two workers. **There is never any cost to hire workers.**

*Note: All mills must always have at least one living worker in them after any option to hire workers.*




### Political climate effect:


When active, the player has the following option:



**High demand for milling asbestos:** The employment capacity for mills in the active country is increased to three workers.

*Note: Following the same rules as for mines, with the increased employment limit the player can hire three workers for their mine, and they do not lose the excess worker, if the employment limit decreases back to two workers.*

- The player now puts one of their mill markers onto the designated open industrial triangle. This triangle now holds a player mill .

**BUILD RAILS:** The player places two of their rail markers onto open rail triangles in the active country . Alternatively, the player may choose to place one of their rail markers onto an open industrial triangle in the country. If any rails are placed in an open industrial triangle, the player returns both the country mine/mill marker and its political climate marker to the box. These markers will no longer be used in this game.

### Political climate effect:

When active, the player has the following option:




**Effective infrastructure:** When the player builds one of their rails in one of the active country's open industrial triangles, they may place another rail marker on an open rail or industrial triangle in the country.



**Privatization:** The player may replace national rails in the active country. They remove the grey rails from the board and replace them with their player markers.

*Example: Marion builds rails in Rutland **A**. She places two of her red rail markers on open triangles **B**. If the privatization effect would be active, Marion could have exchanged one or both of the national rail markers with her own markers.*



**BUILD A PORT:** The player places one of their port markers onto an open port triangle in the active country .

### Political climate effect:

When active, the player has the following option:



**Privatization:** The player may replace a national port in the active country. They remove the grey port from the board and replace it with the one of their player markers.

Once the current player has completed their three actions, turn the event marker on the action board face down. After all players have acted in this phase, move the game phase die to the next phase.

*Example: After using her three actions, Marion finally turns the event marker face down on the action board **A**.*



## Phase 2: Convert Money into Resources



In turn order, each player has the option to convert money into resources.

The player may exchange money for an amount of resources in whichever countries they desire. Each \$1 exchanged gets the player an amount of country specific resources equal to the current exchange rate (see Subsidies under Actions) of a chosen country.

There is no limit to the number of exchanges a player may make. Players are free to exchange for resources in any number of countries they wish any number of times they wish or until out of money. Players are not forced to convert any of their money if they wish not to do so.

Once the player first in turn order has finished any exchanges they wish to make, it is the next player's turn to make any exchanges they wish. After all players have had a chance to convert their money, move the game phase die to the next phase.

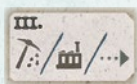
*Note: Players are never allowed to convert resources into money.*



**Example:** Marion pays a total of \$3 **A** to buy 4 UGL resources for \$2 **B** and 3 Pecora resources for \$1 **C**.



### Phase 3: Mine, Mill or Move Asbestos / Make an Investment or Pass



This phase is played in action cycles. An action cycle is one trip through the player turn order.

When it is a player's turn to act, for as long as it is possible, they must perform a single mine, mill, or move asbestos action. If a player cannot mine, mill, or move asbestos, they may make an investment action or pass. A passing or investing player may later be required to perform a mill or move action as the result of another player's action.

Phase 3 ends at the beginning of an action cycle, when no player can still conduct a mine, mill, or move action. In other words, if all players – beginning with the first player – are only eligible to conduct an investment, then no players may make an investment because the Phase now ends.



#### MAKE AN INVESTMENT OR PASS

During an action cycle a player with no required mine, mill, or move asbestos action to perform may either pass or make an investment action.

**Note:** The player must perform a mine, mill, or move asbestos action if there is such actions available to them.

Passing does allow a player to act in a future action cycle.

To perform a make an investment action, the player chooses one of the four rows in their investment area on their player board. They may spend \$1 or \$2 to move the corresponding marker respectively 1 or 2 spaces to the right.

Each time a marker moves to the second \$1 space of any row, the player gains a permanent investment effect. If the marker moves to the fourth \$1 space, the player instead gets the second (better) investment effect. For each investment row, the two effects are never cumulative.

These investment effects are explained in the chapters of the affected player actions.

**Example:** Marion cannot perform a mine, mill or move action, so instead she invests \$1 in rail authority. She moves her invest marker to the second space and gains rail authority 1 **A**.




### Grades and Quality

The most common grading method of asbestos is the Quebec Standard dry classification method. This standard identifies nine grades of fibers from Grade 1 to Grade 9, primarily based on the length of unbroken fibers. The length of the fiber ultimately determines the applications they may be used in which is directly related to their commercial value.



**MINE ASBESTOS:** The player mines raw asbestos to sell or mill it later.

1. The player chooses one of their mines that they have not yet activated this phase (it will be on its active side .
  2. Following the same rules as they did when building the mine, the player may now hire additional workers. The required minimum number of living workers to mine asbestos is one. Any time the player is allowed to hire, they will not be allowed to hire more workers in the mine than the current employment capacity. Dead workers do not count toward that limit.
- Note:** All mines must always have at least one living worker in them after any option to hire workers.
3. The player must now decide if they wish to mine asbestos unsafely or safely. This may have an effect on the demand track of the country, where the mine is located.

#### To mine asbestos unsafely:

- The cost to mine asbestos unsafely is a worker's death. The player places one of the workers in this mine in the coffin at the bottom of the player board below the worker slots (stack them



up if this is not the first). Dead workers will remain in the coffin for as long as the mine is operational.

- Move the player token one step down on the turn order track. This will influence the turn order for that player during the next round, see below.
- The demand tracker on the country where this mine is located is then moved one space to the right. Any effects this may cause are resolved (see Demand Track above).

**Note:** Dead workers do not count toward the limit of hired workers or asbestos dice values when mining.

**To mine asbestos safely:**

- The cost to mine asbestos safely is to pay 2 resources of the country where this mine is located for every worker, both living and dead, in this mine. The country's resource tracker on the player board is adjusted accordingly.

The player places a blue raw asbestos die onto that mine where it resides on a country board (not the corresponding mine marker on the player board) showing a number on the die equal to the number of living workers in this mine at the beginning of this action (prior to paying the cost for mining unsafely) plus any bonus die values that may be gained from the political climate and investments (see below) up to the maximum of 6 (the highest die face). In The Cost, the die value number represents an abstracted grade of asbestos.

**Political climate effect:**

When active, the player has the following option:



**Effective mining:** The player gains a +1 die value to any blue mined raw asbestos dice in the active country.

**Investment effect:**

When active, the player has the following option:



**Improved mining:** Upon reaching the space **+1** the player gains a permanent +1 die value to any mined blue raw asbestos dice. Upon reaching the space **+1** the player instead gains a permanent +1 die value to any mined blue raw asbestos dice and milled green refined asbestos dice.

**Note:** If both the political climate effect and investment effect are active, the player gains a +2 die value to any mined blue raw asbestos in the active country.

4. As each mine may only be activated once per game round, finally the player flips their mine marker in the country over to the used side. The blue raw asbestos die remains atop the marker.

This completes a mine asbestos action and it is the next player's turn in this action cycle.



**MILL ASBESTOS:** The player mills raw asbestos into refined asbestos.

1. The player chooses one of their mills that currently has a blue raw asbestos die residing on it (having been moved there by a previous move action, see below).

**Example:**

1. Marion chooses her mine in Rutland to mine raw asbestos **A**.
2. She hires two more workers to work in the mine **B**.
3. This mine already suffered two deaths in previous turns **C**. As Marion only has 5 Rutland resources **D**, she cannot afford the costs of 10 resources to mine asbestos safely (for a total of five workers, three living and two dead). Thus, Marion once more must mine asbestos unsafely. One of the workers dies, and she places them on the coffin space below the mine **E**. She moves her player token one step down on the turn order track **F**, and also moves the demand tracker for Rutland one space to the right (reducing the demand for refined asbestos) **G**. Marion places a blue raw asbestos die on the mine marker in Rutland **H**. The die value is "4", as three workers mined the asbestos, and Marion already has the active improved mining investment effect **I**. 5. Finally, Marion flips her mine marker on the country board to the used side **J** as she can only use that mine once per round.





Following the same rules as they did when building the mill, the player may now hire additional workers. The required minimum number of workers to mill asbestos is one. Any time the player is allowed to hire, they will not be allowed to hire more workers in the mill than the current employment capacity. Dead workers do not count toward that limit.

**Note:** All mills must always have at least one living worker in them after any option to hire workers.

- The player must now decide if they wish to mill asbestos unsafely or safely. This may have an effect on the demand track of the country, where the mill is located.

To mill asbestos unsafely or safely, the player follows the same rules as explained above for mining asbestos.

- The player removes the blue raw asbestos die from the mill and replaces it with a green refined asbestos die showing a number on the die equal to the number of living workers in this mill at the beginning of this action (prior to paying the cost for milling unsafely) plus any bonus die values that may be gained from the political climate and investments (see Political Climate and Investment Effects).

#### Political climate effect:

When active, the player has the following option:




**Effective milling:** The player gains a +1 die value to any milled green raw asbestos dice.

#### Investment effect:

When active, the player has the following option:



**Improved milling:** Upon reaching the space  the player gains a permanent +1 die value to any milled green refined asbestos dice (and mined blue raw asbestos dice).

**Note:** Players will notice that when refining from raw to refined asbestos, the number of the die values will most likely differ. The two types (colors) should not be equated as the same good or product. Rather, each is a representation of two different types of product. Each product is evaluated (graded) on its own scale.

**Note:** Unlike mines, mills may be used more than once per round.

This completes a mill action and it is the next player's turn in this action cycle.



**MOVE ASBESTOS:** The player transports asbestos from one location to another to earn money. The amount depends on the color of the asbestos moved and its destination. Also the owners of any rails and/or ports used in the move may earn money.

#### The player follows these rules for movement and payments:

Each asbestos die is owned by the player on whose mine or mill the die is resting on. The ownership of a blue raw asbestos die may change at the end of movement, if the destination mill belongs to another player.

The player chooses an asbestos die they own, and its destination where they want to move it to.

**Note:** A player cannot move a blue raw asbestos die on their mill until it has been milled into a green refined asbestos die (see Milling Asbestos above).

#### For domestic destinations, the moving player can choose between:

- Blue raw asbestos dice are delivered to any player's domestic mill that has no die of any kind currently on it already.
- Green refined asbestos dice are delivered to the domestic market triangle.

#### For foreign destinations, the moving player can choose between:

- Blue raw asbestos dice are moved to a domestic port, then they are delivered to a foreign port, then on to any player's foreign mill that has no die of any kind on it already.
- Green refined asbestos dice are moved to a domestic port, then they are delivered to a foreign port, then on to a foreign market triangle.
- Blue raw or green refined asbestos dice are moved to a domestic port, then they are delivered to the emerging market.

**Note:** Refined Asbestos may only be moved to a country's market triangle if that country has unused demand of one or more refined asbestos on its demand track (see Demand Track above).

In each country, the player moves the asbestos from a triangle to any connected adjacent triangle along the printed rail paths and industrial sites until it reaches its domestic destination, or a port for a foreign destination, either to continue the movement on a port in another country or to deliver to the emerging market. Note, that not all adjacent triangles are connected with printed rail paths. There are no length restrictions to a move as long as any given triangle is not entered more than once per move action.

Any built markers, rail, ports or mines/mills (both national and from any player) do not impede movement. Instead, these markers may dictate the direction of movement as follows:

- Each time the asbestos die is moved, the player who owns the asbestos die decides the destination. They then move the die from triangle to triangle along the preprinted paths, the priorities of movement as detailed below must be assessed. Players must always abide by priorities of movement to travel to an adjacent triangle, until it would force them to a triangle that could no longer lead legally to their chosen destination. Priority is the highest Rail Authority > lower Rail Authority > built rails > open triangles. Triangles that would normally be moved to may be ignored when it would prohibit movement to the chosen destination.
- Until reaching its destination or a port for travel to a foreign destination, the player must move the asbestos to adjacent triangles with built rail markers rather than triangles with no rail markers if there is an option, and can pass through any open and built mine/mill industrial sites and ports treating them just as they would be open triangles. If there is a choice between more than one triangle with a built rail, the player moves the asbestos to the built rail with the highest rail authority (see Investment Effect below) that still also allows the player a legal path to the chosen destination. If there is a tie in rail authority, or only a choice of open triangles, the moving player may choose amongst those tied triangles.



**Notes:** National rails are considered built but have no rail authority. Since industrial sites with anything other than a built rail and ports are treated as open triangles for movement, this may mean a player finds moving asbestos adjacent to its destination will have to take a longer path to it for having to follow the route of built rails and rails with rail authority.

**Investment effect:**

When active, the player has the following option:



**Rail Authority:** Upon reaching the space, the player gains rail authority 1. Upon reaching the space, the player **instead** gains rail authority 2.

**Note:** For rail authority, when a player moves asbestos dice along connected triangles, they must follow this order in descending priority: rail authority 2 > rail authority 1 > built rail > open triangle.

- To deliver asbestos dice to foreign destinations or the emerging market, the player chooses a domestic port to leave the originating country from. Then, they either deliver the asbestos to the emerging market, or choose a port in the foreign country to continue the movement to the chosen destination. When leaving or entering countries, the player must choose the port with the highest port authority, then a built port over an open port. On the rails to the port or from the foreign port to the chosen destination, the player follows all movement rules for rails, except when they are forced to use a specific network of rails to reach the correct port. When traveling by port, no country may be left and then entered again as part of the same move action. Also, traveling to foreign destinations will always only ever involve travel in two countries, the origination country and the country with the destination. Any other countries cannot be entered, travelled across, and then left.

**Investment effect:**

When active, the player has the following option:



**Port Authority:** Upon reaching the space, the player gains port authority 1. Upon reaching the space, the player **instead** gains port authority 2.

**Note:** Port authority governs which port must be used for exits and entrances to the countries when moving asbestos between them. The player must follow this order in descending priority: port authority 2 > port authority 1 > built port > open port triangle.

**For moving the asbestos, the players owning rails and ports may be paid from the bank as follows:**

- \$1 is paid from the bank to the owner of every built rail marker that asbestos moved through.

**Political climate effect:**

When active, the player has the following option:



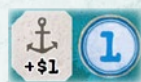
**Lucrative rail payments:** All rail payments in this country are now \$2 instead of \$1.

- \$1 is paid from the bank to the owner of any port used as an exit from a country and/or an entry to a destination country.

**Note:** Built ports passed through, but not used as an entry or an exit destination do not pay out to anyone.

**Political climate effect:**

When active, the player has the following option:



**Lucrative port payments:** All port payments in this country are now \$2 instead of \$1.

Once asbestos has reached its ultimate destination, the moving player is paid from the bank for the asbestos.

- When a blue raw asbestos die is moved to any mill, \$1 is paid from the bank to the moving player per the die face value. Then, the player leaves the blue raw asbestos die on the mill at the same value.

**Example:** A blue raw asbestos die showing a value of 3 makes \$3 for Marion who moved it to a mill.

- When a green refined asbestos die is moved to any market triangle, \$2 is paid from the bank to the moving player per die face value. The player moves the green refined asbestos die to the demand track (see Demand Track above).

**Example:** A green refined asbestos die showing a value of 2 makes \$4 for Nicole who moved it to a market triangle. Then, she places it on an empty space of the country's Demand Track.

- When a blue raw or green refined asbestos die is moved to the emerging market, this happens:

- ❖ If the asbestos left the country via an open port (no marker is present), the payment for the moving player is **always based on the top row** of the emerging market table. Money is paid based on the die value as listed in the table.
- ❖ If the asbestos left the country via a built port, the moving player cross references the emerging market table by finding the column that matches the value on the asbestos die and the row that currently holds the emerging market tracker. They are paid the amount of money listed in the corresponding intersection of the row and column from the bank.

**Investment effect:**

When active, the player has the following option:



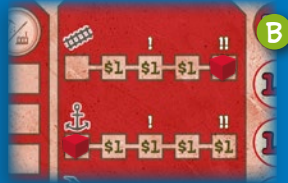
**Improved emerging market:** Upon reaching the space, the player gains +\$1 each time they move any asbestos to the emerging market. Upon reaching the space, the player instead gains a +\$2 each time they move any asbestos to the emerging market.

When phase 3 is over, the game phase marker is moved to the next phase.



**Example:** Angelika built three black rails and a black mill in Rutland, which already milled a green refined asbestos die with face value "3" **A**. Now, she wants to move that refined asbestos from her mill to the domestic market in Rutland. As much as Angelika wants to move the asbestos on all of her rails, she must use a different way: Marion is the only player with rail authority 2 **B**, so instead using her rails to the top right of her mill, Angelika must use Marion's rails at the bottom of her mill **C**, and can only use one of her own rails **D** before arriving at the destination **E**. Marion receives \$2 for her rails, and Angelika receives a total of \$7, for her single rail \$1 and for the green refined asbestos die \$6. Angelika places the green refined asbestos die on the demand track of

Rutland **F**. Besides being forced to follow rail authority, Angelika can use this very long way to deliver the asbestos; she is not forced to use the shorter available option to reach the destination **G**.



**Example:** Nicole moves a blue raw asbestos die with face value "3" from her mine in UGL **A** to her mill in Pecora **B**. As both Angelika and Nicole have no rail or port authority, so Nicole can choose any way along the built triangles. Pecora's political climate effect for lucrative port payments is active **C**, so Nicole receives a total of \$7 for the delivery (\$2 for her rails **D**, \$2 for entering Pecora via her port **E**, and \$3 for delivering the raw asbestos to her mill). Angelika

receives a total of \$3, as Nicole uses Angelika's port for leaving UGL **F**, and the two rails in Pecora **G**. Alternatively, Nicole could have delivered the raw asbestos to Angelika's mill by using the national port and her own rails in Pecora, resulting in a total of \$6 for Nicole, and \$1 for Angelika, but then the ownership of the blue raw asbestos die would have changed to Angelika, giving her more income by milling that asbestos and selling it to a domestic or foreign market, or to the emerging market **H**.



**Example:** Marion moves her blue raw asbestos die with face value "4" from her mine in Rutland to the emerging market **A**. As she has the highest rail authority and Angelika has port authority 1, Marion moves along her own rails and the national rails to Angelika's port **B**. Marion receives a total of \$5 (\$2 for her own rails, and \$3 for the emerging market, as she used a built port **C**), while Angelika receives \$2 for her port. Because of Angelika's port

authority, Marion must use Angelika's port and not the national port **D** (thus, not getting \$1 for her third red rails).

0	\$0	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$2
1	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$2	\$3
2	\$1	\$1	\$2	\$2	\$3
3	\$1	\$2	\$2	\$3	\$4
4	\$1	\$2	\$3	\$3	\$4





## Phase 4: Clean Up



If this was game round 4, the game is now over and the players go directly to the End of Game section below. At the end of game rounds 1-3 the players perform these steps in order:

1. The player who killed the most workers this game round is determined as noted on the columns below the turn order track. That player decides what place they want to be in the turn order for the next round. Then the player who killed the second most workers chooses one of the remaining free places, etc.

If players are tied for the number of workers killed at any step of this process, the player earlier in the current turn order gets to choose their new place in the turn order first.

Players who killed no workers do not choose their place in the new turn order. They remain in their relative positions (in regards to any other players that may not have killed any workers) with whatever spaces that may be still available to them.

2. All used mines in the countries are flipped back to their active sides so that they may be used again in the next round.
3. All green refined asbestos dice are removed from the demand tracks of the countries.
4. The game phase die is adjusted to show the next game round (turn it from "1" to "2" and so on) and The Cost continues with phase 1 of the next game round.

## 5. GAME END AND SCORING

At the end of the fourth game round the game is over. In rare cases, the game ends early, if all countries regulate out the asbestos trade because of too many deaths within their borders (see The Demand Track on page 8).

The player with the most money wins. In the rare event of a tie, tied players share the victory.

However, the players should now take a look at the countries and their player boards. What happened? Is there really a "winner"? Has anyone produced no deaths while mining and milling? Did someone care to mine and mill safely?

### A final note:

Notable countries that still permit the use of asbestos (as of 2019): Brazil / China / India / Russia / The United States of America

**Example:** During this round, Angelika killed no workers, Marion killed one worker, and Nicole killed two workers **A**. Thus, Nicole killed the most and chooses to be first in turn order for the next round. Marion chooses next, and wants to be second. Finally, Angelika gets the third place in turn order **B**.





Armando Canales

# THE COST

**Author:** Armando H. Canales

**Co-Authors:** Lyndon M. Martin, Brian A. Willcutt

**Development:** Uli Blennemann, Henning Kröpke

**Graphics:** Harald Lieske

**Layout:** Vladimir Krist

© 2020 Spielworxx • Nielände 12 • D-48727 Billerbeck

[www.spielworxx.de](http://www.spielworxx.de)





© 2020 Spielworxx