



Guidelines for good communications for mineral exploration



To satisfy our need for new, efficient, green and locally produced technologies, **new world-class ore deposits must be discovered about every two years**. This task is becoming increasingly difficult as easily accessible deposits (e.g. close to the surface) are becoming exhausted.

European industry consumes about **20% of the world's mineral products** but **produces only 3%** of products.

The PACIFIC research project focussed on new methods for discovering mineral resources. The project **developed new exploration techniques** that incur relatively low costs but importantly respect the environment. In addition, the project investigated our attitudes to mining and how we comprehend and process information available from various sources.

Many parts of Europe have not been explored for mineral deposits since the last century. In many regions, there is a **strong chance of discovering new deposits** and expanding the resource base of known ones; but only if modern, innovative technologies are employed. Mineral exploration techniques **must now evolve to meet the challenges** that currently faces our economy and society.

Launched in June 2018, and led by Université Grenoble Alpes (UGA) this three year project received funding of **€3.2 million from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme**.



PACIFIC has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 776622.

Related Research

As part of the **PACIFIC** project, Geological Survey Ireland and the Economic and Social Research Institute in Ireland carried out a number of studies to investigate attitudes to mineral exploration and mining, and to understand the psychological mechanisms we use to assess information and perceive risks related to these activities. www.pacific-h2020.eu

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) carried out an online survey to assess attitudes to mining. A group of 1000 people, representative of the Irish population, were asked about how they perceived mining, related activities and their impact. www.gsi.ie

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Behavioural Unit conducted complementary research to identify the psychological mechanisms we use in assessing risks. The objective of this was to identify the processes by which we take in information and make related decisions, for example to support or oppose a mining project.

The first part of the work focused on comprehension of information about mining and the roles of people's pre-existing opinions and attitudes in the assessment of the information about mineral exploration and mining.

The second part of the research looked into how people without strong prior attitudes integrate information about the benefits and disadvantages of mining and form opinions on the topic. www.esri.ie



Communicating exploration and management of our natural resources

What do people know about mining & mineral exploration?

From studies undertaken as part of PACIFIC, it is clear that the majority of people do not have sufficient information to be able to make an informed decision regarding a mining project. For example, there is a general lack of knowledge regarding modern mining practices, licensing and regulation, and the benefits and risk of mining (including understanding risk mitigation measures and how regulation is enforced). There is also a lack of awareness of the differences between mining in Europe and other areas where regulations and licensing requirements are less stringent or not enforced.

What kind of information should be made available?

Objective, accessible and honest information should be made available by all relevant parties and about all stage of the project.

It is worth remembering that most people have a strong sense of attachment and a clear set of values (e.g. environmental protection) in relation their locality. These should be considered when preparing information about activities that may impact local communities and individuals.



Who should provide the information?

In the case of a new exploration project or mining activities, information should be provided by the relevant companies regarding activities in the local area. However, it is also essential that higher level information is provided by the government institutions responsible for licensing and regulation. This should include information about mining in general and how it is managed, but there should also be information available for individual mining or exploration projects where active.

It is also essential that information providers are proactive and provide information about projects at different stages including examples of how modern mining activities are carried out.



Why should information be shared and who is it for?

It is vital that the public, Non-Governmental Organisations, local groups etc. have access to all relevant information so that they can make informed decisions in a participatory manner. It may not be appropriate to include very detailed operational information, however there should be sufficient information to allow someone unfamiliar with the technical or regulatory processes to ask the relevant questions about a mining or exploration project.



When should information be made available?

Information should be made available as early as possible in the process (e.g. at the initial exploration stage) but importantly, it should be updated and republished regularly as the project evolves. It is important to make information available in a timely manner when requested.

How should information be presented?

The information should be provided in a clear and balanced format. If there are activities planned that may be perceived as risky, these should be clearly described and information regarding the associated mitigation measures should also be included.

It is important to have the information available in a range of high quality formats and for as wide an audience as possible (e.g. online, traditional media, local libraries, audio formats, newspapers etc.)