

RESPONSIBLE MINERAL EXTRACTION



Challenges

Mining usually goes along with significant impacts on the environment as well as surrounding communities. In the worst cases, mineral extraction and trade may be associated with violent conflicts and human rights abuses. Mining operations may not pay attention to basic occupational safety and health and labour rights. Although more commonly found in artisanal and small-scale (ASM) operations, when governance structures are weak, these problems may be present in large-scale industrial projects, too. Mitigating impacts on environment and society, promoting human and workers' rights, maintaining good relations between different stakeholders of mining projects, transparency and accountability and, in the best case, maximising mining's contribution to sustainable rural development – these are all elements of responsible mineral extraction. Responsible mining is promoted by a number of national and international best practice standards and it is also the basis of responsible sourcing.

Projekt-Consult

As early as the 1980s, Projekt-Consult began developing and introducing locally adapted technologies to improve the work situation and reduce environmental damage caused by mining in Latin America. Some of the topics have accompanied us since then - such as the reduction of mercury emissions in small-scale gold mining. Other issues have only been added over time, such as mine site audits and improvements in water and energy efficiency in mining. Today, our services encompass technical solutions, capacity building

and strategic advice on the environmental and social dimensions of resource extraction.

Our services

Environmental best practice

Finding ways to make environmental protection financially affordable for small and medium mining operations is the goal of several of our projects. Solutions are sought by introducing environmentally favourable technology through the training and education of workers, increased work safety measures, higher productivity by means of (semi-) mechanization of the operations, and assistance in legalizing the mines; these measures contribute towards reducing the environmental impact - especially in the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector.

Cyanide and mercury in ASM

In the 1980's, experts of Projekt-Consult became aware of the enormous environmental and health challenges generated by the widespread use of the amalgamation process in artisanal and small-scale mining. Within pilot projects in Colombia, first technical means to reduce mercury emissions from the process and to replace the open mercury cycle, have been successfully implemented. Since then, Projekt-Consult has implemented numerous lighthouse projects worldwide and has gained extensive experience with the toxicology, monitoring, and reduction of mercury.

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Occupational safety and health

Translating modern OSH standards into practically applicable standards for the ASM sector is a key expertise of the company which has been demonstrated by internationally recognised publications and training materials on organisation of safety and health in the mines, personal protective equipment, mine rescue procedures and training, safe mine design and mining methods, open cast, underground mine ventilation, safe handling of explosives, and blasting operations.

Information and sensitization campaigns for responsible mining

Campaigns to inform and sensitize artisanal miners on responsible mining principles are an integral part of our ASM-related projects. These may be carried out as separate campaigns, as part of trainings for artisanal miners or as part of the greater communication strategy of projects.

Development of communication and coordination structures for different mining stakeholders

Within our projects, we have designed structures for effective communication and coordination among different mining stakeholders, such as private companies, local communities, artisanal miners, the mining administration, etc.

Implementation of best practice standards

A number of national and international, compulsory and voluntary, best practice standards for responsible mining have been developed over the past years. Projekt-Consult has accompanied mining companies in the implementation of such standards, including mine site audits, recommendations for improvement, development of related company policies and training.

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