Association for Mineral Exploration

Chapter 1: Indigenous Engagement Guidebook

INTRODUCTION

At the Association for Mineral Exploration (AME), we believe successful projects and partnerships provide mutual benefit and support efforts towards reconciliation.

This series of information and tools intends to provide mineral explorers and developers working in British Columbia (BC) with the context and understanding to effectively create open and strong relationships that can lead to successful delivery of exploration and resource development projects. While some requirements are spelled out clearly in regulations and law, others are found more broadly in Canadian case law, local expectations and best practices. Mineral explorers and developers may also look to guidance and calls to action in **Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission report** as well as the principles within the **United Nations Declaration for Rights for Indigenous Peoples**. In addition, the Canadian government has created "**10 Principles: Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship With Indigenous Peoples**".

These tools have been developed with a range of mineral explorers and developers in mind, but also recognizes other key readers may include the regulators, investors and also Indigenous communities with whom mineral explorers and developers engage and work. Furthermore, Indigenous peoples and companies are increasingly active in the exploration and mining sector; these tools are meant to be helpful for all readers who are participating or interested in mineral exploration and development in BC.

Early engagement with Indigenous peoples is a key component of a successful approach to mineral exploration and resource development. Proper, early and meaningful engagement should lead to respectful relationships, strong projects and mutual benefits for Indigenous peoples, industry and society as a whole. While the Provincial and/or Federal government is legally obligated to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate Indigenous peoples on land and resource decisions that could impact Indigenous rights and interests, explorers and developers have an important role to play in projects successfully moving forward.

Mineral explorers are often the first to connect with communities and are well suited to share up-to-date information regarding their project. Mineral explorers and developers can also create direct opportunities for Indigenous input, improved understanding of mineral exploration, shared decision-making, relationship building and economic participation. Indigenous leaders and community members have knowledge they may choose to share that could assist or otherwise improve the exploration and development activities. Mineral explorers and developers and Indigenous peoples can work together for mutual benefit through early engagement, as evident in the many good projects in British Columbia.

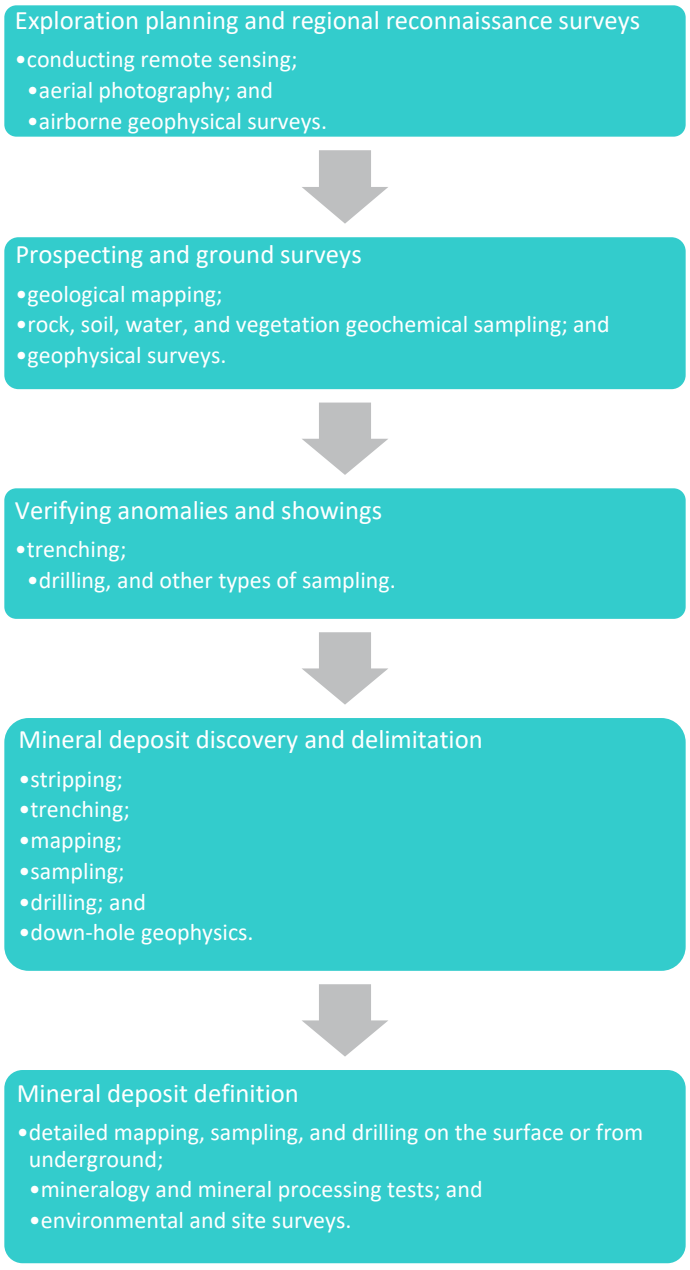
What is Mineral Exploration?

Mineral exploration is the search for materials in the earth's crust that appear in high enough concentrations and amounts to be extracted and processed for profit. It is the first step in the mining lifecycle and includes a wide range of techniques and activities and may take several years to confirm a resource. The supply of minerals is critical to support the needs of our modern society and furthers our ability to grow the "green" economy.

During the mineral exploration stage, large areas of land are often evaluated by airborne or ground-based surveys, such as those conducted by the **BC Geological Survey** or **Geoscience BC**, for example. These surveys provide important geological and geoscientific information about the occurrence and potential of mineral and coal resources. This information encourages investment in mineral and coal exploration by helping prospectors and companies target promising areas.

Mineral exploration covers a wide range of **objectives and activities** that begin with the selection of a target area. The type of work carried out depends on the minerals being sought and how much information is already known about a deposit and area geology. Pursuing promising clues that may lead to a mineral discovery often requires substantial investment and years of work and only a small number of these clues lead to discovery. It is not until drilling and rock excavation have more clearly defined the extent of a deposit and cost studies have concluded that profitable extraction is possible while taking into consideration environmental and social conditions.

1 Exploration Activities at Various Stages



As described by the federal department of **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)** on their website, mineral exploration may involve a variety of different activities as summarized in the flow chart in the side bar.[1] Generally, exploration can be divided into two stages: initial exploration and advanced exploration.

More advanced exploration activities include:

- Project engineering, done by conducting pilot tests of processing methods, engineering design and planning, and risk analysis;
- Project economics, accomplished through financial studies (pre-feasibility studies) that include mine capital and operating cost estimations; and
- Feasibility studies and production decisions, accomplished through an exhaustive due diligence.

It should be noted that it is the duty of every mineral explorer and developer, whether an individual or company, to comply with all Federal and Provincial laws and regulations, specifically, applicable sections of the **Mines Act**, and parts of the **Health, Safety and Reclamation Code in BC**.

This information in this Guidebook does not replace laws or regulations, nor does it substitute for the advice of professionals in the field, including legal counsel and Indigenous governments. Should anything contained in this information or the tools appear to be in variance with the *Mines Act* and Code, current case law, or other relevant legislation or regulations, the provisions of the *Mines Act* and Code, current case law, or other relevant legislation or regulations will prevail.

[1] http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/exploration/8290