

iCRAG, The SFI Research Centre for Applied Geosciences Response to “Public consultation on scoping report for the Environmental Assessment of the emerging Draft Policy Statement on Mineral Exploration and Mining in Ireland”

Submitted to: Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

Submitted by: iCRAG, the SFI Research Centre for Applied Geosciences

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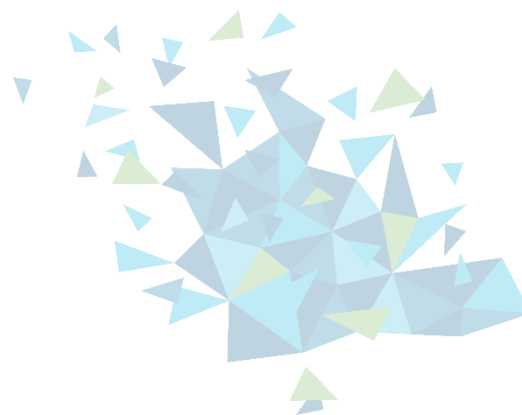
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About iCRAG

iCRAG is the SFI Research Centre for Applied Geosciences. We are a team of researchers creating solutions for a sustainable society.

We develop innovative science and technologies to better understand the Earth's past, present, and future and how people are connected to it.

We drive research in areas that are critical to society and the economy, including:

- Sustainable discovery of energy resources and raw materials required for decarbonisation.
- Securing and protecting groundwater and marine resources.
- Protecting society from Earth's hazards such as floods and landslides.

iCRAG, the world leading SFI Research Centre in applied geosciences hosted by UCD, comprises 150 researchers across eight universities and institutions. iCRAG is supported by Science Foundation Ireland, Geological Survey Ireland and industry partners.

www.icrag-centre.org

iCRAG, the SFI Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences, funded by Science Foundation Ireland, Geological Survey Ireland and industry partners welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the development of policies for mineral exploration and mining in Ireland.

Sustainably managed mineral exploration and mining can enhance Ireland's supply chain of critical raw materials, provide employment across the island, and secure many of the materials needed as part of the green transition. As Ireland's applied geoscience research centre, comprising more than 150 researchers across eight Irish universities and institutions, iCRAG is actively contributing to Ireland's mineral exploration and mining activities.

Hosted by University College Dublin, iCRAG's broad research community focuses on three interrelated Challenges—Earth System Change, Earth Resources, and Earth Science in Society. Established in 2015 iCRAG has established a network of industry partners in the mineral exploration and mining areas, and has strong relationships with several government bodies and agencies.



iCRAG hopes that the policy statement on mineral exploration and mining will enable Government departments, State agencies, regulatory authorities and policy makers to make informed decisions on such activities. Furthermore, iCRAG wants to share its expertise particularly in these areas as part of this consultation process.

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Scoping Question # 1

Based on the plans, policies and programmes outlined, are there any other key relevant international, national or regional plans, policies or programmes that should be considered in the SEA Environmental Report on the Policy Statement on Mineral Exploration and Mining?

The EU Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection (2006), which is due to be revised in 2021 (see the European Commission's 2020 discussion document, New Soil Strategy: Healthy Soil for a Healthy Life) should be considered. In addition, the EU Regulation 2017/852 on mercury should also be considered.

Scoping Question # 2

Based on the likely significant impacts outlined above, are there any other effects or impacts that should be considered in the SEA Environmental Report on the Policy Statement on Mineral Exploration and Mining?

An additional impact to consider is the carbon footprint/greenhouse gas emissions associated with exploration and mining activities.

Scoping Question # 4

Do you have any suggestions or comments in relation to the overall approach to alternatives?

With respect to “Table 7-2: Potential approaches to the development of alternatives for the Policy Statement on Mineral Exploration and Mining”, the Alternative Type “Value and Effects Oriented” considerations should focus on an action areas approach rather than a whole country approach.

Further information on the above points can be sought from Prof. Murray Hitzman, iCRAG Director, murray.hitzman@icrag-centre.org or Dr Fergus McAuliffe, iCRAG Communications Manager, fergus.mcauliffe@icrag-centre.org.