

Submission by Geoscience Ireland re the DECC Draft Minerals Policy



- The Draft Policy is a **welcome development**, recognizing the need for minerals and the role of minerals in climate action and the circular economy.
- The Draft Policy **aligns with economic objectives** e.g. Future Jobs 2019 (Section 2.8.). It might also usefully refer to skills and capacity developed by companies serving the minerals sector in Ireland which are capable of trading internationally, as exemplified by the Geoscience Ireland (GI) Business Cluster. GI turnover in 2020 was €1.24 BN of which €400M was generated overseas in over 80 countries.
- Section 4.1.5 refers to **International Cooperation** and commits to promote the industry abroad as world class in terms of expertise, sustainable mining practices and skilled workforce in order to continue to attract inward investment and facilitate Irish companies and personnel to compete for international contracts.
- The **Geoscience Ireland (GI) business cluster is an example - but not the only case- of Irish companies winning international contracts.** Skills exported by the minerals sector include capacity building, design and contracting services in geology, geotechnical engineering, environmental engineering, mineral exploration, mining, health & safety training, water resources and regulatory skills. In addition, Ireland has well established analytical services and makes drilling products for the minerals sector.
- Section 4.1.4 refers to **Capacity Building.** While Ireland has many skilled drillers, there are no requirements for the certification of such personnel. An **Apprenticeship in Geo-Drilling** was commenced in 2019 by IT Carlow and has attracted strong support from industry, trade unions, state and semi-state agencies and professional bodies. As a regulator of exploration and mining which includes drilling, DECC should ensure that drilling is carried out by suitably qualified personnel only and support policies which encourage the take up of appropriate apprenticeships.

GI is currently a project delivered by Geological Survey Ireland and is supported by Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs. GI is undergoing a transition from DECC to a stand- alone cluster; this process is expected to complete in Q1 2022. Continued support from Enterprise Ireland, GSI and DFA is anticipated.

A Review of the GI Project by Indecon Economic Consultants is nearing completion. This Review should be assessed in finalising the Draft Minerals Policy.



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