



Strengthening the Mastering of Natural Resources in the Kyrgyz Republic

**Development Cooperation between the Geological Survey of
Finland and the State Agency on Geology and Mineral Resources
under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic**

Project Funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland



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PROJECT PERIOD: 2014 – 2017
TARGET COUNTRY: Kyrgyz Republic
BUDGET: € 1.6 million
FINANCING: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
EXECUTING INSTITUTIONS: Geological Survey of Finland (GTK) and State Agency on Geology and Mineral Resources under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (SAGMR)

Project context

Kyrgyzstan has long been recognized as an important producer of gold, antimony and silver. The country is also endowed with commercially significant deposits of uranium, lead, mercury, tin, tungsten and rare-earth metals. Deposits developed in transparent and environmentally sustainable ways should provide Kyrgyz society as a whole with a wide range of benefits, including improved living standards, strong institutions and integration with the global economy.

As part of efforts to advance geoscience capabilities in Kyrgyzstan to extend

the national reach of geoscience work throughout the country, the “Strengthening the Mastering of Natural Resources” Project (2014–2017) focuses on seven areas: geodata rescue and dissemination, geosector transparency, geohazard identification, regional outreach, hydrogeology and geophysics, marketing and communications, as well as mentoring of young experts. The Geological Survey of Finland (GTK) together with the State Agency on Geology and Mineral Resources Under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (SAGMR), the governmental agency charged with managing the national geosector, jointly implement the project.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

The “Strengthening the Mastering of Natural Resources” Project strengthens SAGMR’s capacity to carry out its national mandate and serve the public at large, government agencies and private companies. Further, SAGMR will be assisted in establishing new working procedures in the areas of geoinformation management, data delivery and marketing.

Younger staff members will especially benefit from the project through improved expertise and familiarity with current practices. Women, in particular, will have opportunities to take career paths previously unavailable to them and participate more in decision-making processes.





Objectives

1. Data rescue and dissemination

Kyrgyzstan's treasure trove of geodata reflects the country's major role as an ore and mineral producer during the Soviet era, as well as long-standing geological interest in the region. The project builds on earlier GTK-SAGMR cooperation that laid out basic procedures for digitizing paper maps in Bishkek, the headquarters of SAGMR.

Tasks will include ramping up the digitization work at the southern expedition in Osh and online dissemination of digital products and services from the new geoinformation centre in Bishkek. The online catalogue will be extended to include Osh products.

2. Geosector transparency

Kyrgyzstan wants to promote public-private cooperation through a shared vision of economic policy among all stakeholder groups in order to promote long-term economic stability and market certainty. The emphasis here is on giving decision-makers and stakeholders equal access to geoinformation and clarification on the available opportunities for adding value. Companies bidding for mineral rights, in turn, should compete on an even playing field with clear rules.

To strengthen institutions, the project provides assistance in improving the quality and diversity of available geodata. Kyrgyzstan's commitment to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is a major step towards reform in the sector.



EITI in brief:

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative sets standards for transparency and accountability in extractive industries. The payments and revenues of the companies engaging in the extraction of gas, oil and minerals are published to increase public awareness and reduce corruption. (<http://eiti.org/>)

3. Geohazard identification

Kyrgyzstan in recent years has experienced major natural disasters from earthquakes, torrential rains and rapid spring melts, as well as severe loss of glaciers and snowpack in its mountains. Landslides and mudslides, in particular, can to some extent be anticipated and their economic consequences and damage to infrastructure mitigated – not to mention loss of life and public health issues. Work focuses on acquisition and interpretation of geoinformation gathered in the field and through remote sensing (satellite data).

Good institutions and policies are decisive in determining whether natural resources are a curse or a blessing.



4. Regional outreach

Development of the Central Asian Geoportal (www.cac-geoportal.org) will continue with partner organizations in Tajikistan and Kazakhstan.

SAGMR's southern expedition based in Osh, lies over 300 kilometres from the Bishkek headquarters. To complement the new capabilities under development in Bishkek, efficiency improvements at the Osh branch will facilitate access to a vast body of unique geoinformation. The southern district not only includes areas of international interest, but the Osh office can support regional environmental themes, mineral development, land use planning and infrastructure development.

The "Strengthening the Mastering of Natural Resources" Project operates in close cooperation with other donor-funded projects in the region, as well as Foreign Ministry-funded projects headed by the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) and the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE).

The focus is on institutional capacity building within the geo-sector in the Kyrgyz Republic.

5. Hydrogeology and geophysics

As part of efforts to develop groundwater and environmental protection capacity, the project includes geophysical techniques for improved detection and monitoring contamination around selected sites. In addition to geophysical measurements, data from groundwater sample-taking is combined with other digital geodata for tracking of effluent plumes and creating of a clear picture of environmental impacts.

6. Marketing and communications

International investors are well aware of the potential of Kyrgyzstan's mineral sector, even if the country so far has kept a low profile. The project will assist in preparation of a "road show" along with online and physical marketing materials for senior and junior mining ventures interested in gold, silver and other metals. Kyrgyzstan needs to develop a higher profile at international conferences and specialist seminars.

7. Mentoring young experts

In addition to seminars and training modules, the project emphasizes on-the-job training and twinning processes that assure acquired skills and knowledge to remain in Kyrgyzstan so that the next generation of geoscience talent is ready to take up the reins. In introducing new working practices, best practices are stressed in software licensing, GIS applications, data interoperability and latest techniques in data collection.





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