



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mineral Policy of Estonia

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Department of mineral resources

21.04.2022

Content

- Past
- Present
- Future (bright?)
- Main principles



Major recent events

- June 2017- Riigikogu (Parliament) approved „The general principles of Earth's crust policy until 2050“
- 1. January 2018- the Estonian Geological Survey was (re-) established
- June 2020- The description of the area of government of the MEAC was amended and included the area of mineral resources and as activities- geological mapping and ensuring geological competence of the state
- Feb 2021- Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (MEAC) has the new *Department of mineral resources* and the *Deputy Secretary General for Energy and Mineral Resources*

The general principles of Earth's crust policy until 2050

- ...which declares: „Earth's crust and the natural resources found there are explored and used in a way which creates as much value for Estonia as possible, at the same time considering the environmental, social, economic, geological, and security aspects of these activities“
- The Earth's crust in Estonia contains several resources with considerable economic potential
- The state should have the main competence and initiative in making decisions regarding the use of these resources

Main mineral resources

- Oil shale
- Construction minerals (lime- and dolostone, sand and gravel, crystalline rock)
- Phosphorite or phosphate rock
- Peat
- Clay
- Sea- and lake mud
- The resources of future: REE-s, iron and other metal ores, black shale (vanadium, Mo, U, etc), glauconite

1. Main principles/current situation

- All bedrock mineral resources belong to the state
- All mineral resources in public waterbodies and on state land belong to the state
- Bedrock means a rock created in a preglacial period which is opening on the ground or buried under Quaternary cover
- The private landowner owns non-bedrock minerals, i.e. only the quaternary sediments (sand, gravel and peat)
- The use of mineral resources is aimed at promoting the economic growth of the state, while compensating for the environmental impacts

2. Main principles/current situation

- The main responsible authority for exploring and mining permitting is **Environmental Board**
- **Commission of Mineral Resources** is advising on issues of exploration and exploitation of mineral resources, validation of mineral reserves, among other topics
- The fee for the right to extract mineral resources is paid for the extraction or use of state-owned mineral resources
- The rates of those fees is established by a regulation of the Government and set per tonne or per cubic meter

Corresponding laws

- Earth's Crust Act
- General Part of Environmental Code Act
- Environmental Charges Act
- Nature Conservation Act
- Building Code
- Planning Act

Earth's Crust Act regulates

- Geological investigation, exploration and extraction of mineral resources
- The rights of the owner of an immovable upon use of mineral resources within the boundaries of the owner's immovable
- Reclamation requirements
- Use of the earth's crust not related to the extraction of mineral resources
- Protection of the earth's crust
- State supervision over compliance with the requirements
- Liability for violation of the requirements

The area of government of the MEAC

- Analytics and research (forecasting the need for mineral resources)
- Assessment of socio-economic impact of mineral resources
- Conducting, coordinating and funding of the state-run researches
- Collection, interpretation and systematisation of geological information
- Geological mapping

Implementation of the policy in the MEAC

- Coordination of exploration and use of mineral resources, directing the activities of the EGS (Survey)
- Participation in legislation concerning the earth's crust
- Coordination of plans, exploration permits and mining permits
- Determining the state interest in the permit application process
- Management of calculation of oil shale and peat resource fees
- Participation in the assessment of the environmental impact and efficiency of the use of the earth's crust, and in the process of spatial planning

In focus

- Sustainable use of building mineral resources and deposits necessary for the construction of infrastructure objects
- Development of a concession mechanism for future mineral resources
- Financing and conducting research on existent and future mineral resources and also geothermal
- Promotion of the use of mineral resources, international cooperation and communication with the public
- Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation in the sector

Department of mineral resources

- The scope of mineral resources in the MEAC is managed and regulated by the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR)
- DMR is responsible for:
 - construction aggregates and other mineral resources
 - future mineral resources
 - reputation building of area of earth's crust
 - social responsibility associated with the use of mineral resources

Key points

- With the green transition, the demand for REE's is growing. REE's and phosphorus are critical raw materials. Estonia has one of the largest phosphorite deposit in Europe
- Estonian phosphorite as a raw material for fertilizers also contains REE's, research into the distribution and finding the best technologies for their separation is currently being carried out
- In parallel, we are mapping the most suitable concession models for Estonia
- The most important rare earth processing plant in Europe is in Estonia

Geological Survey of Estonia, field of activity

- **Conducting geological mapping**
- **Geological investigation and exploration**
- **Maintenance of geological sample material and development of geological databanks; ensuring availability of geological information**
- **Geothermal energy research**
- **Advising governmental authorities**
- **Informing the public about the earth's crust**

Some problems we face

- The confrontation between the need to extract mineral resources and the anti - mining attitude
- Landscape protection areas of local importance, which often do not have the necessary justification for nature protection, have been used to control mining
- The extraction of mineral resources declared to be of national importance is practically decided by the local government
- Fears related with phosphorite

WINDS OF CHANGE

*and The Beginning of All
New Things*



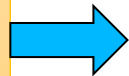
Bright future

- Minor changes in the current Earth's Crust Act- this year?
- Significant changes:
 - The new Earth's Crust Act, from?
 - Concession procedure for future mineral resources
 - Review the system of environmental charges, including the fees for the right to extract mineral resources and the dividing those revenues between state and local authorities
 - Thematic spatial planning of future aggregates mining sites
 - Modernization of reclamation system

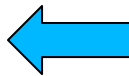
Ministry of
Environment



Department of
environmental
technology



cooperation



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Communications



Department of
mineral resources



Land Board
(geoportal, envir.reg)

Environmental
Board (permits)



Governmental
Authorities

Geological Survey
of Estonia



State
Authority



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
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Thank you!

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