

How to gain a Social License to Operate in the context of re-mining projects?

REWIMET-Symposium Ressourcenmanagement

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Local societies and resource extraction (1)



Local societies and resource extraction (2)



Local societies and resource extraction (3)

- *Perspective Mining Industry*: local societies are a relevant factor when it comes to mining.
 - *Perspective Local Communities*: Mining has ecological, social and, at best, economic consequences for daily life in local communities; varying degrees of affectedness.
 - *Perspective Policy and Administrative Bodies*: ??
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- Legal compliance with state environmental regulations is not enough.
 - Legitimate interests often are considered very late in administrative and planning processes.
 - Instrumentalization of local interests by non-local actors.

The concept of the Social License to Operate (SLO)

- The concept has been developed in the 1990s as the industry's response on the critique of local communities on negative effects of mining and the imbalance of cost benefit allocation.
- Today: seen as a standard instrument and precondition for successful mining projects.
- SLO aims on integrating perspectives of diverse local interests into planning and realization of mining projects and, by so doing accomplish societal duties of mining companies.
- SLO is not a license in the legal sense, but rather the ongoing relationship-building process involving mining companies and local communities.
- Social, environmental, economic context is important.

SLO in the context of re-mining projects

- Overall: ... is similar to SLO in the context of mining projects
- Specific aspects in the context of re-mining projects:
 - Mining experience of/in the local community.
 - Expected impacts and advantages.
 - Procedural fairness highly relevant.
 - Local tradition of citizen's involvement.
 - Involvement of scientific actors.
- Typical fields of tension:
 - The right moment to communicate, especially related to new technologies.
 - Degree of transparency.

Misunderstandings in the context of re-mining projects

- Our project is a „good“ project that aims on sustainability – this is obvious and needs no further explanation.
- In a former mining region, people are used to mining and have a positive attitude to it.
- The company XY organized a citizens hearing; they know how to do this.
- Nothing happened in the past months, why we should inform about this?
- There is a lack of awareness of raw materials (*Rohstoffbewusstsein*) in (local) society, people share a NIMBY attitude.
- There were opportunities to participate (... during the summer break, the vacations, over Christmas ...)
- There are no visible protests, so the project is seen in a positive light.

Concluding: How to gain a Social Licence to Operate

- Understanding and recognition of the legitimacy of local expectations regarding projects with unpredictable ecological, economic and possibly social impacts.
- Honest assessment of the known and unforeseeable impacts of the raw material extraction project.
- Knowledge of local issues and perspectives as well as possible conflicts, especially with regard to mining history, but also other industrial projects.
- Awareness of potentially unequal power relations.
- Regularly contact with the local community.
- Communication, transparency, integrity.

Cited Literature

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Häßler, P., Bleicher, A. (2024): REMINTA – Recycling mineralischer Fraktionen aus Tailings am Beispiel des Bergeteichs am Bollrich in Goslar. TP 5 Wahrnehmung des Recyclings mineralischer Fraktionen aus Tailings - Darstellung der Ergebnisse des TP, online verfügbar: https://www.hs-harz.de/user-mounts/751_m4606/Leitfaden_TP_HS_Harz_Web.pdf.

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Related Publications:

Häßler, P., Bleicher, A. 2024: REMINTA – Recycling mineralischer Fraktionen aus Tailings am Beispiel des Bergeteichs am Bollrich in Goslar. TP 5 Wahrnehmung des Recyclings mineralischer Fraktionen aus Tailings - Darstellung der Ergebnisse des TP, online verfügbar: https://www.hs-harz.de/user-mounts/751_m4606/Leitfaden_TP_HS_Harz_Web.pdf

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