

# Rehabilitation of abandoned mines: Covas, Fonte Santa, Terramonte, Espinho, Lousal, Old dam Urgeiriça, São Domingos mine

2001 to 2015      Countries covered:    Portugal

## Summary:

---

Portuguese government established a good, transparent and clear legal framework that facilitated the difficult rehabilitation project of abandoned mines. There is not a similar project in EU level in which the massive rehabilitation of old mines to be achieved.



## Description:

---

One of the most successful rehabilitation practices exists in Portugal, where DGEG- Directorate General of Energy and Geology (Portuguese Mining Authority) formulated a roadmap to rehabilitate various abandoned mines, such as Covas, Fonte Santa, Terramonte, Espinho, Lousal, Old dam Urgeiriça, and São Domingos mine, with a clear description within the national legislation framework and with the establishment of a subsidy company to perform the rehabilitation plan. Portugal is committed to correct environmental liabilities and the impacts of centuries of mining activity. Until 1990, there was no legal obligation for environmental remediation. Since 1990, every mining company is responsible for ensuring the environmental rehabilitation of its sites. The Government defined a policy and created the conditions for the implementation of an Environmental Remediation of Old Mining Areas Plan. The focus of the project was on the mining waste management, the control and reduction of mine water and AMD, the mine water treatment systems (passive, active and mixed), the soil decontamination, the landscape integration and the heritage preservation. 95 mining areas were funded with 89 M€ between 2001-2015, 9 mining areas with ongoing remediation works with 26,6 M€ for the period between 2016-2019, and 51 planned interventions in remaining mining areas are funded with 87 M€ between 2016-2022.

# Good practice areas:

## Environmental sustainability

---

Rehabilitation of the surrounding landscape and natural conditions of development in accordance with the previous habitat conditions.

## Social responsibility

---

Elimination of the risk factors for public health and safety, resulting from water pollution, soil contamination, mining waste and any unprotected areas; Preservation of significant heritage of old mines through valorization of archaeological remains related to mining activity

## Economic sustainability

---

Provision of conditions for future use of reclaimed areas such as agricultural or forestry use, tourism

## Organisations involved:

---

DGEG- Directorate General of Energy and Geology

<http://www.dgeg.gov.pt>

EDM-Empresa Desenvolvimento Mineiro (Portuguese State owned company)

<https://edm.pt/en/>

## Innovation category:

---

Organisational  
System

## Impact on the mining value chain

---

- MINE CLOSURE / WASTE management (incl. Permitting)

## Mine closure / Waste

---

- mine site reclamation/rehabilitation for subsequent uses

## Linked policies

---

### New Royalties Policy

Since 2007, royalties from portuguese mining companies started to be used not only to finance budget of geological resources public entities, but also to support the rehabilitation of abandoned mining sites.

### Law on environmental rehabilitation of degraded mining areas-1658

Decree Law No. 198-A/2001, of 06 July establishes the legal framework for concession of the environmental rehabilitation of degraded mining areas.

## Transferability:

---

The creation of conditions to develop remediation plans needs political will. It is obvious that the rehabilitation of environmental liabilities arising from industrial mining activities belongs to the priorities of DGEG National Policy Decisions.

## Innovation drivers and barriers

---

### Drivers:

Economic

EU cohesion fund

Other

Local communities pressure for rehabilitation of abandoned mine sites

## Impact Area

### Area:

---

Environment, Ecosystem services and quality of natural resources

### Impact on listed area:

---

+: Rehabilitation of the surrounding landscape

### Area:

---

Human/Social, Infrastructure & regional development

### Impact on listed area:

---

+: Preservation of significant heritage of old mines