The social focus as a cornerstone for success in the MUGA project

2014 - Ongoing Countries covered: Spain

Summary:

Geoalcali is a Spanish company dedicated to the exploration, development and operation of potash mines in Spain. The Company's attitude towards external stakeholders and Social Responsability can be summarized by the moto "CREA" Commitment, Respect, Excellence, Attitude. Possibly the most significant action undertaken was the voluntarily Public Participation Process



The Company welcomed over 200 persons from local communities



Description:

Geoalcali is undertaking the development of the Muga Mine potash project, located in the northern region of Spain. Since its inception, one of the Company's key strategic activities has been its commitment to transparent, two-way, continuous and open, communication with local communities.

The communication strategy has a number of streams, such as presentations, face-to-face discussions, group meetings, one-on-one meetings, engagement in local social activities, provision of various materials about the mine, working sessions with mayors, engagement with schools in the neighboring towns, Open Days for local community, and, very significantly, a formal Public Participation Process. These activities will continue in the future, so as to ensure engagement and to build mutual trust with local key stakeholders in a transparent and open fashion. The Company understands and believes that there is no more important strategic goal than the maintenance and nurturing of the Social Licence to Operate.

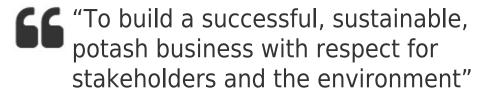
In the list of activities described above, possibly the most significant action undertaken was the voluntarily Public Participation Process, which included:

- Information sessions with the community (12), more than 1,500 people have attended the public sessions.
- Survey of a statistically significant 8% of local residents. (Official public statistics typically have participation rates of 0.05%)
- Survey of key stakeholder groups, including those that may have voiced concerns about the project.

- Discussion sessions with the residents coordinated by an external party, with the objective of collecting suggestions and understanding any concerns. All recommendations from these sessions were addressed by the Company.
- The Company committed publicly to 23 Commitments to the community, including an action plan with several initiatives that are monitored and publicly available on Geolcali´s website.
- Placement of suggestion boxes in the community to maintain active offline communication channels.

This Process has no precedent in the sector.

Geoalcali is also active with regular updates to society via the media and participates in information events to raise awareness on the importance of "raw materials and mining with principles".



Communications and CSR Manager Susana Bieberach

Good practice areas:

Social responsibility

involving the community and their engagement for creating a social licence to operate

Organisations involved:

Geoalcali

https://www.geoalcali.com/

Innovation category:

Organisational

Impact on the mining value chain

Exploration

• reduced environmental impact

Extraction

increased environmental performance

Processing

• increased environmental performance

Mine closure / Waste

• mine site reclamation/rehabilitation for subsequent uses

Linked policies

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Raw Materials

The European Commission is concerned about the public image of the mining sector

Restoration of Areas Affected by Mining Activities-1724

In the particular case of Spain, the 1985 decree of restoration of mining areas has had an important impact. This decree is also very advanced, since mining was the first industry to deal with aspects of restoration. The public perception in Spain that the mines are abandoned and an orphan landscape remains. However, this does not correspond to reality. It is true that in Spain there are a lot of abandoned mining areas (some that are already heritage sites), but they tend to correspond to mines prior to this decree. Society tends to associate modern mines with old and unsustainable exploitations. It is important that the population know how modern mines are operated and that legal instruments force the mine operators to remediate land after 30 years of use. In a way, this perception and process of restoration legislation is transferable to all the countries of Europe with respect to specific country contexts.

Transferability:

SLO concept should be incorporated in business model and culture. It is key to have proactive communication from the beginning towards all stakeholders, in order to build trust. Educational processes are important for society to raise its awareness for where resources come from.

Innovation drivers and barriers

Drivers: Barriers: Other Other

Social skills. it is necessary to incorporate soft skills
NIMBY. Not In My Backyard. There is an important to the mining design teams and to the engineers and sector of society that is against mining, so it is geologists so that they know how to explain the important to raise awareness projects well to society

Impact Area

Area:

Human/Social, Public participation