

# **Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

## **Ministry of Mines**

### **Directorate of Policy**

#### **Access to Geoscience Data and Information Policy**

**Hamal 1391**

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## ACRONYMS

**AGS:** The Afghanistan Geological Survey

**MoM:** The Ministry of Mines

## DEFINITIONS

**Geoscience Data and Information** includes, but is not restricted to, electronic (digital) and hardcopy (typically paper) geosciences documents such as:

- i. Geological reports
- ii. Geoscience research papers
- iii. Geological maps
- iv. Geophysical and remotely sensed datasets and images
- v. Geochemical datasets
- vi. Drill logs
- vii. Topographic data
- viii. Hydrology data

**Geoscience samples and specimens** include rock (including drill core/chips), soil, stream sediment, fossils and water (surface and underground) samples. Samples may have been processed in some manner ex thin sections, polished slabs etc.

**General Data** includes research, exploration data, literature and geological maps.

**Advanced Data** includes detailed exploration data, large files and detailed maps with good and high resolutions.

**Confidential Data** includes internal communication within Ministry of Mines and the data which is strategically important for the national interest.

## 1. **Preamble**

Afghanistan is endowed with rich mineral resources and the records of these resources include geological maps, reports, local geological sites records, rocks and fossils samples and concession data which include licenses etc. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is committed to advancing the development of Afghanistan's mineral resources as well as increasing knowledge and awareness of the country's geology. In light of this, the Ministry of Mines, as custodian of Afghanistan's mineral resources, recognises the importance of having open access to geological data and information for all interested parties, including business, academia and the general public.

## 2. **Objectives of the Policy:**

The objective of this policy is to encourage and promote investment in the mining and hydrocarbons sectors by providing easy access to geological data, information and geological maps and samples. It also ensures the availability of geological data for research, teaching and exploitation by government or private organisation.

## 3. **Legal and Regulatory Framework**

According to Minerals Law of Afghanistan, geological data managed and controlled by the Ministry of Mines will be available to the public. Printed copies (hardcopies) of such data shall be subject to payment of reasonable charges. A summary of mining contracts will be published within three working days after signature. All data provide by the MoM in any format, will remain the copyright of the Government of Afghanistan.

## 4. **Source of Information**

The Ministry of Mines is the primary source, custodian and regulator of all types of geological data in Afghanistan, including data collected by licensed mining companies submitted to the MoM as per the National Mining Policy.

## **5. Availability of Data**

Any individual or company may visit the Afghanistan Geological Survey office during normal office hours to have reasonable access to printed copies of geological data. No appointments shall be needed, and no fees shall be charged for viewing the geological information. Responses to electronic request for advanced data will be provided within seven working days from receipt by both Hydrocarbons and Minerals and Investment Promotion Directorates.

Geological data will be available via the internet via subscription. Interested parties will be required to register to access this information. The e-mails of the interested parties will be collected and updates, news-letters, new tenders and other information will be sent to these e-mails. Online access to data will be regularly monitored by Investment Promotion Directorates of MoM.

## **6. Access to Data**

There shall be three types of data namely general data, advanced data and confidential data.

General Data will be available via the internet without any charges but it will require registration. Advanced data shall be made available upon request and confidential data will be available only to the authorities.

## **7. Contracts and Agreements**

Ministry of Mines is committed to ensure that its departments meet the requirements of the Access to Information Policy when engaging with private sector organizations, or when establishing agreements or arrangements with public sector institutions. Access to information regarding mining or hydrocarbon contracts shall be provided for in the relevant laws. The Ministry of Mines is committed to honor confidentiality arrangements with mining license holder if so stated in the contract.

**8. Effectiveness of the Policy**

This Policy will be effective on its approval by the Cabinet and is deemed to be the foundation document and from which relevant legal and regulatory acts may be developed. The policy shall be reviewed from time to time by Ministry of Mines to take cognizance of changes in facilitating easy access to data and any other matter that arise from its implementation.