

**Project coordinator**

**SGU**  
Sveriges geologiska undersökning  
Geological Survey of Sweden

---

**Consortium partners**

---

**Linked Third Parties**

www.minland.eu    
 MinlandProject    
 Minland Project    
 Minlandproject

## COMMUNICATION



EUROGEOSURVEYS SECRETARIAT  
The Geological Surveys of Europe

Rue Joseph II, 36-38  
1000 Brussels  
+32 2 888 75 53

info@eurogeosurveys.org  
www.eurogeosurveys.org

## PROJECT COORDINATION



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF SWEDEN

Villavägen 18, 752 36  
Uppsala, Sweden  
+46 1817 9013

ronald.arvidsson@sgu.se  
www.sgu.se/en



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 776679.

www.minland.eu Issue NO 4 - September - November 2023

# MinLand NEWSLETTER

Advocating for a more sustainable use of land

## The MinLand workshop presents: investigating on efficient EU policies for minerals and a more regulated legal framework for spatial planning land-use

### In MinLand Issue #4

- Interview with Lena Karka
- Interview with Nikolaos Arvanitidis
- Interview with Ronald Arvidsson
- Interview with Fernando Señas
- Interview with Riikka Aaltonen

### Interview with Lena Karka Spatial Planning Expert

Freelance spatial planner working on the issues of spatial location of productive activities, land use conflicts, spatial planning and environment, sustainable development and the relative legislation

*Do you think that major EU and global strategies, such as new industrial strategy, energy transition targets, electrification, should be considered when it comes to spatial planning mineral land-use?*

The issue of global strategies consideration in land use planning for minerals conceals the wider issue concerning the influence of global strategies on the national spatial planning systems. Major EU and global strategies, such as the aforementioned, constitute an international context in which national systems are bound to operate more or less. Therefore, spatial planning has to take into account these strategies at least as international trends. Their influence depends upon a number of factors. The first issues to consider are how binding they are and if they have a spatial dimension.

Policies that do not create specific obligations and whose spatial impact is far from clear will not affect the spatial plans, moreover, because land use plans are statutory instruments, backed by specific legislations. In planning systems, where there is a hierarchy of plans from national to local level (like in Greece), global and EU strategies have to be taken into consideration at the higher level plans or frameworks which will provide for guidance to local level plans.

Especially regarding EU policies, their role could be very positive for the development of activities as

mining that suffer public opposition and due to this behaviour spatial plans avoid to deal with them on an equal basis with other activities.

Of course, EU policies have serious impacts more so on economic or environmental policies than on spatial ones, although it may be said that the first group has inherent spatial impacts and, in this sense, they indirectly influence the latter.



A last issue to be considered is that global and EU strategies may easily change in the light of new needs or technological developments and in such a way that minerals with no economic significance will gain value. Thus, minerals have to be safeguarded in the same way as other important natural resources through land use planning. And this is a permanent need.

*In the framework of Minland workshops, did you have a chance to exchange knowledge with other*

*relevant practitioners (i.e. land-use planners and mining authorities at local, regional and national levels etc.)? What did this bring to you? What did you learn from it?*

Mineral The MINLAND workshop in November 2018 was a significant experience for me because I had the opportunity to exchange of knowledge and experiences on a topic that have been in the core of my interests for more than 35 years: the issue of spatial planning for mineral resources with particular focus on their conflicts with other activities, especially tourism.

By taking part in the workshop I was exposed to new practices and points of view, explored different aspects of the minerals spatial planning discourse and gained a deeper understanding of a vast professional field. In particular, the presentations of the case studies were really informative for me not only because they identified a recurring set of problems but, mainly, because they highlighted the disparities in the legal context for the spatial management of mineral resources among the participating countries.

In addition, the personal contact with people of diverse academic and professional backgrounds and the subsequent meaningful conversations with them offered me a chance to further investigate common interests and



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 776679.

## Interview with Mr. Ronald Arvidsson

## Coordinator of the MinLand Project

compile a diverse portfolio of ideas, suggestions and possible solutions to the questions of land use planning for minerals.

As such, this experience was also very instrumental to my current work as the scientific director of the group of private consultants, assigned by the Ministry for the Environment and Energy with the elaboration of the National Spatial Framework for Mineral Resources. The Framework aims at formulating policy for the spatial organisation of the mineral industry based on the principles of sustainable development. It is also asked to finalise and put into practice the national policy on raw materials drafted in 2012 in order to introduce the principles of the Raw Materials Initiative in the management of the Greek mineral resources.

## Biography Lena Karka

Dr. Lena Karka studied Architectural Engineering at the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA). She holds DEA and PhD from the Faculty of Geography of the University Paris I – Pantheon – Sorbonne and a post doc from NTUA. The subject of her PhD thesis was: "Mining industry and tourism development in the coastal zone of Greece, Chalkidiki-Milos island".

She worked for more than twenty years at the Department of Spatial Planning in the Ministry for the Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works. Initially, she was responsible for spatial planning issues for the mineral industry and later, during nine years, she headed the Section of Land Use and Spatial Organization of Productive Activities in the Department of Spatial Planning, which holds the responsibility for granting location permits to major developments in the mining, industrial, tourism, aquaculture and other sectors.

She worked for seven years as a researcher at the Laboratory for Spatial Planning and Urban Development in the Faculty of Architecture in NTUA, involved in projects concerning the revision of the legal context on industrial installation in Attica, the sustainable development through spatial planning, cross-border cooperation among others. She served for three years as a visiting assistant professor in the undergraduate programme at the Department of Planning and Regional Development of the University of Thessaly and gave lectures to the Greek-French Master Programme DYNITAR of the same university as well as to other postgraduate programmes of several universities, e.g. the National Technical University Athens and the University

of Crete. Actually, she is a freelance spatial planner working on the issues of spatial location of productive activities, and use conflicts, spatial planning and environment, sustainable development and the relative legislation and lately, she was engaged as the scientific director of the group of private consultants, assigned by the Ministry for the Environment and Energy with the elaboration of the National Spatial Framework for Mineral Resources. She has authored or co-authored 50 scientific papers in journals and conferences in the fields of spatial planning, mining legislation and conflicting land uses.

**MinLand has accomplished significant results over two years. When assessing the project's results, which are the main achievements and contributions of MinLand in the field of mining policy and land use planning?**

1. MinLand has overall brought together the two policy and legislative arenas of mineral exploration and extraction with land use. Some key aspects are that:

a. Mineral land use can be divided into two main parts which always are prerequisite that the change of land use plans are done rather fast (it becomes more or less an automatic process coupled to permitting) since a too long process may be an effective stopper for financing of promising targets:

i. Pre-exploration stage which builds upon high-quality geological information. Here previous exploration data can be used together with data attained by the geological surveys. ii. Land use that comes into play during permitting from exploration to extraction thus coupled to permitting processes.

b. Minerals can be brought into land use upon existing high-quality geological information in order to be safeguarded and not sterilized. This land use can be a tool that is used strategically for evaluating equal assessment

for final land use.

c. Exploration can be done in parallel with existing land use with almost no remaining impact and is seen as a key aspects for future new extractive sites.

d. Minerals need to be assessed on an equal value basis with other land uses. Here there are several models which are built around MS legislation.

i. Processes that are tied to a future evaluation of land use when the need arise from e.g., exploration and applications for extraction permits.

ii. In some of the studied cases all mineral resource types can be added into the mineral land use. One such example is the Norwegian model into which

1. Well defined and valued deposits
2. Less well defined deposits
3. Areas of possible valuable minerals.

Other examples tying into this are among others, Sweden, Portugal, Austria and Greece.

iii. The connection of equal evaluation can be seen e.g., from the permitting processes from Ireland and Sweden where the land use aspects for extraction are decided upon and dynamically adjusted into land use planning.

**How relevant was the project to target groups, including EU, partner organisations and stakeholders? When assessing cooperation, to what extent have partnerships been sought and established and synergies been created among all the parts involved? Was the project designed in the most appropriate way to meet the needs identified?**

## Interview with Mr. Nikolaos Arvanitidis

## EU Coordinator of the MinLand project

The project was very successful in reaching out to the target groups, particularly authorities and industry, where close to 400 stakeholders participated in the different workshops. The workshops proved to be very productive giving important information back into the project as well as strengthening the stakeholders knowledge. Innovative aspects upon practice were discussed and put forward.

**Which are the three main challenges which will need to be addressed in the upcoming years?**

a. Firstly to keep or evolve the policies so that they are integrated. Without integrated land use, permitting, environmental concerns, the process will not function.

b. That the limits are being kept within reasonable bounds, i.e., the time it takes for a project from commencement of exploration activities until extraction starts. This is imperative that this is kept in such a way to make it as short as possible. This connects to the previous point but also influence of negative stakeholders to mining, how long time responses to these will take, and on what grounds a project is stopped or put on hold. Is it simply because we don't like mining or are there other concerns. Good examples of how authorities and mining companies deal with this are presented within the project including solutions to infringing upon other land uses such as sensitive nature.

c. The main challenges are:

- i. Lack of knowledge and competence both within the authorities as well as the concerned stakeholders ;
- ii. Lack of political leadership, i.e., the need connect the different policy fields concerning mining. iii. Stakeholder groups that as a principle are against mining, not necessarily a majority but very vocal and influential.

## Biography Ronald Arvidsson

Ronald Arvidsson has since 2012 been active at the Geological Survey of Sweden as a geophysicist, 2013-2014 Head of SGU's division Mineral Information in Malå. Last few years participating in EU projects and working as MinLand project coordinator. Before this he was scientific lead in establishing a geological base model for a seismic hazard model for Europe. Other expertise involve EIA and expert support to Östahmmars Municipality regarding establishment of a Nuclear Waste facility in Sweden. The early career involve research in geophysics and seismology with postdoctoral research in Boston and Bergen.



**Looking more in detail at the project's results, how would you evaluate MinLand's impact in the field of EU policies and best practices? Were the objectives planned achieved in this sense? What are the results achieved beyond the framework in which the project was founded?**







## Interview with Mr. Fernando Señas

### Regional Ministry of Economic and Business Development – Government of Navarre

Institute of Landscape Planning, Department of Landscape, Spatial and Infrastructure Sciences - University of Natural Resources and Life

#### Is stakeholders' engagement likely to continue, scaled up or institutionalized after the end of the project?

Stakeholder engagement is critical to successful land use planning and management. It is given that successful sustainable land-use planning, and management efforts rely on stakeholder support, integration and knowledge. All stakeholders concerned should be equally benefited, making at the same sure that the importance of mineral industry is raised and highlighted, and that exploration and mining are facilitated. Minland is aiming at ensuring that every stakeholder has the right to participate in the preparation and evaluation process, and that planning is of high quality and interactive, that expertise is comprehensive and that there is open, science-based and multivariant provision of mineral information and data along with other land-use interests being planned.

#### Which is the roadmap to follow after the competition of the project?

Minland provides the methodology for implementing a responsible and innovative land stewardship throughout the mining life cycle, making sure the whole mineral value chain is considered. This applies to transparent and sustainable mineral land use practices taking into consideration and intending to:

- Integrating and maximising the multiple benefits related to economic, social, environmental and cultural values;
- Creating a sound basis for a durable cooperation between all stakeholder groups.
- Identifying possible synergies or conflicts between stakeholder;
- Enhancing the steering capacity for the preparation and implementation of sustainable land-use plans addressing minerals development;

- Raising that mining and other land uses can be complementary as sequential or neighboring activities.
- Contributing to SDGs, making that way local use of a global goal.

#### Biography Nikolaos Arvanitidis

*Nikolaos Arvanitidis (male), Economic Geologist with more than 40 years as Researcher at the Geological Institute of Stockholm University, R&D Project Manager on mineral exploration and development projects and Regional Division Director at the Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration (IGME) in Greece, Senior Specialist at the Geological Survey of Finland (GTK), Head of Economic Geology Division at the Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) and presently EU project coordinator at SGU, Chair of the Mineral Resources Expert Group at EuroGeoSurveys (EGS), Executive Secretary of the European Technology Platform for Sustainable Mineral Resources (ETP SMR) and operational member of the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials (EIP RM) Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP). Active member of the Raw Materials Supply Group, the working groups on Criticality and ERECON, and the Advisory Group on Challenge 5 under Horizon2020. Actively involved in more than 20 EU R&D and 3 bilateral minerals related projects, since 1984, as coordinator and participant, and currently in X-Mine, MinLand, Smart Exploration, SCRREEN and FRAME/GeoERA. For more than 15 years involved in evaluation of proposals, addressing FP6 & FP7 SPACE-GMES and H2020 calls and as Project Technical Assistant (PTA) reviewing ongoing EU funded projects.*



#### How is MinLand project contributing to overcoming obstacles related to diversity of policies, legislations and practices regarding mineral resource development?

Mining projects permitting is quite a complex issue, in which environmental and land planning matters and legislation play an important role. Land planning and its common interests with the mining sector is precisely the core of MinLand project with the objective of detecting and spreading best practices within this topic.

So far, our main contribution in the project has been taking part of the workshop organised by IGME in Madrid at the beginning of the current year 2019. It was a very interesting day in which different agents from the public and private sector had the opportunity to debate about how legislation, and more specifically land planning regulation, impacts in mining permits. In fact, IGME presented some case studies across Spain. I can say these cases where not totally new or were not very different from what we manage in our region, but it is always interesting to know how things are in other regions.

**Thanks to MinLand project, which best practices on minerals policy and legal framework, land use planning and permitting did you**



## Interview with Ms. Riikka Aaltonen

### Senior Adviser of Mineral Policy at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland

Turku University of Geology and Mineralogy

#### discover?

It is maybe too optimistic to say we have discovered new best practices. In fact, after working in the mining sector for a few years, the problems you have to face are not very different from one case to another, although every one has its very peculiar singularity. In addition, the workshop in Madrid was a local one, in which only Spanish partners participated. And sharing a common legislation and culture means common problems. Maybe if the workshop had had an international character it would have been possible to know different policies and regulations, as well as different case studies.

Anyway, I must admit that taking part in MinLand project has been useful in two senses: first, it has given me the opportunity to establish new contacts with people with some common problems, which may result rather interesting in the future. And second, group conversations and debates resulted very rich and it is always a good opportunity to open your mind and see how other people work with similar problems in a different way.

#### Biography Fernando Señas

*Organisation: Regional Ministry of Economic and Business Development – Government of Navarre (Spain)*

*Name: SEÑAS Fernando*

*Nationality: Spanish*

*Age of birth: 1977*

*Qualification: Industrial Engineering*

*In 2001-2004, he was working in private consultancy services in the field of R&D, connecting companies and Administrations. During 2006-2012, Regional Ministry of Economic and Business Development – Government of Navarre. Energy Area. Head of this Area since 2008. Promotion of renewable energies and energy efficiency. He has experience in energy planning, INavarre Horizon 2020.*

*He has experience in energy planning, being responsible for the design of the III Energy Plan of Navarre Horizon 2020. 2012-2016, Regional Ministry of Economic and Business Development – Government of Navarre. Head of the Energy and Mining Area. Promotion of renewable energies and energy efficiency. Energy planning. Mining permitting and risks prevention.*

*2017- today, Regional Ministry of Economic and Business Development – Government of Navarre. Head of the Mining Area. Mining permitting, risk prevention and relations with different public and private stakeholders. Languages: Spanish (mother tongue), Basque (C1), English (C1) and French (B1).*



#### How important is to make a stronger link between land use- and mineral policies? How is MinLand project contributing to this issue?

I find it difficult to make a strong link between those two, due to the fact I mentioned above: the uncertainty. But MinLand can and should contribute to the question of explaining this uncertainty, and also promoting good land use solutions, as there are such!

“Deposit of public importance” is in our national Mining Act. When the government is to decide on eventual expropriation of land area for mining purposes, they decide if the project/deposit in question is of national importance. So the assessment of importance is left to the government, and case by case.

Safeguarding the European mineral raw materials: There are known deposits or indications of deposits, but the possibility to establish a mine on the site is challenging or prohibited due to other land uses. And then there is the fact that no one knows for certain where the exploitable deposits are, or are going to be. There is the unknown which is hard to explain to the public.



#### Biography Riikka Aaltonen

*Since March 2012 Riikka Aaltonen holds the position of Senior Adviser of Mineral Policy at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. Master of Science from Turku University with major in geology and mineralogy. Work experience from Finnish Mining Authority and several mining and exploration companies in Finland and Sweden.*

