

GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. These Principles and Guidance address issues that are specific to mineral exploration and represent the first part of the PDAC's *e3 Plus: A Framework for Responsible Exploration*. They are intended to complement established norms for corporate behaviour as exemplified by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises,¹ the United Nations Global Compact,² the Performance Standards on Social and Environmental Sustainability and the Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines of the International Finance Corporation,³ the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative,⁴ the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights⁵ and the Equator Principles,⁶ among others.⁷
2. Explorers should understand that the minimal requirement is to conduct their activities in conformity with:
 - Applicable laws and regulations, including international treaties ratified or supported by the host country and those of the explorer's home country; and
 - International standards and good practice associated with human rights and the social and environmental aspects of mineral exploration activities.
3. Explorers are responsible for carrying out the due diligence necessary to be informed as to the laws, regulations, treaties and standards that are relevant at any time or place with respect to their activities and also the international standards of practice associated with human rights, social and environmental management.
4. The Principles and Guidance strive to answer the **'why?'** and **'what?'** of applying good practice in mineral exploration. The **'how to'** of applying good practice will be supported by the practical tools described in three PDAC on-line toolkits for explorers: Excellence in Social Responsibility, Excellence in Environmental Stewardship, and Excellence in Health and Safety. These three toolkits, along with the Principles and Guidance, form essential elements of *e3 Plus: A Framework for Responsible Exploration*.
5. The Principles have equal weight and value and have been given numbers in this document solely to facilitate easy reference. Explorers should have the Principles in mind at all times.

¹ www.oecd.org/daf/investment/guidelines

² www.unglobalcompact.org/AbouttheGC/TheTENPrinciples/index.html

³ www.ifc.org/ifcext/sustainability.nsf/Content/PerformanceStandards

⁴ <http://eitransparency.org/eiti/principles>

⁵ www.voluntaryprinciples.org/principles/

⁶ www.equator-principles.com/principles.shtml

⁷ For a list of relevant instruments see 'Sustainable development and corporate social responsibility: Tools, codes and standards for the mineral exploration industry,' published by PDAC and available at <http://www.pdac.ca/pdac/publications/pdf/sd-csr-publication-final.pdf>.

6. The Guidance describes, in general terms, what is recommended for explorers to convert the Principles into practice in their normal course of business. Some elements of the Guidance are common and constant aspects of exploration planning and implementation and, as such, they may be considered essential components of corporate culture. However, explorers are encouraged to manage each project in response to the specific characteristics encountered on the ground (legal regime, social and cultural characteristics, physical and biological environment, stage of exploration, and area of influence). Such project-specific characteristics permit recognition of the relative intensity with which the actions recommended in the Guidance should be applied. Details of how the application of the Guidance may be optimized to meet project-specific circumstances are largely contained in other, more extensive sources of information such as the three PDAC on-line toolkits.
7. For the Principles and Guidance to be fully effective, explorers are encouraged to require that contractors and sub-contractors working on their behalf accept and adhere to them, where relevant and practical.
8. The Principles and Guidance are intended for the use of exploration companies, contractors and subcontractors, communities affected by exploration activities, indigenous⁸ groups affected by exploration projects, civil society groups interested in exploration projects, governments at all levels, and any other stakeholders.⁹
9. In the second phase of developing *e3 Plus: A Framework for Responsible Exploration*, the PDAC will recommend guidelines for reporting on the social and environmental performance of mineral exploration projects. Consideration will also be given to developing a process whereby assurance can be given to all stakeholders that the Principles are being adhered to.
10. Adoption of the Principles and Guidance is voluntary and is not a condition of PDAC membership; however explorers are strongly encouraged to commit to their adherence.
11. Explorers should not represent, directly or indirectly, that they subscribe to *e3 Plus: A Framework for Responsible Exploration* unless they adhere to the Principles and are able to demonstrate that they are implementing the Guidance.

⁸ In Canada, Australia and some other countries the term aboriginal is used instead of indigenous and in Canada would include the groups who self identify as First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

⁹ Stakeholders are here defined as individuals or groups that are influenced by or have the ability to influence an exploration project.