



Unearthing Possibilities: Human Resources Challenges and Opportunities in the Canadian Minerals Exploration Sector

Who We Are

The Mining Industry Human Resources (MiHR) Council is the national sector council for the minerals and metals industry. MiHR contributes to the strength, competitiveness, and sustainability of the Canadian minerals and metals sector through bringing all industry stakeholders together to address human resource challenges and opportunities. MiHR is the recognized industry leader in the identification and analysis of the HR issues facing the industry and a catalyst for development and implementation of solutions.

Background

One of the Mining Industry Human Resources (MiHR) Council's strategic objectives is to research, analyze, forecast and disseminate labour market, human resource and other human capital information relevant to the minerals and metals sector (i.e. labour market intelligence, sector studies, occupational supply and demand forecasts, and relevant research focused on HR issues).

To meet this objective MiHR is engaged in several initiatives to improve the quality and availability of labour market information to industry stakeholders. This includes developing better ways of collecting, analyzing, disseminating and communicating mining-specific labour market information.

The *Unearthing Possibilities* project will add to this body of knowledge. Specifically, the project will research, analyse and disseminate findings on labour market issues and the short and long-term human resource challenges facing the Minerals Exploration sector.

Purpose

The purpose of the *Unearthing Possibilities* initiative is to provide reliable, relevant, and timely labour market information to support strategic workforce planning, and stimulate a proactive approach to the HR challenges facing the minerals exploration sector. Research will focus on workers involved in exploring for and evaluating mineral deposits that eventually lead to the establishment of new mining operations (e.g., prospectors, developers, drillers and geoscientists, and potentially workers involved in other non-technical support fields such as environmental management, finance and investment analysis).

Objectives

The primary objectives for this project are to:

enhance the labour market information available to minerals exploration industry stakeholders;
assess labour supply and demand factors of workers involved in exploring for and evaluating mineral deposits;
develop a strategy to monitor, assess, and project the supply and demand for the minerals exploration industry's workforce;
identify the short- and long-term HR challenges and opportunities facing the minerals exploration segment of the industry; and
serve as the basis for developing an industry strategy and action plan to address key HR issues.

Partners

MiHR contributes to the strength, competitiveness and sustainability of the Canadian mining sector by collaborating with all relevant communities of interest. For the purposes of this project, MiHR is partnering with The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) as well as other interested stakeholder groups.

Activities

Project work for *Unearthing Possibilities* will be broken down into three phases: a situational analysis; intensive industry research; and stakeholder roundtables to develop a strategy and action plan.

Phase 1: The Current Situation

In the first phase of research, the current state of the workforce and available labour market information will be assessed. Primary activities in this phase will be to:

- conduct an analysis of the current state of knowledge and literature review on known labour market conditions for this segment of the industry;
- determine the scope of labour market information requirements and reporting needs;
- develop an inventory of existing sources of information on labour supply and demand;
- identify the labour market information gaps, determine probable causes, who is affected, and what has been done to date to address the issues; and
- incorporate data and analysis into MiHR's labour market information system.

Phase 2: Primary and Secondary Research

In the second phase of research, primary and secondary research will be used to identify the human resource challenges and opportunities facing the minerals exploration sector. Activities will be to:

- conduct surveys, interviews, and focus groups with industry stakeholders to determine the short- and long-term HR challenges ;
- review relevant academic and grey literature on HR issues for the sector, as well as Statistics Canada data products and reports, COPs reports, etc.; and
- determine short- and long-term HR challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

Phase 3: Analysis and Industry Strategy

In the third phase of work, industry stakeholders will be consulted to review project findings and develop an industry strategy for addressing the issues raised.

- consult with industry stakeholders about Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings through roundtable or focus group discussions and determine the overall implications for the sector;
- provide insights and suggest practical solutions;
- develop an industry strategy to address identified issues; and
- produce a series of reports and other communications (e.g., webcasts, presentations, articles) to disseminate findings to all communities of interest.

Outputs and Outcomes

Project work will be presented to the industry in the form of a two-part sector study report (Part 1: Situational Analysis and Part 2: HR Challenges and Opportunities). Research findings will be disseminated through web and webinar postings, conferences, forums, and media coverage. Ultimately the project is expected to improve labour market information and increase the level of understanding among stakeholders about the HR challenges and opportunities in the minerals and metals sector.

Research and project work will result in the following outputs:

- a complementary set of information reports related to supply and demand for workers in the minerals exploration sector;
- an industry strategy to address key HR issues;
- improved labour market information for this vital sector; and
- updates and contributions to MiHR's labour market information system.

In addition, the following long-term impacts are anticipated:

- improved strategies to achieve balance between supply and demand of workers for the Canadian mineral exploration sector;
- increased understanding among communities of interest about key human resource issues that must be addressed by the minerals and metals industry to ensure its viability; and
- increased level of dialogue, collaboration and buy-in from minerals exploration sector stakeholders to the collaborative process being fostered in the minerals and metals industry.

More Information

For more information on this and other exciting HR-related research initiatives, please contact:

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