

INFACT's first trials of innovative, non-invasive mineral exploration technologies are imminent

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Press release | July 2018 | The EU-funded INFACT project aims at combining the development and test of innovative, non-invasive minerals exploration technologies with an assessment of their social acceptance. For this purpose, three European reference sites will be established in Germany, Finland and Spain. Stakeholder consultations took place at all sites in June and early July to pave the way for first technology trials which are about to start in August.

In its recently published [action plan for batteries](#) which identifies EU sources for the minerals required to produce batteries, the European Commission has highlighted the essential role mineral raw materials will play to transform Europe into a low-carbon and circular economy, while strengthening simultaneously Europe's production and value chains. The 36-month project [INFACT](#), funded under the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme for Research & Innovation, is fully aligned with this strategy. Under the coordination of the Helmholtz

Institute Freiberg for Resource Technology (HIF) at the Helmholtz-Zentrum Dresden-Rossendorf, universities, research institutions, regional agencies, international not-for-profit organisations and service companies have joined forces to develop and test innovative, non-invasive and socially acceptable mineral exploration technologies. Some of these methods will be tested in summer 2018 and 2019 at the project's three reference sites in Germany (Geyer), Finland (Sakatti) and Spain (Cobre Las Cruces, Seville and Minas de Río Tinto, Huelva).

Following up on a [socio-scientific analysis](#) that has helped to understand the historical and economic factors which determine the social acceptance for mining activities in the surroundings of Geyer, Sakatti and Seville, the project team is now getting ready for the first technology trials. These will take place at each of the reference sites in summer 2018. Stakeholder consultations were scheduled in June and early July, to inform citizens at local and regional level about the planned activities. In August and early September, helicopter-flights will be conducted at each of the sites to acquire a good geological knowledge of the areas. The aim is to bring forward non-invasive methods as a useful tool, making mining more sustainable and hence socially more acceptable.

The flight campaign in Finland is now ready to kick-off. It is scheduled from 1 to 13 August 2018 with the aim of detecting geological features associated with mineral accumulations at various depth ranges. The Sakatti reference site is part of a Natura 2000 area, created to protect natural diversity, and the campaign has been planned in August to prevent interference with the nesting period of several bird species, and the peak of activity for reindeer herding, in July and September respectively. Arctic conditions and especially the presence of a thin glacial till layer for early time data, also constitute a challenge to the geophysical acquisition campaign. A major public event is planned for 5 August 2018, at Sodankylä airport, where citizens will have a glance at the helicopter and the exploration technologies while the INFACT team will be available to answer questions.

After these first trials in Finland, further data acquisition campaigns are scheduled in Germany, in the time span from 12 to 22 August, and in Spain, from 21 August until 9 September. During these trials, further citizen involvement activities are foreseen to ensure that residents are informed in a transparent way about the research efforts, aiming thus to bridge the gap between Europe's need for domestic mineral resources and the often-stated lack of communication towards the public.

More information is available on the project website: www.infactproject.eu

You may also [download](#) this press release in PDF format.

The INFACT partners:

Agencia de Innovation y Desarrollo (IDEA), Anglo American Sakatti Oy, Arhus Geo, Atalaya Mining, ATClave, Cobre las Cruces, Dialogik, European Federation of Geologists (EFG), Fraunhofer IAO, GALSA (Geotech), Geognosia, Helmholtz Institute Freiberg for Resource

Technology (HIF) at Helmholtz-Zentrum Dresden-Rossendorf (coordinator), Oulu Mining School, SRK Exploration Services, Supracon, SYKE, University of Eastern Finland.

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