

GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL AIRBORNE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYING

General Purpose of Guidelines

The purpose of these Guidelines is to allow regional airborne geophysical surveying for minerals to be conducted in an orderly and co-ordinated manner throughout the State, in order to serve the National Minerals Policy objective of identifying, as quickly as possible, further commercially viable mineral deposits for development. Thus, the Guidelines complement the Minerals Development Acts, 1940 to 1999, which regulate minerals prospecting and development in the State.

The Guidelines are additional to the requirements of the Air Navigation and Transport Acts and other legislation concerning the use and safety of civil aircraft in flight. Data on those requirements should be obtained directly from the Irish Aviation Authority, Aviation House, Hawkins St., Dublin 2.

Additionally, a licence is required under the Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1926, as amended, for radio systems for use in such surveys.

Applications for such licences should be addressed to the Commission for Communications Regulation, Block DEF, Abbey Court, Irish Life Centre, Abbey Street, Dublin 1. The importation and re-exportation of radio systems and other equipment for use in such surveys are governed by the Customs Acts. Information on the requirements of those Acts should be obtained directly from Customs Administration, Castle House, South Great George's Street, Dublin 2.

Guidelines to be Followed

Planning stage: Before a regional airborne survey is commenced, the Exploration and Mining Division (EMD) of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources must be advised at least 20 working days in advance of the nature, extent and area of the proposed survey and the proposed start and completion dates.

On receipt of notification, EMD will ascertain if there are any Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the proposed area. SPAs are sites protected under the European Birds Directive (1979), and access (including airborne work) may, depending on the bird species, be allowed only at certain times of the year. No work over SPAs may commence without the prior written approval of EMD.

Persons proposing to conduct regional airborne geophysical surveys for minerals are required also to discuss their proposals with EMD, particularly with regard to:

- * proposed survey area and flying height, line spacing and tie lines;
- * geophysical parameters to be measured;
- * instrumentation and navigation systems to be used;
- * processing and interpretation techniques to be used;
- * content and format of the survey data submission as outlined in the EMD publication "Reference guidelines for the format and content of airborne geophysical survey data submissions to Exploration and Mining Division".

KEY FEATURES

- "Open Skies" Policy - free to fly over currently licensed ground
- All raw, processed and interpreted data lodged with Exploration and Mining Division
- All data confidential for 4 years
- At end of confidentiality period all data publicly available
- Substantial exploration expenditure credits

These guidelines, which outline EMD data submission requirements in detail, are available from EMD and are based on internationally recognised data formatting and archiving systems. EMD recommend that any persons planning to carry out an airborne survey would take these guidelines into consideration before the data acquisition stage.

Provision should also be made for representatives of EMD to be made aware, on a confidential basis, of the principal practical aspects involved in the conduct of the proposed survey. EMD should also be advised as to the person responsible for the conduct of the survey and be supplied with the day-time and after-hours telephone and fax numbers of that person.



Survey stage: EMD should be kept fully informed of the progress of the survey. Within three months after the completion of the survey, all survey data (see EMD Airborne Survey Data Guidelines) must be lodged on a confidential basis with EMD (the 'lodgement date'). In addition, a full geological interpretation of the results of the survey (either by the contractor or the licensee concerned) is required to be lodged with EMD on a confidential basis within six months of the survey being completed.

The extent of the areas flown and the names of the companies involved may be made publicly known by EMD after one month following completion of the survey. All other details will remain confidential unless otherwise agreed by the company or companies involved (see 'public release' below).

Exploration expenditure credits

Where a regional airborne geophysical survey is conducted by or on behalf of the holder of a Prospecting Licence under the Minerals Development Acts, 1940 to 1999, the total cost of that survey will be accepted by EMD towards the required exploration expenditure for any then licensed area covered by the survey for a period of up to two years after completion of the survey. The cost of the survey will be apportioned equally for all Prospecting Licence areas held and covered by the survey, unless the licensee wishes to apportion part of the survey costs over additional areas covered by the survey and for which a Prospecting Licence is granted within four years after the completion of the survey, in which case the credit would be available for the first two year term (only) of the Licence(s). In any event, the total credit towards the exploration expenditure of the licensee will not exceed the total cost of the survey. Where exploration expenditure relates to the reprocessing of previously acquired survey data, the licensee is required to submit all reprocessed survey data in accordance with the EMD Airborne Survey Data Guidelines. The same public release procedures apply to reprocessed survey data.

Where a regional airborne geophysical survey is carried out by a person or company who does not, at the time of the survey, hold a Prospecting Licence in the area surveyed, and where such person or company acquires a Prospecting Licence (or Licences) in the area surveyed within four years after the completion of the survey, the total cost of that survey will be accepted by EMD towards the expenditure requirement(s) for the first two year term (only) of the said Prospecting Licence(s).

Where, within four years after the completion of a regional airborne geophysical survey the holder of a Prospecting Licence acquires airborne survey data for the area of the Licence from a person who conducted the survey, or on whose behalf that survey was conducted (irrespective of whether or not that person is the holder of a Prospecting Licence over any areas covered by the survey), any reasonable payment expended on such acquisition or on reprocessing will be accepted by EMD towards the exploration expenditure requirement for that Licence for a period of up to two years after said acquisition.

Public Release

Airborne survey data will remain confidential for four years after the 'lodgement date'. At the end of this four year period all airborne survey data will be publicly released. However, such data in respect of Prospecting Licence areas still held will remain confidential for a further two year period (maximum), if so requested, in writing, by the holder of the Prospecting Licence. Where such a request is made, the holder of the Prospecting Licence will be required to provide EMD with a copy of all data appropriate for public release after the four year period and with written notification listing the Prospecting Licence areas and data to remain confidential.

Where the holder of a Prospecting Licence has acquired data over that ground from the person on whose behalf the survey was conducted, then all hard copy images, maps and reports relating specifically to that area will be provided by the licence holder on surrender to go on public release. All other data will remain confidential until four years after the completion of the survey.

Airborne Survey data which is released for public inspection may be used by the State in generating products for the purpose of stimulating mineral exploration.

