Technical Assistance for Mauritania on Mining Sector Governance

The Bureau of Energy Resources Energy and Mineral Governance Program
Proposed Technical Assistance for Mauritania on Mining Sector Governance

Mauritania has a long history of producing iron, gold, and other common minerals and could become a significant contributor and beneficiary of the global energy transition by tapping its diverse critical mineral potential, including cobalt, copper, lithium, and rare earth elements.

Coupled with detailed resource mapping and characterization, Mauritania would benefit from appropriate fiscal incentives to attract qualified investors and regulations and enforcement capacity to mitigate the environmental and social impacts of critical mineral development.

The United States, through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR) offers support to Mauritania's Ministry of Petroleum, Energy, and Mines and its Office for Geological Exploration to better understand its critical mineral potential and the fiscal incentives and regulations needed to responsibly develop it.

Technical cooperation will be conducted by two ENR Energy and Mineral Governance Program (EMGP) implementers: The Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), a team of attorney-advisors with expertise in mining sector legal and regulatory development ; and Deloitte, a consulting firm that can source experts on every aspect of critical mineral development.

The below list indicates a range of possible EMGP technical assistance capabilities to assist the Government of Mauritania. ENR budget limitations may limit available options and require prioritization or combination.

- **Fiscal Regime Benchmarking:** Experts team will undertake benchmarking and comparative analysis of fiscal regimes worldwide, including a comprehensive assessment of Mauritania's current mining sector fiscal regime, ultimately producing a report containing precise recommendations for optimizing the fiscal framework. The goal is to bolster Mauritania's competitive edge for attracting qualified investment. (*CLDP*)

- **Environmental Regulatory Development:** Implementers would analyze Mauritania's existing and draft mining sector laws and regulations, identify strengths and gaps, and provide a report with recommendations that could include new or strengthened regulations, granted authorities, and enforcement capacity. The report could include case studies on similar jurisdictions determined in coordination with the Ministry. (*CLDP*)

- **Joint Geoscience Cooperation:** This work would help the Ministry conduct reconnaissance and district-level geophysical, geological, and laboratory work to showcase new investment potential in Mauritania's critical mineral sector. The targeted area(s) could be determined through further discussion between the ENR and the Ministry about its priorities based on prior exploration. An example of potential geoscience work would be:

  The Ministry and ENR's implementers (expert industry exploration geologists/geophysicists) would work to design a field plan for assessing IOCG and VMS-hosted mineralization potential in the Mauritanides Fold Belt. Airborne and/or ground-based geophysics and geological sampling could be conducted on areas surrounding major IOCG deposits to assess carbonate replacement, quartz vein, and disseminated sulfide resource potential. Another option would be to look at orthomagmatic PGE and chromite potential in the province. Samples would be sent to an industry metallurgical lab (e.g., ALS, SGS) for geochemical analysis, bench-scale testing, process flowsheet development, and financial sensitivity analysis. Pending the results, implementers would draft a report that the Ministry could use to highlight the resource potential to investors. (*Deloitte*)

- **Critical Mineral Workshop:** Implementers would convene for Information exchanges, where relevant and appropriate, related to critical mineral exploration and processing. Such exchanges include a workshop in Nouakchott for interactive discussion and capacity building on completed analysis, findings and recommendations, and identified methodologies for continued resource exploration and characterization and investment targets for production. (CLDP, Deloitte)

- **Other areas of cooperation**, the Parties may mutually determine any other areas of cooperation for joint endeavors, subject to further agreement and consensus

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