



British
Geological Survey
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

Gateway to the Earth

PRESS RELEASE

6th October 2017



DIRECTORATE OF GEOLOGICAL SURVEY &
MINES



Unlocking geoscience data – Uganda Pilot Project the key to African resource development

Resource development relies on geoscience data ('geodata'). In Africa, access to useful geodata is often slow, expensive and unreliable. This discourages potential investors and leads to a slow rate of development. A pilot project is proposed in Uganda to create a Geoscience Data Portal to make 'geodata' freely available and stimulate economic development.

The African Union recognises that geoscience data is required for economic growth, social development and to improve environmental management, poverty reduction and wealth creation. Up until now, there has been limited access to, and usefulness of, the geodata held by geological surveys and other government organisations in Africa. Geodata is held in many different formats (from poorly-preserved hard copy, to digital data stored on obsolete media, to modern cloud-stored georeferenced data), disseminated across multiple organisations (often without full knowledge of what exists and where it resides). This limited availability also directly affects the process of policy-making and the level and quality of investments attracted into a country.



Members of the pilot project met at a workshop in Uganda earlier this year

The potential solution is to create a Public Geoscience Portal for 'pre-competitive data' – this is where meaningful and useful geoscience data that informs early stage decision-making can be made freely available. This typically comprises geological, geophysical and geochemical data at regional or 1:250,000 scale that is geo-referenced with existing metadata such that it can easily be integrated into exploration company prospectivity analysis, exploration software packages and other decision-making packages used by potential investors.

A pilot project has been proposed to achieve this objective. The project will explore, develop and test the benefits of geodata sharing as part of a Public Private Partnership (PPP) between Government, industry and commercial organisations. This Pilot Project proposal is made by a consortium of the African Union Commission, the British Geological Survey, Geosoft Inc.,



International Geoscience Services (IGS Ltd), the Uganda Directorate of Geological Survey and Mines (UDGSM) and the Ugandan Chamber of Mines and Petroleum (UCMP).

The pilot project will focus on two areas of Uganda: Busia within the greenstone belt to the east of Kampala which is prospective for gold, base metals, phosphates, rare earth elements and vermiculite; and Buhweju southwest of Kampala which has the potential for gold and base metals (copper, lead, nickel and zinc). While these pilot areas focus on mineral resource development, the wider benefits of geodata sharing will also be considered for water resource development, land-use planning, agriculture, environment and socio-economic development.

Professor John Ludden, Executive Director of the BGS, said "This is a superb opportunity to test a model whereby we integrate resources data with environmental data in a developing area."

Zachary Baguma, the Commissioner Geology at UDGSM, commented "This project is in tandem with our investment promotion efforts. We recently launched a campaign of country-wide exploration and data collection. This will be one of the means of exposing our data globally and attracting inward investment."

Timothy Dobush, CEO of Geosoft Inc, said "We are excited to work with our project partners to explore and deliver upon sustainable economic and social benefits from geoscience data"

Irene Ivy Nakalyango, CEO of UCMP, said "Promotion and fostering investment into Uganda's mineral sector is our flagship as a Chamber. This project will fill one of the biggest gaps we are currently faced with; availability of data!"

Ends

For further details or to arrange media interviews please contact:

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Notes for Editors

The following are available for interview:

- Professor John Ludden, Executive Director, British Geological Survey

For additional information go to: www.bgs.ac.uk

Photographs are available from our ftp server: <ftp://ftp.bgs.ac.uk/pubload/bgspress>

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