

**GEOTEAM CJSC**  
**PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DISCLOSURE PLAN**  
**AMULSAR - ARMENIA**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Lydian International Ltd (LYDIAN) is aware that mineral exploration and development of mining projects bring social and environment effects. To promote positive effects and to mitigate potential negative effects when carrying out appropriate exploration development in Armenia, GEOTEAM CJSC as a subsidiary of LYDIAN endorses the concept that communication with project stakeholders is an essential component of any environmental and socio-economic assessment process. Potential negative effects may occur due to lack of communication and stakeholder engagement or simply due to bad publicity reflecting perceived examples from other areas in the world where actual and measurable environmental and social impacts may become the result from poor design, construction, operation, or closure of specific exploration/mining operations.

GEOTEAM is committed to a pro-active and ongoing dialogue with all agencies, organizations, and individuals with an interest in development of the Amulsar Project (Project). This Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan (PCDP), outlines and documents GEOTEAM's consultation and disclosure practices implemented for the Project. The PCDP includes details of public involvement activities which have already occurred and which are planned to take place later in the development life of the project:

- Before GEOTEAM acquired the Amulsar exploration license;
- Activities subsequent to the acquisition of the license;
- The initiation of exploration activities at the project
- During implementation of a public involvement program designed to collaborate with stakeholders
- During development of the Project
- Continuing throughout the life of the Project.

### **1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE PCDP**

The PCDP seeks to define a technically and culturally appropriate approach to consultation and disclosure. The goal of this Plan is to ensure adequate information is provided to project-affected people and other stakeholders in a timely manner, and that these groups are provided sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns that may influence Project decisions. And that the approach gives recognition to and is carried out in a manner consistent with local cultural norms of the area and of Armenia as a whole.

The PCDP is a useful tool for managing communications between GEOTEAM and stakeholders. The PCDP should help to facilitate and streamline decision making whilst fostering an atmosphere of

understanding that actively involves individuals, groups, and organizations that can affect, or be affected by, development of the Project.

The Plan is intended to document implementation of a formal program in an objective, transparent manner to focus efforts on improving communications between GEOTEAM and other interested parties. Monitoring and evaluation of program results and behavior of the respective parties will enable evolution and improvements to the program over time.

The Key Objectives of the PCDP can be summarized as follows:

- To keep stakeholders informed of GEOTEAM activities;
- To generate and document broad community support for the Project;
- To improve communications between interested parties;
- To document development of formal public consultation; and
- Establish formal complaint submittal / resolution mechanisms.

Key aspects of the consultation and disclosure process include:

- Regular release of Project-related information in a manner consistent with Lydian's Public Consultation and Disclosure Strategy, including GEOTEAM policies, Project details, answers to frequently asked questions, and rights and responsibilities of affected people presented as required in a manner consistent with local cultural norms of the area and of Armenia;
- Articulation and delivery of clear, consistent messages from key staff to stakeholders and the public,
- Ensuring that community workers are aware of GEOTEAM's position regarding the Project and are capable of responding to questions/comments appropriately;
- Consultation is undertaken in both Armenian and English;
- Regular meetings and forums are documented by GEOTEAM management to present Project-related information, answer questions, and assuage concerns;
- Identification of multi-stakeholder committees, including a Chairperson acceptable to all parties to discuss and make decisions regarding
- Project impacts and community concerns;
- Maintenance of an open-door policy for community workers, such that stakeholders feel comfortable approaching them directly to ask questions and raise concerns;
- Creation of a responsive management system for recording and responding to comments and concerns.

## **1.2 PROJECT HISTORY**

The Amulsar region was initially identified by the Armenian Soviet Expedition in 1936-1937 as an area of “secondary quartzite” which was deemed to host potential as a silica resource. Work aimed at testing the potential of the silica resource commenced in 1946 with the development of small-scale exploration adits. The work concluded that the alunite content of the silica was too high (up to 25%) and that as such the project was of no interest as a source of quality silica.

Further work aimed at researching the silica potential at Amulsar was conducted in the early 1960's. The work identified the “secondary quartzite” as metasomatic in origin and developed due to the replacement of intermediate composition volcanic rocks (known regionally as the Amulsar Suite). Some 300m of tunneling and 640m<sup>3</sup> of trenching were also completed during this time (mostly on the north-eastern side of the ridge). 13 tonnes of bulk sample were collected and sent for analysis and on the basis of this work it was concluded that the silica was of sufficient quality for the production of low-grade glasses.

Research work by the Soviet Expedition continued at Amulsar during the period 1979 to 1982 and was focused principally in understanding and mapping the alteration zoning across the area. Silica reserves at Amulsar were never entered onto the Republic of Armenia State Balance and no further exploration or research work has been conducted in the area since 1982.

The Amulsar exploration license was granted to GEOTEAM in March of 2006. GEOTEAM CJSC is a subsidiary of Lydian International Ltd. The Amulsar project forms part of Lydian International's Caucasus Joint Venture with Newmont Overseas Exploration Ltd.

Field studies combined with geophysical surveys and geochemical sampling were carried out by GEOTEAM, Lydian International, and Newmont geologists in the Amulsar license in 2006-2008 from May till October, when the area is not entirely covered by snow. Sampling of rocks and soils has been continued to extend the geochemical data coverage, to improve the geological understanding of Amulsar, and to prepare for the 2007 and 2008 drill programs. 5 drill holes were drilled in 2007 and 92 drill holes were drilled in 2008.

In 2008 several external international experts visited the project to contribute to a better understanding of the Amulsar system and to evaluate the mineralization potential.

### **1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Amulsar license is located some 170km by sealed road and 6km by unsealed track to the southeast of Yerevan. The license area straddles the boundary between Vayots-Dzor and Syunik Marzes

(provinces) and incorporates part of the main highway south from Yerevan. A high tensile power line transects the southern limits of the license.

The core of the Amulsar license comprises a mountainous area, an approximately 7km long northwest-southeast trending ridge which reaches a maximum altitude of 2,988m. The mountainous area around Amulsar is quite rounded and, with vegetation limited to wild grasses and isolated scrub, access is relatively straightforward. There is no cultivated land and there are no privately held land parcels within the license area outside of the immediate reaches of nearby villages, Saravan and Gorayk.

The area is seismically active with the most recent destructive earthquake being recorded in September 1931 at the township of Sisian some 35 km to the southwest of the prospect area. Destructive earthquakes have also been recorded in the ancient city of Vayk, some 20km to the southeast.

## **2.0 PREVIOUS PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DISCLOSURE EFFORTS**

GEOTEAM is not aware of any previous public consultation or disclosure efforts made under the Soviet regime or subsequently by any other exploration company.

Since being awarded the license, GEOTEAM has implemented a series of meetings with the local municipal authorities, interested parties and landowners as part of its commitment to best practice.

## **3.0 REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

The current mining law in Armenia came into force in April of 2003 (amended in December of that year). In December of 2003 Armenia was awarded the London Mining Journal's Outstanding Achievements Award for its mining law which was recognized as the most favorable in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Normal Prospecting Licenses in Armenia are granted for a term of three years without extension. Special Prospecting Licenses in Armenia are granted for 5 years and can be subject to an extension. A Prospecting License is activated by execution of a Concession Contract which regulates the licensee's activities under the law. On application for a Special Prospecting License the licensee must conclude a Stabilization Contract which is a written agreement with the Republic of Armenia regulating the licensee's advanced exploration activities under the law.

Application for a Special Mining License can be submitted at any time but usually follows granting of a Special Prospecting License and conclusion of a Stabilization Contract. Special Mining Licenses are current for a period from twelve to twenty five years.

There are no limits or restrictions on repatriation of funds.

To this end, GEOTEAM has developed a Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan to address potential issues that is culturally sensitive, transparent, provides timely, accurate information to Project-affected people and other stakeholders, and allows sufficient opportunity for stakeholder input.

### **3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS ARMENIA**

Environmental regulation in Armenia follows the Environmental Control Law, Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, Law on Nature Protection and Nature Utilization Payments, Law on Seismic Protection, Water Code, Land Code and Air Code of the Republic of Armenia.

### **3.2 WORLD BANK/IFC GUIDELINES**

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has published policies and requirements regarding public consultation and disclosure to ensure projects in which it invests are implemented in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. GEOTEAM has, wherever possible, followed the appropriate guidelines. The following IFC procedures, policies, and practical manuals were reviewed and considered when developing this PCDP.

- During the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, GEOTEAM should conduct consultations with affected groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local authorities, and other interested parties about environmental and socioeconomic aspects of the project, and consider stakeholders' views.
- Consultation should start as early as possible with information made available in advance. The project sponsor should consult stakeholders at least once during scoping and before the Terms of Reference for the EIS are finalized and once a draft is prepared. In addition, GEOTEAM should consult with such groups throughout project implementation, as necessary, to address EIS related issues that affect them.
- Consultations to be undertaken by GEOTEAM during construction and operation of the Project should be incorporated into the Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan.
- For the initial consultation GEOTEAM should provide summaries of project objectives, descriptions, and potential impacts. When the draft EIS is ready GEOTEAM should present findings of the EIS to the public. In both cases, the information should be disseminated among the relevant stakeholders proactively, and in the local language. After consultations have been held, GEOTEAM adds details to the EIS report of the consultation conducted, and discusses measures on how public comments will be incorporated into project design and implementation.
- The draft EIS report should be made readily available to the public in public places, and should contain responses to public consultation process. A non-technical summary of the document should be made available in the local language to local stakeholders. The report is made available to a wider public through World Bank's Info Shop website.
- Public consultation is an ongoing process and should continue throughout construction and operational phases.
- IFC's Good Practice Manual
- IFC guidelines on best practice in public consultation and disclosure outline issues to consider while undertaking public consultation and disclosure, as follows:

1. Written and oral communication in local languages and readily understandable formats;
  2. Accessibility by relevant stakeholders to both written information and to the consultation process;
  3. Use of oral or visual methods to explain information to non-literate people;
  4. Respect for local traditions or discussion, reflection and decision-making;
  5. Care in assuring groups being consulted are representative, with adequate representation of women, vulnerable groups, ethnic or religious minorities, and separate meetings for various groups, where necessary;
  6. Clear mechanisms to respond to people's concerns, suggestions and grievances.
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- 1998 – General Environmental Guidelines: For financed projects in which no other specific environmental guidelines have been developed, general environmental guidelines may be used. These guidelines emphasize pollution prevention, and are intended to minimize resource consumption, including energy use, and to eliminate or reduce pollutants at the source. General Environmental Guidelines include requirements for air emissions, liquid effluents, hazardous chemicals and wastes, solid wastes, and ambient noise.

### **3.3 INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND STANDARDS**

LYDIAN, whilst not a member of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), aspires to membership and follows best practice guidelines as promulgated by the ICMM. As such, the Amulsar Project will follow the ICMM's principles for sustainable development throughout the life of the Project. The ICMM Principles include:

- Implement and maintain ethical business practices and sound systems of corporate governance;
- Integrate sustainable development considerations within the corporate decision-making process;
- Uphold fundamental human rights and respect cultures, customs and values in dealing with employees and others who are affected by our activities;
- Implement risk management strategies based on valid data and sound science;
- Seek continued improvement of environmental, health, and safety performance;
- Contribute to conservation of biodiversity and integrated approaches to land use planning;
- Facilitate and encourage responsible product design, use, re-use, recycling and disposal of products;
- Contribute to social, economic and institutional development of communities in which we operate;
- Implement effective and transparent engagement, communication, and independently verified reporting arrangements with stakeholders.

### **3.4 LYDIAN CORPORATE POLICIES**

GEOTEAM, in keeping with LYDIAN's corporate philosophy, is designing and operating the Amulsar Project to be a model corporate citizen in terms of recognition of social and environmental concerns in communities where the Project may have an effect.

GEOTEAM, as a subsidiary of Lydian International Ltd Corporation, will develop and operate the Amulsar Project under the LYDIAN Corporate Social Responsibility Policy which includes management systems and discipline specific standards on Community and External Relations.

LYDIAN believes public consultation and collaboration are vital components of its Social Responsibility Policy. The Company, through its management and Board of Directors, is actively and continually seeking stakeholder involvement in its deliberations not only to improve decision-making and build understanding, but also ensure long-term project viability and benefit enhancement to Project-affected people and other relevant stakeholder groups.

LYDIAN's Social Responsibility Policy addresses the following points:

- Goals Regarding Engaging Stakeholders
- Demand leadership from all employees;
- Seek to share success by partnering with stakeholders in appropriate community development programs;
- Consult stakeholders in matters that affect them;
- Strive to communicate performance in an accurate, transparent and timely manner;
- Understand that the actions and conduct of every LYDIAN employee and contractor are the basis on which stakeholders will evaluate LYDIAN's commitment to achieving the highest standards of social responsibility;
- Carry out our Social Responsibility Policy in accordance with LYDIAN's Environment and Health and Safety Policies since environmental, health and safety issues can affect the communities where we operate.

### **4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DISCLOSURE PLAN**

GEOTEAM has established a local community consultation programme in Armenia since 2006, including several stakeholder consultation and disclosure activities. The objectives of the Communications Plan include:

- Develop a process to ensure that GEOTEAM has timely access to information and identification of communications support required for various activities.
- Identify GEOTEAM external stakeholders, their issues and information needs.
- Develop appropriate and consistent key messages in support of GEOTEAM values and activities.
- Appoint relevant communicators to communicate GEOTEAM key messages.

- Develop communication support material for GEOTEAM key messages.
- Work to develop appropriate corporate social responsibility policy initiatives.
- Establish and maintain cordial relations with all stakeholders including government, media, traditional authorities, local communities, and the general public as well as employees.
- Develop a crises communication manual relevant to GEOTEAM.
- Train relevant personnel in crises communications
- Project stakeholders – individuals, groups, and organizations with a legitimate interest in the Project have been actively engaged in the consultation process to provide opportunities to actively contribute toward development of the Project.

#### **4.1 RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

GEOTEAM has overall responsibility for stakeholder consultation and involvement programme. These responsibilities include:

- Responding to the concerns and issues expressed during public consultations
- Allocating sufficient funds to implement a viable PCDP
- Ensuring that all public consultation and information disclosed is documented.
- GEOTEAM's engagement strategy is supported through community education activities, including school visits, formal and informal stakeholder engagement exercises, development and initiation of an issues log, stakeholder engagement register, contact reports and feedback systems, as listed below. These approaches allowed GEOTEAM to consistently track issues of concern among community constituents.
- Proposals for enhancing internal communications systems providing employees with consistent key messages, speaking points, Frequently Asked Questions on various issues related to the Project are being developed.
- An understanding of the economic/political/socio-cultural context in which GEOTEAM proposes to communicate has informed the structure of various public meetings facilitated.
- Monthly newsletters in English and Armenian with photographs of activity at the site are to be produced and distributed to each household immediately affected by exploration activities.

#### **4.2 SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

Several primary issues have been identified that relate to the Amulsar Project. These issues and the manner in which GEOTEAM has addressed them are summarized below.

Social and Economic Effects:

Main part of Gorayk's village males had work in Arpa-Sevan tunnel's construction, but since 2003 tunnel had finished. Small percent of people work in their small private farms. According to Armenian

family tradition many of the young men still live with the head of the family. GEOTEAM Company and its subcontractors employed in 2008 approximately 100 males and around 5 females.

#### Managing Expectations:

A significant challenge is differentiating between an exploration project and a producing mine and managing unrealistic expectations. GEOTEAM clarifies this difference through public meetings, staff briefings and the company newsletters.

#### Biodiversity and Forest Reserves:

Biodiversity is a measure of the variety of life, and its processes; including the variety of living organisms, genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur (Langner and Flather 1994). Biodiversity is often interpreted as a measure of biological complexity and variation within the Study area. GEOTEAM recognizes that the activities of exploring and developing resources may have an impact on biodiversity.

Likewise companies engaged in exploration and resource development can be a positive force for biodiversity conservation. Through sound environmental management many potential impacts to biodiversity from exploration and development can be avoided or mitigated. GEOTEAM is committed to work in effective business-NGO-government partnerships focused on biodiversity conservation in the Project area.

### **4.3 INFORMATION DISCLOSED**

GEOTEAM has adopted a community-oriented approach where the Company both gains the support of the stakeholders for the Project, and involves stakeholders in the project development for the benefit of everyone.

GEOTEAM has also been active in establishing links with the community, local authorities business, and schools to suit individual stakeholder concerns.

### **4.4 REPORTING**

The PCDP is an appendix to the Sustainable Development Policy Statement (SDPS) GEOTEAM will maintain an active file regarding all public consultation and disclosure documentation collected throughout the program, which are available for public review on request. The GEOTEAM General Manager of the Amulsar Project will compile and submit a report summarizing PCDP results to IFC annually. The report will provide a summary of all public consultation issues, grievances, and resolutions. The report will also provide a summary of relevant public consultation findings from informal meetings held at the community level.

### **4.5 IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS**

The Amulsar Project has a number of stakeholders: people, agencies, or organizations that could be directly or indirectly affected (positively or negatively) by the Project or that could influence the Project (positively or negatively). In order to develop an effective stakeholder involvement program, it is necessary to identify the various stakeholder groups as different outreach methods may be required for different groups. In addition, primary concerns will likely vary between respective stakeholder groups.

GEOTEAM has encouraged local communities to use elected representatives to assure stakeholders of a consultative and collaborative approach to conflict resolution free from coercion and based on informed consent.

Major stakeholder groups are summarized below.

- Government Agencies:
  - Geological department of Ministry of Nature Protection
  - Geological Control department of Ministry of Nature Protection
  - Environmental departments of Ministry of Nature Protection
  - Vayotz Dzor regional head office
  - Syunik regional head office
- The offices of the local municipalities.
- Surface rights holders.
- Approximately 550 people live in the Gorayk village; approximately 50 of them are directly affected by the project.
- GEOTEAM are actively seeking engagement with other NGOs who are operating in the area.

#### **4.6 INFORMAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS**

GEOTEAM through its country manager, GEOTEAM representatives and Directors of LYDIAN interact with the local community regularly, consulting on a broad range of issues. These interactions happen as GEOTEAM representatives are on their daily rounds, meeting with local people, providing informal updates on the progress of the Project, and answering questions. GEOTEAM's decision to include all stakeholders into the dialogue when the concession was acquired has helped develop broad community support.

#### **4.7 COMPLAINT PROCESS**

To meet its policy objectives, GEOTEAM maintains both informal and formal grievance mechanisms. GEOTEAM management attempt to answer questions and address issues during formal and informal stakeholder consultations; if they are able to do so, documentation is not recorded. If a stakeholder raises an issue that requires follow-up, then stakeholder's contact information and question/issue is

documented and addressed by the Country Manager, according to the complaint process described below.

A Complaint Register Form is maintained solely for local residents who come to the project site at Amulsar. Complaints are dealt with in a timely fashion, either verbally or through means of a written response as soon as possible. GEOTEAM staff routinely seeks advice and, where appropriate, intervention of traditional authorities to assist in resolving disputes. Traditional authorities possess considerable institutional relevance, particularly at the rural level where traditional status continues to command respect.

Where there is a requirement to issue a written response to a complaint a written or verbal invitation is given to the complainant to visit the office and have his complaint addressed and a written response is handed over.

Requests for help are not considered complaints.

### **SUMMARY of the COMPLAINT PROCESS**

- STEP 1: Receive the complaint letter and put the date of receipt on it
- STEP 2: Enter the complaint in a Complaint Database
- STEP 3: Acknowledge receipt of each complaint in writing to each person. This is done as soon as complaints are received.
- STEP 4: Where complaint relates to compensation dispute, notify the bank to withhold payments on all disputed compensation until parties resolve the dispute and notify GEOTEAM accordingly.
- STEP 5: File all original complaint letters chronologically by month.
- STEP 6: Complaint letters with specific issues are photocopied and forwarded to persons responsible to comment or resolve the case/issue.
- STEP 7: All resolved cases are documented and filed in a separate file

## **5.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PCDP**

### **5.1 GRIEVANCE MECHANISM**

GEOTEAM maintains an informal grievance mechanism for resettlement and compensation issues should they arise. Informal grievances are treated as complaints and are resolved according to the Complaint Process previously described. A grievance is considered to be more serious as it might involve resettlement and compensation issues that could result in legal action and are addressed using the formal grievance process.

GEOTEAM established a formal grievance mechanism to address actual, measurable concerns relating to the resettlement and compensation process which is described as follows:

1. First order mechanism is a face-to-face discussion with appropriate GEOTEAM personnel. Most grievances are heard and resolved in the presence of family members or other “witnesses.” Agreement

is normally reached or 'proved' without the complainant continuing into another forum. Except in complex cases where additional investigation or involvement of third parties is required GEOTEAM will respond to written grievances within thirty days. Responses generally include a settlement proposal. Grievances of a legal nature are forwarded to GEOTEAM's Legal Representative in Yerevan for redress.

Responses/settlements are coordinated through the on-site management team.

2. GEOTEAM has regular meetings which provide a forum at which individual and community grievances may be raised, discussed, and resolved with Company officials.

3. Court Action: Armenian citizens and legal entities have access to court recourse in conformance with applicable laws.

## **6.0 ONGOING PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

### **6.1 FUTURE CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES**

GEOTEAM believes that public consultation is an ongoing process and plans to continue the stakeholder efforts throughout the construction, operations, and closure phases of the Project. As the Project progresses through its phases, GEOTEAM's message will change to reflect the issues and concerns of each phase. Key messages will contain more information about employment and training, safety, environmental monitoring and health awareness.

GEOTEAM is committed to maintaining its ongoing program and will:

Maintain regular communications with all stakeholders, including the media in accordance with LYDIAN's Communication Plan; Provide local residents with regular information on the progress of work and related implications; Provide local residents with information on employment and training opportunities; Maintain awareness of safety issues around transport and road alignments; Maintain constructive relationships between local residents and GEOTEAM Project development team by continuing regular information meetings and informal interactions; Identify and respond to new stakeholder issues and concerns by reviewing the complaints file and listening to stakeholders; Monitor implementation of mitigations measures for resettlement and compensation programs; Monitor implementation and effectiveness of mitigation measures; community development plan, and other social investment programs; Monitor community attitudes toward GEOTEAM and the Project; Ensure complaints are addressed according to the established process; Ensure gender sensitive and culturally appropriate processes are used in communication and interactions;

### **6.2 CONSULTATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE**

A Consultative Liaison Committee (CLC) is planned to be formed with broad stakeholder representation to provide a structured and sustainable consultation mechanism for the life of the Project.