

Based on input from our public engagement sessions, we have compiled answers to commonly asked questions about the regulation of rock-hosted mineral resources. Questions are divided into the following topics:

- regulatory oversight
- liability management
- environmental considerations
- public safety and risk
- participant involvement

Regulatory Oversight

Does the AER have the expertise to regulate minerals?

The AER has been regulating energy and resource development in Alberta for more than 80 years in some form or another. Also, the Alberta Geological Survey (AGS), a branch of the AER, has researched, mapped, and studied Alberta's minerals for decades. We are also growing our minerals expertise by adding new skilled positions.

Who is funding the regulation of minerals?

The Government of Alberta has provided grants to the AER to support this work. This funding is separate from the fees collected from oil and gas operators.

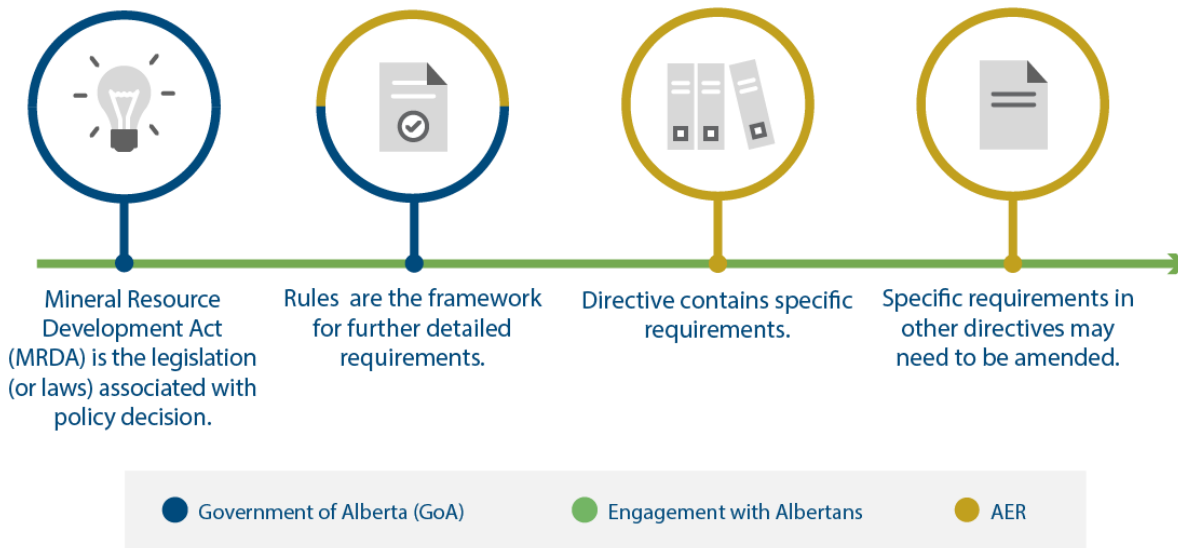
What is the regulatory framework?

The Government of Alberta sets the policy regarding mineral resources. The regulatory framework reflects the policy direction and includes

- legislative instruments (e.g., acts and regulations) and
- rules and directives that specify requirements and expectations that industry must follow.

The following graphic shows the division of responsibilities for the regulatory framework. Similar frameworks exist for geothermal, brine-hosted minerals, helium, coal, oilsands, and oil and gas resource development.

Once the framework is in place, we enforce it through our [Compliance Assurance Program](#).



Who is responsible for mineral regulation?

Historically, mineral development was overseen by several regulators, including

- Alberta Energy and Minerals
- Alberta Environment and Protected Areas
- Forestry and Parks

The AER now regulates the life cycle of mineral resource development through [Directive 090: Brine-Hosted Mineral Resource Development](#) and [Directive 091: Rock-Hosted Mineral Resource Development](#).

Note: AER requirements for rock-hosted minerals come into effect upon the Government of Alberta's release of the *Rock-Hosted Mineral Resource Development Rules* on the [Alberta King's Printer](#) in the Alberta Gazette.

What is a life-cycle regulator?

AER regulation begins at the application review stage, continues throughout construction and operations, and ends with site closure and reclamation.

Liability Management

How will liability be managed for rock-hosted mineral developments? Must I post security?

We are currently developing an approach to mine liability management for rock-hosted minerals. Once the information is ready, it will be available for feedback through AER's public comment process on proposed regulatory changes. We will keep you posted as this area of regulatory development evolves.

You can subscribe to aer.ca [updates](#) to be notified of future public comment periods.

Environmental Conditions

How big is the environmental footprint of a rock-hosted mineral operation?

A rock-hosted mineral operation will look like a traditional mine or quarry. The footprint varies depending on the operation and the technology.

How does the regulatory framework address the environmental risks associated with rock-hosted mineral development?

Most environmental risk considerations relate to water, land use, conservation and reclamation, waste management, air emissions, and resource conservation. Our requirements are designed to mitigate risks within these categories.

Depending on the size and scale of activity, a company may have to provide an [environmental impact assessment](#) (EIA). EIA reports are required for large projects that could have significant environmental and socioeconomic impacts.

Public Safety and Risk

How does the regulatory framework address safety risks for rock-hosted mineral resource development?

The safety of the public and the environment is our top priority and safety risks, like all risks, are managed through the regulatory framework.

We have extensive knowledge from the mining sector that can help inform the safe and responsible development of rock-hosted mineral resources. For example, we have requirements for emergency response planning and requirements related to dust, noise, and seismic activities.

Participant Involvement

What is participant involvement?

Overall, participant involvement is about how operators engage with those affected by their operations as directed by regulatory requirements and the opportunities for participants to provide input about those operations.

How will participant involvement be managed?

Section 31 of the [Responsible Energy Development Act \(REDA\)](#) and *section 5* of the [Alberta Energy Regulator Rules of Practice](#) set out the rules regarding public notice associated with resource development applications. Applications submitted under the *MRDA* will be subject to these participant involvement requirements (i.e., notification and consultation requirements).

If you are concerned about a mineral project in your area and believe you may be directly or adversely affected by it, you can submit a [statement of concern](#) against the company's application. We share applications on our [Public Notice of Application](#) page. A [preapplication](#) concern can be submitted to adr@aer.ca.

Did you know?

The AER provides opportunities to have your say about proposed developments beyond those outlined in *REDA*, including participation in a public comment period. We also seek feedback in less formal ways, such as stakeholder workshops. In 2023, we hosted nine engagement events to support the creation of the regulatory framework for rock-hosted mineral development and provided a 45-day public comment period on our draft directive.