

MINING ACTIVITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: COOPERATION POLICY IN RIO DE JANEIRO STATE, BRAZIL

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The Brazilian Federal Government is responsible for the process of grants of the mineral rights, control and monitoring throughout the national territory. This centralised model results in several problems for small-scale mining which are dependent of the current state environmental regulations, that generally restrict the mining activities. Since 1995 through 1998 the Departamento de Recursos Minerais do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - state agency of mining resources - is working hand-to-hand with the government environmental staff and took part within the Comissão Estadual de Controle Ambiental - CECA, the state normative bureau of environmental regulation and started a close cooperation with the state environmental agency by licensing mining activities. Due this situation DRM received the responsibility of monitoring mining activities under environmental regulations as a CECA technical support as well as Rio's environmental agencies. In 1999 a government's administrative reform took place and DRM and the Secretaria de Estado de Energia, Indústria Naval e Petróleo - SEINPE - starts a new policy for mining development in sustainable basis. In spite of the new situation DRM continues with the current environmental attributions and cooperation with FEEMA, according the Government's policy of promotes the compatibility of mining activities and environmental protection. The challenge is to promote actions that help to develop and benefit mineral assets with environmental conscious. The small-scale mining is widespread in Rio and the major activities are the exploitation of the self-called social minerals like quarries, clay and sand which sometimes seems like scatter-mining without any environmental care.