



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU

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June 7, 2022

Mr. Tulsi Das C. Reyes

President

Berong Nickel Corporation

3/F DMCI Homes Corporate Center

1321 Apolinario St., Bangkal,

1233 Makati City

Dear Mr. T.D. C. Reyes:

This refers to the request of Berong Nickel Corporation (BNC) for an authority to verify minerals (ATVM) involving the 650.87-hectare portion of the company's application for Exploration Permit (EP) denominated as EPA-356-IVB (formerly AMA-IVB-038) situated in Quezon, Palawan, pending the approval of the said application.

The Office has determined that the pertinent Exploration Work Program (ExWP) satisfactorily outlined the proposed exploration activities and indicated the necessary information and/or technical discussion for a systematic implementation of the mineral verification.

In view thereof and pursuant to the pertinent provision of the Executive Order No. 79 series of 2012¹, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2012-07², and DAO No. 2016-07³, the authority to verify minerals is hereby granted to BNC subject to the following conditions:

1. BNC shall submit within 15 days from receipt hereof the Revised Environmental Work Program, taking into account the attached comments of the Mine Safety, Environment and Social Development Division of this Office.
2. Mineral verification shall be confined to the area within EPA-356-IVB.
3. The conduct of mineral verification in the subject area shall have a duration of one year.
4. The mineral verification should be conducted in accordance with the approved ExWP.
5. BNC shall spend an amount of not less than ten percent (10%) of the budget under the approved ExWP for the conduct of environmental mitigating measures.

Likewise, an equivalent amount shall be spent for the development of the host and neighboring communities, advancement of mining technology and geosciences, and implementation of Information, Education and Communication Program for greater public awareness and understanding of responsible mining and geosciences.

6. The implementation of the approved ExWP is subject to periodic audit/monitoring by this Office/Mines and Geosciences Bureau MIMAROPA Region.
7. Copy of the approved ExWP shall be provided to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Palawan and the received copy shall be furnished to this Office.



1. Institutionalizing and Implementing Reforms in the Philippines Mining Sector, Providing Policies and Guidelines to Ensure Environment Protection and Responsible Mining in the Utilization of Mineral Resources
2. Implementing Rules and Regulations of EO No. 79
3. DENR Manual of Authority on Technical Matters

**"MINING SHALL BE PRO-PEOPLE AND PRO-ENVIRONMENT
IN SUSTAINING WEALTH CREATION AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE."**

Handwritten signature/initials

8. BNC shall submit to the Regional Director concerned, copy furnished this Office, within 30 days after the completion of the one-year term or date of completion of the mineral verification, whichever comes earlier, a final technical report on the result of the mineral verification. Such information shall include detailed financial expenditures, raw and processed geological, geochemical, geophysical and radiometric data plotted on a map at a minimum 1:50000 scale, copies of the original drilling reports, map, environmental work program implementation and detailed expenditures showing discrepancies/deviation with approved exploration and environmental plans and budget as well as other information of any kind collected during the exploration activities.

Failure to submit the said report shall be subject to payment of fines as provided under Section 271 of DAO No. 2010-21⁴.

9. The existing applicable rules and regulations on environmental protection and management, and safety and health of workers shall be strictly complied within the conduct of the mineral verification.
10. The DENR/MGB shall not be prevented or hindered from conducting within the reasonable time of the day any on-site inspections of the mineral verification activities and pertinent records.
11. The Government shall be held free and harmless from all claims and accounts of all kind, as well as demands and actions arising out of mineral verification in the subject area and shall be indemnified for any expenses or cost incurred by reason of any such claims, accounts, demands or actions.
12. The authority to verify minerals may be withdrawn upon violation of any of the above conditions or when the national interest or public welfare so require of for environmental protection or ecological reason.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


ENGR. JUANCHO PABLO S. CALVEZ
Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Director

Encl.: As stated

c.c.: **The Regional Director**
Mines and Geosciences Bureau MIMAROPA Region
7/F DENR Bldg., 1515 Roxas Blvd.,
Ermita, Manila

⁴ Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995

Mines and Geosciences Bureau
North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
MINE ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT SECTION
MINE SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Contractor/Permittee	:	BERONG NICKEL CORPORATION
MPSA/Permit No.	:	AMA-IVB-038
Location	:	Quezon, Palawan
Period	:	Application for Authority to Verify Minerals

COMMENTS
ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORK PROGRAM (EWP)
May 24, 2022

1. The proponent should expound discussion on the following:
 - a. Item 4.2.1 (*Water Quality*): Provide quantitative data, i.e., water quality sampling results, that will support the statement that the “*water from the area is clear and not polluted...*”
 - b. Item 4.2.2 (*Hydrology*): Include in the discussion the drainage pattern and systems in the area, water source to be utilized during the conduct of exploration, and nearest/receiving major water body/ies;
 - c. Item 4.3 (*Climatology/Meteorology*): Provide quantitative data, i.e., air sampling results, that will support the statement that there is “*fairly good air quality in the project site...*”
 - d. Item 4.5. (*Biological Environment*): Include existing terrestrial and marine flora and fauna species in the area. Apart from the general species present, please include endemic/indigenous species, if any; and
 - e. Item 4.6 (*Socioeconomic Environment*): Include demographic characteristics/features and economic activities of the **nearby community** that might be affected by the exploration activities, based on the latest PSA data/census.


If there are no available data/information on the matter, studies/baseline data gathering on the same can be conducted simultaneously with the exploration activities. It is recommended that the results of the studies be submitted before the beginning of the 2nd half of the Authority to Verify Minerals to be granted.

2. Item 5.1.7 (*Estimated Exploration Costs*): Reconcile the total Exploration Work Program (ExWP) cost presented in the document – PhP51,345,725.00 per Item 2.1 (*Project Description*) and PhP52,345,725.00 per Item 5.5 (*Estimated Cost*).
3. Item 6.0 (*Identification of Potential Environmental Effects*): Indicate the number and dimension of the drill pads to be constructed.
4. Item 7.1 (*Progressive Rehabilitation...*): Indicate the tree species to be used in rehabilitation.
5. On Tables 7-1 to 7-4: The proponent should modify the attached table to follow the format provided in the updated EWP outline enclosed in the MGB Memorandum Circular No. 2021-006 in re: *Safety and Health, Environment, and Social Development and Management Manual*. The proponent is required to provide the following: *Environmental Monitoring Matrix, Summary of Identified Impacts and*

Mitigating Measures, and Matrix of Environmental Management Measures. Include in the summary activities the baseline data gathering to be conducted. Indicate the corresponding schedule and budget.

6. On Table 7-3 (*Misinformation on project implementation*): The proponent should be reminded that the **IEC activities** to be funded under the EWP shall be related to the environmental management measures to be implemented. Other topics/agenda and activities should be included and funded in the Community Development Program (CDP) of the company, to be implemented alongside the EWP and other work programs.
7. On Table 7-3 (*Unsafe working condition*): The proponent should take note that EWP only covers the identification of the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be used by the workers/employees. Appropriation of funds for the provision of PPE shall be addressed in the Safety and Health Program. **The budget allocated for such activities were included in the total EWP cost.** Please revise accordingly.
8. The proponent should ensure that the resulting EWP cost, once adjustments were made, is at least 10% of the ExWP cost.

Evaluated By:


IVY KIMBERLY A. BATECAN
SEMS

Reviewed by:


DANNY P. BERCHEs
Chief, Mine Environmental Audit Section

Approved by:


MARCIAL H. MATEO
Chief, MSESDD