

18 July 2026

**Aid to Discussions on
Test Mining and Pilot Mining**

Tuesday --- 21 July 2026 --- 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Co-facilitated by BEL, CHN, GER

For the Council discussion during the July meeting of the 31st Session of the Authority, we ask delegates to speak to the set of guiding questions below.

Overall process & differences between Test Mining and Pilot Mining

- Would you agree with the overall process regarding the conduct of Test Mining and Pilot Mining and the differences between both phases as illustrated in Annex I to this document? Or do you have any other conceptual understanding of the process?
- Should there be a Council approval procedure to transit from Pilot Mining to Commercial Production or would an assessment by the LTC be sufficient?

Objectives of Test Mining and Pilot Mining

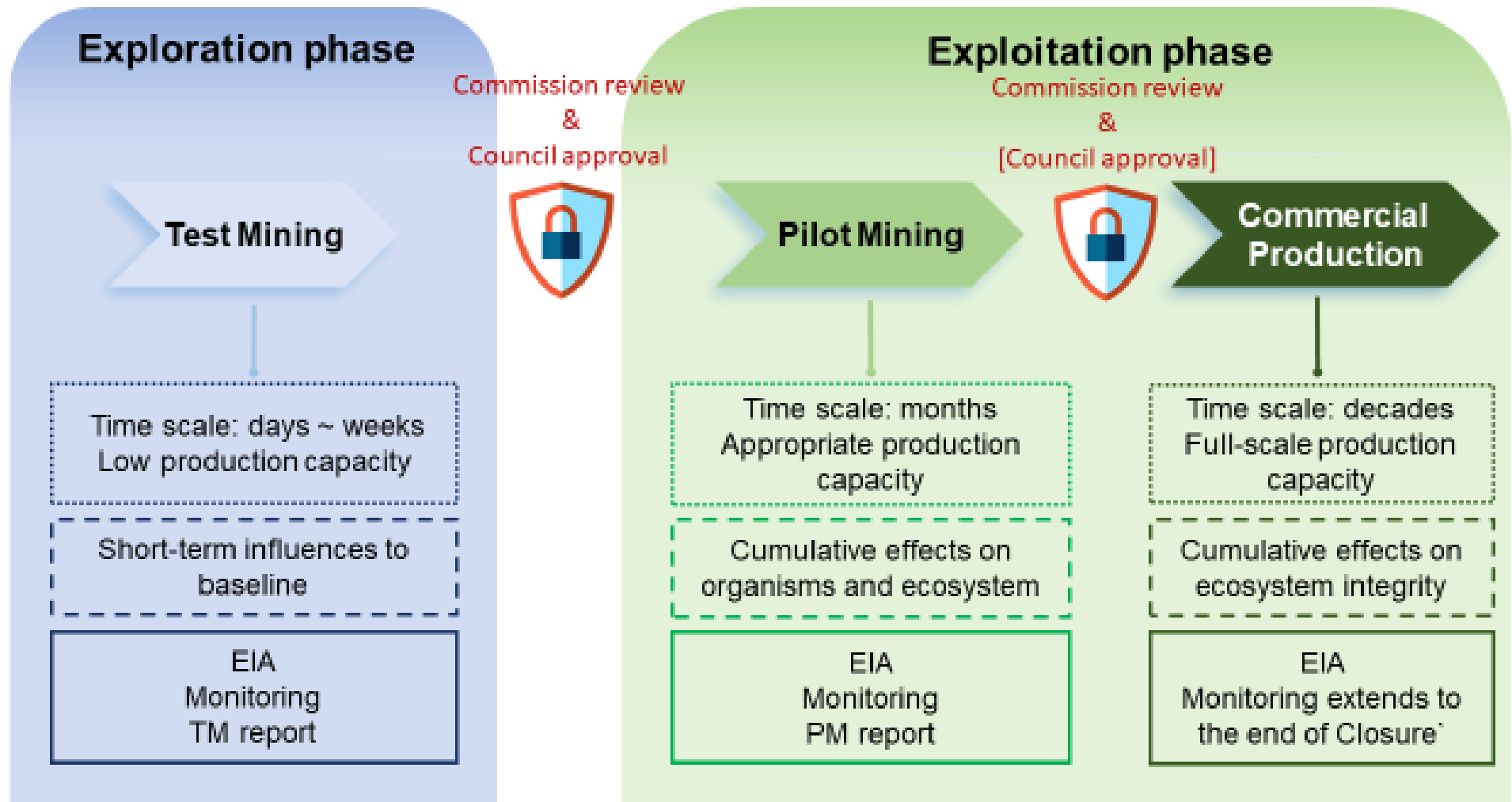
- Do you generally agree with the objectives for Pilot Mining as currently set out in paragraph 4 of DR 48ter and the informal initial draft set of objectives for Test Mining as set out in Annex 2 to this document?
- Should the objectives of Test Mining be set out in a stand-alone paragraph of regulation 48ter or should they be part of the Definition of Test Mining in the Schedule?

Exemptions

- Under which specific circumstances should an exemption for Test Mining be allowed, taking into account the informal initial draft set of objectives for Test Mining as set out in Annex 2 to this document?
- Do you see the need for additional paragraphs under DR 13 for the verification of exemptions by the LTC and to specify any consequences of a rejected exemption?

Annex 1

Overall Process and Differences between Test Mining & Pilot Mining



Annex 2

Objectives of Test Mining and Pilot Mining

Informal initial draft set of objectives:

The purpose of Test Mining is to:

- (i) test the functionality of the proposed mining equipment in a reduced scale;
- (ii) gain initial understanding of the impacts the foreseen mining operation will cause; and
- (iii) collect the necessary field data as a basis for the environmental impact assessment to accompany the proposed plan of work.

Draft Regulation 48ter, paragraph 4:

The purpose of Pilot Mining is to[:

- (i) validate that the proposed mining equipment is commercially and technically appropriate;
- (ii) ensure that the Environmental Impacts and Effects of the activity are in accordance with the Environmental Impact Statement [and the conditions of the Exploitation Contract][, and to inform the Plan of Work]; and
- (iii) prove the technical capabilities of the [Applicant][Contractor] to carry out its activities in accordance with the [Exploitation Contract] [Plan of Work].]