

## Six months in the pandemic: how job situations are likely to change in the minerals sector

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An eight-question English-language survey was conducted by Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences, University College Dublin, Ireland. The survey was designed to determine the immediate effects of the pandemic on people in the minerals sector and how the effects were distributed in terms of geographic area, sector of the minerals industry, and commodity. The survey asked about the impacts on people's employment, the nature of the impact, and the level of concern individuals had concerning job security due to COVID-19. The survey was posted online on April 23, 2020, and was held open for responses until May 2, 2020. The summary of the results of the survey is given below:

**Effect on work:** 37% of respondents strongly agreed that the COVID19 pandemic had already significantly affected their work, 28% agreeing that it had somehow affected their work and 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the pandemic had affected their work.

**Effect on employment status:** 65% said there had been no change whereas 18% reported reduced hours, 4% reported being furloughed, and 9% reported having been laid off. The highest rate of change in employment status was from Africa, where 45% of respondents reported negative employment activity, defined as job loss, furlough, or reduced hours. South American respondents were next, with 34% reporting negative employment activity. Europe appeared to be the most stable, with 70% of respondents experiencing no change in employment status followed by Asia and North America, where 66% of respondents reported no change in employment status. The youngest cohort (ages 18-30) reported the highest percentage of lay-offs (14%) followed by the 31- to 45-year-old group (11%). The 46- to 60-year-old group fared the best with only 6% losing their jobs while those aged over 60 had 7% lay-offs. However, experiencing reduced hours was more common for the older groups, in which almost 22% of respondents aged over 45 years had their hours reduced compared to 14% of the those up to age 45.

**Concern about job security:** Looking to the future, 26% of respondents were very concerned (scoring 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) about future employment due to the pandemic, 43% stated they had little or no concern about future employment, while 22% were moderately concerned, and 9% had already lost their job. Some 36% of African respondents were very concerned about job security going forward due to the pandemic. Respondents from South America were next in line with 33% stating strong concern. Approximately 50% of respondents from Asia and Australia had little to no concerns about employment in 2020 going forward. 30% of the European respondents recorded being very concerned about employment for the rest of 2020 and sometime beyond. By current employment status the unemployed (32%) being the most concerned, followed by consultants (29%), then students (28%), and those employed (25%); retired respondents were the least concerned. Concerns by age indicate that those aged 31 to 45 were most concerned, with 30% of the 31- to 45-year-old cohort being very concerned and a further 22% being concerned about job security.

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(Disclaimer: The results are in conformity globally for the first 6 months. COVID-19 pandemic is still showing no signs of waning. Many of the above figures perhaps will go up at least for about a year before going down, if at all. Moreover, such survey shows an indication and not a certainty. Request caution be exercised.)

**Courtesy and Reference:** Murray Hitzman, et al, Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Minerals Sector: A Real Time Survey, SEG Discovery (2020) (122): 26-33