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Guiding Principles for Effective Engagement of Geoscientists in Sustainable Development Activities

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Geoscience is foundational to sustainability, and an enabler of inclusive economic growth, human development, and environmental protection. Geoscientists understanding of Earth resources, dynamics and systems can help (in partnership with others) to advance progress and support the transition to sustainability, as set out in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 'Business as usual', however, is not enough to realise the significant ambitions of this development agenda, ensuring that we leave no one behind. As the geoscience community steps up to meet the geoscientific requirements of the SDGs we need to review not just what we can contribute, but also how we work.

Effective pathways for future sustainability therefore requires geoscientists to adapt in order to increase the relevance and impact of our contribution, improve accountability, and build respectful partnerships for development. This presentation articulates and discusses 10 guiding principles that aim to enhance the way in which we work, particularly when collaborating with those in the Global South (so called 'developing countries'). These guiding principles draw upon existing internationally recognised quality standards for development and humanitarian work and set these into the context of geoscience-for-development activities (including research, innovation, training, and capacity strengthening).

Guiding principles advocate geoscience-for-development activities that:

- Support lasting and positive change, through appropriate, relevant and sustainable activities.
- Strengthen local capacity and ownership of geoscience-for-development activities (empowerment).
- Advance inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Communicate effectively, including listening.
- Capture and share learning with both internal and external audiences.
- Identify and act upon potential or actual unintended negative effects in a timely and systematic manner.
- Value cooperation, working in a coordinated and complementary manner.
- Manage resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.

- Ensure appropriate internal training and support.
- Are transparent and accountable.

These principles support the planning of high-quality sustainable development interventions, effective monitoring and evaluation of project partnerships and approaches, and clear communication of values to all relevant stakeholders. Indicators for each guiding principle illustrate how to demonstrate these within a project, supported by active, critical reflection on the specific context. These guiding principles have shaped the ODA activities of the British Geological Survey programme, Geoscience for Sustainable Future, with examples set out during this presentation.