

SCALE OF ILLEGAL MINERAL EXCAVATION IN LITHUANIA

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Mineral resources state assets, the excavation of which is an engine of economic and social progress. There are 17 species of minerals found in Lithuania. In recent years, nine types of minerals have been used in Lithuania: dolomite, limestone, underground water, clay, sapropel, gravel, sand, peat and oil. Safe and rational use of useful resources is the maximum benefit for the state and society, and the minimum impact on our environment, while the mining processes are managed and maintained. Most of the resources used in Lithuania, like the rest of the world, are groundwater and building materials. According to the data of the Lithuanian Geological Survey, extraction of mineral resources for construction and road industry (dolomite, sand and gravel) has significantly increased over the past year [1]. Some have been exterminated and rehabilitated, and, of course, new ones have emerged. The emergence of new quarries and the closure of depleted plants are monitored by state institutions, but they collect information only on legally extracted minerals, but there are no accounts of other types of cadastral areas of damaged land, quarrying quantities, and such cask condition. The Lithuanian Geological Survey performed the State Damaged Land Management Plan 2014-2020 approved by the Minister of Environment and carried out an audit of all Lithuanian cadastral damaged areas of more than 0.3 ha - "Collection and systematization of information on damaged lands" [2]. The purpose of this project was to identify the sites and condition of the land damaged by any mining operation; to calculate excavated mineral resources; to accumulate and systematize information on damaged lands and based on the collected data to identify the damaged lands to be treated first. The results of this work showed that 3300 sites of more than 0.3 hectares are affected by casual damage (fig. 1).

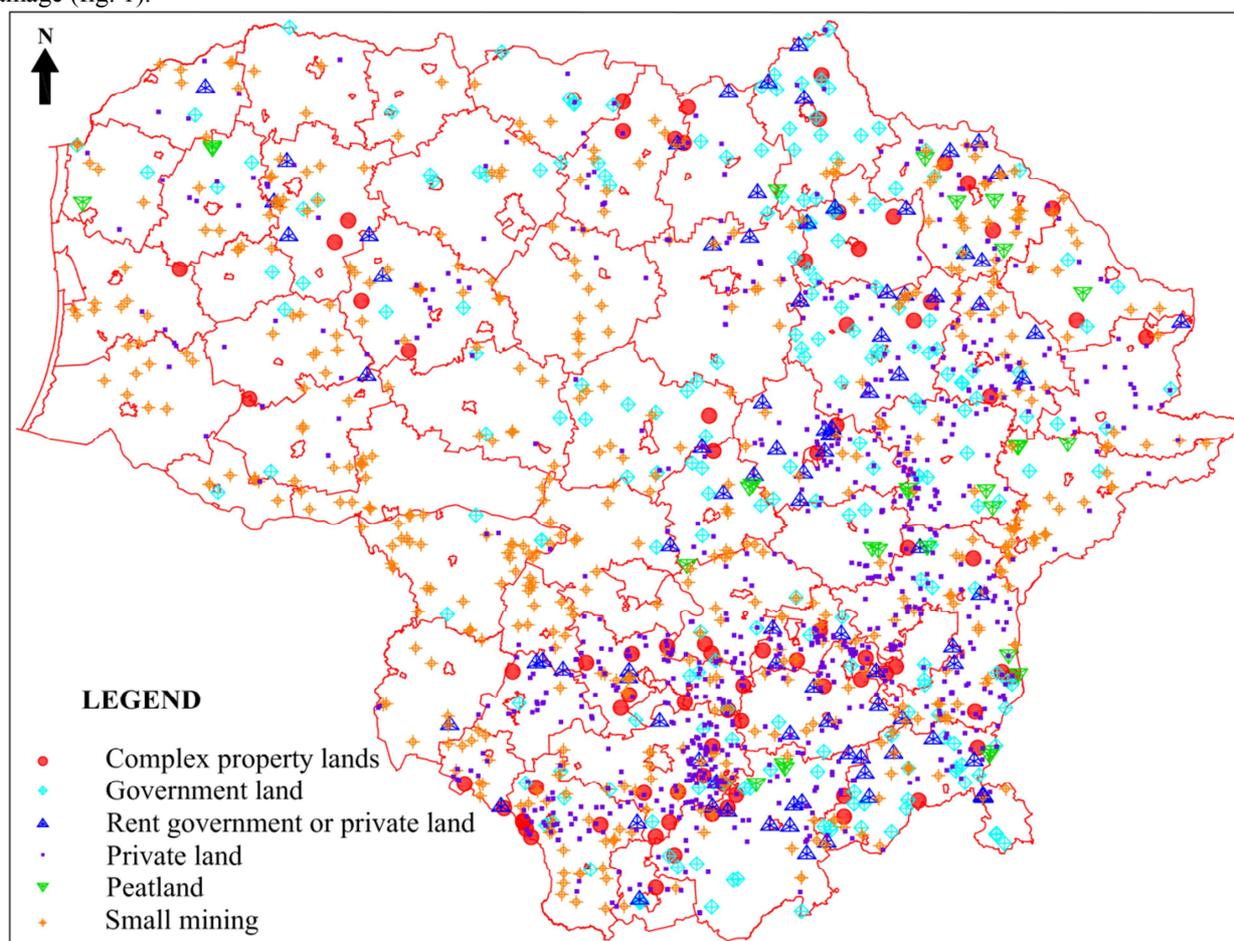


Fig. 1. Plan of damaged land area.

The amount of minerals likely to be illegally dumped, mainly gravel and sand, amounts to 15 million m³, thus the state has lost about 6 million Euro taxes.

[1] Lithuanian Geological Survey, Annual report 2017, 140 Vilnius (2018).

[2] G. Juozapavicius, A. Armanavicius et al., Collection and systematization of information on damaged lands, Final report, 225, (Vilnius, 2015).