

MINING TOURISM CENTERS AS PART OF MINE CLOSURE PLANS IN PERU

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an analysis of the conversion of mines, related facilities and mining-related environmental liabilities into mining parks and/or museums as a strategic alternative to traditional closure or total shutdown of a mine. It seeks to argue that this proposed solution goes beyond the simple preservation of industrial heritage, constituting a strategy for sustainable territorial development that transforms "mining liabilities" into "economic assets." Key findings indicate that the ideal viability of these projects depends on integrated planning from the conception of the mine and the concurrence of critical factors, mainly of a social nature, such as community and governance commitment, through stable regulatory and financial frameworks. The case studies presented, ranging from the Americas to Europe and other continents, demonstrate the existence of diverse and successful models applied to mines, especially old ones. The Riotinto Mining Park in Spain exemplifies socio-economic revitalization led by a foundation, while the Zollverein industrial complex in Germany showcases a multifunctional model that combines tourism with business innovation. The similar situation in North America, with greater development in the field, such as the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine in West Virginia or the World Museum of Mining in Montana, and slightly less in Mexico, contrasts with the Andean region in South America, particularly in Peru, revealing a gap between the existing regulatory framework, which is aligned with international best practices, and practical implementation, pointing to significant challenges such as high closure costs, bureaucracy, and the persistence of illegal and informal mining. It is concluded that the conversion of mines in the region has great future potential, rather than being a current reality, and that the creation of dedicated management entities, with community participation, will enable the long-term sustainability of these new cultural and economic assets.

KEYWORDS

Cultural assets, mine closure, mining parks, industrial heritage, and mine conversion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mining in many countries around the world, such as Peru, has been and continues to be an activity of great importance, not only as a support for economic development but also for technological development in this field, as well as other related industrial activities. However, when mineral resources were exhausted or their extraction became uneconomical, many mines

and facilities had to be abandoned without an adequate Closure Plan being implemented, due to a lack of updated legislation, causing their deterioration and, in many cases, turning them into mining liabilities as sources of environmental disruption in their surroundings (Cenzano, 2007). In view of this, it is necessary to ask whether the depletion of a mine necessarily means that the deposit, its facilities, and infrastructure are no longer of interest to society. In many countries around the world, depleted or uneconomical deposits have been considered "industrial archaeological heritage," so that through a conversion project to showcase their value, it may serve as a testimony and motivation for future generations to promote or value this activity, as has been done in various countries, as can be seen in the digital bibliography reviewed and, in some trips, made by the author abroad over several years (Cenzano, 2007). Likewise, this type of project has been gaining great global relevance in recent years, as mining heritage can be converted, if protected and preserved, into a source of wealth and a focus of attraction for new business initiatives such as tourism, and into an important alternative for the future development of areas where mining was once perhaps the main occupation and source of livelihood (Delgado Domínguez, Romero Macías, & Regalado Ortega, 2012).

In the case of Peru, to date, there are no suitable centers in the areas with the highest mining activity to store and maintain assets, such as mining infrastructure, equipment, industrial plants, etc., which were used in mining throughout the country's history and can be considered industrial archaeological heritage to be valued by the surrounding community (Cañizares Ruiz, 2011). Many of these "assets" in this country are located in different places within the properties of various private companies, the state, and communities that, due to their age and poor condition, are considering them in their mine closure or liability plans and are likely to be closed and/or demolished. However, with state promotion and an adequate legal framework, a good percentage of them could be considered mining "archaeology" and converted into theme parks and/or mining museums (Cenzano, 2007).

Against this background, this study focuses on the potential incorporation of mining tourism into mine closure and post-closure strategies in Peru. Rather than proposing tourism as a substitute for remediation or closure obligations, the paper examines under what technical, legal, institutional, and social conditions certain mining components could be preserved, adapted, and managed as cultural, educational, and economic assets. This approach seeks to contribute to the discussion on responsible mine closure by highlighting the possible post-mining value of selected infrastructure, provided that safety, environmental stability, and community participation are ensured.

2. THE CONVERSION OF MINES: A PARADIGM SHIFT

2.1. From Liabilities to Assets: Fundamentals of Post-Mining Conversion

The repurposing of mining facilities is a significant option for post-extraction management, as it allows for the restoration, rehabilitation, and enhancement of certain mining components for tourism, educational, cultural, and economic purposes. This approach is particularly applicable to old mines, disused facilities, or mining environmental liabilities

which, after meeting minimum safety and remediation requirements, can be transformed into spaces for historical interpretation, industrial heritage, and regional development (Exploraciones Mineras del Cantábrico, 2021). This heritage encompasses both the “productive space,” which includes galleries or tunnels, open pits, headframe, machinery, and production workshops, and the “reproductive space,” consisting of camps, hospitals, and other infrastructure related to the life of the mining community (Cueto Alonso, 2016). For this reason, the conversion effort is not limited to preserving isolated structures, but rather seeks to reinterpret a cultural landscape linked to a region’s economic, social, and technological history.

From an economic perspective, this process can help transform disused mining facilities into assets capable of creating jobs, attracting visitors, revitalizing local services, and diversifying economies that depend on mining (SRK, n.d.). From a social perspective, this can open up new opportunities for former miners and nearby communities, who can work as guides, cultural managers, or tour operators. However, such a transformation requires first addressing the risks associated with soil and water contamination, physical instability, geotechnical issues, and the presence of mining operations lacking adequate safety measures.

In this regard, post-mining redevelopment represents a paradigm shift: moving from an approach focused solely on the closure, decommissioning, or demolition of facilities to one that explores the possibility of preserving, adapting, and reusing certain elements of cultural, educational, or economic value, provided that this is compatible with safety, human health, and environmental protection.

2.2. Strategic Planning: A Long-Term Integrated Process

The successful implementation of a project based on this new vision requires strategic planning that extends beyond the final stage of operations. Closure should be viewed as a progressive process, integrated from the design and operation of the mine, as advocated by the guidelines of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM, 2025). This approach helps reduce costs, anticipate risks, and preserve components of heritage or tourism value. It also requires the coordinated participation of the company, the government, and local communities to define objectives, responsibilities, and sustainability mechanisms (Sánchez, Silva-Sánchez, & Neri, 2015).

3. CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.1. Risk Management: Safety and Environmental Remediation

Effective risk management is the starting point for any mining operation conversion project. The abandonment of these facilities entails physical and environmental risks that must be mitigated as a priority, such as unfenced open pits, tunnel collapses, unstable ground, geotechnical instability of tailings piles or waste deposits, and soil and water contamination (Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration [DMPE], 2025; Subirón Garay & Alcalde Molero, n.d.). Therefore, any closure plan must ensure the physical, geochemical, and

hydrological stability of the site to protect life, health, and the environment, in accordance with the objectives established in Peruvian mine closure regulations (Ministerio de Energía y Minas [MINEM], 2025). In the Peruvian context, the cost of closure can amount to as much as 50% of the initial investment, highlighting the need for technical and financial planning from the earliest stages (IIMP, 2025a).

3.2. Pillars of Socioeconomic Viability

The viability of a “mining tourism” project depends not only on physical safety and remediation, but also on complementary and critical socioeconomic factors (SDSN Bolivia, 2024). Among the former factors, the commitment of workers, companies, and the local population stands out, as well as access to basic services, transportation, lodging, and minimum safety conditions. Complementary factors include visual appeal, historical remains, tourist signage, culinary offerings, and other elements that enrich the visitor experience. These factors demonstrate that historical heritage and aesthetic beauty are not sufficient on their own. A site may be attractive, but if it lacks safety, basic services, or community support, its development as a tourist destination will be unviable. Consequently, the sustainability of mining tourism depends as much on its physical attributes as on the “social license” derived from the participation of the local community (SDSN Bolivia, 2024).

The levels of priority among these factors reveal a crucial point: the historical heritage and aesthetic beauty of a place are not enough on their own. A site may be visually attractive because of the vestiges of its past, but if it lacks critical safety indicators, such as measures against landslides, or basic infrastructure, such as a continuous supply of water and other basic services, its tourism development will be considered unviable. Therefore, the true sustainability of a mining tourism project is not based solely on its physical attributes, but fundamentally on the project's "social license," which derives from the support and participation of the local community. The conversion is, in essence, a community development project rather than a simple tourism project.

Table 1 shows the levels of factors according to the indicator, adding their description and meaning respectively.

Table 1 – Factors and indicators for the sustainability of a mining tourism project

Type of Factor	Specific Indicator	Description and Meaning
Critical	Interest and commitment of workers, company, and population	The support of the community and former mine workers is essential for the success and sustainability of the project, which would be unfeasible without it.
Critical	Access to basic services	The availability of drinking water, access roads, and electricity is an essential requirement for the operation of a tourism business.

Type of Factor	Specific Indicator	Description and Meaning
Critical	Structural safety and signage	Protective measures against the risk of collapses, landslides, or falls are mandatory to ensure visitor safety.
Complementary	Visual and historical appeal	The ruins, machinery, and iconic buildings add value and enhance the experience, but they do not compensate for the absence of critical factors.
Complementary	Support infrastructure (roads, restaurants, etc.)	Elements such as road signs, transport arrival points, and gastronomic offerings enrich the visit and the overall tourist experience.

4. GLOBAL CASE STUDIES: LESSONS AND MODELS OF SUCCESS

International case studies show that there is no single model for reconversion, but rather a diversity of approaches adapted to the local context and strategic objectives.

4.1. The European Iberian Axis: Pioneering and Adaptation

The Riotinto Mining Park in Huelva, Spain, is a pioneering example of socioeconomic revitalization (Cañizares Ruiz, 2011). In response to the crisis in the metal mining industry, the company Río Tinto S.A. established the Río Tinto Foundation in 1987, which promoted the preservation and enhancement of industrial heritage and the creation of local jobs. Through training programs, more than 700 young people were trained, with a job placement rate of nearly 70% (Delgado Domínguez, Romero Macías & Regalado Ortega, 2012).

In Almadén, Ciudad Real, Spain, the public-private management model has been crucial. Following the cessation of mercury production in 2003, the underground mine, managed by the public company MAYASA, was converted into a cultural and tourist complex that was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2012 (UNESCO, 2012). Its business model is based on sustainability, reinvesting all tourism revenues in the conservation and maintenance of the heritage site (Delgado Domínguez, Romero Macías, & Regalado Ortega, 2012). On the other hand, the Cardona Salt Mountain focuses on the revaluation of a unique geological phenomenon. After the mine closed in 1990, the site has been converted into a tourist center that displays machinery and allows visitors to access an underground gallery, combining industrial history with the wonder of the natural landscape. Table 2 shows other cases of conversion in Spain.

Table 2 – Location of other mining museums and parks in Spain

Project Name	City	Region
D. Felipe de Borbón Historical Mining Museum	Madrid	Madrid

Project Name	City	Region
Museum of Mining and Industry	El Entrego	Asturias
Mining Museum	Cercs	Barcelon a
Cardona Mining Museum	Cardona	Barcelon a
Can Tintorer Neolithic Mines Archaeological Park	Gavá	Barcelon a
Gypsum quarries (recreational)	Vilobí	Barcelon a
Jayona Mine	Fuente del Arco	Badajoz
Francisco Pablo Holgado Historical Mining Museum	Almadén	Ciudad Real
Pozo Norte Mining Park	Puertollano	Ciudad Real
Mining Museum	Barruelo	Palencia
Navajún Mines	Navajún	La Rioja
Castilla-La Mancha Museum of Science and Technology	La Mancha	Cuenca
Geomineral and Archaeoindustrial Park	La Unión	Murcia
Geological-mining Park	Mazarrón	Murcia
La Celia Mines	Jumilla	Murcia
Las Médulas Geological and Mining Park	Las Médulas	León
Castile and León Mining Museum (steelworks building)	Sabero	León
Salt mines railway (tourist route)	Torre Vieja	Alicante
Mining Museum (Eugenia Mine)	Bellmunt	Tarragon a
Zerain Mining Museum (Aizpea Mining Complex)	Lagazpi	Guipúz c oa

4.2. Experiences in Central Europe: Integration and Diversification

Large-scale redevelopment models have been developed in Germany. The Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in Essen, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, combines tourism, creative and digital businesses, a design university, and a business incubator (Route Industriekultur, 2019). This approach created 2,780 jobs, a figure close to the number of miners who worked there in 1986. In the Leipzig Lake District, the conversion of a lignite mining area into a sustainable tourist destination was driven by government intervention and private investment (Canal 13C, 2018).

4.3. The United Kingdom Model: Historical Preservation and Community Leadership

The Big Pit National Coal Museum in Wales represents a model of operational preservation and experiential tourism (Coupland, 2012). This coal mine, which operated until 1980, was acquired by the local government and converted into a museum by a charitable trust. Its main attraction is an underground tour led by former miners, who bring authenticity and “living history” to the experience. Table 3 lists the cases mentioned, their revitalization models, and their most notable results

Table 3 – Tourism conversion projects in Europe and the United Kingdom

Project Name	Country	Closure of Operations	Conversion Model	Key Stakeholders	Main Results
Zollverein Complex	Germany	1986	Multifunctional conversion	Foundation, Companies, State	2,780 jobs, World Heritage Site, business incubator.
Leipzig Lake District	Germany	1970s-1990s	State-led macro-rehabilitation	State, investors	Transformation of a vast mining area into a sustainable tourism destination.
Big Pit National Coal Museum	Wales (United Kingdom)	1980	Operational preservation	Local government, Charitable trust	Authentic experience with former miners as guides, preservation of industrial heritage.

It should be noted that there are other countries such as Ireland, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, France, Poland, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic, among others, which, together with Spain, currently make this part of the world the one with the highest number of mining parks and museums (Cenzano, 2007). However, in countries on other continents, such as Korea and Japan, several mine museums have been established, as well as in Australia and New Zealand.

4.4. North America: Public Space Projects

In the United States, the Pikeview Quarry Rehabilitation Project in Colorado demonstrates how a limestone quarry once considered a “scar” on the community can be transformed into a recreational asset through ecological restoration, native species, and infrastructure for cycling, hiking, and recreation (Herschbach, 2018). Other examples include the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine in West Virginia, where visitors enter a recreated mine tunnel, and the World Museum of Mining in Butte, Montana, which preserves mining facilities and

equipment (Cenzano, 2007). See Figure 1.

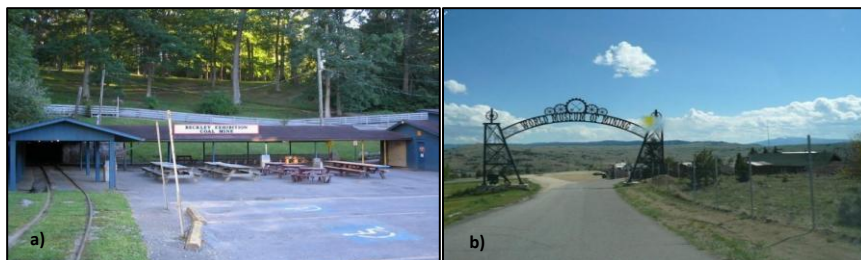


Figure 1 - Experiences in the United States with the implementation of mining museums. a) Museum and mining exhibition park in Beckley. b) World Museum of Mining in Butte.

An emblematic case is Kennecott's Bingham Canyon Mine, located near Salt Lake City, Utah, where experiential mining tourism takes place at one of the world's largest and deepest operating mines, owned by Rio Tinto. The author observed this firsthand during a guided tour from a safe viewing platform and at the Visitor Center, which tells the story of Kennecott, which began operations in 1904.

Table 4 shows these and other cases in different states of the country that teach visitors to appreciate mining activities (Cenzano, 2007).

Table 4 – Mines with museums and mining parks in the United States of America

Project Name	Facilities	Facilities	Facilities
Pikeview Quarry	Recreational Rehabilitation	Colorado	Colorado
Exhibition Coal Mine	Underground, coal	Beckley	West Virginia
World Museum of Mining	Underground, copper, gold	Butte	Montana
Black Hills Mining Museum	Underground and Surface Gold	Lead	North Dakota
Beulah Mine	Coal Mining	Beulah	North Dakota
Asarco Mineral Discovery Center	Copper Supply	Mission	Arizona
Copper Queen Mine	Copper, Gold	Bisbee	Arizona
Copper Town Mining Museum	Underground, Copper and Gold	Calumet	Michigan
Western Museum of Mining and Industry	Complex	Colorado Springs	Colorado
Creede Underground Mining Museum	Underground, Silver	Creede	Colorado
Old One Hundred Mine	Underground, Gold	Silverton	Colorado

Project Name	Facilities	Facilities	Facilities
Phoenix Gold Mine	Underground, Gold	Idaho Springs	Colorado
Crystal Gold Mine	Underground, Gold	Kellogg	Idaho
Kentucky Coal Mining Museum	Underground, Coal	Benham	Kentucky
Sterling Hill Mining Museum	Underground, Zinc	Ogdenburg	New Jersey
North Star Mining Museum	Surface, Gold	Grass Valley	California
Northeastern Nevada Mining Museum	Old Town	Elko	Nevada

5. REGULATORY, FINANCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK IN THE REGION

5.1. The Role of Government Policies and Legislation

Although the existence of a robust legal framework is a crucial step, it is not sufficient on its own to ensure the transition. In Latin America, regulatory effectiveness faces challenges related to governance, oversight, institutional continuity, and financing. In the case of Peru, this is compounded by illegal or informal mining, which generates environmental liabilities without clearly identified responsible parties. Therefore, effective governance and oversight are just as important as the legal framework for ensuring that the transition moves from theory to practice.

5.2. Incentives and Financing Mechanisms for Conversion

The transition requires financing mechanisms that encourage private investment in projects with a social impact (Crouse, Weinig & Kos, 2024). These may include tax incentives, deductions for environmental investments, trusts, or the “Works for Taxes” program—a mechanism that channels corporate resources toward projects with social and economic impact.

6. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN PERU

Peru, a country with a rich mining tradition, faces a dichotomy in the management of its industrial mining legacy. Although there is a regulatory framework governing the closure of mining liabilities and mines, large-scale conversion projects for tourism are scarce. Efforts in the country have mainly focused on reforestation, dismantling or demolishing infrastructure and closure of surface and underground operations.

The implementation of mining tourism models faces significant barriers: high closure costs, bureaucracy, limited investment, and the persistence of illegal and informal mining. In

Peru, closure costs can amount to up to 50% of an operation's initial investment, which hinders new projects if there are no incentives or adequate financing mechanisms (IIMP, 2025a).

Currently, Peruvian examples are limited to mineral museums located in urban areas or a replica of an underground mine for educational purposes in a theme park in Lima (Las Leyendas Park) (IIMP, 2026). Therefore, mining conversion in the Andean region remains more of a future potential than an established reality.

6.1 Feasible international examples for Peru

6.1.1 Almadén Mercury Mine, Spain

When it comes to mining-related environmental liabilities, the Almadén case is particularly relevant. This former mercury mine was converted into a cultural and tourist complex and, in 2012, was inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site under the property "Mercury Heritage: Almadén and Idrija" (UNESCO, 2012). The case demonstrates how conversion can prevent the dual deterioration of mining and metallurgical heritage and its natural environment through a management model focused on conservation and public use. Due to its colonial history, the presence of surface and underground infrastructure, and its link to mercury production, this case offers relevant lessons for the Santa Bárbara Mining Environmental Liability site in Huancavelica, whose application to UNESCO seeks similar heritage recognition.

6.1.2 Kennecott Mine in Utah, United States

In the case of active and closed mines, Kennecott in Utah, United States, serves as a model for experiential mining tourism promoted by the operating company itself. Its Visitor Experience offers a self-guided tour that presents Kennecott's mining operation and provides a dramatic view of the massive open pit, while requiring visitors to follow specific safety policies, including the use of shuttle service to access the overlook and remaining within designated fenced or clearly marked visitor areas (Rio Tinto, n.d.). In Peru, similar conditions exist at open-pit mines with good accessibility and road infrastructure, such as Yanacocha (Cajamarca), Antamina (Áncash), Cerro Verde (Arequipa), and Toquepala (Tacna). Among these, Yanacocha stands out as a case of particular interest, given that it has already been analyzed as a mining tourism alternative for the regional development of Cajamarca (Nugra et al., 2021). Likewise, the inclusion of Cajamarca as a pilot destination in the transformation process toward becoming a Smart Tourism Destination, with technical support from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR) and the Regional Directorate of Foreign Trade and Tourism (DIRCETUR), reinforces the opportunity to align this type of initiative with a broader regional tourism strategy (MINCETUR, 2025).

6.2 Sector-specific legislation

In Peru, although there is currently updated legislation on mine closure, it does not contemplate the conversion of "passive assets" in closure into "economic assets" mining tourism models, unless the "rehabilitation" process of mining components achieves chemical, physical, and hydrological stability, as well as the recovery of local flora and fauna communities;

characteristics that pose minimal risk to human health. In this case, the conditions would be in place to allow for the subsequent use of the land for the creation of forests, recreation, or other productive purposes (Section 7.14, amended by Art. 2 of DS 006-2025-EM).

Likewise, if the community or local, regional, or national governments are interested in the economically viable "alternative use" of any facility or infrastructure belonging to a mining unit for public use or interest, they must jointly request with the owner of the mining activity that said facility or infrastructure be excluded from the closure commitments (Art. 18 of DS 033-2005-EM, amended by DS 037-2017-EM).

However, with regard to the closure of mining liabilities, current legislation favorably considers regulations that, through amendments to the Liability Closure Law and its Regulations, have clarified definitions regarding generators, voluntary remediators, and those who request "alternative use," in addition to reuse. The State promotes private sector participation in the remediation of areas with mining environmental liabilities, under any modality permitted by current legislation (Article 14 of DS 003-2009-EM). Figure 2 shows the evolution of regulations.

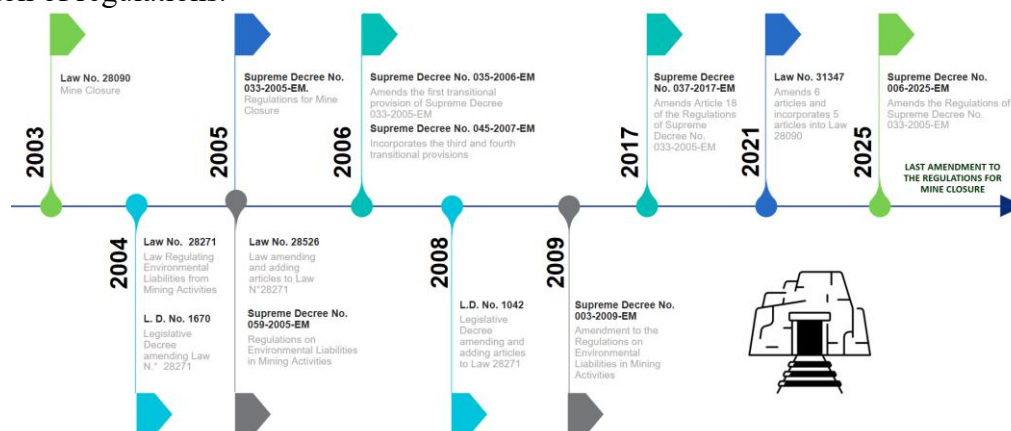


Figure 2 - Timeline showing the evolution of specific regulations

Alternative use consists of conditioning the mining environmental liability for productive, "tourist," cultural, "recreational," sports, or other activities, provided that it is requested by the local government or local governments in the area where the environmental liabilities are located. Such conditioning shall not pose a risk to human health or the environment (paragraph 4.11 incorporated by Article 2 of DS 003-2009-EM). In the case of Peru, its mining history includes many mines and facilities located in different regions, particularly in the high Andean areas near towns and cities that originated from this activity. For a long time, these towns depended on mining until the mines were depleted or abandoned because they were no longer profitable, leaving these towns to fend for themselves.

6.3 Changes to Ensure the Viability and Success of Mining Tourism

For mines currently in operation, closure regulations must be updated to include incentives allowing mining operators to repurpose certain components—such as camps, interpretation centers, observation decks, access points, or auxiliary facilities—for tourism. This should be done provided that physical, chemical, and hydrological stability is ensured, and there are no risks to human health or the environment. Currently, the regulations allow for certain subsequent uses of the land or facilities, but do not explicitly address mining tourism as a specific objective within closure plans; therefore, it is necessary to clarify this possibility in the sectoral regulations (Supreme Decree No. 006-2025-EM; Supreme Decree No. 037-2017-EM).

While sectoral regulations on mine closure have been updated through 2025, the same is not true for regulations on the closure of mining environmental liabilities, the last substantial amendment to which dates back to 2009. Furthermore, even in recent updates to the Regulations for Mine Closure, references to subsequent use remain primarily associated with land use or public interest purposes, without explicitly identifying mining tourism as a conversion alternative (Ministry of Energy and Mines, 2025). Therefore, it would be appropriate to incorporate a regulatory provision recognizing this possibility, always under verifiable conditions of safety, physical stability, and sustainability.

Regarding the Regulations on the Closure of Mining Environmental Liabilities, the 2009 amendments introduced concepts such as alternative use and reuse, promoting private-sector participation in the remediation of areas with mining environmental liabilities (Supreme Decree No. 003-2009-EM). However, for the alternative use of a liability for tourism or cultural purposes, it would be advisable to consider an amendment allowing the application to depend not only on the local government but also on the mining company, the regional government, or other interested parties, provided there is coordination with the competent authority and participation by the local community.

Greater coordination is also required among entities linked to the mining, tourism, and cultural sectors, such as the Peruvian Association of Engineers (CIP), the Peruvian Institute of Mining Engineers (IIMP), universities in the region, the National Society of Mining, Petroleum, and Energy (SNMPE), the Congress of the Republic, regional governments, the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM), the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR), and the Ministry of Culture, through their regional offices. This coordination would make it possible to identify areas with tourism potential, define responsibilities, channel investment, and ensure that the transition is not limited to isolated initiatives.

Furthermore, given that Law No. 32392 designates tourism as an activity of national interest and a priority policy of the State, consideration could be given to including a representative from the mining sector in the tourism sector's consultative bodies, particularly when addressing mining-oriented destinations or redevelopment projects. This would allow for the coordination of tourism investment promotion, as provided for in Law No. 32392, with mining tourism initiatives promoted in conjunction with regional and local governments (Congress of the Republic, 2025).

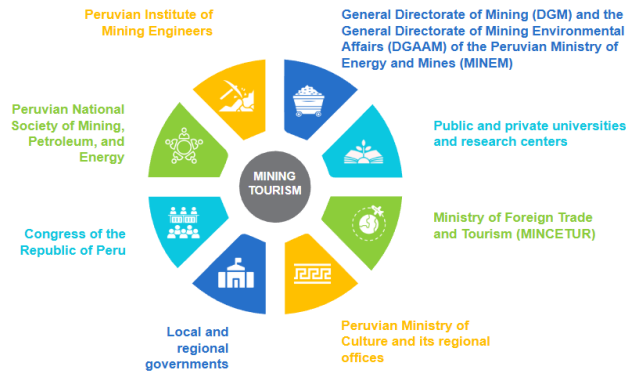


Figure 3 - Inter-institutional collaboration related to mining tourism as a shared objective.
Source: Author's own work

Table 5 - Phases for implementing mining tourism projects in Peru.

Phase	Content	Minimum requirements
1. Presentation and Identification	Identification of the project by the mining operator or the regional government and assessment of its feasibility.	Mine or abandoned site with tourism, archaeological, or scenic value; road access; basic services; social acceptance; and a track record of environmental responsibility.
2. Promotion and sectoral coordination	Market study for project promotion by mining, tourism, and cultural authorities and the regional government.	Coordination among the mining concession holder, regional/local government, MINEM, MINCETUR, the Ministry of Culture, academia, and the community; definition of roles and the managing entity.
3. Technical Study	Definition of project location criteria, identification of current and potential products, favorable aspects (natural, archaeological, cultural).	Physical, chemical, and hydrological stability; identification of visitable components, risks, routes, safety measures, and tourism products.
4. Financing	Economic evaluation, applying various modalities, such as works-for-taxes, income tax deductions, trusts, or other mechanisms (private investments).	Tax-for-works programs, tax deductions, trusts, private investment, or cooperation.

5. Access and transport	Transportation services for visitors to the nearest city and to the mine, with support from travel agencies or other operators.	Access routes, transportation, signage, trained guides, safety protocols, maintenance, and monitoring.
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Source: Prepared by the author.

6.4 Case of the Santa Bárbara Mine

The old Santa Bárbara mine, located in Huancavelica very close to its capital city, has a tradition dating back to the Viceroyalty period, which was even inscribed as the Santa Bárbara Mining Complex on the Tentative List of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972, as a cultural asset under criteria C (ii) and (iv) in 2017. It is an exceptional center for the exchange of knowledge and technological innovation in mining worldwide for the transformation of mercury distillation techniques, which influenced the production of mercury in the mines of America and Europe during the 18th to 20th centuries. Figure 4 show views of its facilities.

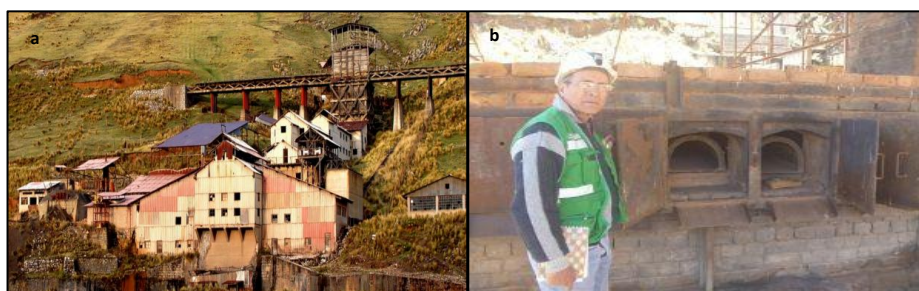


Figure 4 - Views of the old Santa Bárbara mine from the outside and inside. a) Surface infrastructure of the mining complex. b) Furnaces for ore and mercury distillation.

To date, this surface and underground mining complex constitutes the "Santa Bárbara Mining Environmental Liability" and has a Liability Closure Plan in accordance with current national regulations. In addition, the Regional Government of Huancavelica, as part of the Inter-institutional Cooperation Agreement together with other authorities in the region, as well as the Congress of the Republic, has been making efforts in recent years to have this mining complex recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, which, if achieved, would further promote it nationally and internationally for mining tourism.

6.5 Other Cases

In addition to mining-related environmental liabilities, the country is home to large-scale mining operations run by transnational corporations that offer open or technical tours. These initiatives could be gradually expanded to include tourist visits coordinated with the relevant tourism sector authorities, provided that safety, accessibility, and environmental management standards are ensured. Likewise, the Peruvian Institute of Mining Engineers (IIMP) runs the

Mining Tourism (TURIMIN) program, which focuses on scheduled visits to major mining operations; although its current approach is primarily technical and centered on mining immersion, it could serve as a model for designing mining tourism experiences with broader public appeal (IIMP, 2025b).

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Conclusions

The conversion of mines, related facilities, and mining-related environmental liabilities into mining tourism centers represents a strategic alternative for generating new economic, cultural, and educational opportunities in regions historically linked to mining. From an economic perspective, it can help diversify the local economic base and create jobs; from a social perspective, it allows for the revitalization of depressed areas and the preservation of a highly valuable cultural and industrial heritage. For operating mines, experiential tourism can also serve as a tool for building community engagement and strengthening corporate reputation, provided it is grounded in verifiable standards of safety, transparency, and sustainability.

However, the process faces significant challenges. Its viability depends on minimum conditions regarding safety, physical, chemical, and hydrological stability, environmental remediation, accessibility, financing, governance, and social acceptance. In Peru's case, the potential is significant, especially at historic sites such as Santa Bárbara and at active mining operations that could incorporate experiential tourism initiatives. However, for this potential to be realized, it is necessary to clarify the applicable regulatory framework, strengthen coordination among various sectors—including mining, tourism, and culture—and incorporate incentives that allow for the preservation of certain mining components as part of sustainable post-closure use.

7.2. Recommendations

Companies should adopt a progressive closure approach from the early stages of the project, integrating closure plans into the overall strategic planning of the mining operation with the aim of its conversion. It is essential to involve local communities and former workers from the outset of the process, drawing on their knowledge and experience. It is also advisable to explore multifunctional business models that combine tourism with other economic activities to ensure long-term viability. The state must create clear and stable legal and fiscal frameworks that encourage conversion and offer legal certainty to investors. Enforcement capacity must be strengthened to ensure compliance with closure plans and combat illegal mining. Fostering public-private collaboration is essential for managing industrial heritage and attracting capital. Local leadership must be developed to promote conversion projects and articulate the needs and expectations of the population. Training should be provided to former miners so that they can act as guides and managers of the new tourist sites, leveraging their knowledge and authenticity without excluding the local population involved.

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