

Introduction

Geology has always had a significant impact on human society and the way it has evolved. The names of important epochs in this evolution, such as the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Oil Age—not to mention the Stone Age—reflect geology’s significance in shaping society. However, the days when one could strike it rich by drilling a well at random or accidentally stumble across a Mother Lode are all but gone, and discovering, utilising and managing geological resources and hazards today require significant knowledge about the underlying geological processes.

This volume of NGU Special Publication presents some of the ongoing research at the Geological Survey of Norway and shows how geology and geological knowledge influence many areas of society. The global demand for geological resources is on the rise, and knowing where to look for these resources is becoming increasingly more important. In addition, quantifying these resources is vital to ensure present-day as well as future supplies. As society and technology evolve (cf., the Stone Age-, Bronze Age-, Iron Age-progression) so does the demand for geological resources. A sagacious assessment of geological resources therefore requires a broad, research-based approach.

Although surprising to many, we as geologists are well aware that Earth is a dynamic, ever-changing planet. As Earth’s population grows and formerly uninhabited areas are inhabited, understanding the effects of these changes on the land on which we live becomes increasingly important. Furthermore, managing and sustaining the environment that today’s and future societies depend on require understanding of how our actions affect our surroundings both on a local and global scale. As societies have expanded and continue to expand into uncharted territories, knowing what hazards lie ahead—not to mention above and below—requires insight into geology and geological processes.

Rather than highlighting a particular topic, which is often the case with Special Publications, the purpose of this volume is to emphasise the span of what we consider to be ‘geology’ and show how these diverse topics come together under the common topic ‘Geology for Society’—the motto of the Geological Survey of Norway. Although 150 years old and counting, the arrows continue to point up and out with regard to society’s need and demand for geological knowledge.

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