

Preface

At the end of 2003 the Instituto Geológico y Minero de España (IGME) celebrated the completion of the Geological cartographic Plan named MAGNA. The Geological and Geophysical Division proposed for that event an interesting study of the social and economic evaluation of this 1:50.000 scale geological mapping Plan. The scarcity of this type of studies, at national and global levels, allows to consider this one as absolutely original, without forgetting the pioneer study done by Bernknopf and collaborators of the USGS in 1983 about the societal value of geological maps.

It was considered of high interest the publication of this "ex-post" evaluation of a systematic cartographic program that shows the great usefulness of this type of thematic mapping. This utility is shown not only close to the geological sciences surroundings but also at the Public Administrations and institutions in charge of this type of mapping production or as potential users. In order to have a better diffusion this study is published in a bilingual (Spanish-English) edition.

It is a pleasure for me to write the preface of this publication for all aforementioned. It presents not only the methodology and results of the economic evaluation of the MAGNA Plan but, also the users reception, their opinions and suggestions. Firstly, in order to put the study within its context, the reader is introduced to the knowledge of the historic and future perspective of the MAGNA Plan.

It is certainly complex to face the evaluation of an intangible asset such as geological mapping produced by the IGME during the last third of the century. Without any doubt the results have many uncertainties. Nevertheless, the seriousness of the study and the positive results obtained (corroborating previous initiatives, of more partial nature, carried out mainly in USA) allows to warrant the profitability of a systematic cartographic program.

For an institution like the IGME, whose main purpose along its history was the production of our country's geological maps, it is gratifying to verify the usefulness and profitability generated in the society by this activity. But, we must also congratulate ourselves because

this study has allowed us to contemplate ways of improving the cartographic program in line with the needs of the users and, therefore, granted us to move this infrastructure activity forward and sharpen the product currently offered to our citizens, which is the priority for a Public Organisms like the Instituto Geológico y Minero de España.

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