

CASE STUDY

THE 2010 CHILEAN MINING RESCUE (A)

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On August 5, 2010, 700,000 tons of some of the hardest rock in the world collapsed in Chile's century-old San José mine. The collapse buried 33 miners at a depth almost twice the height of the Empire State Building—over 600 meters (2,000 feet) below ground. Never had a recovery been attempted at such depths, let alone in the face of challenges like those posed by the San José mine: unstable terrain, rock so hard it defied ordinary drill bits, severely limited time, and the potentially incapacitating fear that plagued the buried miners. Could the trapped miners and rescue workers mobilize before air and resources were depleted? The ensuing efforts would draw the attention and resources of countless people in Chile and around the world—and theirs would become a story of human survival, ingenuity, and hope facing the most desperate of circumstances.

THE MINING INDUSTRY OF CHILE

With volcanoes, glaciers, deserts, and an immense continental mountain range, the geographically varied country of Chile extends along more than half of the Pacific coast of South America. Often referred to as the mining capital of the world, Chile was the world's largest producer of copper, accounting in 2009 for about 35% of the world's copper production. Copper was also a pillar of Chile's economy, contributing 14.4% of the country's GDP in 2010.

Much of Chilean copper production lay in the hands of international investors until the 1950s, when the Chilean government, under President Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, initiated a nationalization process that succeeding governments continued. Through negotiations with foreign investors, the government gradually acquired control of Chile's largest copper mines. Even after General Augusto Pinochet's junta seized control of the government in 1973 and began to implement reforms that favored the free market, the mines remained in government possession

CODELCO

The National Copper Corporation of Chile (known by its Spanish acronym, Codelco) was established in 1976. With control of Chile's largest mines, Codelco became the largest copper-producing company in the world and in 2010 accounted for 12.5% of

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This is a preview of the case study that is part of the program.
The full version will be available with the purchase of the course.