

M.I.D.E.

(Método de Información De Excursiones).

Manual

(Version 1.0)

Developed through the collaboration of "Servicio de Protección Civil" of the Regional Government of Aragón, the Social and Cultural Fund of Ibercaja, and the Aragonese Federation of Montañismo (FAM), within the framework of the campaign "Safe Use of Mountains"

M.I.D.E. (Método de Información De Excursiones).

Manual (Version 1.0)

M.I.D.E. is a method of communication between hikers, to express the technical and physical requirements of a given route. Its objective is to evaluate the relative difficulties of excursions, so that hikers may encounter routes appropriate to their abilities and ambitions. It is to be used openly and freely by those informing others about mountainous excursions. The method is intended as a complement to route descriptions and recommendations that each author deems necessary.

M.I.D.E. has been created with the awareness that nature is complicated and always surprises. The methodology is free to be used by all who bear this in mind.





M.I.D.E. is presented by the Aragonese Federation of Mountaineering (FAM), Civil Protection of the Government of Aragón, and other entities.

The two components of M.I.D.E. are; a system of information for hikers, and a methodology for recording excursions within this system. For the system to work, anyone presenting an excursion in the M.I.D.E. format must assess the demands of the excursion using the same methodology which follows:

References

- ❑ Start point, route, and arrival point
- ❑ total height in ascent
- ❑ total height in descent
- ❑ horizontal distance
- ❑ seasons and conditions in which the grades of difficulty apply
- ❑ specific difficulties where relevant

Evaluations:

	<p><i>Environment.</i> Hostility of the environment</p>	<p>Within this method, each category is expressed on a scale of 1 to 5 based on the criteria which follow.</p>	<p>Example: From Parzán to Viadós by the GR11 Height gain: 1360 m. of ascent and 775 m. of descent. Distance: 21,30 Km (13,30 miles). Relevant to summer conditions without snow.</p>
	<p><i>Orientation.</i> Route-finding difficulties</p>		
	<p><i>Terrain.</i> Difficulties underfoot</p>		
	<p><i>Exertion.</i> Duration, and effort required</p>		

			
<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>

Evaluation



Severity of the environment

	For the hiker	Criteria for the writer	
1	The environment is not risk free	Exposure to one factor from the list considered very probable	<p style="text-align: center;">List of the risk factors. Each factor are to be taken account of only one time..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to spontaneous stone fall <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure sudden downfalls of snow or ice <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to stone fall caused by one's own party or other walkers <input type="checkbox"/> Possibility that a fall from the path may be serious or long <input type="checkbox"/> Existence of passages where the use of hands is necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Crossing rivers without bridges <input type="checkbox"/> Crossing glaciers or swamps <input type="checkbox"/> Probable crossing of persistent snow or glacier independently of inclination <input type="checkbox"/> High possibility that night temperature falls bellow 0° C <input type="checkbox"/> High possibility that night temperature falls bellow 5° C and humidity reaches 90% <input type="checkbox"/> High possibility that night temperature falls bellow -10° C <input type="checkbox"/> Reaches areas more than one hour from a populated area, a emergency phone or an open road (based on M.I.D.E. timings) <input type="checkbox"/> Reaches areas more than three hours from a populated area, a emergency phone or an open road (based on M.I.D.E. timings) <input type="checkbox"/> The difference of the duration of daylight and the length of the walk (depending of the season) is less than three hours <input type="checkbox"/> Considerable difficulty in orientation at some points on the route due to not-infrequent, local atmospheric phenomena; e.g. sites lacking in features which are particularly prone to mist <input type="checkbox"/> Sections of the route, off paths or trails, crossing difficult terrain or vegetation, which would make the location of the walker by an outside party difficult. <input type="checkbox"/> Dangers from snakes or poisonous insects
2	More than 1 risk factor	Exposure to 2 or 3 factors from the list considered very probable	
3	Various risk factors	Exposure to 4, 5 or 6 factors from the list considered very probable	
4	Considerable risk factors	Exposure to 7,8, 9 or 10 factors from the list considered very probable	
5	Many risk factors	Exposure to 11 or more factors from the list considered very probable	

Evaluation



Orientation

	For the hiker	For the writer
1	Paths and junctions well signed.	Good paths, well defined or signaled. Clear junctions with explicit or implicit signage. Keeping to the path does not require use of the map. The route may follow an unmistakable geographic feature (e.g. a beach or the border of a lake)
2	Footpaths or way marks which follow the route.	Follows clear tracks or footpaths on the ground, or markers showing the route. Attention required to stay on the path and at junctions, but without the need to precisely interpretate geographical features. It is expected that the majority of excursions receive this rating, including those which follow, in a single excursion, various types of track with numerous junctions, e.g. tracks, bridleways, footpaths and way markers through fields (these being well located and maintained)
3	Demands orientation by identification of geographic features and compass points	Although the route follows footpaths or lines marked by geographical accidents (rivers, bottom of the valleys, ridges or marks of crossing of other people), staying with the route requires visualization of geographical features and possibly orientation in relation to compass points.
4	Requires advanced navigation techniques, beyond interpretation of features on the map and the ground	The ground lacks features, nor are there references on the horizon. Route finding depends on comprehension of the ground and dead-reckoning.
5	Difficult navigation is interrupted by obstacles which must be avoided	Dead-reckoning navigation interrupted by impassable obstacles.

Evaluation



Terrain underfoot

For the hiker		For the writer
1	Easy walking	Roads and tracks for vehicles regardless of inclination. Normal stairs. Beaches of sand or gravel.
2	Bridleways and well made footpaths	Footpaths with regular surfaces, not being excessively steep, on which one may stride freely. Apt terrain for horse riding. Crossing of pathless ground which is regular and not excessively steep.
3	Rocky stairways, rough ground and screes	Paths with large irregular steps or stairs, or being rough and steep. Walking off paths on irregular terrain. Crossing screes or loose stones.
4	Contains sections where the use of hands is necessary for balance.	Sections requiring use of hands, difficulty up to I Superior on the UIAA climbing scale.
5	Scrambling, pulling on hands and arms for progress	Sections of climbing or scrambling from II to III+ (UIAA). The existence of such difficulties demands a special mention in the "Specific technical difficulties" section of the M.I.D.E. presentation.



Effort required

For the hiker		For the writer	
1	Less than one hour of continuous walking	Less than 1 h of walking (criteria M.I.D.E.)	<p>The M.I.D.E. times; criteria to calculate duration of an excursion (without stops included)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height gain: 400 metres/hour in ascent and 600 metres/hour in descent. • Distance covered: from 5 to 3 km/h depending on the terrain (roads and tracks 5 Km/h; bridleways good paths and pasture 4 Km/h; poor paths rocks and riverbeds 3 Km/h) <p>For each section:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Calculate separately the duration from the height differences, and from the horizontal distance 2. Of these two times take the longer, and add to this half of the shorter time. <p>Thus one has the duration of the excursion as we require it. Common sense and experience allows the modification of these times to take into account details such as river crossings or difficult sections requiring exertion and time for little gain in distance. Just as well one may take into account particularly favourable terrain for quick progress.</p>
2	From 1 to 3 hours of continuous walking	More than 1 h and less than 3 h (2+1) of walking (criteria M.I.D.E.)	
3	From 3 to 6 hours of continuous walking	More than 3 h and less than 6 h (3+2+1) of walking (criteria M.I.D.E.)	
4	From 6 to 10 hours of continuous walking	More than 6 h and less than 10 h (4+3+2+1) of walking (criteria M.I.D.E.)	
5	More than 10 hours of continuous walking	More than 10 h of walking (criteria M.I.D.E.)	

Methods for assessing the whole excursion:

Introduction: A days walk may contain different passages between which there is a significant difference in severity of the environment and difficulty in Orientation. M.I.D.E. attempts to express the difficulty of the whole excursion with a single number for each of the four factors assessed. To assist, the following points may be considered;

to evaluate the factors “Orientation” and “Terrain”

- The excursion may be divided into logical sections for the evaluation. In this case one presents the evaluation of the section of greatest severity as the evaluation for the whole excursion.
- However, the evaluation should reflect the overbearing type of terrain. In the event that a short section is of much greater difficulty than the rest of the excursion, the whole excursion may be valued slightly less than the difficult section.
- If the excursion involves any section, however short, where the use of hands is necessary to maintain balance, and a fall could be serious, the evaluation of “Terrain” should be no less than “4”.
- Bear in mind that M.I.D.E. is created in a spirit of prudence, at the same time it’s greatest use to hikers will be in accurate comparison between excursions known and unknown.

to evaluate the factors “Exertion” and “Environment”

- If the excursion is assessed by division in to sections, then the time necessary for the whole excursion can be calculated as the sum of the times for each segment. See the table under “Exertion” for the calculation.
- Severity of “Environment” is evaluated according the list of risk factors. Every factor of risk should be included no more than once, and all are regarded equally, independent of their probability, or frequency of occurrence during the excursion.

Summary:

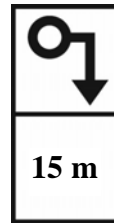
- **For each factor (*Environment, Itinerary, Displacement, Effort*) the excursion is presented with an evaluation at least equal to the section of the excursion with the greatest severity.**
- **The whole time needed for the journey is the sum of times needed for all sections.**
- **For the assessment of the severity of the “Environment”, the accumulation of risk factors should be considered over the entirety of the excursion.**

Evaluation

Special technical difficulties

It is important to draw attention to the existence of passages which do not permit simple progression and which require experience, special knowledge and/or special equipment. Included are; progression on the snow, short parts of difficult climbing, and abseiling. Such techniques are not very common in hiking but are used in many mountains of Europe where many excursions combine hiking and climbing.

In version 1.0 of M.I.D.E. the following are considered:



<p align="center">Passages of climbing</p>	<p align="center">Abseil</p>	<p align="center">Snow slopes (very probable, or possible)</p>
<p>Include to the right of the M.I.D.E. presentation if the excursion contains passages of climbing of difficulty II or higher according to evaluation UIAA.</p> <p>Grade for the most difficult section.</p> <p>The factor “TERRAIN” will be given a rating of 4 or 5.</p>	<p>Include to the right of the M.I.D.E. presentation if the excursion involves a descent where an abseil may be appropriate.</p> <p>Indicate the length in metres.</p>	<p>Include to the right of the M.I.D.E. presentation if the excursion contains snow slopes (in the conditions in which it is presented). The dashed border indicates a possibility of snow.</p> <p>Indicate the steepest inclination.</p>
<p>If the excursion contains such technical difficulties, they should be explained in “Further information”</p>		

ENCLOSED I





Summary for inclusion in publications

M.I.D.E. (Método de Información De Excursiones).

M.I.D.E. is a method of communication between hikers, to express the technical and physical requirements of a given route. Its objective is to evaluate the relative difficulties of excursions, so that hikers may encounter routes appropriate to their abilities and ambitions.

Example

			
3	2	3	5

	<i>Environment.</i> Hostility of the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The environment is not risk free 2 More than 1 risk factor 3 Various risk factors 4 Considerable risk factors 5 Many risk factors 	
	<i>Orientation.</i> Route-finding demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Paths and junctions well signed. 2 Footpaths or way marks which follow the route. 3 Demands orientation by identification of geographic features and compass points 4 Requires advanced navigation techniques, beyond interpretation of features on the map and the ground 5 Difficult navigation is interrupted by obstacles which must be avoided 	
	<i>Terrain.</i> Difficulties underfoot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Easy walking 2 Bridleways and well made footpaths 3 Rocky stairways, rough ground and screes 4 Contains sections where the use of hands is necessary for balance. 5 Scrambling, <u>pulling</u> on hands and arms for progress 	
	<i>Exertion.</i> Duration and effort required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Less than one hour of continuous walking 2 From 1 to 3 hours of continuous walking 3 From 3 to 6 hours of continuous walking 4 From 6 to 10 hours of continuous walking 5 More than 10 hours of continuous walking 	Calculated according to criteria M.I.D.E. for a walker not excessively loaded

M.I.D.E. is presented by Spanish Mountaineering Federation (Federation Espanola de deportes de montana y escalada – FEDME), Aragonese federation of mountaineering (Federacion aragonesa de montanismo – FAM), Proteccion Civil of the Aragóense government and other organizations.

More information: www.euromide.info