

Paper Number: 4787

THE EU INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY FOR RAW MATERIALS: ENHANCING FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR A STABLE SUPPLY OF RAW MATERIALS

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A secure supply of raw materials is a priority of all industrialised countries, which extends beyond country borders and national policies. The appropriate and sustainable supply of raw materials requires specific framework conditions which relate to mineral policies, raw materials knowledge, infrastructure and international cooperation. These conditions are not met in the same way across the globe, and in 2008 the European Union (EU) pioneered the development of a strategy on raw materials based on three pillars: (1) ensuring the fair and sustainable supply of raw materials from international markets, through the promotion of international cooperation with developed and developing countries; (2) fostering the sustainable supply of raw materials from European sources, and (3) reducing consumption of primary raw materials by increasing resource efficiency and promoting recycling. This strategy is being propelled by the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Raw Materials, a stakeholder platform that aims to ensure the sustainable supply of raw materials to the European economy whilst increasing benefits for society as a whole. The EIP Raw Materials has defined the background for the development and implementation of the Horizon 2020 funded project INTRAW, a 2015 initiative in line with the first pillar of the EU strategy on raw materials, with the objective of establishing the European Union's International Observatory for Raw Materials by 2018.

This contribution will present the INTRAW project, and how the European Union's International Observatory for Raw Materials is being developed, with the objective of enhancing framework conditions for a stable supply of raw materials, thus contributing to the stability of Europe and international countries that face similar challenges. The creation and maintenance of the European Union's International Observatory for Raw Materials will have a strong impact in two dimensions:

1. It will narrow the existing gap in aspects of the raw materials knowledge infrastructure in the EU by providing a link to the knowledge infrastructure in technologically advanced countries. This is a two-way instrument that should contribute to the harmonisation of mineral policies, by providing data that enable evidence-based policies and appropriate, cost-effective management, planning and adaptation decisions by the public sector. This will benefit businesses, industry and society;
2. It will enable a better alignment of the R&I activities among the individual EU members, and will leverage cooperation with third countries by boosting synergies with international research and innovation programmes. This way the EU's role and scientific capabilities in the raw materials

area will be reinforced in the mid-term, and the conditions for sustainable access and supply of raw materials in the EU will benefit from the international cooperation.

The authors will describe how the European Union's International Observatory for Raw Materials is being designed and will explain why an integrated bottom-up approach for comparative performance analysis of existing practices and policies related to raw materials research, education and industry within the EU and five reference countries (Australia, Canada, Japan, South Africa and the USA) and between them over time is being used as a starting point.

