



**SUSTAINABLE
RECYCLING
INDUSTRIES**



Roundtable on Sustainable Recycling Industries

The SRI Roundtable addresses sustainability criteria in secondary resources management in developing countries. Whilst international efforts on standards and traceability mechanisms to ensure sustainable mining of raw materials exist, similar tools for secondary resources are still missing. This challenge is tackled by the SRI Roundtable, which is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat of Economic Affairs (SECO) as part of the Sustainable Recycling Industries Programme.

Filling in the gap

Developing countries are a vital source of raw materials used in global value chains. While this fact has led to significant development of extractive industries in these countries, the main stakeholders concerned have not experienced substantive positive socio-economic changes. Furthermore, this process has brought about detrimental impact on the environment and accelerated depletion of natural reserves.

In order to address the growing concerns of local and international stakeholders, standards and associated labels emerged to ensure the sustainability of extraction and production of certain product clusters, such as the well-known Fairtrade label to certify extraction activities of gold and other precious metals. Many other product clusters are still missing, whereas additional life-cycle stages of products such as the recycling phase, are still not taken into account.

Gold production perfectly illustrates this: gold is not only produced through mining but also recovered from discarded IT devices, such as mobile phones, which may contain up to 30 times more precious metal per m³ than raw gold ore.

Due to increasing prices over the last several years, gold is currently recycled at a very high rate. Yet, no traceability mechanisms exist for recycled gold and hence its recovery takes place without any oversight or guidance, often using methods that pose risk to health and safety of workers and local communities, as well as to the environment.

Moreover, responsible recycling practices of gold and other precious metals (e.g. platinum) which are emerging in developing countries on a small-scale, are usually developed inadvertently and the metals recovered in socially and environmentally responsible ways do not have access to the international commodity markets; nor are they recognized with better prices or otherwise.

Our focus

The objective of the Roundtable on Sustainable Recycling Industries (**SRI Roundtable**) is to facilitate the international promotion and recognition of policies and standards for the sustainable management of secondary resources.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Materials Science & Technology



More specifically, the multi-stakeholder SRI Roundtable will develop internationally recognized Guidance Principles which would include sustainability criteria for the management of secondary resources in current and emerging stewardship initiatives, as well as their corresponding conformity assessment and traceability schemes.

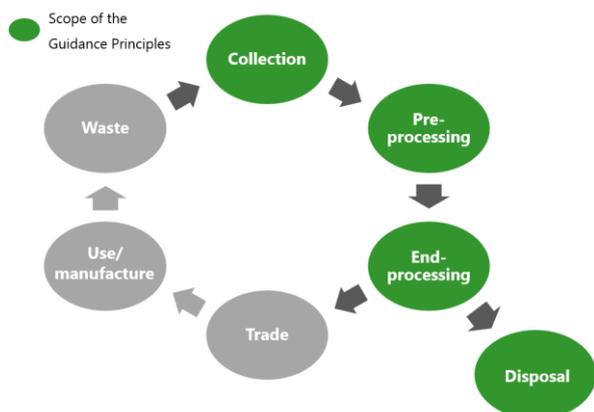
These Guidance Principles will focus on critical and valuable metals, and the main beneficiaries of their implementation will be micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) around metal recycling activities in developing countries as well as value chain holders.

Furthermore, the SRI Roundtable will support the development of standards based on the Guidance Principles and conduct field testing of conformity assessment and traceability schemes in SRI participating countries: Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, India, Peru and South Africa.

Guidance Principles

To define and determine what aspects are relevant to ensure a sustainable management of secondary metals, the **Guidance Principles for Addressing Sustainability Criteria in Secondary Resources Management** will be developed.

The Guidance Principles will recommend suitable environmental and socio-economic aspects for secondary metals management (e.g. collection, pre-processing, final processing and disposal) to be considered within the current and emerging metal stewardship initiatives, in particular regarding the context and needs of MSMEs in developing countries.



Standards and certification schemes

Through its expert network and based on the Guidance Principles, the SRI Roundtable will identify relevant existing and emerging metal standard (stewardship) initiatives and will provide them with technical assistance in order to incorporate sustainability criteria into the strategies of management of secondary metals.

In order to build and strengthen local capacities and disseminate the results in SRI participating countries and in the global value chains, field testing of conformity assessment and traceability schemes will be conducted.

Communication and outreach

Active communication is essential in order to identify and ensure the engagement of key stakeholders for the SRI Roundtable.

In this regard, metal and recycling associations and industries, MSMEs on metal recycling activities in developing countries, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and related industry associations, standard setting initiatives for sustainable metals, NGOs, government representatives, international organizations and cooperation agencies, experts and research institutions related to the topic are welcomed to participate.

Furthermore, stakeholders from SRI participating countries (Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, India, Peru and South Africa) are particularly encouraged to join the SRI Roundtable.

Joining the activities

If you are interested in supporting this initiative, please contact us at

sri@wrforum.org

