

EUROPEAN RAW MATERIALS INITIATIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consultation response by British Geological Survey (BGS)

This response is submitted by the British Geological Survey (BGS). The BGS is part of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), and is the United Kingdom's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS carries out research in strategically important areas including energy and natural resources, vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and earth system science, often in collaboration with the national and international scientific academic community. In this way the BGS maintains and develops understanding of earth sciences to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk.

BGS undertakes surveying, modelling, research and environmental and geological monitoring to deliver UK and NERC science objectives. It also works overseas, where it plays an important role in building geological infrastructure and capacity in developing countries.

Policy area : Defining critical raw materials

Q1. Do you have any comments on the methodological approach, including the scope, to determine criticality at EU level? If so, please specify.

The methodology used was heavily dependent on data and the outcomes may have been more robust if more/better data were available. For example, separate uses for particular minerals are often not resolved by available statistics (e.g. some uses of magnesite are critical, some are not). The scope of materials considered should have been wider (for example, phosphate and potash were not addressed).

Q4: Are you aware of any initiatives in your country that aim to assess the criticality of raw materials? If so, please describe briefly.

The UK Department for Transport commissioned a study of the availability and substitutability of Rare Earth metals. The evaluation report, *Lanthanide Resources and Alternatives*, was published in May 2010 (see http://www.oakdenhollins.co.uk/pdf/dft-01_205_issue2.pdf).

The UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has commissioned a 'Review Resource Risks Faced by Business and an Assessment of Future Viability' (this has not yet <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=2&F>

Q6 : Do you think that the EU should propose a system of stockpiling for the critical raw materials? If so, please indicate whether you consider it more appropriate to do this at Community or alternatively at Member States level.

The EU should consider commissioning research to assess the viability of this proposal.

Policy area : Development

Q11: What specific actions would you consider most relevant needed in the following areas:

- Good governance;
- Infrastructure / investments;
- Geological knowledge / skills.

Capacity building in

- mining law
- modern mining cadastre (licensing systems),
- permitting
- investment promotion (including enhancement of geological knowledge, skills and information)
- geological data retention/update

Policy area: Improvement of the regulatory framework conditions inside the EU

Q16: Do you agree that these topics correspond to the major challenges in this policy area? If not, please specify.

Yes

Q17: Can you think of any other avenues which should be followed by the Commission? If yes, please specify.

There is a requirement for a more consistent (harmonised) approach to reporting mineral statistics across Member States.

Q18: Do you agree with the recommendations made in the report on "Exchanging Best Practice on Land Use Planning, Permitting and Geological Knowledge Sharing" or do you have any specific ones to be added. Please explain.

Yes. The best practice examples presented in the report of the working group are very useful by highlighting potential improvements Member States may wish to consider with regard to their own minerals policy and associated land use planning policy, along with necessary geological data (the knowledge base) enhancements required in order to enhance this policy area. More effort is, however, now needed to further address the challenges listed in this policy area.

Q19: Do you consider it useful to establish an EU geological service based on a network of Member State geological services?

Yes, better coordination on these issues between member state geological surveys would be extremely useful.

Policy area: Promoting skills and research, development and innovation

Q21: What type of actions would you propose to provide better cooperation between companies, universities and public authorities in order to promote skills and in the extractive or other raw materials sectors? Please specify.

The UK Mineral Forum has proved very successful in promoting better dialogue between industry, regulators, government and campaigning groups on a variety of issues including skills (see <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/ukmf/home.html>). This could serve as a model for a similar European body.

Q23 and Q24: Where do you see the major gap/the urgent need for the raw materials sector related research, development and innovation at EU level. Please provide details; and What is your idea of a major research and innovation action that would have the highest positive impact on the security of raw materials supply for the EU industries? Please specify.

Better, harmonised statistics and information to underpin research. Comprehensive and systematic data and information on the mineral resources of Europe.

Q25: Are you aware of innovative exploration and extraction technologies, where project partners on a European level are needed to develop and implement the new technologies and which are the innovative technologies which need to be developed further. Please provide details.

There is a need for fundamental 4D studies of mineral deposit formation which would underpin better exploration, mining and processing - particularly for minerals and metals such as REEs, tantalum and gallium which are critical for environmental technologies. Research is also needed into the possibilities for de-carbonisation of resource exploitation including assessment of low-energy intensive deposits.

Policy area: Resource efficiency & recycling

Q28: In what ways should statistics on trade in, and recycling of, products containing secondary raw materials be improved?

Fundamental data on recycling are lacking across Europe. Research is required urgently to improve level of data gathering and interpretation. This is needed to ensure that this important potential source of supply is not lost to European industry.

**British Geological Survey
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