



International Governance for environmentally sound supply of raw materials (FKZ 3716 32 103 0)

Assessment of the national, European and international legal framework regarding environmental and social standards for raw material extraction, and options for action

German Environment Agency

Umwelt 
Bundesamt

Background

Raw material and resource extraction has significant impacts on the environment. They occur not only at extraction but at processing, treatment and transport. The most common environmental impacts are water pollution and soil contamination, threats to habitats and degradation of land, especially in open-cast mining, which often cannot be restored after completion of the mining activities. Extraction often leads to social impacts, in particular for the local population. These risks are increased by rising global demand and weak enforcement of environmental and social standards e.g. in developing countries and emerging economies.

Impacts of raw material extraction do not occur at the place where the commodities are actually utilised, because they are mostly exported. Countries importing raw materials, including Germany as one of the biggest importers of industrial metals, therefore have a special responsibility.

International approaches are needed to reduce the environmental impacts of raw material extraction at a global scale. However, there is no comprehensive international law specifically on regulating extraction or pertinent environmental and social standards. Existing treaties only address some issues relating to mining, have gaps or establish vague obligations.

The German Resources Strategy of 2010 stresses that a secure, sustainable and as far as possible transparent supply with raw materials can only be achieved through international cooperation. The German government has worked in the G7/G8 and the G20 towards putting this issue on the international agenda.

Project objectives and content

The research project will assess and further develop suitable governance instruments which can foster, establish and enforce global standards for environmentally and socially sound raw material extraction. The project team will analyse how international law and other, non-binding international instruments can be used to advance environmentally sound extraction of abiotic raw materials. To this end, it will use a set of analysis criteria, case studies, and implementation reports from selected countries.

Approach

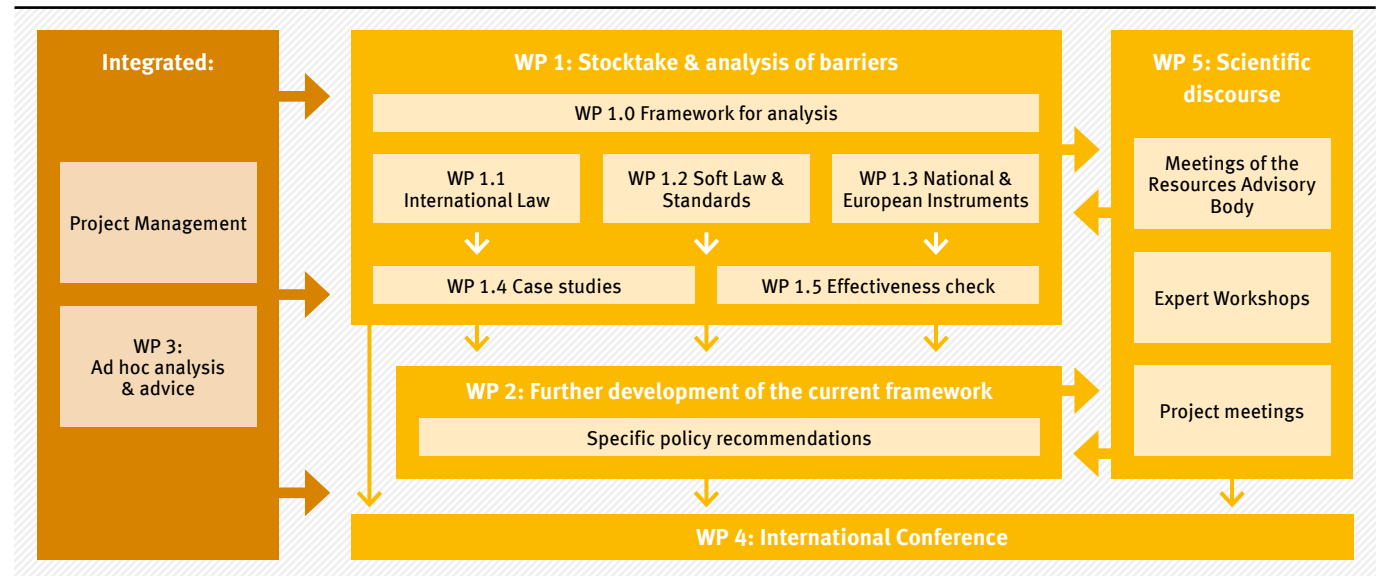
- ▶ Stocktake and assessment of existing international law, soft law instruments, and German or European measures with extraterritorial effect, related to extraction of abiotic raw materials
- ▶ Specific policy options and recommendations

Project Milestones

| Estimated dates | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 09/2016 | Project start |
| 09/2017 | Interim Report I (WP 1) |
| 10/2017 | Expert Workshop I |
| 06/2018 | Interim Report II (WP 2) |
| 07/2018 | Expert Workshop II |
| 10/2018 | Final Conference |
| 02/2019 | Final Report |

Source: German Environment Agency

Project structure

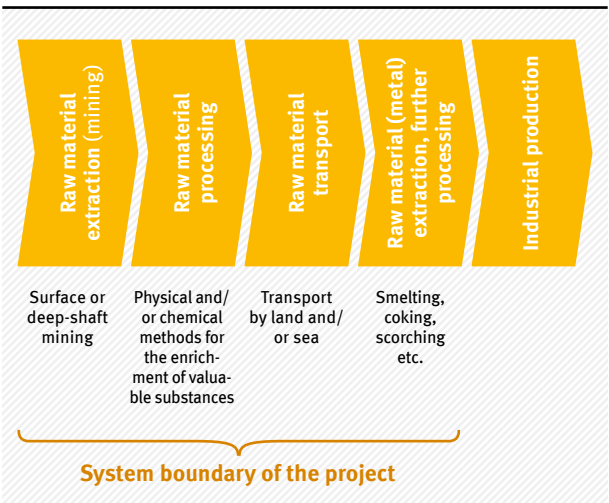


Research study for the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) – brief overview

The research project’s objective is to assess and further develop suitable governance instruments which can foster, establish and enforce global standards for environmentally sound raw material extraction.

It will analyse how international law and other international cooperation and policy instruments can be used to advance environmentally sound extraction of abiotic raw materials. The project also includes ad hoc analyses and advice as well as convening two workshops and an international conference.

The research focuses on abiotic raw materials (metals and ore, other minerals and fossil raw materials) and their extraction, treatment, transport and processing.



It will develop specific recommendations to the German government on how better use can be made of international governance and international law to foster environmental and social standards in raw material supply.

Project team & contact

Ecologic Institute (Lead)

Dr. Ralph Bodle
Ralph.Bodle@ecologic.eu

Öko-Institut e.V.

Andreas Hermann
a.hermann@oeko.de

Projekt-Consult


Moritz Lörcher
moritz.loercher@gfa-group.de

Editor:

Umweltbundesamt
Postfach 14 06
06844 Dessau-Roßlau
Tel: +49 340-2103-0
info@umweltbundesamt.de
Internet: www.umweltbundesamt.de

Contact person:

Oliver Weber
Tel: +49 (0) 340 2103 2340
oliver.weber@uba.de

 /umweltbundesamt.de

 /umweltbundesamt

Image sources:

Fotolia / Andreas Fanke

November 2016

► Publications as a pdf:

<https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen>