

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

The research project's objective is to provide a legal and political science perspective to the Federal Government's efforts to anchor the protection of resources more strongly at the international level.

The project analyses how global governance processes and international law can contribute to reducing resource consumption and making the utilisation of resources more efficient and effective.

The study looks at abiotic raw materials (metals respectively ores, other mineral raw materials, fossil raw materials) and their utilisation, processing or other use. It will examine options to increase resource efficiency and reduce resource consumption along the entire value chain.

The study aims at elaborating policy recommendations for the Federal Government how international resource efficiency governance and international law could be shaped towards increased resource efficiency and less resource consumption.

Relevant terms

- Resource efficiency: The relation of a certain use/result to the deployment of the natural resources necessary to achieve this use/result
- Abiotic resources: Metals, sand, gravel, potassium salts, quartz sand, fossil raw materials

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**Options under public
international law to increase
resource efficiency
(FKZ: 3716 33 100 0)**

Assessment of the impact of the
international legal framework on
resource consumption and elaboration
of options to anchor resource
efficiency at the international level

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Background

Resource protection and resource efficiency are an ecological, economic and social necessity. Many resources are limited and under pressure from the rising world population, production methods, consumer behaviour and the high per capita resource consumption. Using more and more resources will exceed the limits of the earth's ecological carrying capacity in the foreseeable future. This development requires appropriate and effective measures. At the same time, a consistent resource efficiency policy and reduction of resource consumption can reduce the socio-economic and ecological impacts of the extraction and utilization of raw materials, as well as the generation of waste.

Resource efficiency is now on the international agenda, for example at the Rio + 20 Conference 2012 and the G8 and G7 group of states. Moreover, Germany seeks to permanently anchor this issue at the G20 during its presidency. The 2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the United Nations also aim at progressively improving, through 2030, global resource efficiency and at decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and resource consumption.

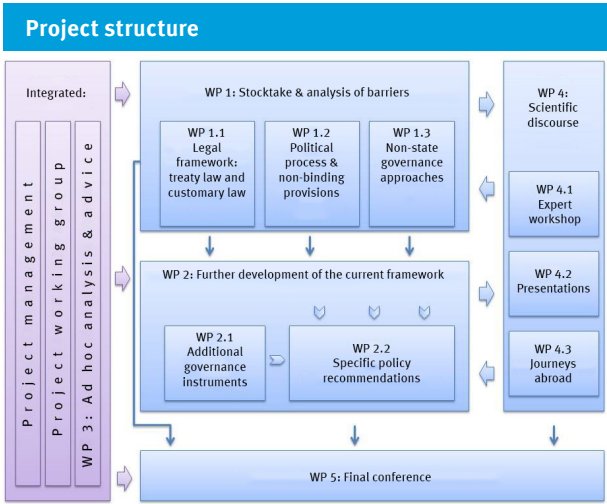
In its current 'Resource Efficiency Programme II', the Federal Government commits to the goal of anchoring resource efficiency more strongly in international treaties, processes and institutions, and to examine options for action. At present there are no salient international treaties or institutions that channel and focus the political debate, particularly with regard to abiotic raw materials. Therefore, in the long term, the Federal Government pursues an international treaty on increasing resource efficiency.

Objectives & content of the project

The research project's objective is to provide a legal and political science perspective to the Federal Government's efforts to anchor the protection of resources more strongly at the international level. It analyses how public international law and other international governance mechanisms could be used more effectively to increase resource efficiency along the value chain. The project includes ad-hoc analyses and short term advice, as well as contributions to the scientific debate and analyses through one-day expert workshops and presentations at European or international conferences.

Approach

- Stocktake and assessment of existing international law and of non-legal and certain non-governmental instruments and processes related to resource efficiency of abiotic raw materials
- Assessment of governance proposals in academic literature
- Specific policy options and recommendations



Milestones of the project	
Estimated dates	
6/2016	Project start
05/2017	Interim report I (WP 1)
06/2017	World Circular Economy Forum
11/2017	World Resources Forum
02/2018	Interim report II (WP 2)
2018	Final conference
04/2019	Final report and conference proceedings

Source: Umweltbundesamt