



Sustainability framework for the European extractive industry

PRESS RELEASE | BRUSSELS | OCTOBER 2021 – The SUMEX project is pleased to announce the release of a report describing the sustainability aspects that should be considered for the European extractive industry in the fields of carbon neutrality and circular economy.

SUMEX (Sustainable Management in EXtractive Industries) is a 36-month project funded by the European Commission that started on 1 November 2020. The project’s first aim was to **establish a sustainability framework for the extractive industry in Europe**, with the involvement of stakeholders from civil society, academia, industry and government backgrounds from all across the EU.

SUMEX sees legal compliance with all applicable legislation as the baseline and as a minimum requirement for companies in the extractive sector. But even in the EU, legal compliance does by no means imply equal sustainable management of the sector. The project suggests one common standard to describe what responsible extraction should mean in the EU and suggests to use the IRMA (Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance) Standard to describe the criteria that a responsible extractive operation should fulfil today. However, responsible management does not mean sustainable management. In order to meet this criterion, SUMEX recommends for the industry to transition, aligned with the European Green Deal, **from responsible extraction towards a future state of sustainable management**. This transition is described through the SUMEX sustainability aspects over a time period up to 2050, via the milestone of contributing towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030.

In addition to describing sustainability aspects, the SUMEX Sustainability Framework also includes **evaluation and decision-making criteria** in order to assess a policy’s, project’s or operation’s sustainability.



“We see the Sustainability Framework presented in this report as a roadmap for the extractive industry in Europe to move from legal compliance and responsible extraction to sustainable extraction in 2050, aligned with the current European political debate. The sustainability aspects describe the topics and to some extent high level goals that the industry will need to consider most as part of the transformation required”, says Michael Tost, Montanuniversität Leoben, coordinator of the project.

For the SUMEX project internally, the sustainability framework will be used as a ‘funnel’ for **mapping good practices** from other projects and programmes such as Horizon 2020 or EIT RawMaterials and for analysing European policies targeting the extractive industry with regards to sustainability. These practices will then be presented in a **digital toolkit**, which will serve as the basis for establishing a **Community of Practise for engagement and peer learning** amongst extractive industry stakeholders across Europe.

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