



Strategic projects under the Critical Raw Materials Act

Guide for Applicants

DRAFT Version

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Disclaimer

This guide aims to support potential applicants to the open call for Strategic Projects under the Critical Raw Materials Act. It is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation of any applicable legal sources. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on its behalf can be held responsible for the use made of this guidance document.

This Guide provides the necessary supporting information for any Undertaking interested in applying for the recognition of a raw materials project as Strategic Projects according to the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA).

Section 1 gives useful **background information** for understanding the context of Strategic Projects under the CRMA, providing the list of the Strategic Raw Materials, describing the EU ambition for 2030 in terms of extraction, processing and recycling capacity as well as diversification of external sources, and detailing the assessment criteria for strategic projects: contribution to the security of supply, technical feasibility, sustainability, cross-border benefits and mutual benefits for the EU and third countries. Please consult this section if you want to better understand the context of Strategic Projects under the CRMA.

Section 2 presents the **essential conditions for applications**. Here you can find a list of mandatory information to be included in the application as well as an overview of formal requirements that need to be fulfilled if you want to apply to the open call for Strategic Projects. Please carefully check this section before you start preparing the application.

Section 3 is the most relevant section of this guide. It provides details about the **preparation and submission process for applications**: creating an EU Login, requesting the opening of an EU Send WEB communication channel, preparing an application with the help of the online application form, generating an Application ID and submitting the application via EU Send WEB. This section also includes a reference to the dedicated website where you can find all the relevant information about Strategic Projects under the CRMA.

The preparation of the application using the online form is a crucial step of your application. For this reason, section 4 of this guidance is dedicated to **supporting information for the online application form**. Here you find very detailed instructions about each field of the form. It is essential that you carefully follow the given instructions when preparing your application.

The **assessment procedure** of the applications is the subject of section 5, which provides details about the workflow including the completeness check, the assessment of the complete applications, the consultation of the Critical Raw Materials Board, and the communication of the result. This section also addresses the reporting obligations for projects recognised as Strategic Projects under the CRMA and the process associated with the withdrawal of such recognition by the European Commission.

This guidance finishes with a **glossary** section 6 and the contact information & helpdesk section 7.

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1 Background – Strategic Projects under the European Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA)

1.1 Strategic Raw Materials

The European Union (EU) needs access to a secure, diversified, affordable and sustainable supply of critical raw materials, which are vital for strategic applications in sectors such as the net zero industry, the digital industry, aerospace, and defence. Strategic Projects under are one of the key instruments defined by the new Critical Raw Materials Act that will contribute to this objective. The recognition of a project as a Strategic Project by the EC has several advantages, including streamlined and predictable permitting procedures and support in gaining access to finance.

Strategic Projects under the CRMA are raw material projects that would make a meaningful contribution to the security of the EU's supply of 17 **strategic raw materials** listed in Annex I of the Act:

- a) bauxite/alumina/aluminium
- b) bismuth
- c) boron – metallurgy grade
- d) cobalt
- e) copper
- f) gallium
- g) germanium
- h) lithium – battery grade
- i) magnesium metal
- j) manganese – battery grade
- k) graphite – battery grade
- l) nickel – battery grade
- m) platinum group metals
- n) rare earth elements for permanent magnets (Nd, Pr, Tb, Dy, Gd, Sm, and Ce)
- o) silicon metal
- p) titanium metal
- q) tungsten



1.2 The EU ambitions for 2030

Strategic Projects under the CRMA must contribute to the achievement of benchmarks defined in the Critical Raw Materials Act:

- 1) By 2030, EU capacities for each strategic raw material have significantly increased so that, overall, EU capacity approaches or reaches the following benchmarks:
 - a) **EU extraction capacity** is capable of extracting the ores, minerals or concentrates needed to produce **at least 10% of the EU's annual consumption** of strategic raw materials, to the extent possible in light of the EU's reserves;
 - b) **EU processing capacity**, including for all intermediate processing steps, is capable of producing **at least 40% of the EU's annual consumption** of strategic raw materials;

- c) **EU recycling capacity**, including for all intermediate recycling steps, is capable of producing **at least 25% of the EU's annual consumption** of strategic raw materials and is capable of recycling significantly increasing amounts of each strategic raw material from waste;
- 2) The EU's imports of strategic raw materials have been diversified with a view to ensuring that, by 2030, the EU's annual consumption of each strategic raw material at any relevant stage of processing can rely on **imports from several third countries or from overseas countries or territories (OCTs)** and that **no third country accounts for more than 65 % of the EU's annual consumption** of such a strategic raw material.

1.3 Assessment criteria for Strategic Projects under the CRMA

The following criteria defined in Article 6 of the Critical Raw Materials Act will be taken into account to assess projects submitted to the open call for Strategic Projects:

1) Contribution to the supply security

Would the project make a meaningful contribution to the security of the EU's supply of strategic raw materials?

The European Commission (EC) will assess the fulfilment of this criterion in accordance with the following elements and other evidence included in the application (see section 2.1 below):

For projects in the EU:

- whether the project contributes towards the benchmarks listed in section 1.2 under point 1);
- whether the project contributes to maintaining or strengthening EU capacities as a share of the EU's annual consumption of strategic raw material, taking into account the expected increase in EU consumption;
- whether the project contributes to strengthening EU capacity to produce innovative raw materials able to substitute strategic raw material in one or more strategic technologies, while taking measures to achieve an equal or lower environmental footprint compared to the strategic raw material that is substituted.

For projects in a third country or Oversea Country or Territory (OCT) of the EU:

- whether the project contributes to the benchmarks listed in section 1.2 under point 2) or contributes to maintaining the resilience of the EU's supply of strategic raw materials;
- whether the applicable legal framework or other conditions provide assurance that trade and investment related to the project will not be distorted, taking into account, in particular, whether the EU has concluded a Strategic Partnership¹ or a trade agreement containing a chapter on raw materials with the relevant third country, or OCTs, and is consistent with the EU's common commercial policy;

¹ Currently the EU has concluded a Strategic Partnership or a trade agreement containing a chapter on raw materials with the following third countries or OCT: Argentina, Canada, Chile, Congo (Democratic Republic), Greenland, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Norway, Rwanda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Zambia

- the extent to which there are Undertakings that have or are willing to conclude offtake agreements with the project promoter with a view to using or processing the strategic raw materials produced by the relevant projects in the EU;
- whether the project is in line with the EU's development cooperation and foreign policy objectives.

2) Technical feasibility

Is the project technically feasible, or will it become technically feasible within a reasonable timeframe? Can the expected production volume of the project be estimated with a sufficient level of confidence?

The European Commission (EC) will assess the fulfilment of this criterion in accordance with the following elements and other evidence included in the application (see section 2.1 below):

- the quality of the feasibility studies carried out on the potential of development of the project;
- whether the technology intended to be used has been demonstrated in the relevant environment.

3) Sustainability

Would the project be implemented sustainably, in particular as regards the monitoring, prevention and minimisation of environmental impacts, the prevention and minimisation of socially adverse impacts through the use of socially responsible practices including respect for human rights, indigenous peoples and labour rights, in particular in the case of involuntary resettlement, potential for quality job creation and meaningful engagement with local communities and relevant social partners, and the use of transparent business practices with adequate compliance policies to prevent and minimise risks of adverse impacts on the proper functioning of public administration, including corruption and bribery?

The European Commission (EC) will assess the fulfilment of this criterion in accordance with the following elements and other evidence included in the application (see section 2.1 below):

For projects in the EU:

- an overall assessment of a project's compliance with relevant EU or national law as well as relevant supplementary evidence, taking into account the location of the project.

For projects in a third country or Oversea Country or Territory (OCT) of the EU:

- compliance with the applicable national law where that national law provides sufficient assurance of compliance with the criterion or aspects of it and with the following international instruments:
 - a) ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy;
 - b) OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct, in particular the guidelines related to combatting corruption;

- c) OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas;
- d) OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in the Extractive Sector, including where referring to the principles set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- e) OECD Principles of Corporate Governance;
- f) OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct;
- g) UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
- h) IFC Performance Standard 5 on Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement.

Project promoters may also attest compliance with this criterion by²:

- providing evidence that the project concerned is individually certified by one or more schemes recognised pursuant to Article 30(2) of the CRMA that jointly cover the requirements listed in Annex IV, point (2) of the CRMA; or
- committing to obtain certification for the project concerned as part of by one or more schemes recognised pursuant to Article 30(2) of the CRMA that jointly cover the requirements listed in Annex IV, point (2) of the CRMA, and providing sufficient evidence that when implemented the project concerned will be able to meet the criteria for such certification.

4) Cross-border benefits

For projects in the EU, would the establishment, operation or production of the project have cross-border benefits beyond the Member State concerned, including for downstream sectors?

The European Commission (EC) will assess the fulfilment of this criterion in accordance with the following elements and other evidence included in the application (see section 2.1 below):

- whether undertakings from different Member States participate in the project;
- whether potential offtakers are located also in more than one Member State;
- effects on the availability of strategic raw materials for downstream users in more than one Member State.

5) Mutual benefits for the EU and third countries that are emerging markets or developing economies

For projects in third countries that are emerging markets or developing economies, would the project be mutually beneficial for the EU and the third country concerned by adding value in that third country?

The European Commission (EC) will assess the fulfilment of this criterion in accordance with the following elements and other evidence included in the application (see section 2.1 below):

The extent to which the project contributes, in the relevant third country:

- to strengthening more than one stage of the raw materials value chain in that country or its wider region;

² Please note that at the opening of this call, there are no schemes that have been recognised pursuant to Article 30(2) of the CRMA.

- to fostering private investment in the domestic raw materials value chain;
- to the creation of wider economic or social benefits, including the creation of employment.

2 Essential conditions for applications

2.1 Mandatory information to be included in the application

According to Article 7 of the CRMA, the following information must be included in the application:

- a) relevant evidence related to fulfilment of the assessment criteria listed in section 1.3;
- b) a classification of the project according to the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources, supported by appropriate evidence;
- c) a timetable for the implementation of the project, including an overview of the permits required for the project and the status of the corresponding permit-granting process;
- d) a plan containing measures to facilitate public acceptance including, where appropriate, measures to facilitate the meaningful involvement and active participation of affected communities, the establishment of recurrent communication channels with local communities, organisations, including social partners, and relevant authorities, and the implementation of awareness-raising and information campaigns and potential mitigation and compensation mechanisms;
- e) information about the control of the undertakings involved in the project, as defined in Article 3(2) and (3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004³, and, where multiple undertakings are involved, information outlining the relative involvement of each undertaking in the project;
- f) a business plan evaluating the financial viability of the project;
- g) an estimate of the project's potential for quality job creation and the project's needs in terms of skilled workforce and a work plan to support upskilling and reskilling and promote inclusive representation of the workforce;
- h) for projects in third countries or OCTs involving extraction, a plan to improve the environmental state of the affected sites after the end of exploitation, with a view to restoring the prior environmental state while taking into account technical and economic feasibility;
- i) for projects related exclusively to processing or recycling located in areas protected pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC or Directive 2009/147/EC, a description of the technically appropriate alternative locations assessed by the project promoter and why those alternative locations are not considered to be appropriate locations for the project;
- j) for projects with the potential to affect indigenous peoples, a plan containing measures dedicated to a meaningful consultation of the affected indigenous peoples about the prevention and

³ Article 3(2) and (3) of [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 139/2004](#) of 20 January 2004 on the control of concentrations between undertakings (the EC Merger Regulation) (OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1) reads:

2. Control shall be constituted by rights, contracts or any other means which, either separately or in combination and having regard to the considerations of fact or law involved, confer the possibility of exercising decisive influence on an undertaking, in particular by:

- (a) ownership or the right to use all or part of the assets of an undertaking;
- (b) rights or contracts which confer decisive influence on the composition, voting or decisions of the organs of an undertaking.

3. Control is acquired by persons or undertakings which:

- (a) are holders of the rights or entitled to rights under the contracts concerned; or
- (b) while not being holders of such rights or entitled to rights under such contracts, have the power to exercise the rights deriving therefrom.

minimisation of the adverse impacts on indigenous rights and, where appropriate, fair compensation for those peoples, as well as measures to address the outcomes of the consultation.

Please make sure to include this information in the online application form or as supporting document as explained in sections 3.3 and 4 of this guide.

2.2 Other essential conditions

Applications for recognition as a Strategic Project under the CRMA are submitted by the *project promoter* (defined in this context as any Undertaking or consortium of Undertakings developing a raw material project) to an open call with regular cut-off dates. The first cut-off date of this call will be on [XXX]. Applications submitted later than that date will only be considered for the subsequent cut-off date.

Applications must be:

- prepared using the online application form
- readable, accessible and printable
- if applicable and necessary, supporting documents should be provided (they are indicated on the online application form and in section 3.3 of this guide)
- drafted in English; for supporting documents in other languages, please provide the original document and a translated version, where possible.
- submitted electronically via the EU Send WEB application (details provided below).

After submission, the EC will check the completeness of submitted applications as explained in section 5.1 of this Guide.

Project promoters must confirm in the online application form that their application:

- addresses one or more of the strategic raw materials listed in Annex I of the Critical Raw Materials Act;
- by the year 2030, makes a meaningful contribution to the benchmarks defined in Article 5 of the Critical Raw Materials Act.

Project promoters that do not confirm their compliance with these criteria will not be able to complete the application form.

3 Preparation and submission of applications

All information necessary to prepare an application is available on the dedicated website related to Strategic Projects under CRMA:

https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/raw-materials/areas-specific-interest/critical-raw-materials/strategic-projects_en

To submit an application, four steps should be followed:

- 1) create an EU login account
- 2) request the opening of an EU Send WEB communication channel with the EC
- 3) prepare the application form with the help of the online form template
- 4) submit the application (application form and supporting documents, if applicable and necessary) via EU Send WEB

3.1 Create an EU Login

EU Login is the user authentication system of the EC. It allows authorised users to access a wide range of EC web services, using a single email address and password. Project Promotors can create an EU Login account using the self-registration page <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/login>, then click on the "Create an account" link on the EU Login main page. A full tutorial is available here: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/manuals/EU_Login_Tutorial.pdf

3.2 Request the opening of an EU Send WEB communication channel with the EC

EU Send WEB is a web-based exchange platform that ensures secure transfer of documents between the EC and external stakeholders. It supports message encryption, message integrity using checksum algorithms, 2-factor authentication via EU Login and traceability.

Project Promotors who intend to apply for Strategic Projects are advised to request the opening of an EU Send communication channel with the EC immediately after they created an EU Login, **and not later than 30 days before the cut-off date.**

Such requests should be sent by e-mail to the functional mailbox GROW-CRMA-STRATEGIC-PROJECTS@ec.europa.eu, indicating their EU login identifier. Once the EU Send channel has been opened, the access details will be confirmed by the EC via e-mail.

A full user guide for EU Send WEB with further technical information is available here: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-08/EUSendWeb_UserGuide.pdf. In addition, a video demonstrating its features is available online: <https://youtu.be/KBRKAetPdJY?si=BGfz2rGGPKY8GySw>

3.3 Prepare an application with the help of the online form

An application consists of the **application form** in pdf-format, created with the help of the online form, and supporting documents (if applicable and necessary).

The application form is firstly prepared online accessing the following link: [insert link]

The application form has the following sections:

- Section 1. Project Basic Information
- Section 2. Project Ownership
- Section 3. Strategic Raw Materials (SRM) Information
- Section 4. Project Technical Feasibility
- Section 5. Project Financial Viability
- Section 6. Project Operational/Permitting Status
- Section 7. Security of Supply, Cross-border Benefits, Trade
- Section 8. Project Sustainability
- Section 9. Attestation

Together with the application form, **supporting documents** (if available and necessary) may be provided to complement the information, in the context of some specific sections or fields of the application form. The naming of these supporting documents should **strictly follow** the rules indicated in the related section or field and on the top of the application form:

- **Section 2:** Ownership structure [document name: Application_ID_Ownership_Structure]

- **Section 3:** Resource Estimates (for Extraction projects) [document name: Application_ID_Resource_Estimates]
- **Section 3:** Material inputs (for Processing, Recycling and Substitution Projects) [document name: Application_ID_Material_Inputs]
- **Section 4:** Technical feasibility study [document name: Application_ID_Technical_Feasibility_Study]
- **Section 5:** Business plan [document name: Application_ID_Business_Plan]
- **Section 5:** Due diligence reports [document name: Application_ID_Due_Diligence_Reports]
- **Section 6:** Operational planning [document name: Application_ID_Operational_Planning]
- **Section 8:** Certification scheme [document name: Application_ID_Certification_Scheme]
- **Section 8:** Sustainability [document name: Application_ID_Sustainability]

The Application ID will appear at the bottom of the online form after the attestation box has been checked (see section 3.4).

Further detailed information on all fields of the online application form can be found in section 4.

3.4 Completing the application and Application ID generation

After completing sections 1-8 of the online application form, the project promoter must confirm that to the best of their knowledge and belief, the information given in this form is true, correct, and complete, that true and complete copies of documents required by this form have been supplied, that all estimates are identified as such and are their best estimates of the underlying facts, and that all the opinions expressed are sincere. This confirmation must be signed in section 9 of the application form providing the full name, the signatory e-mail, the date of signature and by checking the box “I Confirm All of The Above”.

Once this attestation box is checked, the Application ID will appear at the bottom of the online form. This Application ID must be used as prefix in the name of all supporting documents that are sent to the EC as part of the application.

The online application form has at its bottom the following functional buttons:

- **Validation Summary:** when clicking, the list of incomplete fields (if any) in the online form is displayed. If the form is complete, this button is not visible.
- **View pdf:** allows the user to create and save locally a pdf-file of the online form. This button is only active in complete forms.
- **Load data:** allows loading in the online form a previously saved copy of the data (by default this file is located in the local folder “Downloads”)
- **Save data:** allows saving a local copy of the current data of the online form in the format of a JavaScript Object Notation file (by default this file is located in the local folder “Downloads”)
- **Discard Changes:** allows the user to discard unsaved changes.

After completing all sections of the form, the following two steps must be carried out:

1. **Save the data** and keep a local copy of it. This copy will help you to recover your data in case you are contacted by the EC during the completeness check.
2. **Create a pdf-file** and save it by clicking on “View PDF”.

3.5 Submit the application via EU Send WEB before the cut-off date

The full application (i.e. the completed main application form as pdf together with the supporting documents) must be submitted to the EC via EU Send WEB **at the latest on the indicated cut-off date**.

All applications received after the cut-off date will only be considered for the subsequent cut-off date.

4 Supporting information for the online application form

In general, all fields of the application form are free text fields, unless specified otherwise.

Fields marked with a red asterisk are mandatory. The pdf-version of the application form cannot be generated without having completed all these fields.

4.1 Section 1: Project basic information

- a) **Project Name:** The name of the project as legally registered.
- b) **Project Type:** Indicate whether it is an extraction, processing t, recycling or substitution project.

The CRMA foresees Strategic Projects in extraction, processing and recycling of strategic raw materials as defined in Annex I as well as for substitute materials. This means that the project must involve planned facilities or planned significant extension or repurposing of existing facilities active in extraction, processing or recycling of the strategic raw materials.

Extraction project means a project involved in the extraction of ores, minerals and plant products from their original source as a main product or as a by-product, including from a mineral occurrence underground, mineral occurrence under and from water, sea brine and trees.

Processing project means a project involved in any physical, chemical and biological processes involved in the transformation of a raw material from ores, minerals, plant products or waste into pure metals, alloys or other economically usable forms, including but not limited to beneficiation, separation, smelting and refining, and excluding metal working and further transformation into intermediate and final goods. Please note that extraction projects that also include beneficiation should be submitted as one extraction project.

Recycling project means a project involved in any recovery operation by which waste materials are reprocessed into products, materials or substances whether for the original or other purposes. It includes the reprocessing of organic material but does not include energy recovery and the reprocessing into materials that are to be used as fuels or for backfilling operations.

Substitution project means a project that is able to produce innovative raw materials able to substitute strategic raw materials in one or more strategic technologies, while taking measures to achieve an equal or lower environmental footprint compared to the strategic raw material that is substituted.

You can only select **one of these project types**. If your project covers more than one stage of the value chain (e.g. both extraction and processing), then please submit them as separate applications to this open call, indicating in the project short summary that your application is connected to another application. In case the main focus of your project is one project type and

only touches upon another stage (for example an extraction project that includes beneficiation on-site), you should submit them as one application.

- c) **Project Development Stage:** scoping stage, pre-feasibility, feasibility, construction, and production.

Please indicate the current stage of development of your project, meaning the latest stage that has not been completed yet.

A **scoping study** is an order of magnitude technical and social-environmental-economic study to evaluate the potential viability of the mineral resource and determine whether a prefeasibility study is justified.

A **prefeasibility study** is a comprehensive study of a range of options for the technical and social-economic-environmental viability of a mineral project that has advanced to a stage where the mining and processing methods are determined. A prefeasibility study is at a lower confidence level than a feasibility study.

A **feasibility study** includes technical and socio-environmental-economic analyses to determine the viability of a mining project based on the appropriate mining and processing methods and financial aspects. The results of the study may reasonably serve as the basis for a final decision by a proponent or financial institution to proceed with, or finance, the development of the project.

The **construction stage** consists of constructing the production facility.

The **production phase** begins once the project is constructed and starts producing e.g. extraction and recovery of a product from mining, processing, or recycling.

- d) **Project Lifetime (in Years):** The project lifetime refers to the estimated period of time over which a mining operation is expected to be economically viable and productive based on the currently defined reserves and resources.
- e) **Estimated Starting Date of Production:** Provide the date you are expecting to start producing.
- f) **Estimated Full Capacity Date:** Provide the date you expect to reach full capacity.
- g) **Project Main Products:** After selecting the “project type” (see above), one of the three green buttons will appear in the form: “Add Product (for Extraction)”, “Add Product (for Processing, Recycling)” or “Add Product (for Substitution). By clicking on these buttons, you can add one or several main products. For extraction, processing and recycling projects this should be a strategic raw material as defined under annex I of the CRMA, even if it is only a byproduct of the process, and the volume for other materials is larger. Other non-strategic raw materials produced should be added under iv.) “Other products”. For substitution projects, please specify the material that is able to substitute a strategic raw material in one or more strategic technologies.
- h) **For extraction projects:**
- i) Please indicate the **strategic raw materials** your project is producing, starting with the main one. Additional relevant non-strategic raw materials can be listed under “Other products” and then filled in in “Other product name”.
 - ii) provide the **chemical form** for your main product.

- iii) Indicate how you measure the purity of the Strategic Raw Material within this main product. You can give this information in percentage or as ppm.
 - iv) The foreseen yearly production describes the average annual amount of ore, minerals or concentrates extracted once the facility is fully operating.
- i) For processing and recycling projects:**
- i) Please indicate the **strategic raw materials** your project is producing, starting with the main one. Additional relevant non-strategic raw materials can be listed under “Other products” and then filled in in “Other product name”.
 - ii) **Material input (in tonnes):** Indicate the input of materials used directly to produce the strategic raw material in tonnes. This is the raw material that will be transformed from ores, minerals, plant products or waste into pure metals.
 - iii) The **yearly production** describes the average annual amount of this main product obtained once the facility is fully operating.
 - iv) Strategic Raw Material content of this main product in percent.
- j) For substitution projects**
- i) Indicate the name of the material your project is going to produce.
 - ii) Indicate the Strategic Raw Material your project is going to substitute.
 - iii) Indicate the yearly production of the new material in tonnes once the facility is fully operating.
 - iv) Indicate the amount of the Strategic Raw Material you indicated above to be substituted annually once the facility is fully operating.
- k) Project Short Summary:** Provide a short general description of your project. More details regarding specific aspects can be provided below in this template. For **substitution projects**, also provide information on the type of substitution and quality of the substitute and whether it relies on another Strategic Raw Material.
- l) Describe the relevance of the project for the EU including position of the project in the value chain:** Describe how your project is strategically important for the EU. This could, for example, include the contribution to the EU’s 2030 benchmarks as defined in section 1.2 of this document or to off-takers that you are serving in the European market.
- m) Describe how this recognition would be beneficial for the project development:** Describe the main advantages of obtaining the Strategic Project status for your project. For example, this could be a faster permitting procedure, easier access to funding or attention.
- n) Main Project Promoter Details:**
- The project promoter is the undertaking or consortium of undertakings developing the Strategic Raw Materials project. It is the registered company or individual overseeing the project. An undertaking can be any entity engaged in an economic activity, regardless of its legal status and the way it is financed. An undertaking is an economic unit which may consist of several natural or legal persons.
- i) **Undertaking’s name:** Provide the name of the project promoter.
 - ii) **Undertaking’s Country:** Choose the country where the headquarter of the main project promoter is located. *(drop down list)*

- iii) **Address:** Indicate the address of the headquarter of the main project promoter.
- iv) **Undertaking's Stock Symbol:** Also known as a ticker symbol, this field represents the unique series of characters assigned to a publicly traded company's stock or security, that allows to identify a company's shares on the stock market.
- v) **EU-Participant Identification Code:** A Participant Identification Code (PIC) is a 9-digit number that serves as a unique identifier for legal entities participating in European funding programmes. You can check on the Participant Register (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register>) whether your organisation is already registered. If not, you can register your entity in the Participant Register and get a PIC number. Registration only takes a few minutes.
- vi) **Undertaking's Website:** Provide the website of the project promoter in the format <https://XXX.XX>
- vii) **Relative ownership share:** Provide the relative ownership share (in %) of the project promoter in the project.
- viii) Describe the project promoter's **roles and rights** within the project.
- ix) Provide information that allows to determine **who controls the project promoter**. In this context, control means rights, contracts or other means that give the holder of them the possibility of exercising decisive influence on an undertaking. This can be the right to use all or part of an undertaking's assets; as well as rights or contracts which allow decisive influence on the composition, voting or decisions of the organs of an undertaking. Where possible, this should also include basic information on the ultimate owner of the undertaking.
- o) **Project Contact Person:** Provide the contact information for the person responsible for this application. Any communication from the EC will be conducted via this contact person. Include the full name, the position in the undertaking as well as an email address that will be checked regularly.
- p) Add the different locations of the project by clicking in the green button **" + Add Location "**. Indicate for each location of the Project:
 - i) The **Country** it is located in (*drop down list*)
 - ii) More information on the **Location**, for example a clearly identifiable postal address.
- q) The **Geographical coordinates** in latitude and longitude: Provide them in the European Terrestrial Reference System 1989 (ETRS89 system).
- r) The **United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC)**⁴ is a resource project-based and principles-based classification system for defining the environmental-socio-economic

⁴ Sources

[UNFC2019](#)

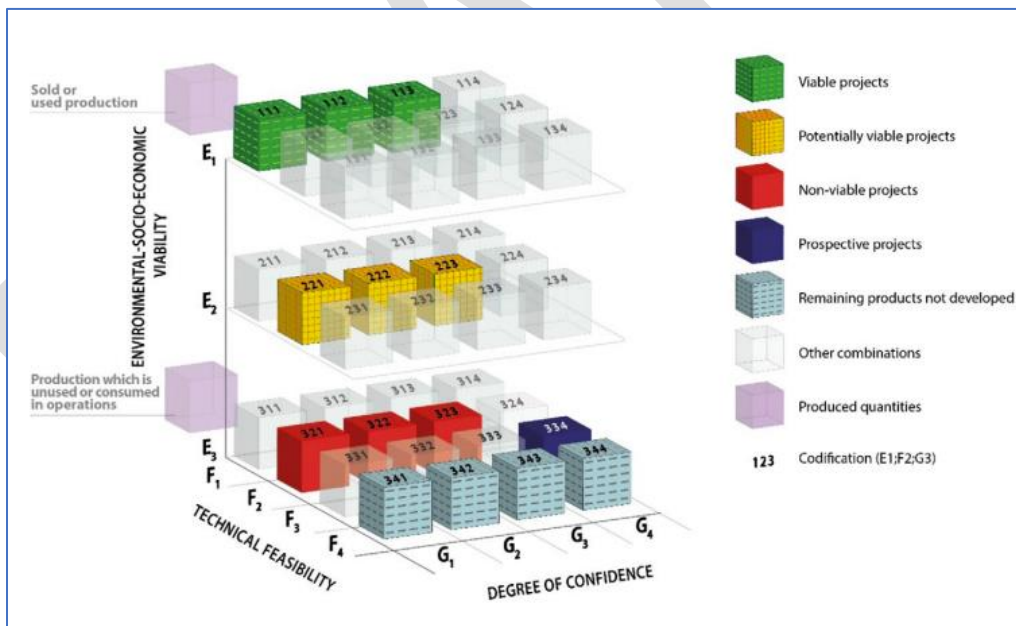
[Supplementary Specifications for the Application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources to Minerals](#) 2021

[Specifications for the application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources to Anthropogenic Resources](#), 2018

viability and technical feasibility of projects to develop resources. The products of a resource project are classified on the basis of the three fundamental criteria of environmental-socio-economic viability (E), technical feasibility (F), and degree of confidence in the estimate (G), using a numerical coding system. Combinations of these criteria create a three-dimensional system (Figure 1).

- i) E axis: Environmental-Socio-Economic Viability. The E axis designates the degree of favourability of environmental-socio-economic conditions in establishing the viability of the project, including consideration of market prices and relevant legal, regulatory, social, environmental and contractual conditions.
- ii) F axis: Technical Feasibility. The F axis designates the maturity of technology, studies and commitments necessary to implement the project. These projects range from early conceptual studies through to a fully developed project that is producing and reflect standard value chain management principles.
- iii) G axis: Degree of Confidence. The G axis designates the degree of confidence in the estimate of the quantities of products from the project.

Figure 1: UNFC Categories and Examples of Classes



The Categories and Sub-categories are the building blocks of the system, and are combined in the form of “Classes”. A Class is uniquely defined by selecting from each of the three criteria a particular combination of a Category or a Sub-category (or groups of Categories/Sub-categories) (Figure 2). Since the codes are

[Bridging Document between the Committee for Mineral Reserves International Reporting Standards Template and the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources 2024](#)

[UNFC GUIDANCE EUROPE - Guidance for the Application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources \(UNFC\) for Mineral and Anthropogenic Resources in Europe 2022](#)

always quoted in the same sequence (i.e. E; F; G), the letters may be dropped and just the numbers retained.

Figure 2: UNFC Classes and Sub-classes defined by Sub-categories

UNFC Classes Defined by Categories and Sub-categories						
Total Products	Produced	Sold or used production				
		Production which is unused or consumed in operations				
	Class	Sub-class	Categories			
			E	F	G	
	Known Sources	Viable Projects	On Production	1	1.1	1, 2, 3
			Approved for Development	1	1.2	1, 2, 3
			Justified for Development	1	1.3	1, 2, 3
		Potentially Viable Projects	Development Pending	2	2.1	1, 2, 3
			Development On Hold	2	2.2	1, 2, 3
		Non-Viable Projects	Development Unclassified	3.2	2.2	1, 2, 3
Development Not Viable			3.3	2.3	1, 2, 3	
Remaining products not developed from identified projects		3.3	4	1, 2, 3		
Potential Sources	Prospective Projects	[No sub-classes defined]	3.2	3	4	
	Remaining products not developed from prospective projects		3.3	4	4	

In terms of resource projects, UNFC is applicable to primary and secondary raw materials. Primary raw materials pertain to minerals projects (e.g., mining project) and Secondary raw materials to anthropogenic resources projects (e.g., recycling project). Supplementary specifications for the application of UNFC to Minerals and Anthropogenic Resources specify the use of UNFC to classify minerals projects and recovery projects of anthropogenic resources, respectively. The table below provide definitions of UNFC Categories in the context of Minerals and Anthropogenic Resources, with supporting explanation (Table 1).

Table 1: Definitions of UNFC Axes Categories for Minerals and Anthropogenic Resources

Category	Minerals Specifications		Anthropogenic Resources Specifications	
	Definition	Supporting Explanation	Definition	Supporting Explanation
E1	Development and operation are confirmed to be environmentally-socially- economically viable.	Development and operation (prospecting, exploration, mine production, processing, sales-access to market, rehabilitation) are environmentally-socially-economically viable on the basis of current conditions and realistic assumptions of future conditions. All necessary conditions have been met (including relevant permitting and contracts) or there are reasonable expectations that all necessary conditions will be met within a reasonable timeframe and there are no impediments to the delivery of the product to the user or market. Environmental-socio-economic viability is not affected by short-term adverse conditions provided that longer-term forecasts remain positive.	Recovery and sale has been confirmed to be economically viable.	Recovery and sale is economic on the basis of current market conditions and realistic assumptions of future market conditions. All necessary approvals/ contracts have been confirmed, or there are reasonable expectations that all such approvals/contracts will be obtained within a reasonable timeframe. Economic viability is not affected by short-term adverse market conditions provided that longer-term forecasts remain positive.
E2	Development and operation are expected to become environmentally-socially-economically viable in the foreseeable future.	Development and operation (prospection, exploration, mine production, processing, sales-access to market, rehabilitation) are not yet confirmed to be environmentally-socially-economically viable but, on the basis of realistic assumptions of future conditions, there are reasonable prospects for environmental-socioeconomic viability in the foreseeable future.	Recovery and sale is expected to become economically viable in the foreseeable future.	Recovery and sale has not yet been confirmed to be economic but, on the basis of realistic assumptions of future market conditions, there are reasonable prospects for economic recovery and sale in the foreseeable future.
E3	Development and operation are not expected to become environmentally-socially-economically viable in the foreseeable future or evaluation is at too early a stage to determine environmental-socioeconomic viability.	On the basis of realistic assumptions of future conditions, it is currently considered that there are not reasonable prospects for environmental-socio-economic viability of mining in the foreseeable future; or, environmental-socio-economic viability cannot yet be determined due to insufficient information (e.g. during prospecting and exploration). Also included are estimates associated with projects that are forecast to be developed, but which will be unused or consumed in operations (sub-economic ore, waste).	Recovery and sale is not expected to become economically viable in the foreseeable future or evaluation is at too early a stage to determine economic viability.	On the basis of realistic assumptions of future market conditions, it is currently considered that there are not reasonable prospects for economic recovery and sale in the foreseeable future; or, economic viability of recovery cannot yet be determined due to insufficient information (e.g. during the assessment phase). Also included are quantities that are forecast to be converted, but which will not be available for sale.

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Category	Minerals Specifications		Anthropogenic Resources Specifications	
	Definition	Supporting Explanation	Definition	Supporting Explanation
F1	Technical feasibility of a development project has been confirmed.	Development or operation is currently taking place or, sufficiently detailed studies have been completed to demonstrate the technical feasibility of development and operation. A commitment to develop should have been or will be forthcoming from all parties associated with the project, including governments.	Feasibility of recovery by a defined development project or mining operation has been confirmed.	Recovery is currently taking place; or, implementation of the development project is underway; or, sufficiently detailed studies have been completed to demonstrate the feasibility of recovery by implementing a development project or mining operation.
F2	Technical feasibility of a development project is subject to further evaluation.	Preliminary studies of a defined project provide sufficient evidence of the potential for the development and that further study is warranted. Further data acquisition and/or studies maybe required to confirm the feasibility of development.	Feasibility of recovery by a defined development project or mining operation is subject to further evaluation.	Preliminary studies demonstrate the existence of a project in such form, quality and quantity that the feasibility of recovery by a defined (at least in broad terms) development project or mining operation can be evaluated. Further data acquisition and/or studies may be required to confirm the feasibility of recovery.
F3	Technical feasibility of a development project cannot be evaluated due to limited data.	Very preliminary studies of a project indicate the need for further data acquisition or study in order to evaluate the potential feasibility or development. Additional exploration and investigation are required to confirm or to assess the technical feasibility of the project.	Feasibility of recovery by a defined development project or mining operation cannot be evaluated due to limited technical data	Very preliminary studies (e.g. during the assessment phase), which may be based on a defined (at least in conceptual terms) development project or mining operation, indicate the need for further data acquisition in order to confirm the existence of a project in such form, quality and quantity that the feasibility of production can be evaluated
F4	No development project or mining operation has been identified.	Remaining quantities of product not developed by any project (not recoverable ore, at least not with available technology, too deep, groundwater issues etc.).	No development project or mining operation has been identified.	In situ (in-place) quantities that will not be produced by any current development project or mining operation.

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Category	Minerals Specifications		Anthropogenic Resources Specifications	
	Definition	Supporting Explanation	Definition	Supporting Explanation
G1	Product quantity associated with a project that can be estimated with a high level of confidence.	Product quantity estimates may be categorised discretely as G1, G2 and/or G3 (along with the appropriate E and F Categories), based on the degree of confidence in the estimates (high, moderate and low confidence, respectively) based on direct evidence. Alternatively, product quantity estimates may be categorized as a range of uncertainty as reflected by either (i) three specific deterministic scenarios (low, best and high cases) or (ii) a probabilistic analysis from which three outcomes (P90, P50 and P10) are selected. In both methodologies (the “scenario” and “probabilistic” approaches), estimates are then classified on the G Axis as G1, G1+G2 and G1+G2+G3 respectively. In all cases, the product quantity estimates are those associated with a project. The G-axis Categories are intended to reflect all significant uncertainties (e.g. source uncertainty, geologic uncertainty, facility efficiency uncertainty, etc.) impacting the estimate forecast for the project. Uncertainties include variability, intermittency and the efficiency of the development and operation (where relevant). Typically, the various uncertainties will combine to provide a full range of outcomes. In such cases, categorization should reflect three scenarios or outcomes that are equivalent to G1, G1+G2 and G1+G2+G3. Additional Comments: The G axis in minerals and mining conditions primarily reflect geologic uncertainty impacting the estimate forecast for the project. Uncertainties include availability and resolution of direct data such as drill hole density in relation to the mineralisation and or deposit type. In addition, indirect data such as geophysical data might be included, which should be measured against redundancy of methods (e.g. geophysical measurements calibrated against drill core evaluation, drill hole logs. Calibrated methods provide higher certainty than uncalibrated methods.) The accuracy of measurements controls the level of the category (lab assay, rock mechanics, mineralogical phase assessment).	Quantities associated with a known deposit that can be estimated with a high level of confidence.	For in situ (in-place) quantities, and for recoverable estimates of Fossil Energy and Mineral Resources that are extracted as solids, quantities are typically categorized discretely, where each discrete estimate reflects the level of geological knowledge and confidence associated with a specific part of the deposit. The estimates are categorized as G1, G2 and/or G3 as appropriate. For recoverable estimates of Fossil Energy and Mineral Resources that are extracted as fluids, their mobile nature generally precludes assigning recoverable quantities to discrete parts of an accumulation. Recoverable quantities should be evaluated on the basis of the impact of the development scheme on the accumulation as a whole and are usually categorized on the basis of three scenarios or outcomes that are equivalent to G1, G1+G2 and G1+G2+G3. <i>Additional Anthropogenic Material Context:</i> The G Axis reflects the level of confidence in the potential retrievability of the quantities. Thus, the G axis categories are intended to reflect all significant uncertainties impacting the estimated Anthropogenic Material quantities and typically would include (but not be limited to) areas such as characterization of Anthropogenic Materials and analysis of Anthropogenic Material Systems. Uncertainties include both variability in the Anthropogenic Material Source (e.g. composition, quantity) and the efficiency of the sourcing process (re-use, preparation for reuse, recycling and recovery). Typically, the various uncertainties will combine to provide a full range of possible outcomes. In such cases, categorization should reflect three scenarios or outcomes that are equivalent to G1, G1+G2 and G1+G2+G3.
G2	Product quantity associated with a project that can be estimated with a moderate level of confidence.		Quantities associated with a known deposit that can be estimated with a moderate level of confidence	
G3	Product quantity associated with a project that can be estimated with a low level of confidence.		Quantities associated with a known deposit that can be estimated with a low level of confidence.	
G4	Product quantity associated with a Prospective Project, estimated or postulated primarily on indirect evidence	A Prospective Project is one where the existence of a developable product is based primarily on indirect evidence and has not yet been confirmed. Further data acquisition and evaluation would be required for confirmation. Where a single estimate is provided, it should be the expected outcome but, where possible, a full range of uncertainty should be calculated for the prospective project. Based on the lack of direct evidence, an estimation of qualities and quantities is not suitable and/or potentially misleading in mineral exploration. In addition, it is recommended that the chance of success (probability) that the prospective project will progress to a Viable Project is assessed and documented	Estimated quantities associated with a potential deposit, based primarily on indirect evidence.	Quantities that are estimated during the exploration phase are subject to a substantial range of uncertainty as well as a major risk that no development project or mining operation may subsequently be implemented to extract the estimated quantities. Where a single estimate is provided, it should be the expected outcome but, where possible, a full range of uncertainty in the size of the potential deposit should be documented (e.g. in the form of a probability distribution). In addition, it is recommended that the chance (probability) that the potential deposit will become a deposit of any commercial significance is also documented. <i>Additional Anthropogenic Material Context:</i> Category G4 is equally applicable to Anthropogenic Material quantities and defined with “Estimated quantities associated with a potential Anthropogenic Material Source, based primarily on indirect evidence” (e.g. exploration studies on the quantities in a territory). It might be helpful to introduce sub-categories (G4.1, G4.2, and G4.3).

The purpose of a Bridging Document is to explain “the relationship between the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) and another classification system, including instructions on how to classify estimates generated by the application of that system using the UNFC Numerical Codes” (UNECE, 2019).

The CRIRSCO-UNFC Bridging Document outlines the relationship between estimates reported in compliance with reporting codes and standards based on the CRIRSCO Template and estimates classified using UNFC. The use of UNFC and CRIRSCO Template aligned systems to classify and report on mineral projects, respectively, with the application of each system being dependent on the objectives of the project evaluation and related reporting requirements.

Table 2: Standard mapping of CRIRSCO Template aligned estimates to UNFC Categories

<i>CRIRSCO Template</i>			<i>Corresponding UNFC Category^f</i>			<i>UNFC Class</i>	
<i>Public Report and Study Types^a</i>	<i>Standard Definitions</i>						
Feasibility Study or Life of Mine Plan ^b (for an operating mine)	Mineral Reserves	Proved	E1	F1	G1	Viable Projects	
		Probable			G2		
Pre-feasibility Study ^d	Mineral Reserves	Proved	E2	F2	G1	Potentially Viable Projects	
		Probable			G2		
Feasibility Study, Life of Mine Plan ^b (for an operating mine) or Pre-feasibility Study ^e	Mineral Resources (exclusive of Mineral Reserves)	Measured	E2	F2	G1		
		Indicated			G2		
		Inferred			G3		
Scoping Study report or other Public Report on a Mineral Resource estimate ^f	Mineral Resources	Measured	E2	F2	G1		
		Indicated			G2		
		Inferred			G3		
Public Report on exploration stage projects	Exploration Target		E3	F3	G4		Prospective Projects
	Exploration Results		Estimates not published				
Not applicable ^g	Estimates obtained from historical reports ^h					Non-viable Projects	

^a The use of a Life of Mine Plan on operating mines, as indicated below, only applies in cases where no material changes to the current operation are envisaged.

^b In cases where a Life of Mine Plan includes a proportion of Inferred Mineral Resources, and such material has been reported separately, then such material should be coded as E2F2G3.

^c These are the Categories which would normally be used for a study when the mapping is based on a current (or recently published) study. Where there have been material changes since the effective date of a report, or the study is otherwise no longer considered current, the assumptions used in the study should be reviewed in order to determine whether the results obtained are still valid and whether the E and F axis values need to be altered. For instance, where an operating mine has ceased operation, where mining licences have expired or been revoked, or where there have been material changes in costs of prices the mapping of Mineral Reserves from a feasibility study or Life of Mine Plan would be downrated from E1 to E2 and from F1 to F2.

^d Estimates included in a Life of Mine Plan which is potentially viable under current conditions.

^e Estimates of material not included in the Life of Mine Plan which could be economically extracted using reasonably assumed future conditions.

^f Estimates which are considered to have ‘reasonable prospects for eventual economic extraction’ under reasonably assumed future conditions.

^g CRIRSCO Template aligned reporting does not allow the Public Reporting of estimates on non-economic mineralisation.

^h Historical estimates will generally be downrated to E3 and F3, with the original G Categories being retained.

4.2 Section 2: Project ownership

The ownership information required by the Critical Raw Materials Act consists of two steps:

- 1) In the first step, you need to describe the **general ownership structure of the project itself**. You should give information regarding the project operator, the ownership type (state-owned, private company, joint venture, etc.) and provide information on the undertakings and persons involved in the project and how they are linked to the project. You can illustrate the structure with a diagram you can add to your application you will send via EU Send WEB (you cannot add it in the online form).
- 2) In a second step, you should provide additional information on **all relevant undertakings and persons involved in the project** (for the project promoter such information was already provided in section 1). This should include all relevant shareholders with a significant ownership share as well as owners of critical technology for the project. You can do so by adding a section for each of them by clicking on the green button “add undertaking” or “add person”, respectively. For **each natural person**, add their full legal name, their main country of residence and a valid address. Also add the relative ownership of the natural person in the project.
 - i. Describe more details on the roles and rights of the undertaking involved in the project.

For **each undertaking**, add its name, the country it is located in, a valid address, the undertaking’s stock symbol, where available, the PIC code, a website and the relative ownership share.

- i. **Undertaking’s stock symbol**: Also known as a ticker symbol, this field represents the unique series of characters assigned to a publicly traded company’s stock or security, that allows to identify a company’s shares on the stock market.
- ii. Undertaking’s **website**: Provide the website of the undertaking in the format <https://XXX.XX>
- iii. A **Participant Identification Code (PIC)** is a 9-digit number that serves as a unique identifier for legal entities participating in European funding programmes. You can check on the Participant Register (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register>) (whether your organisation is already registered). If not, you can register your entity in the Participant Register and get a PIC number. Registration only takes a few minutes.
- iv. Provide information that allows to determine who controls the undertaking involved. In this context, control means anything that gives the holder the possibility of exercising decisive influence on an undertaking. This can be the right to use all or part of an undertaking’s assets; as well as rights or contracts which allow decisive influence on the composition, voting or decisions of the organs of an undertaking. This should also include basic information on the ultimate owner of the undertaking, where possible.

4.3 Section 3: Strategic Raw Materials information

The online form automatically inserts the values you have provided in section 1 for the Strategic Raw Materials produced. You can change them in section 1.

- a. For **extraction projects**, describe the assessment methods, used classification of resources and the level of confidence in the resource. Describe also other co-products if relevant. Also provide any available third-party documentation about resource estimates.
- b. For **processing or recycling projects**, describe the material inputs, their origin and assessment methods. This is the raw material that will be transformed from ores, minerals, plant products or waste.
- c. For **substitution projects**, describe the innovation potential of the project.

4.4 Section 4: Project technical feasibility

- a. **Summary of technical feasibility:** This should include the technology readiness level of the project foreseen processes and the possible risks related to the method and technology as well as proposed mitigation measures. If relevant, include the status of intellectual property rights related to the technology used. This should involve a summary of the environments in which the technology has already been applied and an assessment how similar they are to the one in which your project intends to apply them. For **extraction projects**, the description should include the spatial dimension of the ore body, grades, ore minerals, potential for ore body extension beyond the currently defined.
- b. **Risks related to access to necessary technology:** This should include a summary about the necessary technology and ownership of intellectual property for crucial parts, as well as risks related to its access. Risks could include export restrictions from the country where the technology is owned.
- c. Cover the **infrastructure needs** of the project, building on relevant information and referring to the feasibility study or similar if available. Also describe what needs be done from your side as well as by other to bridge those infrastructure needs. They could, for example, include electricity and water access as well as access to roads, railways or a harbour.
- d. One of the conditions for designating the status of Strategic Project is that the expected **production volume** of the project can be **estimated with a sufficient level of confidence**. Please provide evidence on the level of confidence in delivering the expected project outputs within its operational environment.
- e. In case you have **available studies on project's technical feasibility**, provide them. Annex III of the CRMA specifies that these feasibility studies shall be designed to assess whether a proposed project is likely to be successful by analysing technological and environmental considerations, and to identify potential technical issues and problems that could arise while pursuing the project. Note that the information provided in the previous sections will be used to assess and the provided study only as supporting evidence. Please also refer to these studies in your descriptions

4.5 Section 5: Project financial viability

- a. The **business plan** provided (mandatory part of the application, see Art. 7(1)f of the CRM) will be used as supporting evidence providing more details for the information filled in other fields in this section. Feel free to **refer to the business plan in these fields**. The business plan should also include an executive summary highlighting the most relevant points.

- b. Summarise the **project value proposition** (why should a customer choose your product), including the company strategy with specific regard to the project, approach to commercialisation, market analysis including target markets, key customers, and main competitors.
- c. **Project’s financing**: The summary should include a description of type, sources and use of funds already secured or envisaged (e.g. amount and source of equity financing, guarantees and loans), expected public subsidies and their source. List any potential financing gaps and propose your intended actions.
- d. **Key risks related to the business plan**: Every project faces risks of financial nature. Describe those you deem as the most relevant for the success of your project, including their nature and how they could impact the financial viability of the project. Also provide and describe mitigation measures
- e. **Financial due diligence** reports produced by independent parties can be used to support the information given in this section, so provide them if available. If not available, try to substantiate your information given by other means.
- f. The CRMA establishes a dedicated **subgroup under the CRM Board for financing of Strategic Projects**. This group brings together representatives of national promotional banks and institutions, export credit agencies, the European development financial institutions, the European Investment Bank Group, other international financial institutions including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and, as appropriate, private financial institutions shall be invited as observers. This provides a good opportunity for project promoters to have the financing needs of their project discussed by experts and equally to promote their projects within the financial community.

4.6 Section 6: Project operational/permitting status

- a. Summarise the operational planning for the development of the project (mandatory timetable, see Art. 7(1)c of the CRM Act) and the key milestones including construction and roll out.
- b. Provide an overview of the relevant permits required for the project, including for each of them a short description, their timeline, including the acquisition/application date and their current status (also specify if acquired, applied, to be applied). By clicking on the green button “Add Permit” you can add a new permit to provide information for.
- c. Provide a description of the **project’s operational risks and the proposed risk mitigation** measures. Include all known risks associated with construction, project design, operation and decommissioning, relevant to the project technology, category and sector. Explain how risks (including timing, weather conditions, commissioning conditions, unexpected or undesired events) are taken into account in the project planning and strategy and the proposed mitigation measures.

4.7 Section 7: Security of supply, cross-border benefits, trade

- a. **Summarise the strategy for sourcing Strategic Raw Materials and securing the off-takers for the produced SRM**. To assess the contribution to European supply security for projects involved in processing, recycling, and where applicable, substitution, it is important to also take into account the sourcing strategy regarding key raw material inputs. This again refers to the raw material that will be transformed from ores, minerals, plant products or waste.

Also provide information on potential risks in the sourcing and how flexible your project could react to changing supply situations. Please also include information about crucial inputs needed for the processing (e.g. acids, gases for controlled atmospheres, etc).

For the assessment of the fulfilment of the security of supply criterion for a project, it is important to show that a significant share of the produced material would end up on the European market. An important way to provide such evidence is with off-take agreements with European downstream producers. Off-take agreements can also help project promoters to become more resilient against fluctuating prices and provide a positive signal to prospective investors.

- b. Provide **basic information on the raw materials suppliers**, as defined above. This should include their ownership and the location of their headquarter as well as information on the level of commitments (memorandum of understanding, option for one side, commitment to deliver and receive for both, etc.), the amounts involved and the time period covered.
- c. Provide **basic information on (expected) off-takers**, as defined above. This should include their ownership and the location of their headquarter as well as information on the level of commitments (memorandum of understanding, option for one side, commitment to deliver and receive for both, etc.), the amounts involved and the time period covered.
- d. With the **off-take mechanisms in the CRMA** (art. 17), the EC supports Strategic Projects to find off-takers for their produced Strategic Raw Materials by setting up of a system that enables both interested off-takers and promoters of Strategic Projects to indicate their buying or selling bids and to bring them in contact if the respective bids are potentially compatible. This can help to reduce uncertainty over future prices for strategic raw materials and thereby limit decrease the risk of the project for the promoter and financiers. Your answer is fully indicative and will only be taken as an expression of interest.
- e. Would you be interested in participating in the **demand aggregation and matchmaking (joint purchasing) mechanism** for Strategic Raw Materials under the CRM Act (art. 25)? The mechanism will collect the bids of interested undertakings in the EU to purchase certain Strategic Raw Materials, selected by the EC after an assessment of impacts, and aggregate them. Then it will collect bids from interested sellers globally and match both sides. Transactions happen outside of the mechanism. As Strategic Projects you can indicate your interest to sell Strategic Raw Materials via this mechanism. Your answer is fully indicative and will only be taken as an expression of interest.
- f. For projects in the EU, the **cross-border benefit** beyond the EU country where it is located is an important criterion for the assessment of an application for a Strategic. Such benefits could include companies from a different Member States participating in the project, potential off-takers located in more than one Member State or positive effects on the availability of strategic raw materials for downstream users in more than one Member State.
- g. For projects in third countries or Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) it is important to demonstrate how the project brings added value for the EU. Such benefits could be EU companies participating in the project, potential off-takers located in EU or positive effects on the availability of strategic raw materials for downstream users in the EU. For projects in third countries or Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) that are

emerging markets or developing economies, it is also important to demonstrate the added value at local level. Such benefits could include strengthening more than one stage of the raw materials value chain in that country or its wider region, promoting private investment in the domestic raw materials value chain, or creating of wider economic or social benefits, including the creation of employment.

- h. **For projects in third countries or OCTs** identify any potential bottlenecks you may encounter regarding trade and investment conditions, particularly focusing on the political and economic environment in the country you are located.

4.8 Section 8: Project sustainability

4.8.1 General structure of section

Certification by an international certification scheme in itself is not sufficient to show compliance with the sustainability criteria in art. 6.1c) CRMA. However, they can be used as supporting evidence to the information provided in the application form. You can refer to such certification schemes in your descriptions below. If yes, provide the relevant documentation.

The sustainability section of this template is divided in three parts. The first one deals with the environmental impacts, the second one with social impacts and the last one with governance impacts. In each section different aspects of sustainability have to be covered. The approach to show compliance is the same for all sections.

- a) For **projects in the EU**, you can show compliance by proceeding as follows:
Describe in a first step very briefly the obligations under national and EU law covering these aspects and in a second step how you have addressed or intend to address these issues in your project. If applicable, indicate where you are going or intend to go beyond these legal obligations. Where useful, you may refer to received permits, ongoing permitting applications or the summary of an environmental impact assessment report, as asked for below, as well to certification schemes you are referring to.
- b) For **projects in third countries or OCTs**, there are different ways to show compliance with the sustainability criterion.
 - i) If the applicable legal framework of the country and region your project is located in provides sufficient assurance that the required sustainability criteria are complied with and sufficient evidence is provided, you can proceed similar to the case for EU projects.
In this case, describe in a first step very briefly the applicable legal obligations for your location covering these aspects and in a second step how you have addressed or intend to address these issues in your project. If applicable, indicate where you are going or intend to go beyond these legal obligations.
Where useful, you may refer to received permits, ongoing permitting applications or the summary of an environmental impact assessment report, as asked for below, as well to certification schemes you are referring to.
 - ii) Another way to show compliance with the sustainability criteria is by pointing to the relevant international instruments listed in Annex III (5) of the CRMA and below. To do so, describe

how the instruments address the specific point of the criterion and then how you implement what is asked from the instrument.

- (1) ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
 - (2) OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct, in particular the guidelines related to combatting corruption
 - (3) OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas
 - (4) OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in the Extractive Sector, including where referring to the principles set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - (5) OECD Principles of Corporate Governance
 - (6) OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct
 - (7) UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
 - (8) IFC Performance Standard 5 on Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement
- iii) You can also use a mix of the first two approaches and for some aspects of sustainability refer to the legal framework and for others to the international instruments. In this case, please indicate clearly which approach you choose for which aspects.

4.8.2 Environmental impact

The description how the monitoring, prevention and minimisation of environmental impacts is carried out must cover at least the following categories:

- air, including air pollution such as greenhouse gas emissions
- water, including seabed and marine environment, and water pollution, water use, water quantities (flooding or droughts) and access to water;
- soil, including soil pollution, soil erosion, land use and land degradation
- biodiversity, including damage to habitats, wildlife, flora and ecosystems, including ecosystem services;
- hazardous substances;
- noise and vibration;
- plant safety;
- energy use;
- waste and residues

To support the information provided above, please provide a summary document of an Environmental Impact Assessment report, a SEIA report or a similar environmental impact assessment report as additional document, if available

If the project covers extraction and is located in third countries or OCTs, your summary also has to include a plan to improve the environmental state of the affected sites after the end of exploitation, with a view to restoring the prior environmental state while taking into account technical and economic feasibility. Including such a plan is an obligation under article 7 (1) i.) of the CRM Act.

If the project covers processing or recycling and is located in areas protected under the Birds or Habitats Directives (only in the EU), your summary also has to include a description of the technically appropriate alternative locations, assessed by the project promoter, and why those alternative locations are not

considered appropriate for the location of the project. Including such a description is an obligation under article 7 (1) j.) of the CRM Act.

4.8.3 Social impact

The description has to include respect for human rights, indigenous peoples' rights, in particular in the case of involuntary resettlement, and labour rights. Also please refer to examples of stakeholder engagement, local support for the project and the level of public awareness of the project's existence.

- i) **If the project has the potential to affect indigenous peoples**, your summary has to include a plan containing measures dedicated to a meaningful consultation of the affected indigenous peoples about the prevention and minimisation of the adverse impacts on indigenous rights and, where appropriate, fair compensation for those peoples as well as measures to address the outcomes of the consultation. If those concepts are addressed by the national law applicable to the project, the plan could instead describe such measures. Providing this plan is a requirement according to Art. 7(1)j of the CRMA.
- ii) Describe how meaningful engagement with local/affected communities and relevant social partners is carried out. List all concrete measures and their status to facilitate public acceptance in a plan. Providing this plan is a requirement according to Art. 7(1)d of the CRMA.
- iii) Provide a summary of potential quality jobs that will be created by the project (directly and indirectly). Describe how you would support the upskilling and/or reskilling. These are requirements according to Art. 7(1)g of the CRMA.

4.8.4 Good Governance

The description has to include how transparent business practices with adequate compliance policies are used in your project to prevent and minimise adverse impacts on the functioning of public administration including anti-bribery and anti-corruption measures.

5 The assessment procedure

5.1 Completeness check

Following the submission of an application via EU Send WEB, the EC will start checking its completeness.

For an application to be considered complete, it must comply with the essential conditions listed in section 2. Project promoters will be informed within 30 days of the applicable cut-off date via EU Send WEB, if the EC considers the information provided in the application to be complete.

If the application is incomplete, the EC may



request the applicant to submit the additional information necessary to complete the application without undue delay, specifying which additional information is required. The EC will reject those applications whose project promoters fail to comply with these requests.

After the completeness check, the EC will notify the project promoter that their application is complete and transmit the complete application to the EU Member State, third country or OCT whose territory is concerned by the proposed project.

5.2 Assessment of the complete applications

The EC will assess all complete applications with the help of experts who will be selected from the EC's [expert database](#), established following an [open call for expression of interest](#). All experts who assist with the assessment of Strategic Projects, will be required to sign a contract with the EC, which includes provisions on the confidentiality of all shared data, documents or other material (in any form).

Before starting the assessment process, the experts are briefed on the content of the relevant parts of the CRM Act, the assessment process and procedures (including assessment criteria) as well as the terms of their contract (confidentiality, impartiality, conflicts of interest, completing tasks and approving reports, penalties for non-compliance, etc.)

During the individual assessment, the experts work individually. Each expert prepares an individual assessment report. Applications are normally assessed by at least four individual experts, whose collective expertise cover technical, financial, and environmental, social and governance (ESG)-related aspects of the application, as well as UNFC classification.

After the individual evaluation, the EC may invite all experts who have assessed the application to meet in a consensus group, to agree on a common position, if needed. The Commission may also request project promoters to organise site visits for assessing certain aspects of the applications.

5.3 Consultation of the Critical Raw Materials Board

The European Critical Raw Materials Board (“the Board”) is composed of representatives from all EU Member States and the EC and is chaired by a representative of the EC. Its mandate is to provide advice to the EC and to carry out the tasks set out in the CRM Act.

The EC will inform the Board of all complete applications. The Board will discuss and issue an opinion on whether the proposed projects fulfil the assessment criteria, based on the opinion of the EC.

Member States whose territory is concerned by a proposed project have the right to object against the recognition of that project as a Strategic Project. The Member State concerned will substantiate its objection during the Board meeting. Moreover, for Strategic Projects in third countries or OCTs, the EC will not approve the application before receiving the explicit approval of the third country concerned. For that reason, project promoters are strongly encouraged to inform the concerned Member State or third country about their application for this call.

5.4 Communication of the assessment result

Taking account of the opinion of the Board, the EC will adopt its decision on the recognition of the project as a Strategic Project.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the assessment within 90 days of the acknowledgement of the completeness of the application. The EC will also inform the Board and the Member State or third country whose territory is concerned by the project.

5.5 Extension of the assessment deadline

In exceptional cases, where the nature, complexity or size of an application so require or where the number of applications received is too high to allow for the processing of applications within these 90 days, the EC may, on a case-by-case basis, extend that time limit by a maximum of 90 days. In that event, the EC will inform the project promoter in writing, no later than 70 days after acknowledging the completeness of the application, of the reasons justifying the extension and of the time limit for the decision.

5.6 Reporting obligations

Every two years after the date of recognition as a Strategic Project, project promoters have to submit a report to the EC containing information on the progress in the implementation of the Strategic Project, in particular with regard to the permit-granting process, possible delays and progress in project financing, including public financial support. A copy of this report will be shared and discussed with the Board.

Project promoters are obliged to notify the EC of any changes to the Strategic Project that would affect its fulfilment of the assessment criteria, or any changes in control of the undertakings involved in the Strategic Project on a lasting basis, compared to the information included in the application.

In addition, project promoters have to establish and regularly update the undertaking's website or a dedicated project website with information relevant to the local population and to foster public acceptance about the Strategic Project. This website must include information on the environmental, social and economic impacts and benefits associated with the Strategic Project and be accessible by the public free of charge, not requiring the provision of personal information (free-access website). It has to be available in a language or languages that can be easily understood by the local population.

5.7 Withdrawal of Strategic Project recognition by the EC

Where the EC finds that a Strategic Project no longer fulfils the assessment criteria or, where its recognition was based on an application containing incorrect information to the extent that it affects its compliance with these criteria, it may, taking into account the opinion of the Board, withdraw the recognition of a project as a Strategic Project.

Before adopting a decision to withdraw recognition, the EC will provide the project promoter with reasons for its decision, the project promoter will be given the opportunity to reply and the EC shall take into account the project promoter's reply.

Projects which are no longer recognised as Strategic Projects shall lose all rights connected to that status under the CRM Act.

Strategic Projects that no longer fulfil the assessment criteria solely due to an update of the list of strategic raw materials in Annex I of the CRM Act will be allowed to maintain their status as Strategic Projects for three years from the date of that update.

6 Glossary

‘raw material’ means a substance in processed or unprocessed state used as an input for the manufacturing of intermediate or final products, excluding substances predominantly used as food, feed or combustion fuel;

‘raw materials value chain’ means all activities and processes involved in the exploration, extraction, processing and recycling of raw materials;

‘extraction’ means the extraction of ores, minerals and plant products from their original source as a main product or as a by-product, including from mineral occurrence underground, mineral occurrence under and in water, and from brine and trees;

‘EU extraction capacity’ means an aggregate of the maximum annual production volumes of extractive operations for ores, minerals, plant products and concentrates containing strategic raw materials, including processing operations that are typically located at or near the extraction site, located in the EU;

‘mineral occurrences’ means any single mineral or combination of minerals occurring in a mass or deposit of potential economic interest;

‘reserves’ means all mineral occurrences that are economically viable to extract in a particular market context;

‘processing’ means all physical, chemical and biological processes involved in the transformation of a raw material from ores, minerals, plant products or waste into pure metals, alloys or other economically usable forms, including beneficiation, separation, smelting and refining, and excluding metal working and further transformation into intermediate and final goods;

‘EU processing capacity’ means an aggregate of the maximum annual production volumes of processing operations for strategic raw materials, excluding such operations that are typically located at or near the extraction site, located in the EU;

‘recycling’ means recycling as defined in Article 3, point (17), of Directive 2008/98/EC;

‘EU recycling capacity’ means an aggregate of the maximum annual production volume of recycling operations for strategic raw materials after re-processing, including the sorting and pre-treatment of waste, and its processing into secondary raw materials, located in the EU;

‘annual consumption of strategic raw materials’ means an aggregate of the amount of strategic raw materials consumed by undertakings established in the EU in processed form, excluding strategic raw materials incorporated in intermediate or final products placed on the EU market;

‘supply risk’ means supply risk as calculated in line with Annex II, Section 2 of the Critical Raw Materials Act;

‘critical raw material project’ means any planned facility or planned significant extension or repurposing of an existing facility that is active in the extraction, processing or recycling of critical raw materials;

‘offtaker’ means an undertaking that has entered into an offtake agreement with a project promoter;

‘offtake agreement’ means any contractual agreement between an undertaking and a project promoter containing either a commitment on part of the undertaking to procure a share of the raw materials produced by a specific raw material project over a certain period of time or a commitment on part of the project promoter to provide the undertaking with the option to do so;

‘project promoter’ means any undertaking or consortium of undertakings developing a raw material project;

‘permit-granting process’ means a process covering all relevant permits to build and operate the critical raw material projects, including building, chemical and grid connection permits and environmental assessments and authorisations where those are required, and encompassing all applications and procedures from the acknowledgment that the application is complete to the notification of the comprehensive decision on the outcome of the procedure by the single point of contact concerned;

‘strategic technologies’ means the key technologies instrumental for the green and digital transitions as well as for defence and aerospace applications;

‘waste’ means waste as defined in Article 3, point (1), of Directive 2008/98/EC;

‘recovery’ means recovery as defined in Article 3, point (15), of Directive 2008/98/EC;

‘Strategic Partnership’ means a commitment between the Union and a third country or an overseas country or territory to increase cooperation related to the raw materials value chain that is established through a non-binding instrument setting out actions of mutual interest, which facilitate beneficial outcomes for both the Union and the relevant third country or overseas countries or territories.

7 Contact information & Helpdesk

Before contacting the helpdesk, please consult the list of Frequently Asked Questions about Strategic Projects that are published on the Strategic Projects website: [Link to FAQs]

Questions related to the creation of EU login? Please consult <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/help.html>

Questions related to **EU Send WEB** may be addressed to DIGIT-EU-SEND@ec.europa.eu

UNECE EGRM Secretariat HELPDESK for Strategic Project Promoters

Slavko Solar / slavko.solar@un.org

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Other questions may be addressed to GROW-CRMA-STRATEGIC-PROJECTS@ec.europa.eu