

Roundtable for Sustainable Recycling Industries

■ The availability of material resources, such as metals applied in consumer electronics, is becoming noticeably more critical. Pioneering efforts in the sustainable management of such resources are required. This includes the sustainable recovery of secondary raw materials from waste. Current practices, for instance to recover gold and other precious metals from waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE or e-waste), have shown the urgent need for improvement, especially in certain parts of the developing world. Since a decade Seco and Empa have implemented programmes in this field and developed widely accepted knowledge and expertise for developing countries. These results have led to the development of the recently started “Sustainable Recycling Industries” (SRI) follow-up programme. With the aim to support small- and medium-sized recycling enterprises in developing countries, SRI's scope covers the fate of end of life consumer goods with a particular focus on the recovery of (critical) materials. The programme is planned for the duration of four years and supports specific initiatives in Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, India, Peru and South Africa.



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SRI Roundtable

■ An overarching activity of the programme addresses the demand for a comprehensive international approach to ensure the benign recovery of secondary raw materials. With this activity SRI is facilitating a multi-stakeholder process to develop, test and establish a fair trade scheme for secondary raw materials which will include the following components:

- International standard (its own or adopted)
- Verification system (e.g. auditing, reporting, certification, accreditation)
- Incentive system (e.g. labelling, registration, long-term marketing programme)
- Long term governance and management

To ensure broad acceptance and applicability of such a fair trade scheme, SECO, Empa and the World Resources Forum Association (WRFA) will establish a roundtable with participation of stakeholder groups, such as multilateral organizations, NGOs, affected communities, recyclers, producers, traders, etc. The roundtable will be developed according to the credibility principles of the ISEAL Alliance. The principles “represent the values and concepts that are embraced by sustainability standards systems that are most likely to achieve the ultimate aim of bringing about positive social, environmental and economic impacts, while decreasing negative impacts” (www.isealliance.org).