



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 9, 2009

CONTACT: Bradley Cameron
Director of Communications, EICC
P. 202-422-4999

Statement on Use of Minerals in Electronics Products

Policy makers and non-governmental organizational (NGOs) have expressed concern about the sources for specific minerals that are used in electronics industry products. EICC members share these concerns and are engaged in efforts to address important issues related to the use of “conflict” minerals.

About EICC

EICC was established in 2004 to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions in the global electronics supply chain through use of a standardized code of conduct. EICC was incorporated in 2007 as an association to ensure greater awareness of the code, and to expand its adoption across the industry. Current EICC members include raw materials, component suppliers, contract manufacturers, and brand companies.

Industry Approach to Improve Supply Chain Efforts

EICC companies are committed to improving conditions in the electronics supply chain:

- The companies work closely with their suppliers to ensure they understand the social and environmental standards in the EICC Code of Conduct, and that they work to abide by the code.
- EICC also provides training and guidance to help suppliers improve, and has made substantial investments in research to address supply chain challenges.
- The association maintains work groups that focus on critical supply chain issues. The EICC Extractives Work Group is specifically focused on the extraction of minerals used by the industry, and movement of the minerals through the industry’s supply chains.

Like other industries, the electronics industry depends on long and complex supply chains that can include multiple tiers of suppliers from many different countries. EICC members make every effort to improve the business practices and operations of their suppliers as far back in the supply chain as possible.

Industry Efforts to Address Conflict Minerals

EICC members stated in February 2009 that mineral extraction and transport activities that fuel conflict are unacceptable. EICC has initiated research to determine how prevalent conflict minerals are in electronics industry supply chains and what steps the industry can take to remove them from electronics products.

The industry's greatest challenge is that providers of minerals for the electronics industry are far removed from the companies that sell finished products.

- As a result, electronics companies have limited interaction with minerals suppliers, as well as limited access to information about the suppliers or their practices.
- The situation is often compounded by commercial agreements between suppliers in multiple tiers that limit disclosure of sourcing information to end-users.
- In addition, minerals used to create the metals in electronics products are often mixed from various sources and exchanged in ways that prevent tracing.

EICC companies are collaborating to learn more about what can be done to address the problem of conflict minerals, including those that are produced in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). What is known is that the primary mineral reserves of four metals frequently used in electronics products (tungsten, tin, tantalum, and gold) are available outside of the DRC.

EICC members have developed a three-pronged approach to positively influence this challenging issue:¹

1. Education: EICC has commissioned reports on key metals and mining conditions. The reports will be combined with media analysis and NGO literature to better inform member companies about the issue.
2. Stakeholder Engagement: EICC is working with experts, NGOs, governments, academics, adjacent industry organizations, and others in the electronics supply chain to learn more about the issue, and to work toward collaborative solutions.
3. Transparency: The EICC Extractives Work Group initiated an industry project in April 2009 to develop supply chain transparency, with particular focus on cobalt, tin, and tantalum. The project will attempt to identify participants in the supply chains and to obtain information from suppliers relating to conformance to the EICC Code of Conduct and other CSR programs.

Conclusion

EICC member companies are working to extend their influence beyond their immediate suppliers to create better social and environmental conditions throughout their extensive supplier networks, including on the issue of minerals extraction. EICC is also collaborating with a range of stakeholders to educate member companies about the complex issues associated with global supply chain management.

¹ See 2009 EICC Extractives WG Goals:
<http://www.eicc.info/PDF/Report%20on%20Metal%20Extraction.pdf>