

Participant Invitation – Critical raw materials and circular economy: A new way forward for Europe?

*An invitation-only roundtable, organised by Science|Business in partnership with SisAI Pilot & NTNU
Brussels – Tuesday, 15 October 2024 – 14:00 to 17:00 CET*

Dear SisAI partner,

On behalf of Science|Business, I am pleased to invite you to participate in an exclusive, high-level roundtable taking place in Brussels on **Thursday, 15 October (14:00 – 17:00 CEST)**, which we are organising in partnership with the Horizon 2020-funded SisAI Pilot project and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) Brussels office. Our central theme will be **“Critical raw materials and circular economy: A new way forward for Europe?”**.

As highlighted in the June 27 conclusions from the European Council, the EU’s next strategic mandate will prioritise – among others – the development of more circular and resource-efficient industrial systems and a more supportive environment for scaling up Europe’s manufacturing capacity for net-zero technologies and products.

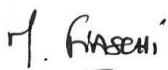
At the interface between these two objectives lies Europe’s ambition for greater autonomy in the fields of critical and strategic raw materials – not just in terms of access to them in their primary form, but also the ‘smart’ use of secondary materials and waste streams, which are often subject to fierce bidding wars in international markets. The latter in particular has major implications for Europe’s large-scale processing industries, such as steel, aluminium, cement and glass – and by extension the many others which rely on their output for their own manufacturing systems. Put simply, if the EU wishes to remain globally competitive and autonomous in these sectors, it will need to use every asset at its disposal – including its historical excellence in science and technology development to drive industrial transformation.

So what can be done to make Europe more materially resilient while increasing climate-friendly competitiveness? The SisAI Pilot project is a ‘live’ case study of how industry-science partnerships can contribute – in this instance around silicon, a vital component in sectors ranging from semiconductors, steel and energy to aerospace and automotive. The project’s main aim – recently achieved – has been to develop, demonstrate (up to TRL 7) and patent a new carbon-clean, circular manufacturing technology to produce silicon and silicon alloys from industrial waste, including quartz and aluminium scrap.

More importantly, the SisAI Pilot project results offer an entry point into a wider set of discussions that are highly relevant to the next EU policy cycle, including: what are the most effective pathways to commercialising circular, net-zero technologies and solutions in Europe? Which levers are available to support market uptake and scaling, including ways to secure access to the primary and secondary materials on which these breakthrough technologies depend? And how else might the Commission and member-states advance Europe’s production capacity and valorisation of waste streams? On October 15, Science|Business – in collaboration with the SisAI consortium and NTNU Brussels office – will convene a select group of senior figures from the worlds of policy, industry, research and finance to address these questions and create recommendations for the EU to reflect upon as the new strategic mandate begins.

Thank you very much in advance for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Maryline Fiaschi
CEO, Science|Business

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: