



Tin in the News

This week's news summary includes latest developments in two programmes to verify "conflict free" supply of tin, both of which face a very tight timetable to meet legislative requirements.

A date for your diary: ITRI and the China Solder Association (CEMTSB) will run an International Tin Seminar in conjunction with the association's 18th annual conference next year. The bi-lingual tin seminar with simultaneous translation will take place on 17-20 May 2011, in the beautiful city of Hangzhou, close to Shanghai. This will be a major event in the tin calendar and is expected to attract more than 300 local and international delegates. A number of key speakers are already confirmed and further details of the programme for the event will be published early in the New Year.

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15 Dec 2010 Vinto trims production forecast

Bolivian state tin producer Empresa Metalurgica Vinto (EMV) will finish the year with output of 11,600 tonnes, company head Ramiro Villavicencio told BNAmericas. In June the company forecast production of 13,000 tonnes as a result of the incorporation of the antimony plant to the production process, but this goal will not be achieved. 2009 output from the plant was 11,801 tonnes. He also reported that there was a new policy for managing inventories at the company that aims to reach zero stock: "The objective of the policy is that once the concentrates are purchased, the process to create metallic tin ready for export can be carried out in four days."

In a separate interview Villavicencio said that civil work for the installation of a new Ausmelt plant was due to start imminently and that the government has made a payment of US\$10.5 million to complete the US\$25.5 million investment required for the project.

Official data shows that refined tin production at Vinto in the first nine months of 2010 amounted to 8,647 tonnes, a marginal 0.3% higher than in January-September last year. In the same period total Bolivian mine output of tin-in-concentrate rose by 8.7%, but most of the increase came from small mines and co-operatives which export part of their production. Production from the state-owned Huanuni mine increased by 2.9% to 7,318 tonnes.

13 Dec 2010 ITRI and ICGLR to co-operate on conflict mineral traceability in the Great Lakes Region

ITRI and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) are pleased to announce signature of a co-operation agreement that aims to seek harmonisation between the ITRI Tin Supply Chain Initiative (iTSCi) Phase 2 mine-to-export traceability and due diligence scheme, and the ICGLR Regional Certification Mechanism. Both the iTSCi and ICGLR initiatives have a common objective of limiting the ability for armed groups to source financing from the production and trade of minerals in the Great Lakes Region and both organisations are keen to take advantage of the synergies between the two complementary systems. The iTSCi system is now recognised as one important initiative towards implementing the ICGLR Regional Certification Mechanism.

At the occasion of the signing of the partnership agreement, Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, ICGLR Executive Secretary, stated that "by working together with ITRI and the industry we can deliver the fast results that we need today. This partnership will also help us to learn the lessons for the implementation of the broader regional certification scheme that the ICGLR Member States are going to implement. I am therefore looking forward to making this co-operation live and active."

Kay Nimmo, Manager of Sustainability and Regulatory Affairs at ITRI explained that "Re-assuring buyers and consumers, as well as international organisations and regulating government-authorities in third-party countries, that appropriate due diligence measures are being applied across the region is a top priority for the tin industry and its industry partners. We are very pleased to be able to begin working more closely with the ICGLR on this issue."

Both ICGLR and ITRI recognise the importance and urgency of implementing a practical, cost effective and credible traceability or certification system for conflict minerals and will primarily address cassiterite, columbotantalite and wolframite as part of this co-operation. Application of traceability to gold is desirable but various adaptations of the system may be required.

Ms Nimmo continued "We are very concerned over the threat to continuing trade from the region resulting from the US legislation on conflict minerals. Minerals that are not tagged and traceable under the iTSCi system will not be acceptable to the supply chain of responsible international purchasers from early in 2011 and there is hardly enough time to put everything in place. We are sure that ICGLR involvement will make a significant difference to a successful achievement of this objective."

The ITRI agreement with ICGLR follows others with the Government of the DRC for co-operation over the initial iTSCi pilot project in North and South Kivu, as well the Rwandan Geology and Mines Authority (OGMR) who are currently implementing the system in Rwanda.

10 Dec 2010 Conflict free smelter program

Two electronics industry organisations - the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI) and Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition (EICC) - have launched their Conflict-Free Smelter (CFS) program, as part of industry's efforts in response to the conflict minerals provisions of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 passed earlier this year. The minerals covered in the law - coltan (columbite-tantalite, a source of tantalum), cassiterite (tin), wolframite (tungsten) and gold - are used in various industrial, consumer and electronics products and the CFS program focuses on tantalum and tin.

In a statement GeSI and EICC noted that "The CFS program aims to identify smelters that can demonstrate through an independent third-party assessment that the raw materials they procured did not originate from sources that contribute to conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The launch of the CFS program is the culmination of a multi-stakeholder project that started in September 2009. This due diligence enables mineral buyers and those further downstream in the supply chain to better understand the origin of the materials in their supply chain. The result of this assessment may also be utilized by companies as a part of their compliance obligations for the anticipated regulations stemming from the conflict minerals section of Dodd-Frank."

A first tantalum smelter assessment has been completed and additional tantalum smelters are scheduled to be assessed under the CFS in early 2011. The CFS is slated to expand to assess smelters of tin, tungsten and gold throughout 2011. An initial list of tantalum smelters who passed the assessment is due to be published on the EICC and GeSI Web sites in the first quarter of 2011.

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