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Gateway - an internationalization project connecting eit rawmaterials with Latin America and Africa

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EIT RAWMATERIALS – CONNECTING MATTERS

EIT RawMaterials, initiated and funded by the EIT (European Institute of Innovation and Technology), a body of the European Union, is the largest and strongest consortium in the raw materials sector worldwide. EIT RawMaterials unites more than 120 partners from leading industry, universities and research institutions from more than 20 EU countries (Fig 1a). Partners of EIT RawMaterials are active across the entire raw materials value chain in the field of raw materials (sustainable exploration, extraction, processing, recycling and substitution) and the impact it will generate (Fig 1b). EIT Raw Materials has the ambitious vision of turning the challenge of raw materials dependence into a strategic strength for Europe. Its mission is to boost the competitiveness, growth and attractiveness of the European raw materials sector via radical innovation and entrepreneurship.



Figure 1. a) EIT RawMaterials knowledge triangle with designated partners representing education, research and industry b) representing the whole value chain for raw materials.

THE GATEWAY PROJECT – CONNECTING EIT RAWMATERIALS WITH LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA

GATEWAY is an EIT RawMaterials funded project with 14 European leading research, university and industry partners with focus on internationalization. We represent the whole knowledge triangle throughout the raw material value chain. The initial idea for the GATEWAY project started when we realized that EIT Raw Materials partners have wide networks in Latin America and Africa and long histories in working in these contexts. This means that many partners are involved with local institutional development and educational

and research cooperation and therefore have deep understanding of the local contexts and most importantly, have access to local networks.

Our ultimate goal in GATEWAY is to link EU with Latin American and African universities, industry and research organizations with young talents and entrepreneurs in order to create a transparent, sustainable and innovative collaborative environment to solve raw materials sector problems and secure the flow of raw materials for now and generations to come.

Lack of understanding the institutions and institutional changes makes it difficult to access and make business in emerging economies (Khanna 2010, Lyytinen 2014). Formal institutional barriers can be for example lack of environmental regulations. On the other hand, informal barriers can be lack of cognitive understanding of benefits of new products and services. This emphasizes that understanding the full complexity of the institutional operating environment requires deep understanding of the local contexts as well as institutional capacity building and/or political strategies to make markets more accessible.

To achieve these approaches we have developed a straight forward process model on internationalization for start-ups and how to get access to our project portfolio and networks and to follow recent developments in the raw material sector in Latin America and Africa.

In the GATEWAY project, we have developed a process model to support internationalization of European SMEs and start-ups within EIT Raw Materials partnership network (Fig. 2).

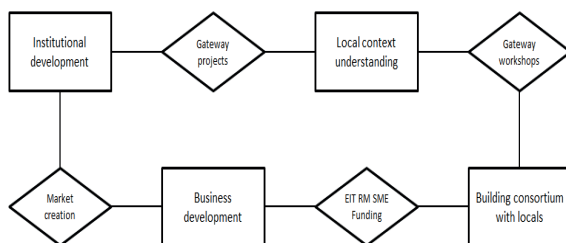


Figure 2. The GATEWAY process model for internationalization.

To support our models we have compiled two interactive map applications (Fig. 3) to get more information about EIT RawMaterials partner's projects and overall activities about commodities and

activities in Latin America and Africa.

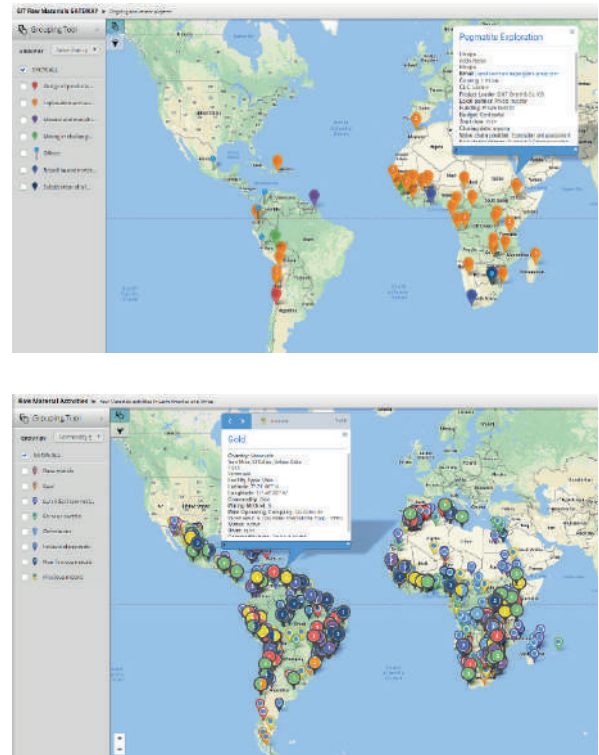


Figure 3. a) Ongoing and recent projects in Latin America and Africa by our GATEWAY partners. b) Commodity types and mining activities in Latin America and Africa.

We are also piloting workshops in Latin America and Africa where European Start-ups can tap to the networks of EIT RawMaterials partners, form consortiums with European and local partners and to apply project funding from identified multi-and bi-lateral funding instruments.

Making business in developing countries have normally long cycles which means that often Start-ups and SMEs do not have the resources to invest on the required business development activities in developing countries to create scalable businesses.

CONCLUSIONS

Our aim is to create more systematic consortiums to facilitate long-term business development in the developing countries. We have one of the Worlds largest consortium, EIT RawMaterials to support our activities and networks. Example of ideal consortium would include several stakeholders, e.g., large companies with long standing reputation and network in the target market, agile SMEs with disruptive technology, research organizations or academic partners with wide-spread

network with local counterparts and consultants assisting in go-to-market strategy. The targets would include, e.g., changing regulations with local research institutes, building business partnerships, developing products or business models with the customers, and tapping to local talents in the local universities.

Our advantage through GATEWAY is that we can directly offer contacts and networks and thus activate start-ups and SMEs to create a direct dialogue with relevant stakeholders and through these networks get access to markets in Latin America and Africa.

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