



The Non-Ferrous Metals Consultative Forum on Sustainable Development

WORKING GROUP ON PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP



What is the Working Group's Remit?

The Product Stewardship Working Group of the Non-Ferrous Metals Consultative Forum on Sustainable Development (NFMSD) was formed as the result of the Forum's first meeting held in Brussels in 2000. The Forum identified the need to establish stewardship programmes that promote and demonstrate responsible management of processes and products throughout the life cycle of non-ferrous metals from exploration through to recycling or final disposal. In April 2001 the Product Stewardship Working Group held its inaugural meeting and defined its work priorities:

- To develop an industry-based, voluntary product stewardship scheme based on a set of principles and criteria covering all stages of metal production through processing, use and recycling;
- To examine issues related to the transfer of best recycling technologies and practices to developing countries.

Who is in the Working Group?

The strength of the Forum process has been its multi-stakeholder approach and the Product Stewardship Working Group reflects this philosophy. The Working Group has three co-chairs: one drawn from the Study Groups' member governments, one from the international non-ferrous metals industry and one from a public interest group. Some fifty-five members of the Group from twelve different countries have participated in its meetings. About half of the Group's members are drawn from the international non-ferrous metals industry and industry associations, while the remaining half come from Study Groups' member governments, multilateral institutions and non-governmental organisations.

The Working Group holds its discussions mainly by teleconference calls and e-mails. Face-to-face meetings were held in London in April 2001, and during full Forum proceedings in November 2001. A sub-group of Co-chairs, members of the Forum Advisory Committee and key industry associations are working to review progress to date and discuss the way forward for developing the framework for a product stewardship scheme for non-ferrous metals.

The International Copper Study Group Secretariat provides technical and analytical support to the Product Stewardship Working Group.

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What has been achieved?

The Product Stewardship Working Group has developed a series of principles and criteria that could form the basis for a voluntary, industry-led product stewardship scheme. The overall approach was presented as a working document to the last meeting of the Consultative Forum in November 2001 in Portugal.

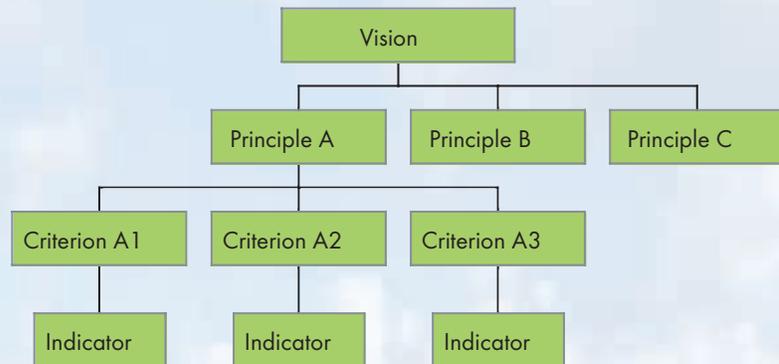
The principles and criteria form the basis for action, to varying degrees, by governments, industry associations, companies and non-governmental organisations. The principles were developed to cover five main themes of stewardship, as defined by the Working Group:

- governance,
- information and communication,
- product design,
- recycling, and
- research and knowledge base.

To date, the approach taken by the Working Group has led to a series of tangible outputs:

- A set of product stewardship principles and criteria
- A background study on existing product stewardship schemes
- A working paper on issues relating to the implementation of product stewardship concepts for the non-ferrous sector
- A draft template of product stewardship principles, criteria and indicators (including responsibility/relevance and level for addressing issues)
- A draft questionnaire on product stewardship
- Preliminary testing of the questionnaire with a number of representative companies in the non-ferrous sector and
- An analysis of results and conclusions from the questionnaire test

Product Stewardship Principles and Criteria



Next Steps for the Working Group

Preliminary results and observations from the questionnaire will be presented to the next Forum meeting in The Hague for comments and suggestions. The Working Group will further refine the questionnaire on product stewardship and start the process of distribution to a broader range of companies. This broader distribution is aimed at receiving responses from a representative crosscut of industry covering all relevant process stages and continental regions. Results from this exercise will then be used to evaluate current perceptions and implementation issues relevant to product stewardship in the non-ferrous metals sector. The evaluation can also serve as a tool for companies to evaluate their own progress in the area of product stewardship as defined by the Working Group.

The results of the questionnaire exercise will assist the Working Group to assess the real-world applicability of the indicators for each of the principles and criteria. It is also designed to refine the Group's approach for the development of a framework and tools for a pilot product stewardship scheme that could be developed in partnership with industry during the next phase of work in this project.