

PRESS RELEASE



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iTSCi BEGINS TRANSITION TO DIGITISED DATA COLLECTION FOR MINERAL SUPPLY CHAINS

The ITRI Tin Supply Chain Initiative (iTSCi) announces another progressive step in implementation with the adoption of a technology solution designed to enhance data collection and traceability in this important minerals due diligence programme. Following a period of extensive development and field trials, this technology system, which electronically replicates current paper based systems, has been tested, approved, and will now be used by Government agents responsible for data recording for the first time.

The iTSCi programme is a tried and tested minerals traceability system capable of tracking 3T's (tin, tantalum and tungsten) production through complex multi-stage and multi-operator supply chains that often involve several layers of mixing and re-processing. The Programme, which was adopted by the governments of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2011, is now operational at over 850 mine sites in the region. This generates huge amounts of data with over 25,000 transactions being manually entered into the Programme database each week, enabling companies up and down the supply chain to understand and manage the mine sources of their mineral purchases.

In order to increase the efficiency of data collection, iTSCi staff have been working extensively with software experts at Helveta UK, a company that specialise in providing mobile supply chain management solutions across a range of industry sectors, in order to achieve a practical and effective system for minerals. Helveta are currently a world leader in the timber traceability sector and have successfully implemented solutions in the Cameroon, Nigeria, Congo-Brazzaville, Liberia, Bolivia and Indonesia. Following testing and field trials, software directly relevant to the iTSCi Programme is now available for installation on simple to operate mobile devices, such as the Motorola Solutions handheld PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) MC 65 used in the trials.

Handheld PDAs can be deployed easily in the field and moved between sites without the need to install bulky, expensive equipment which is generally regarded as impractical for the vast majority of sites in Rwanda and DRC. Government agents will now start to more quickly and accurately collect data at the mine site, processor or exporter with information transmitted in real-time to the Programme database using the mobile phone network, effectively allowing data collection, verification and analysis to occur on the same day.

Government agents of GMD in Rwanda are now using this solution for themselves and the system will be rolled out more widely as financing allows. Dr Michael Biryabarema of GMD explained that "The Rwandan Government is always keen to improve data on our mineral sector which is an important growth area for the country. We appreciate the information that has been generated through our co-operation with iTSCi so far and look forward to the further benefits and improvements that this solution will bring."

Traceability is one important part of any initiative, but the iTSCi programme goes beyond this by incorporating a broader approach to responsible supply chain management and due diligence according to OECD and international expectations. Additional features of iTSCi include continual on-the-ground assessments, independent auditing and much needed capacity building and training for state mining services.

Kay Nimmo, of the iTSCI Governance Committee remarked “Flexibility is key part of the iTSCI programme and we have intentionally designed a system which fits within the existing structure of the supply chain to minimise disruption to operators. The transition to digital data capture using PDAs will provide significant benefits to all participants and stakeholders throughout the value chain but the option of using paper log books will always be available and used for back-up and at locations where digitising data may be less appropriate for a variety of reasons.”

Similar implementation developments are also planned in the DRC and other locations.

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About iTSCI:

The iTSCI Programme is a joint industry mechanism designed to address ‘conflict mineral’ concerns in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and other Great Lakes Region countries. The Programme establishes traceability in the upstream mineral chain for 3T minerals by working with local Governments and their field agents, and assists companies to establish due diligence through independent monitoring on the ground and regular audits. The Programme supports the practical implementation of the OECD’s Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas as well as the UN Security Council Resolution 1952 (2010) due diligence recommendations. Members are expected to recognise all aspects of these guidelines and cooperate with monitoring, evaluation and audits as required, as well as working on their own company policies and contracts to influence the supply chain in a positive way. Through the implementation of the internationally recognised OECD Guidance, the Programme aims to aid compliance with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Rule interpreting the US Dodd Frank law, section 1502 on conflict minerals. The Programme complements other initiatives, including the Conflict-Free Smelter audit programme (CFS), the ICGLR’s Regional Certification Initiative, and BGR’s Certified Trading Chains Initiative (CTC). Please see the project website; https://www.itri.co.uk/index.php?option=com_zoo&view=frontpage&Itemid=60



About ITRI:

ITRI is the world's foremost authority on tin with over 80 years’ experience in tin related technologies. It is a membership based organisation representing major tin producers and smelters and is the premier source of tin related information. ITRI has specialist knowledge of tin use in all the major sectors as well as groups responsible for technology, statistical and market information, regulatory affairs and sustainability. It provides links to the main tin consuming sectors through a substantial network of industry contacts. The organisation hosts seminars, conferences and industry-specific group meetings. It also provides marketing and technical support to its members and the tin industry in general. ITRI is the tin representative to the iTSCI programme Steering Committee and Secretariat of the programme. Further information can be obtained from ITRI <http://www.itri.co.uk>

About Helveta:

Helveta is a UK based software company, incorporated in 2004, specialising in the development of online traceability software. Our traceability platform, Elements™, has been developed specifically for the producers and traders in the timber, biofuel, agriculture and mining and minerals sectors to help comply with the international import regulations. Elements™ produces a Digital Passport™ for every tonne or M³ of commodity produced, containing point of origin and chain of custody data, that is associated to every trade, providing customers with confidence of legality and sustainability. www.helveta.com

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