

REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISE
MINISTRIA E INFRASTRUKTURËS DHE ENERGJISË
QENDRA RAJONALE E INOVACIONIT TË INSTITUTIT EVROPIAN TË
TEKNOLOGJISË DHE INOVACIONIT PËR LËNDËT E PARA

First Regional Workshop

“Enhancement of Regional Collaboration in Critical Raw Materials (CRM) and Circular Economy in the Balkans”

Date: 5 December 2025

Venue: University “Aleksandër Xhuvani”, Elbasan, Albania

Hosts: Regional Innovation Center of EIT RawMaterials (RIC Albania) & University “Aleksandër Xhuvani”

Working languages: English & Albanian (with interpretation)

Purpose of the Workshop

This first regional workshop marks a major milestone in the implementation of the OSF–WB Project “*Enhancement of Regional Collaboration in Critical Raw Materials (CRM) and Circular Economy in the Balkans.*” The event will serve as the first public presentation of preliminary project findings and aims to strengthen cooperation between Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia in the fields of secondary CRM resources, industrial waste valorization, and circular economy development.

Three local experts, one from each country will present their initial findings based on technical reports developed under the project, while the International Expert will introduce the integrated model for conducting the pre-feasibility study covering selected sites in Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia.

The second part of the workshop is dedicated to youth engagement, bringing together young researchers, innovators, and students from across the region. This session will focus on fostering their active participation in start-ups, recycling initiatives, and innovation-driven projects as a critical component for the sustainable development of CRM secondary resources and circular economy in the Western Balkans.

Agenda

09:00 – 09:30 | Registration & Welcome Coffee

- Participant registration
- Distribution of agenda, project brief, and visibility materials

09:30 – 10:00 | Opening Remarks

- Welcome by Dr. Ledi Moisiu, Director, RIC EIT RawMaterials Albania
- Address by Representative, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (TBD)
- Short greeting by Open Society Foundations – Western Balkans (online/in person) (TBD)

10:00 – 10:15 | Session I – Presentation of the Project

“Enhancement of Regional Collaboration in CRM & Circular Economy in the Balkans”

Presenter: *Mrs. Mimoza Simixhiu, Expert in Raw Materials, RIC Albania*

- Overview of project objectives, components, expected results,
- Role of RIC Albania as regional coordination hub
- Q&A (short)

10:15 – 11:00 | Session II – Technical & Policy Context: Secondary CRM Resources in the Region

- **Country Inputs from Key Local Experts (15 min each)**
Each presentation will focus on the site selection, main findings on CRM potential, and the reasons for selecting the respective site within the project framework:
 - o **Albania** – *As. Prof. Ana Fociro*
 - o **Kosovo** – *Mr. Kemajl Zeqiri*
 - o **North Macedonia** – *Mr. Goce Mojsoski*
- **Roundtable Discussion:**
Shared challenges, data gaps, regulatory and investment barriers.

11:00 – 11:20 | Coffee Break & Networking

11:20 – 12:30 | Session III – Designing the Pre-Feasibility Study

- Presentation of proposed methodology for the Pre-feasibility Study for three sites
- Interactive discussion on approach, data harmonization and site selections

12:30 – 13:30 | Lunch Break

13:30 – 14:45 | Session IV – Youth & Academia Engagement in CRM and Circular Economy

This session emphasizes the vital role of academia and young professionals in advancing Critical Raw Materials (CRM) and Circular Economy (CE) initiatives in the Western Balkans. It seeks to encourage active participation of students, researchers, and early-career experts in developing innovative and sustainable approaches to CRM recovery and recycling.

Session Structure:

- **Introductory Presentation:**

- *As. Prof. Ana Fociro*, Academic Expert, RIC Albania – on the role of universities, research institutions, and VET centers in developing CRM and CE skills.

- **Panel Discussion:**

Moderated by *As. Prof. Ana Fociro*, RIC Albania.

Participants: Representatives from academia and young professionals from Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia.

Discussion topic: *“Why Critical Raw Materials and Circular Economy matter for our future and for the sustainable development of our region.”*

Panelists will share experiences, start-up initiatives, and ideas for collaboration, focusing on opportunities in recycling and innovation related to secondary raw materials.

- GeoCura: Transforming Mine Waste into Self-Healing, Sustainable Concrete; presented by Huseyin Cetinkaya, Fabiola Doda, Shah Saud.
- Recygeo: Smart Geopolymer Coatings for Safer, Greener Built Environment; presented by Busra Karakas,
- Kaabrick: Building the future with textile and Mining Waste; presented by Chanda Mubanga, Valentina Chessa.

14:45 – 15:45 | Closing Session

- Roundtable conclusions and reflections moderated by Dr. Ledi Moisiu, Director, RIC Albania
- Closing remarks by RIC Albania