



CIRAN's Consortium Meeting in Lisbon, January 2024

CIRAN held its annual physical meeting in Lisbon, Portugal from 22 to 25 January. Attended by the project partners and several members of the external expert group, the event served as an important platform for exchanging feedback and moving the project forward.

The first day was dedicated to the consortium meeting, where the partners presented their progress in the work packages of their competences. Ranging from technical to more general aspects, the partners once again took the opportunity to discuss their efforts to define a sustainable and responsible policy framework for the sourcing of critical raw materials in the protected areas of Europe.

The second day was dedicated to data collection workshops in which the invited experts actively participated, encompassing experts on community involvement, economic and environmental protection agents, as well as policymakers and implementers. In the morning session, the La Palma Research Centre (LPRC) facilitated a scenario planning workshop as part of its work on the nexus between policy decisions and drivers of change. In this interactive session, participants rotated through four unique stations and discussed future scenarios for CIRAN. Insights were gathered on various aspects including future CRM needs, social acceptance, institutional perspectives and environmental concerns.

In the afternoon, the invited experts contributed their valuable knowledge to a workshop focusing on efficient policymaking in light of the EU's Critical Raw Materials Act's ambitious goal of shortening permitting times from on average 18 years to 18 months.

The CIRAN research team is currently processing the input gathered and outcomes will be shared in due time.

The third day consisted of an excursion to the Natural Park Serras de Aire e Candeeiros. In the municipality of Porto de Mós, participants were given a presentation by the Nature Conservation Institute on reconciling extractive industries and nature conservation in the Serras de Aire and Candeeiros Natural Park. In addition, the company ASSIMAGRA presented a case study on environmental sustainability in the MCE limestone area of Portugal, highlighting the importance of collaboration with different actors for responsible resource exploration and territorial valorisation. Later in the afternoon, visits to local quarries gave both partners and experts a first-hand insight into the delicate balance between economic interests and environmental protection.

The final day was dedicated to management aspects, including planning for the coming year's activities, with a focus on the effective involvement of experts and stakeholders.

