

PROCEEDINGS



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IN THE WORLD OF STONE**

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Portugal Mineral Resources Cluster **Collective strategy for sectorial** **recognition and sustainable development**

Marta Peres, Luís Lopes, Miguel Goulão, Luís Martins

Synopsis

The Mineral Resources Economic Sector (MR) can only be properly considered as a potential factor in the development of a Country if there is an integrated strategy transversal to all activities related to it. Contributions from different areas, such as geology, territorial planning, environmental protection, socioeconomic sustainability of populations where MR is exploited, associated with market policies, among others, should be analyzed together in an integrated way. Therefore, the proposal as a strategic economic cluster and subsequent recognition of the Cluster of MR of Portugal constitutes a milestone and an important step for its rational management.

As an evolution of the Portuguese Stone Cluster, where the clustering strategy demonstrated positive results during the Portuguese economic crisis, the main goal of the "Associação Cluster Portugal Mineral Resources" (ACPMR) is to spread the experience acquired in the stone sector to the Mineral Resources Economic Sector.

Keywords

Mineral Resources, Cluster Association, Dimension Stone Industry, ACPMR.

Portugal Mineral Resources Cluster Association: a short story

The Portuguese Mineral Resources Cluster application and recognition emerges as a natural evolution of the Natural Stone Cluster. In 2009, the Natural Stone Cluster of Portugal had its governmental recognition and from the beginning of its activities, on the 17th of July of that year, three anchor projects and several complementary ones were developed. In total, there was an investment of almost 58 million euros. Effectively, the government support was € 38,246,879.00 and the participation of the promoters was € 19,584,923.00. As a result, and in general, the ornamental rock sector grew in contrast with the economy, for example, it showed a growth of 28% in 2013. This was only possible due to the promotion and marketing strategies that have been carried out in major trade fairs held each year, for example: Xiamen (China), Verona (Italy), Vitória (Brazil), Orlando (Batalha, Madrid, Carrara, Cachoeiro de Itapemirim, Izmir, etc.). This strategy has continued to this day with several projects, of which we highlight the creation of the brand Stone.PT, the project "First Stone" and others submitted and awaiting approval.

However, the eligibility criteria for an economic activity sector to be recognized as "Cluster" were modified and to continue with the recognition of strategic sector, ornamental rocks alone would not have sufficient economic dimension. Therefore, the management of Valorpedra (management body for the Natural Stone Cluster) took the initiative to promote a broad discussion to all Mineral Resources, in order to discuss the theme and raise companies and entities so that the synergy thus created reached a dimension that would fall within the new eligibility parameters.

Nowadays, the Cluster of Mineral Resources has a membership of 38 associates and other partners with the following distribution: 29 Companies; 4 Entities of the Research and

Innovation System; 2 Business Associations; 2 Other Associates and 10 other relevant partners. As new projects are submitted and new contacts being made, new partners have been integrated into the Partnership for Mineral Resources of Portugal.

Reporting to 2013, the associated companies presented a turnover of € 69,141,790.00 with exports of € 53,305,210.00 being extra European Community exports € 41,087,040.00.

The importance of non-European Community markets in the volume of exports was 77.08%, which is a percentage considered very high in relation to the average national performance of the two macroeconomic aggregates, whose national average for that year was 32%. None of the member companies in the cluster has identified the presence of assets or jobs abroad; internationalization will also be a goal to be achieved.

Considering the entire business universe of the Cluster, i.e., companies associated with core and support activities, there is a turnover variation between 2010 and 2013 of 2.20%, much higher than the national average growth rate, which was - 2.97%.

In 2013, the degree of coverage of imports by exports, measured by the quotient between the value of exports and the value of imports of companies associated with core activities, was 1,261.46%, thus showing a behavior far above the national average ratio, which was 104.5%.

Until 2020 the Cluster aims to achieve the following goals: Turnover growth rate of 26.5%; Exports growth rate of 26.5% and substantially increase the growth rate of investment in R & D and innovation.

Among others, the elements listed above contributed to the recognition of the Portugal Mineral Cluster.

In the extended version of this work, an updated version of the above mentioned economic parameters will be present as well as more detailed objectives, framework, strategic proposals, and ongoing actions to be developed in the short and medium term within the scope of the Cluster of Mineral Resources of Portugal.

We also intend to disseminate the experience and attract potential interested parties to this strategy of collective efficiency relevant to Portugal. Moreover, this also constitutes an opportunity for cooperation and internationalization of the companies and entities of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries.

Projects:

On going

- Internationalization of Portuguese Stone Brand – STONE.PT (ACPMR, ASSIMAGRA, UE); it would be detailed.
- Inovstone 4.0 – Advanced technologies and software for natural stone (Consortium with 24 partners. Leader: CEI – Companhia de Equipamentos Industriais Lda); it would be detailed.
- Stone.pt Lab – (ACPMR, ASSIMAGRA, lab partners); it would be detailed.

To be prepared

- New approaches in exploring and research of Mineral Resources;
- Qualify, safeguard and potentiate mineral resources;
- Transforming Environmental liabilities into raw materials;
- Circular Economy in Natural Stones.

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About the authors:

Marta Peres, Dr.

ACPMR – Associação Cluster Portugal Mineral Resources. Praça Luís de Camões, nº 38, 7100-512 Estremoz, Portugal. E-mail: marta.peres@clustermaneralresources.pt

Luís Lopes, Prof.

Universidade de Évora, Escola de Ciências e Tecnologia, Departamento de Geociências. Colégio Luís António Verney, Rua Romão Ramalho 59, 7000-671 Évora. E-mail: lopes@uevora.pt. ICT (Instituto de Ciências da Terra, Portugal; Earth Sciences Institute, FCT) and Associação Cluster Portugal Mineral Resources

Miguel Goulão, Dr.

ASSIMAGRA – Mineral Resources Association of Portugal. Rua Aristides de Sousa Mendes, 3b 1600-412 Lisboa. E-mail: mgoulao@assimagra.pt. ACPMR – Associação Cluster Portugal Mineral Resources

Luís Martins, Dr.

ACPMR – Associação Cluster Portugal Mineral Resources. Praça Luís de Camões, nº 38, 7100-512 Estremoz, Portugal. E-mail: lmartins@clustermaneralresources.pt; ASSIMAGRA – Mineral Resources Association of Portugal (lmartins@assimagra.pt)