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European Union body grants EUR5.4 million to FLSmidth-led mining efficiency project

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The ambition of increasing resource efficiency in the mining industry has encouraged FLSmidth to drive a number of research and development partnerships with customers, third parties and academic institutions around the world. One of the most promising joint projects has received a comprehensive grant from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, to continue the work of reducing energy and resource use in the global mining industry.

The innovation relates to flotation process technology and holds good potential when it comes to reducing energy and water use in this part of the mining flowsheet. Flotation is a key, water-intensive area in mining where valuable minerals are separated from other materials. For FLSmidth, a key player in the joint project, this is part of the MissionZero journey that will enable the mining industry to move towards zero water and energy waste by 2030. The new flotation process is called RFC – Reflux Flotation Cell. Manfred Schaffer, President of Mining at FLSmidth, explains:

“The RFC technology has potential across various commodities and flotation applications. The opportunity presented by the EUR5.4 million grant will accelerate the commercialisation of the technology. It will also allow for further development and optimisation of the RFC, hopefully expanding the energy and water saving potential of flotation solutions.”

The consortium behind the project is led by FLSmidth and includes two mine sites (KGHM Polska Miedz Spółka Akcyjna in Poland and Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara AB (LKAB) in Sweden), two universities (Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and Helmholtz Helmholtz-Zentrum Dresden-Rossendorf University), the Swedish Environmental Research Institute and several external advisors. The University of Newcastle in Australia and Professor Kevin Galvin, will act as external advisors.

To Manfred Schaffer the project proves the deep value of the global companies joining forces with customers and academic institutions alike to find new and more sustainable paths forward for the mining industry:

“We each have our strength, experiences and competences working within mining. A project like this shows the benefit of us all joining forces and combining competences to break new ground in mining technology. I firmly believe that the solutions to the environmental challenges we are all facing must come from technology. I am delighted that we, together with our partners, can deliver a solution that helps in achieving this goal.”

A total of EUR5.4 million was awarded (EUR2.8m to FLSmidth) by EIT RawMaterials, which is funded by EIT, a body of the European Union, through a competitive application process. The RFC-Upscaling project will run from 1 June 2021 until 1 June 2024. More information about the project can be found on the EIT RawMaterials website: <https://eitrawmaterials.eu/project/rfc-upscaling/>

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