



ZIA AGM & Annual Conference

‘From sand to solutions – zircon’s expanding role in advanced industries’

Valencia, Spain, 20 – 21 May 2026

with optional site visits on 19 May



www.zircon-association.org



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[zircon-industry-association](#)

Optional site visits*: Tuesday 19

Join our unique technical site visits while networking with colleagues and industry peers.

Group A

Porcelanosa, ITC and Ceramic Stadium



Group B

Castellón Port, ITC and Ceramic Stadium

*for registered conference delegates

Site visits schedule

Tuesday 19 May

Buses will depart from the Las Arenas conference hotel promptly at 9am

Refreshments and lunch will be provided

Returning to the conference hotel at around 5pm

“The visit to Hoang Long Minerals in 2025 was a highlight for ZIA conference delegates, showcasing impressive mineral separation and milling technologies.”

ZIA conference delegate 2025



Programme

Wednesday 20 May

08:00 – 09:30	ZIA Board Meeting: Olympia meeting room
10:00 – 11:30	ZIA members' AGM: Cronos meeting room
12:00 – 13:00	Conference lunch (all delegates): private area – follow ZIA signage
13:00	Start of conference
13:00 – 13:15	Welcome, opening remarks, antitrust compliance and safety briefing
13:15 – 14:00	Keynote address – <i>Jeff Engle, Tronox</i>
14:00 – 14:30	Zircon Market Update – <i>Daniel Fu, TZMI</i>
14:30 – 15:00	Castellón Port – Gateway to the Spanish Ceramic Industry – <i>Rubén Ibáñez Bordonau, President, PortCastelló</i>
15:00 – 15:30	Networking interval and refreshments
15:30 – 16:00	India as a Strategic Demand Hub in the Global Zircon Value Chain – <i>Anjana Singh, Analyst, Beroe Inc.</i>
16:00 – 16:20	Evolution of Respirable Crystalline Silica in Zircon Processing – <i>Dr Jéssica Gilabert Albiol, ITC</i>
16:20 – 16:40	Solar-Assisted Synthesis of Zirconia and YSZ – <i>Dr Daniel Fernández González, University of Oviedo</i>
16:40 – 17:00	From Zircon to AI – the Zr / Hf Supply Imperative – <i>Alister MacDonald, TCMS</i>
17:00	Closing remarks
17:45 – 18:30	Cocktail reception (Atlas Terrace) and transfer to the Conference Banquet Dinner

Thursday 21 May

09:00 – 09:15	Start of conference Day 2 – opening remarks
09:15 – 09:45	Keynote address: Global and European Economic Outlook – <i>Emily Mansfield, Economist Intelligence Unit</i>
09:45 – 10:05	Zirconium in the Nuclear Power Industry: A Growing Demand? – <i>Simon Marshall, Independent Nuclear Expertise Ltd</i>
10:05 – 10:25	Next Gen Classifier for Milled Zircon – <i>Yener Bicakci, Hosokawa Alpine</i>
10:25 – 10:45	Investment Casting: A High-Technology Niche Market for Zircon – <i>Carlos Olabe, European Investment Casters Federation (EICF)</i>
10:45 – 11:15	Networking interval and refreshments
11:15 – 11:45	ESG in Mining & Minerals – <i>Ted Rhodes, CMS</i>
11:45 – 12:15	ZIA Members' ESG Aims and Aspirations – <i>Sarah Hoang, ZIA</i>
12:15 – 12:45	Why ESG is Relevant to the Zircon Industry – <i>Dr Johannes Gediga, Sphera</i>
12:45 – 13:00	Closing remarks and end of conference
13:00	Lunch (all registered delegates and invited guests)

From sand to solutions

Zircon's expanding role in advanced industries

Keynote Speakers



JEFF ENGLE

Chief Commercial Officer, Tronox

Jeff Engle joined Tronox in July 2001 as an engineer in the technical sales and service laboratory. He has worked in various areas at Tronox over the last 20 years, including sales and marketing, research and development, strategic planning, and business development. Most recently, he has served the company as Vice President, Global Marketing and R&D.

Jeff was elected as Chairman of ZIA in May 2025. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from Oklahoma State University and an MBA from Auburn University.



EMILY MANSFIELD

Regional Director for Europe, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)

Emily Mansfield is the Regional Director for Europe at EIU. Managing a large team, she leads the coverage of European political and economic affairs, producing market-leading analysis and accurate forecasts.

Emily is a skilled editor and economist, and a sought-after public speaker. She has presented at think-tanks such as Chatham House and the Institute for International and European Affairs, at forums such as Wilton Park and the Club de Madrid, and at events organised by the European Parliament and Transparency International. Her specialist areas are France, Germany, the UK, and Europe-wide issues, including EU-China and EU-US relations. Emily joined EIU in 2011. She holds a graduate diploma in economics from Birkbeck, as well as Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Cambridge.

Speakers



DANIEL FU

Senior Consultant, TZ Minerals International (TZMI)

Daniel Fu joined TZMI in 2021 after 20 years of experience in the finance/equity markets. At TZMI, Daniel's key responsibilities include titanium feedstocks and zircon market demand and supply analysis, mineral sands pricing analysis and cross-border trade analysis. He contributes regularly to the various titanium feedstock and zircon-related consulting assignments as well as to TZMI's quarterly and monthly publications. Before TZMI, Daniel was also involved in conducting research across various industries as an investor and in corporate advisory consultation work for emerging/start-up companies in the finance industry.



RUBÉN IBÁÑEZ BORDONAU

President, Port Authority of Castellón

Rubén is the current President of the Port Authority of Castellón, leading the port's growth and modernisation strategy and overseeing all development initiatives. He holds a law degree from Universitat Jaume I and has built a strong legal career spanning over 25 years. His expertise is further enhanced by a financial specialisation, earned through the III Stock Market and Financial Master's program at the Foundation for Stock Market and Financial Studies in Valencia. He has also completed public leadership programs at IESE and IE Business School.

Rubén has served as a regional Member of Parliament in the Valencian Parliament (Corts Valencianes) from 2011 to 2023, acting as spokesperson for Economy and Finance. Previously, he held roles in the Castellón Provincial Council as Vice President (2007–2011) and Provincial Deputy (2003–2007).



ANJANA SINGH

Lead Analyst, Metals, Minerals and Mining, Beroe Inc.

Anjana Singh is a Lead Analyst and Strategic Advisor at Beroe Inc, specialising in metals, minerals, and mining supply chains. She advises global enterprises on procurement intelligence, supplier strategy, and sustainable sourcing, helping organisations to navigate commodity volatility and build resilient supply networks.

With extensive expertise in category strategy and procurement transformation, Anjana translates complex market dynamics into actionable sourcing strategies. Anjana is an electrical engineer and management graduate. She actively contributes to the global supply chain community through thought leadership and industry insights.



DR JÉSSICA GILABERT

Senior Researcher. Head of New Developments and Diffraction Laboratory, Institute of Ceramic Technology (ITC)

Jéssica is currently Head of New Developments and Diffraction Laboratory at the Institute of Ceramic Technology, having joined ITC in 2005 as a senior researcher. She specialises in the study of crystalline structure, carrying out mineralogical and thermal analyses of ceramic materials and related sectors. Jéssica has actively participated in the development of public-funded research projects in mineralogical, physical, mechanical, and tribological characterisation and standardisation of tests related to ceramic materials at national and European levels and participated in over 25 R&D projects. She has also taught courses related to the surface treatment of advanced ceramic materials and the characterisation glazed materials for the ceramic industry, and co-authored 27 research articles and more than 20 conference papers. Jéssica holds a Chemical Engineering degree and PhD in Chemical Engineering from the Universitat Jaume I in Castelló.



DR DANIEL FERNÁNDEZ-GONZÁLEZ

Researcher at the Nanomaterials and Nanotechnology Research Centre, Spanish National Research Council (CINN-CSIC)

Daniel is a researcher at the Nanomaterials and Nanotechnology Research Center of the Spanish National Research Council (CINN-CSIC) and was previously based at the School of Mines of the University of Oviedo. He has more than 10 years' experience in research, including the synthesis and sintering of ceramic and ceramic-metal composites, the valorisation of metallurgical by-products, and the utilisation of solar technologies to fabricate materials. He has participated in numerous projects funded through public calls, as well as several contracts with companies to assist in process optimisation. He is the author of six books and more than 50 articles published in respected journals. Daniel holds a degree in Mining Engineering and a Master's degree in Materials Science and Technology from the University of Oviedo, Spain.



ALISTER MACDONALD

Director, TCMS

With more than three decades of experience across the global minerals and advanced materials sectors, Alister brings extensive expertise in zirconium, hafnium, rare earths, and industrial ceramics. These materials underpin critical applications ranging from nuclear technologies to high-performance alloys and advanced manufacturing systems. Alister is the founder of Technical Ceramic Marketing Services Pty Ltd (TCMS), where he has spent nearly two decades advising clients across metals, minerals, and ceramics on market intelligence, supply chain strategy, and technical marketing. His career includes senior leadership roles at Australian Strategic Materials Ltd and at Alkane Resources Ltd. He also has commercial experience in advanced ceramics markets, including applications for fused zirconia materials.



SIMON MARSHALL

Managing Director, Independent Nuclear Expertise Limited

After graduating in 1979 from Manchester University as a physicist, Simon joined the nuclear industry, where he spent his early career in BNFL's nuclear fuel business in the UK at Springfields and Sellafield. With BNFL's acquisition of Westinghouse, he then took up several global fuel roles covering the UK, Sweden, South Africa (with PBMR) and the USA. Latterly, he worked on new nuclear build programmes for Westinghouse in the UK and in Europe.

Simon's final full-time role was as Managing Director, Westinghouse UK Fuel Operations, responsible for the operation of the Springfields nuclear fuel manufacturing site. He retired from Westinghouse in 2018 and now provides independent nuclear subject matter expertise to governments, utilities, vendors, investors and academia.



YENER BICA KCI

Strategic Sales Manager - Minerals & Metals Division, Hosokawa Alpine AG

Yener BicaKci is Strategic Sales Manager at Hosokawa Alpine AG in Germany, working within the Minerals & Metals Department. His expertise lies in the processing and fine grinding of industrial minerals, with a strong focus on hard mineral industries, closely aligned with global market trends and technological developments.

Yener successfully delivered numerous processing plants for a wide range of hard minerals worldwide, including several ceramic applications, as well as critical raw materials such as rare earths. In this field, he acts as the global point of contact within the company and leads international customer projects. Yener holds a B.Eng. degree in Industrial Engineering from the Technische Hochschule Augsburg.



CARLOS OLABE

CEO, European Investment Casters Federation (EICF)

Carlos Olabe currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the European Investment Casters Federation (EICF). With a professional background spanning many industrial sectors and over two decades in the aerospace sector, Carlos held the role of Programmes Director at Industria de Turbo Propulsores (ITP Aero).

He later became CEO of PCB, a state-of-the-art investment casting company in Spain, where he led its creation and strategic positioning on the international stage over a period of ten years.



TED RHODES

Partner, Mining & Minerals, CMS

Ted is a Partner in the Energy & Infrastructure practice of CMS, an international law firm. Based in London, he heads up the CMS global Mining and Minerals team. He is a specialist in mining, energy and natural resources projects and commodities trading, having worked across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Ted is particularly familiar with Latin America, having led the CMS Brazil office for 12 years, and currently coordinating the CMS Latin America Energy & Natural Resources group. Ted advises mining and minerals, industrial and energy companies, as well as lenders, investors, suppliers, and service providers on project development, commercial contracts, and corporate matters. He has co-authored and edited a book, 'ESG in Mining & Minerals' and has a deep understanding of commodities markets and trade regulation globally.



(SARAH) ANH HOANG

ESG Consultant, ZIA

Sarah is an ESG Consultant at ZIA, where she investigates reporting motivations and monitors progress toward industry-wide sustainability targets. She has extensive experience in GHG quantification, developing carbon credit program proposals, and navigating climate reporting frameworks across the mining, apparel, and regenerative agriculture sectors. Her technical expertise includes analysing carbon reduction potentials and designing decarbonization solutions that align environmental impact with financial value. Sarah holds a Bachelor of International Economics from the University of British Columbia and was a global finalist in the 2025 Accounting4Sustainability International Case Competition. This September, she will continue her academic and professional development by joining the Master of Science in Sustainability Management (MScSM) program at the University of Toronto.



DR JOHANNES GEDIGA

Director Sustainability Consulting Metal & Mining, Sphera

Johannes Gediga is Director Sustainability Metal & Mining at Sphera. Johannes' expertise is in product and corporate sustainability with the metallurgy and mining industry including LCA and sustainability framework projects with several associations including the International Chromium Development Association, Nickel Institute, International Zinc Association, International Platinum Association, International Lead Association, EUROFER (European Stainless Steel Association), World Stainless Association, International Tin Research Institute and the Zircon Industry Association. Bilateral projects with mining and metallurgy companies include Anglo Platinum, Anglo American, Rio Tinto, Glencore, Aurubis, Baosteel, and Essar. Johannes has a Diploma in Aeronautical Engineering and a PhD in Chemical Engineering.