

# Standards for Critical Raw Materials

## Strategic standard setting in China, the EU and the Netherlands

*Standard setting is becoming increasingly relevant in securing critical raw materials and technologies needed for climate and digital ambitions. Technical standards are of major strategic importance because they offer a venue for fostering "lock in" and/or dependence. What can the Netherlands and the EU do to protect their interests and mitigate risks caused by Chinese standardization activities?*

### The Strategic Role of Standards

While traditionally seen as a purely technical tool for ensuring interoperability between products, standardization has developed into an increasingly politicized policy tool.

States and/or actors which enjoy (quasi) monopolies within the product area are seeking to formulate standards to benefit from first mover advantages, from their access to a knowledge base as well as from their products' reach – something which enables them to shape standards in their own image.

### China's ambitions

China's standardization ambitions, in the form of long-term strategies such as 'Standards 2035', lead to two distinct problems for the Netherlands and European Union:

China's quasi-monopoly in the extraction of CRM's and the development of related technologies lead to domestically introduced standards becoming de facto established internationally.

Beijing's approach to standard-setting means that the corporations & state agencies representing China in international organizations are incentivized by realizing China's strategic objectives.

### European and Chinese influence

Chinese influence within major international standard setting organizations is significant, though not (yet) dominant. EU countries have a strong representation in such organisations and are present in many value-based initiatives, where China is virtually absent.



### Recommendations for the Netherlands & EU



Institutionalize standardization as a strategic instrument through creation of a Dutch national standardization strategy



Enhance NEN-partnership to ensure alignment of goals and ambitions



Strengthen representation in international organizations to combat Chinese influence



Encourage public-private partnerships to actively propose domestic and international standards



Collaborate with CEN-CENELEC for the inclusion of standardization in European industrial alliances



The EU should leverage its regulatory power by promoting strict domestic standards



Emphasize importance of EU's 'Rolling Plans' and 'Future and Emerging Technologies' programs

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