



IIMA is a global industry association whose members account for more than 80% of production and international trade in ore-based metallics (pig iron, hot briquetted iron, direct reduced iron, granulated pig iron). Chris Barrington, Secretary to IIMA spoke to Steel360 about the association and its different activities.

Excerpts of the **INTERVIEW**

Q Can you detail us about IIMA

A. IIMA – International Iron Metallics Association which was created by merging two associations; the International Pig Iron Association and the other the Hot Briquetted Iron Association - both the associations were serving the same set of markets and had members in common, so we thought it was a good idea to bring together all based metallics under one umbrella in 2011 and now, after 7 years of successful operations, we have managed to merge the cultures of the founding associations into one. In the meantime the membership has grown significantly.

Our activities are focussed on 4 main pillars:

IIMA ; a torch bearer for the global ore-based metallics industry

1. Communications

Our goal is to deliver the right messages to our various stakeholders through our website, product literature, conference presentations, media articles, etc.

2. Product support

Part of our communications programme is to provide technical and other support to Ore-Based Metallics through our literature as well as educational and training programmes.

3. Regulatory Support

Industry associations are able to engage with regulators on a broader, industry-wide basis and lobby for regulation that is at the same time sensible in its formulation and practical in its implementation. IIMA supports its members by keeping abreast of relevant regulatory developments on a timely basis. IIMA is fortunate to have NGO consultative status at the International Maritime Organisation, enabling us to make a positive contribution to the formulation of maritime regulations affecting shipment of Ore-Based Metallics.

4. Members meetings

We have successful members meetings twice a year, once in Europe, the other in the Americas. We provide members and invited guests with high level presentations from both internal and external speakers and of course members use the opportunity to network with each other, always governed by our strict Code of Conduct which prohibits anything which could or would contravene competition law and anti-trust regulations.

Q. How do you see the Pellet & DRI situation in Iran ?

A. Iran has kept its target of 55 mnt crude steel by 2025, but it is now understood that this number is capacity rather than production, so we understand that the estimate of production is 40-45 mnt. Iran has been building up an integrated supply chain starting with iron ore, with beneficiation, pelletizing and DRI/HBI production. It appears that there is degree of imbalance which will require certain measures in the short term, e.g Iran is exporting some DRI/HBI to



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regional markets. This is probably not sustainable in the long terms and eventually the DRI & HBI will be consumed in domestic steel production.

Q. Pellets prices are on the rise, what to expect in the coming year?

A. The high price premiums for pellets in general and DR grade pellets in particular are clear evidence of a very tight pellet market. Chinese demand for blast furnace (BF) grade pellets has increased during recent months as a consequence of pollution control measures and demand from the DR sector has increased also.

On the supply side, the continuing absence of Samarco from the market remains the biggest issue: it is possible, but not certain, that Samarco will resume production in 2019, but at what level and with which product mix is unclear at this point.

Samarco is clearly too good an asset to stand idle indefinitely, but there are many issues to be solved: legal and licensing issues, financing, the optimum production solution, tailings disposal and of course the shareholders have to reach agreement on the way forward.

When it comes back into the market, Samarco will doubtless have a stabilizing impact on the pellet market and on prices.

Q. What are Technological developments you see in DRI?

A. Innovation with DRI & HBI technology is a continuous process, moving in incremental steps towards improvements in both production and products. For example, increased and smarter use of IT is important for optimizing production outcomes through continuous monitoring of performance, day-by-day, hour-by-hour. Another current focus is on optimising product quality for the EAF, e.g. by offering variable carbon content. 