

<http://imformed.com/cofermin-has-the-right-chemistry>

Cofermin has the right “chemistry”

Last year we reported on the latest stage of evolution of global mineral distributor [Cofermin Group](#), as it entered a new era of management in January 2021.

In this latest follow-up article we focus on the management and role of Cofermin’s chemicals division.



Title Image : Chemical “sourcerers”: Pictured here is fluorspar, shipped from source to market, one of the backbone chemical raw materials of Cofermin Chemicals since 2008, which has achieved “substantial growth in recent years.”

Established in 2008, the formation of [Cofermin Chemicals](#) was an important step in the group’s growth and diversification strategy.

Andreas Pabst, Managing Director, Cofermin Group, explained: “We found the right people who knew the ins and outs of the chemical business, which is very different to that of dealing in minerals.

That’s how Uli Grunow joined the Cofermin Group, now shareholder and managing director. And we recently managed to also strengthen Cofermin Chemicals’ setup by recruiting Derk Proff as director and newest shareholder in our set-up.”

From the 1 January 2021 all four founding partners of Cofermin (Ralf Ossen, Dr. Pawel Golak, Bernhard Krüger and Tim Geldmacher) moved onto the Group’s newly established Supervisory Board.

Their managerial responsibilities and duties have been transferred to their successors, the new management team comprising: Bettina Bohnen (Commercial & Risk Management, HR and Organisation), Michael Neeb (Operations, Sales and IT), Andreas Pabst (Strategy, Business Development and Marketing), as managing directors, and Jens Massenber, as the Group’s Chief Financial Officer (Finance, Controlling and Compliance).

For details and more on the Cofermin Group please see earlier articles:

[Cofermin evolves: talkin’ ’bout a new generation](#)

[M!NERALS now one of Europe’s largest industrial mineral suppliers](#)

[Bernhard Krüger, “King of Chromite”, celebrates his 60th work-anniversary at the sharp end](#)

[“Beyond Commodities”: Successful start for Cofermin’s new magnesia arm IMagine](#)



Management structure July 2022

Supervisory Board

Founding Partners: Ralf Ossen, Dr. Pawel Golak, Bernhard Krüger, Tim Geldmacher
Chairman: Stefan Schulte

<p>COFERMIN Rohstoffe Managing Directors Bettina Bohnen, Michael Neeb, Andreas Pabst</p> <p><i>Strategic market development and agency for niche industrial minerals, and secondary raw materials</i></p>	<p>Cofermin Chemicals Managing Directors Ulrich Grunow, Derk Proff, Jens Massenberg</p> <p><i>Production, trading, handling, packaging, distribution and storage of chemicals</i></p>	<p>Cofermin Chrome Managing Directors Michael Neeb, Andreas Pabst</p> <p><i>Marketing and distribution of speciality chrome ore and chrome sands in a wide range of qualities from a variety of sources</i></p>	<p>Essener Erzhandels Managing Directors Bettina Bohnen, Bernhard Krüger</p> <p><i>Distribution of Fe-based speciality raw materials</i></p>	<p>MINERALS Managing Director Robin Steger, Bettina Bohnen</p> <p><i>Supply of key minerals from Asia, S. America, including magnesia, aluminosilicates, graphite, for metallurgy, refractory, and foundry industries</i></p>	<p>IMagine Managing Directors Andreas Pabst, Jens Massenberg</p> <p><i>Global sourcing & distribution of magnesia raw materials for refractory and speciality markets</i></p>
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IMFORMED interviewed Cofermin Chemicals on its role & outlook

What was the rationale behind the formation of Cofermin Chemicals in 2008?

In the past, all four senior founding partners worked at Frank & Schulte, and at that time the distribution of chemical products belonged to Brenntag, as both companies were part of the Stinnes-Group.

After the foundation of Cofermin Rohstoffe in 2000, the senior partners saw a chance of increasing the range of products by entering the chemical business as well. This was the time, when the so called “Senior Professional Recruiting System” was started by hiring well-experienced seniors for a particular business field, in this case chemical specialities.

With Ulrich Grunow they found an expert in the market of refractories, glass, and ceramic chemical raw materials, working for more than 30 years in this field already. Ulrich became a shareholder of the newly formed Cofermin Chemicals and the business started in 2008.



Senior Management



Ulrich Grunow

*Sales,
Internet*



Derk Proff

*Purchasing, REACH, Food/Feed Sales,
Human Resources, Administration*



Jens Massenberg

Finance & Controlling

Do you have any physical assets, such as processing/storage etc.?

For logistics/warehouses we are working with external partners in Rotterdam, Hamburg and Duisburg.

For our production of Casein-based products we are running with a site in the south of Germany, and for the production on flame retardants we operate a site in Hamburg.

What are your key business sectors?

- Chromium oxide, lithium and cobalt salts and other specialities, such as borates for the refractory, glass and ceramic industries.
- Corrosion inhibitors for yellow metals.
- Calcium formate and acid Casein for the construction industry
- Silver salts for the galvanisation
- Fluorine-based products such as cryolite and fluorspar for the metallurgy and foundry industries.

What is the typical annual volume of total chemical products handled?

12,000 tpa globally

Can you identify any key trends among the supply of these primary chemicals?

Fluorine, lithium, boric acid, cobalt and chrome chemical raw materials have been the backbone of our business since 2008 and achieved substantial growth during the last few years – even during COVID-19 in 2020 until today.

Since Cofermin Chemicals is acting much more as an exclusive extended sales network for our principals than as a classical trader, the general shortage of many chemical products were less of a problem owing to close co-operation with our principals.

There is a specific division for Nutrition? When was this established and why?

In 2021 we gained the GMP+ and IFS broker certification, which allowed us to start with the distribution and marketing of Food & Feed additives in Europe. This will allow us to widen our product portfolio and continue to generate growth.

Have you seen any significant change in the practice of sourcing and supplying chemicals to markets in recent years (Covid-19 aside)?

The global shortage of products, and extremely difficult supply chain management with regard to sea and inland transportation costs.

How has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the business?

As a result of the difficult economic situation for many of our clients in the traditional industries of refractories, glass and ceramics, many clients are asking for extended payment terms to improve their financial situation.

However, meanwhile, the situation of heavy price increases and cost-price inflation forces us to often even shorten payment terms in order to simply secure product availability from many sources.