Metal Recycling in Auto Batteries & Its Impact to Business

Saugat Roy, Principal Consultant ERM, Germany

Auto-batteries demand is ever increasing. With the growing interest of the automakers in EU, and the postponement of the lead acid batteries, substitution litigation, there is lot to speculate how battery driven cars will shape the coming years of the automobile sector. It is also interesting how the Asian versus EU competition is shaping out for the battery manufacturers and the intermediates and raw material suppliers to battery producers. The market is grappling with the right material combination, recycling opportunities, substitution plans and safety aspects of the battery constitution. There is also need for more recycling of the primary resources and raw materials to keep the value chain sustainable, as the resources are finite and has significant environmental impacts associated with their procurements. Some of the leading players in the market who is supplying the key minerals and resources (like Lithium, Nickel and Cobalt, Cadmium) are looking into how to strengthen their recycling potentials through various technological solutions. The paper also explores about how the regulatory trends are supporting such efforts in Asia and EU markets. Overall, the battery market dynamics should determine if the technological options mainly in recycling the crucial metals/minerals in the value chain could keep the initiative sustainable.