

Media Information
29 November 2018

BMW Group, BASF SE, Samsung SDI and Samsung Electronics launch cross-industry project to enhance sustainable cobalt mining.

Munich, 29 November 2018: As part of a cross-industry initiative, the companies BMW Group, BASF SE, Samsung SDI and Samsung Electronics have launched a joint cobalt pilot project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A contract to this effect between the companies, together with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, will aim to improve artisanal mining working conditions, as well as living conditions for surrounding communities. The scope of the project will span over one pilot mine within the next three years, and the partners will not operate the mine.

This fully privately financed project seeks to pilot an approach to address challenges in artisanal mining. As it is limited to one pilot mine site and the surrounding community, it seeks to contribute to identifying workable solutions that lead to better working conditions at the mine site. If proven effective, these measures could then be scaled up to other legal artisanal mine sites and enhance systemic challenges in the longer run.

Cobalt is a key component in the production of batteries for the automotive and electronics industries. The world's largest known reserves of this raw material are found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Industrial mining accounts for approximately 80-85% of Congolese cobalt production, with artisanal mining operations producing the remaining 15-20%. Currently, companies are facing challenges in the areas of environment, health and safety, and human rights when cobalt is extracted through artisanal mining.

This is the first time partners from automotive, chemical and consumer electronics industries have come together in a project on the ground to address the challenges of artisanal cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This pilot project builds on a feasibility study jointly conducted by GIZ and BMW Group. Insights gained from visits to several artisanal mines, stakeholder interviews and surveys of miners and community members were instrumental in shaping this project approach.

This project also contributes to the goals of global initiatives, such as the Global Battery Alliance (GBA), to foster sustainable supply chains.

Unternehmenskommunikation

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2017, the BMW Group sold over 2,463,500 passenger vehicles and more than 164,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2017 was € 10.655 billion on revenues amounting to € 98.678 billion. As of 31 December 2017, the BMW Group had a workforce of 129,932 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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