

Media Information
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BMW Group invests in innovative method for efficient and sustainable lithium extraction

New process from Lilac Solutions focuses on sustainable extraction, efficiency and costs

Munich. The BMW Group is stepping up its expansion of electromobility and will be releasing about ten million fully-electric vehicles onto the roads over the next ten years or so. By 2030, at least half the BMW Group's global sales are expected to come from fully-electric vehicles. This will also increase the need for lithium, an important raw material for production of battery cells.

To promote environmentally-friendly, resource-efficient extraction of lithium, the BMW Group is investing, through its venture capital fund, BMW i Ventures, in an innovative process developed by US startup Lilac Solutions. Lilac Solutions has developed and patented an ion exchange technology that will significantly improve efficiency, costs and sustainability by extracting lithium from brine resources, which are natural deposits of salt water.

"Innovative technologies provide better, more sustainable and more efficient access to raw materials. By investing in startups, we are speeding up development of new technologies, stimulating competition and providing impetus that will make it easier for young companies to access the market," said Wolfgang Obermaier, Senior Vice President Indirect Goods and Services, Raw Materials, Production Partners at the BMW Group. "By investing in Lilac Solutions, we are supporting technological progress in the field of lithium extraction, with a focus on responsible and sustainable methods."

Lilac Solutions has developed a new ion exchange technology to make mining lithium from brine resources more efficient and cost-effective. The company seeks to significantly reduce environmental impact compared to conventional methods, while, at the same time, protecting local communities and ecosystems. The technology has already been proven in initial field pilots and must now demonstrate that it can be scaled

and industrialised in the mid-term. The process could then be used with brines worldwide, even if they have a low lithium content.

BMW Group provides battery cell manufacturers with responsibly extracted lithium

The BMW Group has made sustainability and resource efficiency central to the company's strategic direction. A key aspect here is compliance with environmental and social standards in the supply chain. Eliminating infringements of human rights and environmental standards presents a particular challenge in the case of critical raw materials – as is the case with lithium. For this raw material, BMW Group Purchasing has therefore implemented additional measures and is sourcing lithium directly from the mines and making it available to battery cell suppliers. In this way, the company creates complete transparency about the origin and mining methods of the material.

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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 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2020, the BMW Group sold over 2.3 million passenger vehicles and more than 169,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2020 was € 5.222 billion on revenues amounting to € 98.990 billion. As of 31 December 2020, the BMW Group had a workforce of 120,726 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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