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Copper is Material of Choice for Appliances

Copper continues to be viewed as the domestic appliance industry's preferred material and this is likely to be the case for years to come, with a predicted 1.9 million tonnes being used annually by 2022, according to new research.

The study—carried out by The Martec Group, a strategic market research firm on behalf of the International Copper Association (ICA)—points to multiple factors governing why alternatives to copper have not grasped a larger proportion of the market.

“When it comes to heat transferability, ease of welding, corrosion resistance and much more, copper outperforms potential alternatives,” said study author Keith Miller, Director, The Martec Group. “Copper is tried and tested; embedded in the design of a number of components such as the wire harness and power cords. Moreover, manufacturers are extremely cautious in making the significant investment needed to explore alternatives.”

Colin Bennett, Market Analysis and Outreach, ICA, notes, “Technological developments aside, base demand for both large and small appliances is increasing globally, particularly in developing economies. This points to increased material demand in future.”

The research highlights ovens as an example of where alternative materials are finding it difficult to compete. The global average copper use for an oven is 0.8 kg. The figure consists of a number of components, such as fan motor windings, induction coils, contacts for controls and wiring. All outperform similar components potentially made from alternative materials. With over 39 million large cooking appliance units sold in China alone in 2017, the impact on overall copper demand is significant.

Growth in appliances is predominantly occurring in countries with a developing middle class, namely China and India. Over the last five years, these two countries have experienced a 6–10% annual growth rate in appliances, and this is not expected to slow down. In the next five years, India's annual growth rate could reach 9%. As long as copper continues to be the material of choice, demand will continue to escalate.



About the International Copper Association (ICA)

ICA brings together the global copper industry to develop and defend markets for copper and to make a positive contribution to society's sustainable development goals. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., ICA has offices in four primary regions: Asia, Europe and Africa, Latin America and North America. Copper Alliance programs and initiatives are executed in nearly 60 countries through its regional offices. For additional information, please visit www.copperalliance.org.

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