

Water Scarcity to Drive Future Demand for Copper

According to new research commissioned by the International Copper Association, copper demand will likely be a major beneficiary of the growing global water crisis. The research—undertaken by strategic market intelligence company BSRIA WMI—found copper use in water and waste water utilities could grow to 260,000 tonnes per year by 2027.

BSRIA WMI Director Krystyna Dawson argues that the increasing pressure on our global water supply—caused by a growing population and industrialization of the world’s developing economies—has brought water and waste water management processes and efficiency into focus. With copper a critical material in water management technology, demand in this sector is set to grow significantly.

‘Copper is a key enabler in the transition to a more efficient water and waste water treatment process,’ notes Colin Bennett, Global Manager, Market Analysis and Outreach, ICA. ‘We can see from the research that it will play a huge role as we strive to combat growing water scarcity.’

Drivers of Growth

Copper already exists in large quantities throughout the water utility segment. 78% of it resides in pump motors while electrical wiring, heat exchangers, combined heat and power (CHP) units and other ancillary electrical equipment make up the remaining share.

However, as the spotlight falls on improving efficiency measures and replacing ageing infrastructure, the current demand of 39,000 tonnes is set to grow at an astonishing rate, driven largely by a need for more efficient motors and heat exchangers in cogeneration and ancillary applications. According to the preliminary research results, 200,000 tonnes of copper will be needed to satisfy the demand for motors in 2027.

Unsurprisingly, urbanization and industrialization in China will be the largest catalyst for growth. Due to overtake the US as the biggest market in 2019, China is expected to see a 35% increase in copper demand between 2017 and 2027.

Other emerging markets include the Arabian Peninsula, which has the largest desalination capacity in the world, and Kazakhstan, due to its significant amount of aged infrastructure and plans to progress with desalination. Copper demand is expected to grow in these regions by 25% and 17% respectively.

‘The research showcases copper’s important role in meeting one of the world’s most prominent challenges, and the positive impact on copper demand that should result from it,’ says Krystyna.



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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