

Study reveals power cable trade flows

New research, commissioned by the International Copper Association (ICA) and conducted by Fraunhofer ISI, reveals that the international trade of copper intensive power cables continues to operate mainly intra-continentially, with intercontinental trade flowing often from east to west.

Electrical conductivity is copper's largest global combined application, making the global trade of power cables pertinent to the future of the copper industry. Fraunhofer ISI's research shows that China and Korea led the global export of power cables when measured in cumulative net weight/kt, between 2000 – 2019. The top ten exporters accounted for approximately 55 percent of the exports over the same period.

Western nations, including the USA, Germany, and Great Britain receive the highest levels of imports. The UAE and Australia, positions five and seven respectively, are the only non-western countries in the top ten. The top ten importing countries accounted for around 45 percent of all power-cable imports between 2000 – 2019.

Luis Tercero, Coordinator of Business Unit Raw Materials at Fraunhofer ISI, said, "The majority of power cables are produced and used domestically within regions, but there remain examples of strong inter-continental trade. This reflects a diversified supply structure and supports the security of supply of power cables globally."

Global power cable trade flows operate a "diversified structure," with no dominant trade flows for import or export, and countries operating with multiple suppliers. In the main, Europe, Asia and the Americas operate cross-country trade flows within the respective continents. Where intercontinental flows do occur this is mainly from China and Korea, who export large net trade flows to the Americas and Australia, while Africa and Oceania also mainly import large quantities globally.

Colin Bennett, Market Intelligence Director at ICA, said, "Conducting electricity remains the single largest application of copper and understanding the trade flows for this application, where copper is an essential component, enables a fuller and more detailed view of the circular economy market demand."

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About the International Copper Association

The International Copper Association (ICA) brings together the global copper industry to develop and defend markets for copper and make a positive contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., ICA has offices in three primary regions: Asia, Europe and North America. ICA and its Copper Alliance® partners are active in more than 60 countries worldwide. For additional information, please visit www.copperalliance.org.

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