

Copper power cable underpins the energy transition

Demand for copper power cables is set to rise to more than 8.7 million metric tonnes (mt) by 2035 as the market expands by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.5 percent, according to new research released by SAI INDUSTRIAL, LLC. Copper, due to its high conductivity and energy-efficiency properties, constitutes 54 percent of the global power cable market.

The research, commissioned by the International Copper Association (ICA), showed that large-scale expansion of cabling for solar, wind and electric vehicle infrastructure is driving demand. Copper used in power cables for solar applications is expected to increase from 980,000 mt in 2021 to 6.4 million mt by 2040. Copper used in wind installations is also expected to increase significantly from 2 million mt in 2021 to 6.4 million mt by 2040.

“The electrification of society, driven by the desire to reduce CO₂ emissions in line with the Paris Agreement, is causing increased demand for copper in power cabling. The impact is seen across the world, but China is currently leading the way with 57 percent of copper use in 2021.” said Nihar Swarup, President of South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Turkey at SAI INDUSTRIAL LLC.

The research also predicts that the number of electric vehicle (EV) charging ports will grow from 3.2 million in 2021 to 152.3 million in 2040, causing copper demand in the sector to reach 978,000 mt in 2040—a substantial increase from 43,300 mt in 2021. Demand for copper in power cables will also be driven by other emerging technologies, including building and construction, data centers, smart grids, HVDC networks, energy-storage needs and smart cities.

“The global shift to renewable technologies is great news for the copper industry and climate action,” says Colin Bennett, Market Intelligence Director at ICA. “As countries invest more in solar, wind and electric vehicle infrastructure, the research anticipates big increases in copper demand for power cables. Emerging sectors such as energy storage and smart cities are also exciting opportunities where copper power cable underpins technological development.”

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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 copperalliance.org.

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