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Diego Pavia, CEO of EIT InnoEnergy attends the signature of a strategic partnership between the EU and Serbia in Belgrade alongside European Commission Vice President Maro? ?ef?ovi?, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, President of Serbia Aleksandar Vu?i? and other financial institutions and industrial companies. Image creds: Darko Vojinovic/AP Photo

Under the umbrella of the European Battery Alliance, EIT InnoEnergy will ramp up efforts boost a sustainable and resilient Serbian battery ecosystem and embed it into the existing European value chain. This commitment, supported by several financial institutions and industrial companies, comes following the signing of a new agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Serbia (signed July 19 2024) to develop a strategic partnership on sustainable raw materials, battery and electric vehicle value chains.

Serbia holds some of Europe"s largest reserves of lithium - a key component of batteries used to power electric vehicles and other applications. Through EU"s Critical Raw Materials Act, the European Commission is building a series of new Partnerships to diversify supply of raw materials such as lithium and reduce overreliance on imports from non-EU countries. In addition, key players in the battery value chain such as ElevenES, with LFP battery technology, are starting to emerge in Serbia.

InoBat said it has signed a memorandum of understanding with Serbia's Ministry of Finance and the Municipality of ?uprija, a town in the central part of the country, on building its second gigafactory.

"We are pleased to announce ?uprija as the location for our Serbia Giga Factory and recycling project code-named Lion, which has been under development for the past two years with the International Financing Corporation (IFC)," it added.

According to the firm, Lion will be its second gigafactory in Central and Eastern Europe. InoBat is developing the Voderady research and development pilot line and the mini-giga factory in Slovakia.

InoBat said the Government of Serbia is prepared to offer an incentives package of EUR 419 million for project Lion. The facility will assemble energy storage (ESS) solutions, electric vehicle (EV) batteries and recycle batteries, the company revealed and vowed to align the activities with its comC2C circular value chain development platform.

One of the investors in InoBat is Rio Tinto, which has been developing a lithium mining and processing project in the country. Following mass protests throughout Serbia and other forms of public pressure, the government decided to halt it. However, there are indications that the project could be revived, so the deal with InoBat makes it even more likely.



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" Another major plus point is the potential for co-developing our own distributed power smart grid and electricity from renewable sources for own consumption, " he added.

According to board member and CDO Tara Lindstedt, the Lion project has progressed well. She noted that earlier this year InoBat signed a memorandum of understanding with Minth Group on collaboration across the battery value chain in Europe, starting with Serbia.

"Our decision to locate InoBat's second CEE facility in Serbia was in part influenced by Minth's long and positive experience there," Lindstedt said.

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Web: https://hollanddutchtours.nl/contact-us/

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

