

Costa rica lithium-ion batteries

SAN JOSE, March 18 -- Costa Rica, a country where open pit mining is banned, has become a leader in the extraction of heavy metals such as lithium -- not from the Earth, but old batteries.

For the last six years, it has focused on extracting lithium contained in rechargeable batteries used in everything from mobile phones and laptops to electric cars and solar panels.

Unlike lithium mined elsewhere in conditions often harmful to the environment, workers and local populations, Fortech's metals are taken from 1,500 tonnes of used batteries discarded every year in Costa Rica alone, according to his son, the company's project manager.

Lithium, dubbed "white gold" or the "oil of the 21st century," has seen its price explode on the global market from US\$5,700 (RM25,567) per tonne in November 2020 to 60,500 dollars in September 2022 due to electric cars replacing their polluting, gas-guzzling forerunners.

Recycling also saves the planet of the environment pollution caused by the "usual disposal method" of lithium batteries, which is often simply to dump them, he added.

Fortech does not have the technology to further separate the individual metals in the "black mass," which it sells instead to factories in Europe to complete the process and manufacture new batteries.

According to the German development agency GIZ, Fortech has turned Costa Rica into "a pioneer in Latin America in the valorisation of used lithium batteries." -- ETX Studio

A brief review of Costa Rica's solar market outlookCosta Rica, a Central American country, has achieved impressive renewable energy capacity in recent years. In 2019, the nation's renewable energy share hit 99.15%. Looking at this renewable energy share capacity, one may assume that its solar capacity is equally impressive. Unfortunately, that assumption is inaccurate.

Solar market share statistics revealed that Costa Rica's installed solar capacity stood at 5.4 Megawatts at the end of 2019. This figure accounts for only 0.08% of the Central American nation's cumulative energy capacity. Any solar expert will agree that this is a severe cause for concern.



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