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Interview with Tero Holländer, Head of Business Line, Batteries, Fortum Recycling & Waste International Battery Recycling Congress ICBR 2022

“Fortum’s ambition is to be a significant player in the recycled battery materials market in Europe.”

ICM: What made Fortum decide to enter the battery recycling market?

Tero Holländer: As you know Finland is a major source of primary battery materials and has a long history of implementing low CO₂ solutions in its installations. We see that in the future, batteries will of course play an ever-increasing role in the energy infrastructures of the future. The Fortum group is already present on the market for energy storage and EV charging stations, plastics recycling etc. so it was a natural development for the group to create a specific business line dedicated to battery and industrial waste recycling to meet the growing demand for secondary battery raw materials in Europe.

ICM: What can you tell us about your industrial footprint and technology?

Tero Holländer: Our strategy is to develop our own technology to high technical levels, with low CO₂ technology, using our strong in-house R&D teams. We have been operating a mechanical plant in Finland for the last couple of years already. It is a concept that uses a technology that Fortum has developed itself. We already have an industrial-scale hydro-metallurgical pilot installation. For the development of the hydrometallurgy technology, we sought additional know-how and momentum by buying a local start-up company. Our next investment is a hydro-metallurgical plant coming on stream in Finland in Q1 2023, which again uses different methods for treating battery metals. But we also need to develop outside of Scandinavia to meet the needs of this growing market, so we have chosen a central-European location - to be announced next week - for our next low carbon capacity expansion, in order to best serve the European automotive and battery industries as closely as possible. Our technologies have very high yield, low CO₂ footprint, and thanks to this, perfectly meets the needs of our customers and climate.

ICM: Fortum is a sponsor of ICBR22, is this an indication of your ambitions in this market?

Tero Holländer: Of course. Fortum's ambition is to be a significant player in the recycled battery materials market in Europe. The demand is very high and Fortum is bringing sustainable, low carbon, non-conventional hydro-metallurgical technologies to the lithium-ion battery recycling space. Our plants are all scalable in the near-term to meet market needs. There are exciting, difficult technical challenges ahead, with black mass recycling as the main one currently, and we are investing and keeping an open mind about future developments. At ICBR22 we will hear about the latest innovations and meet the entire battery recycling ecosystem in one place.

ICM: Why should customers choose Fortum?

Tero Holländer: Fortum has many strengths to offer this market. We are part of a big group with investment capacity, and we are already serving the market commercially through our current installations in Finland. As well as end-of-life batteries we also have a big business in recycling side streams such as industrial scrap and waste from the metal refining industries. We are proposing the lowest CO2 technologies in a market where demand is high for low-carbon, sustainable solutions. Our IP-protected technologies meet high technical standards designed and implemented by our 50+ in-house R&D and operational staff. Fortum is ready and determined to provide the best low CO2 lithium-ion battery recycling services to the European market.

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About ICM

ICM AG is the international leader in circular economy congress organisation, specialising in automotive, electronics and battery recycling as well as e-mobility; some of the fastest-growing markets and waste streams in the world. Headquartered in Switzerland, ICM has been bringing together the entire value chain of the recycling industries in Europe, North America, and Asia for the last 27 years. The experienced ICM team speaks English, Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Serbian and Bulgarian.