

INTERVIEW

“We foresee an industry shift toward fully automated, AI-enabled, high-purity sorting solutions as the standard.”

RICHARD THOMPSON

Vice President Portfolios,
Innovation & Digital

smiths detection



ICM: Please give us a brief overview of Smiths Detection's activities in the battery recycling field.

Richard Thompson: Smiths Detection is driving innovation in the circular economy by entering the battery recycling market. Through a new joint venture with Europe's leading sorting specialist, Sortbat and the Research Institute Vito, we are applying our world-leading detection expertise to tackle one of the most urgent sustainability challenges of our time. Our solution is the first fully automated sorting line capable of identifying and classifying every type of portable battery under 5kg, including packs - across all chemistries - with over 98% accuracy.

By leveraging advanced multi-sensor technology, AI-driven classification, and proven X-ray imaging from decades of mission-critical security applications, we can eliminate the complexity of manual and hybrid sorting. The platform delivers higher safety, throughput, compliance, and material recovery, while reducing operational costs and enabling recyclers to scale with confidence.

ICM: What is the importance of battery recycling for Smiths Detection?

Richard Thompson: Battery recycling is a natural extension of our purpose: to make the world a safer place while enabling sustainable operations. The rapid rise of electric vehicles, consumer electronics, and energy storage solutions means billions of batteries will require safe and efficient recycling.

Our technology directly addresses a significant issue in the battery circular economy - sorting. By automating identification and classification, we remove safety hazards, reduce operational strain, and ensure regulatory compliance. This not only supports environmental goals, but also positions Smiths Detection in a high-growth market aligned with global sustainability and the energy transition.

ICM: How do you see this market developing?

Richard Thompson: The battery recycling sector is on the brink of exponential growth, driven by mounting regulation, extended producer responsibility (EPR) requirements, and the need for reliable recovery of critical raw materials.

As chemistries diversify and designs evolve, manual systems will be unable to keep pace with throughput and compliance demands. We foresee an industry shift toward fully automated, AI-enabled, high-purity sorting solutions as the standard. Our platform is engineered to grow with these demands - scalable from small facilities to industrial-scale operations, future-ready for new regulations, and designed to deliver safer, smarter material flows.

ICM: What are your ambitions in this market?

Richard Thompson: We aim to become the global reference in battery sorting technology - setting new benchmarks for safety, accuracy, and operational efficiency. Our ambition is to partner with battery sorters - such as Sortbat - producers, and regulators worldwide to enable scalable, compliant battery recovery at industrial volumes.

With our modular, plug-and-play design, we plan to support facilities of all sizes, expanding our footprint from Europe to global markets. The goal is clear: safer operations, cleaner inputs, and a more profitable, sustainable circular economy.

ICM: How important is it for you to have a presence at ICBR 2025 in Valencia this year?

Richard Thompson: ICBR 2025 is a critical platform for us to demonstrate that next-generation battery sorting is no longer a future vision - it's operational today. Our presence will allow us to engage with industry leaders and forge partnerships that accelerate adoption of safe, compliant, and scalable recycling infrastructure.

This year's ICBR is also our opportunity to formally announce the partnership with Sortbat - showcasing our role as an innovator in sustainable materials management. For us, it's about making battery recycling not just safer, but smarter, more profitable, and ready for the demands of tomorrow's circular economy.

Come and meet us at ICBR 2025, booth #41, shared with Sortbat.

Press Contact:

Jill Ledger-Bompard

Marketing and Communication Director

jill@icm.ch / info@icm.ch

www.icm.ch

+33 663 748 444 / +41 62 785 00 00

About ICBR: 30 years of shaping the Future of Battery Circularity!

ICBR 2025 is the international platform for reviewing the challenges faced by the Battery Recycling Industry on a global basis. For 30 consecutive years, ICBR has brought together the international community of experts and decision-makers of the entire Battery Recycling value chain, including battery recyclers and manufacturers, collection organizations, OEM's, policymakers, materials and services providers, and many more.