



association of battery  
RECYCLERS

NEWS RELEASE  
21 January 2020

## Lead battery industry and value chain establish global material stewardship programme

- Associations endorse key principles designed to serve as a best-practice framework for the responsible management of lead throughout the lifecycle of automotive and industrial batteries
- Commitment will promote continuous improvement and globally shared best practices

**A global alliance of lead and lead battery industry groups has adopted a set of guiding principles designed to help further protect workers and the environment.** The move comes as business leaders review sustainability and ways to reduce their impact on the environment at the **World Economic Forum meetings in Davos** this week.

Worldwide demand for batteries is set to increase significantly as low carbon policies promote electrification and battery energy storage. This demand will increase competition for access to raw materials and could potentially be matched by an uptick in the unregulated recycling sector. By joining forces around a new set of guiding principles, the industry is working towards addressing the improper use of substandard manufacturing and recycling operations.

In the United States and in Europe lead battery recycling is achieved in a closed loop – where the battery materials are recycled back into new batteries – with up to 99% being recycled. However, in some low and middle-income countries, improper and unregulated battery recycling of lead batteries can cause serious health risks for employees and nearby communities.

Industry groups representing lead and lead battery manufacturers and recyclers have signed up to seven key principles and launched a taskforce to implement a wide-ranging material stewardship programme. The industry groups – the [International Lead Association \(ILA\)](#), US-based [Battery Council International \(BCI\)](#), the [Association of Battery Recyclers \(ABR\)](#) and EU-based automotive and industrial battery association [EUROBAT](#) – together represent battery manufacturers in the United States and Europe and battery recyclers globally.

The guiding principles represent an agreement between the organisations, and participating member companies, to develop performance indicators and policies that will ensure continuous improvement in the management of lead exposure and emissions and further minimise the environmental impact of used lead batteries. The principles also promote the adoption of responsible sourcing policies, working through supply chains to ensure that the lead used for battery manufacturing is produced from environmentally sound recycling practices.

David Shaffer, BCI President, and President and Chief Executive Officer of US-based EnerSys said: “This is a significant moment for the lead battery industry and its lead suppliers in North America and Europe. In September we agreed to move forward with this programme, and have collaborated over the past four months to agree to this set of guiding principles. We are committed to work together for the responsible and safe manufacture and recycling of batteries and believe we can make a difference in countries where the need for improvement is greatest.”

Marc Zoellner, EUROBAT President, and Chief Executive Officer of EU-based Hoppecke Batteries said: “The main goal of this programme is to work together with stakeholders such as leading global environmental authorities, NGOs and regulators and to help improve global standards especially in low and middle-income countries. As a responsible industry, we commit ourselves to developing a formal sourcing policy and health and safety performance with the ultimate objective of establishing a new set of targets. This Material Stewardship project will supplement another self-imposed initiative from the battery industry, namely its successful “employee blood lead reduction” programme<sup>1</sup>, which was implemented in Europe and the USA more than 20 years ago.”

Last fall the groups signed a binding memorandum of co-operation and agreed to work together to boost efforts to improve battery recycling in low and middle-income countries.

### **The Guiding Principles:**

1. **Support responsible battery manufacturing and recycling** by placing environmental health and safety excellence at the heart of our operations.
2. Promote the sound management of lead exposure and emissions **by setting continuous improvement targets and sharing best practices.**
3. **Adopt responsible sourcing policies** for lead containing materials, seek to identify risks in the supply chain, and use our influence to promote best practices for EHS performance in suppliers’ operations.
4. **Minimise the environmental impact of our products** by encouraging the development of programmes that ensure effective collection, transportation and environmentally sound recycling of used lead batteries.
5. Adopt business practices that **consider the communities impacted by our operations, respect the human and labour rights** of our employees and **work against corruption** in all its forms.
6. **Proactively engage key stakeholders** in an open and transparent manner.
7. Partner with key stakeholders and government agencies to share our expertise and **promote environmentally sound recycling of lead batteries in low and medium-income countries.**

A taskforce of the associations will oversee the project which will include setting measures for member companies to assess their performance and ensure they are aligned with the guiding principles.

Additional resources will be provided to continue outreach and best practice sharing in low and middle-income countries alongside the United Nations Environment Programme and with NGOs who are working to reduce the impact of pollution from informal recycling of lead batteries.

### **Notes to editors:**

1: The memorandum of co-operation signed last year can be found [here](#).

2: For more information please contact the following media offices:

- **International Lead Association:** Hywel Jarman - Tel: +44 207 833 8090, Email: <mailto:jarman@ila-lead.org>
- **Battery Council International:** Lisa Dry - Tel: +1 202 367 1240, Email: <mailto:Ldry@batteryCouncil.org>
- **EUROBAT:** Gert Meylemans – Tel: +32 2 761 16 97, Email: [gmeylemans@eurobat.org](mailto:gmeylemans@eurobat.org)
- **ABR:** Dick Amistadi – Tel +1.202.861.1708, Email: [damistadi@nc.rr.com](mailto:damistadi@nc.rr.com)

---

<sup>1</sup> More information on the voluntary blood lead reduction target to protect worker health can be found [here](#).