

Partnership for Responsible Battery and Metal Recycling (ProBaMet)

Financed by the Initiative for Global Solidarity

A multistakeholder initiative promoting responsible battery recycling & responsible sourcing of secondary non-ferrous metals from Used Lead-Acid Batteries (ULABs) in Nigeria.

#justtransition #circulareconomy #beatpollution #EHS #secondary raw materials

Sub-standard recycling of lead acid batteries – a major risk to human health and environment

Lead-acid batteries are used in cars, off-grid solar energy applications or back-up power systems. Under the right conditions, used lead-acid batteries (ULABs) can be effectively recycled and the high market price of lead provides a profitable business opportunity. However, in many world regions recycling takes place in sub-standard, highly dangerous and unsafe conditions that release toxic lead-compounds to the workplace and surrounding environment. Lead exposure causes various severe short, mid-, and long-term health impacts. According to UNICEF, up to 800 million children mostly in low- and middle-income countries have elevated blood lead levels, carrying the danger of lifelong consequences. Sub-standard recycling practices are a major driver.

Upgrading the Industry – Enforcement and responsible sourcing

Nigeria is host to one of the largest lead-acid battery recycling industries in Sub-Saharan Africa. At least ten facilities recycle batteries on an industrial scale mainly for exporting of recovered non-ferrous metals. The project ProBaMet supports the upgrading of the recycling sector through three intervention levels: (1) Providing training on environmental health and safety to recycling facilities; (2) Create incentives to facility improvements by supporting Nigerian regulatory authorities in their enforcement; (3) Create business opportunities for high-standard recycling through a coalition of solar companies looking for responsible battery disposal solutions and international companies sourcing secondary raw materials from approved facilities.

Impact – Making standards work for people and businesses

Workers and the local population benefit from improved recycling processes, safer working conditions and sound emission control systems.

Nigerian regulatory authorities introduce and effectively enforce requirements for high-standard industrial development.

Improved business opportunities of recycling facilities contribute to the creation of “Green Jobs” in Nigeria.

The Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS) promotes human rights and environmental due diligence in global supply chains by enabling buyers and manufacturers to live up to their joint responsibility to people and the environment. Concrete objectives are to improve local capacities, reduce risks, strengthen grievance mechanisms and improve data and transparency. ProBaMet is implemented as a joint activity of IGS with the global program Go Circular.

The IGS works on behalf of the *German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)* and is implemented by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft for Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*.