Copper in demand for climate-based retrofitting

Global demand for copper in climate-based commercial building retrofitting is forecast to grow from 40KT in 2020 to 160KT by 2035, a 9.9 percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) according to new research commissioned by the International Copper Association (ICA). The study, conducted by the Building Services Research and Information Association (BRSIA), shows that as the global climate continues to change, and we experience more extreme weather, demand for climate-based retrofitting such as air conditioning (AC) installation, heating/heat pumps, and renewable energy systems is set to rise, driving demand for copper.

One of the many benefits of copper is its ability to facilitate the efficient delivery of electricity and cooling. Copper thus remains the preferred material for heat exchangers, wiring and motors, and an essential component for climate retrofitting. By application, AC (75KT Cu in 2035) and Heating/Heat Pumps (35KT Cu in 2035) will provide the largest contribution in growing demand for copper, with renewables having the highest CAGR (19.7 percent).

In the retrofitting sector, building codes, building standards and voluntary certifications, such as BREEAM in the U.K., play a large role in market growth. LEED, developed by the US Green Building Council, similarly recognize “best in class” building strategies and practices. Other factors include availability of resources for resilience, carbon reduction policies, income growth in developing countries, and the tradeoff between retrofit vs. new construction.

Regionally, the EU, along with Turkey and Russia will be the biggest contributors to copper demand (62KT Cu in 2035) through climate-based retrofitting, with the highest CAGR being in North America (11.4 percent). In regions like Europe and North America much of the existing commercial building stock is set to remain in use for several decades. This means that the focus needs to be on measures that will reduce the “carbon footprint” of existing buildings while making them more able to face up to climate change.

Anette Meyer, Business Manager of Worldwide Market Intelligence (WMI) said, “Our research shows copper has a significant role to play in meeting the demand for climate-based retrofitting in the built environment. As the global climate changes, and demand for climate-based retrofitting rises, our research indicates there is a significant opportunity for the copper industry.”

Colin Bennett, Market Intelligence Director at ICA, stated “BSRIA’s research demonstrates that copper continues to be a preferred material in many building construction applications. With the built environment adapting to a changing climate, and as governments across the world introduce green building regulations, demand for copper’s excellent thermal and electrical conductivity properties is forecast to grow. In commercial buildings alone, the study forecasts that demand for copper will increase to 160KT by 2035.”

About the International Copper Association

The International Copper Association's members represent a majority of global copper production and include some of the world's largest manufacturers of copper semi-end-use products. ICA brings together the global copper industry to develop and defend markets for copper and to make a positive contribution to society's sustainable-development goals. ICA's status as a not-for-profit trade association provides its members with a credible, independent advocate to address challenges faced by the collective industry. ICA is headquartered in Washington, D.C. ICA and its Copper Alliance® partners are active in more than 60 countries worldwide. For additional information visit copperalliance.org.

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