

Costa rica battery recycling

A pioneering company recycles this waste in Costa Rica in search of a circular economy future. Phones, laptops, tablets, electric vehicles and solar receivers need lithium batteries to operate. The question is what to do with them when they run out and become garbage that takes 500 years to decompose.

A Costa Rican company works to install a battery recycling and end-of-life plant that plans to replicate its commitment with allies throughout the region.

Costa Rica, un país líder en la transición hacia la movilidad sostenible, inauguró el pasado 24 de noviembre la primera planta de reciclaje de baterías de litio en el país. La planta, propiedad de la empresa costarricense Fortech, tiene una capacidad de procesamiento de 1.000 toneladas de litio al año.

Lithium Battery recycling. FORTECH is a Costa Rican company leader in the sustainable transformation of waste into useful resources through high-tech industrial processes. They present themselves as an "urban mine" that seeks to extract critical metals in the waste sector and not through the exploitation of the soil, and as "the bridge between ...

Costa Rica, a country where open pit mining is banned, has become a leader in the extraction of heavy metals such as lithium; not from the Earth, but old batteries.

The Fortech recycling factory which opened nearly three decades ago in Cartago about 27 kilometers (17 miles) from the capital San Jose, is referred to by its staff as an "urban mine";

For the last six years, it has focused on extracting lithium contained in rechargeable batteries used in everything from mobile phones and laptops to electric cars and solar panels.

Millions of batteries are discarded every year. While the battery casings take about 100 years to decompose, the often toxic heavy metals inside never do.

For Fortech, this presents a proverbial gold mine, and for our planet, perhaps a lifeboat. "We now know that waste does not exist. We know it is a resource that can be used again," said Fortech managing director Guillermo Pereira.

"It's important to break paradigms," added the 54-year-old, who with his son Francisco, 25, created a new method for extracting metals from used batteries.

"The world needs a circular economy" that recycles precious primary materials rather than



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sourcing new ones, said Pereira.

Unlike lithium mined elsewhere in conditions often harmful to the environment, workers and local populations, Fortech's metals are taken from 1,500 tons of used batteries discarded every year in Costa Rica alone, according to his son, the company's project manager.

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