

Energy storage for electric vehicles zambia

Lusaka, Zambia, 15 April 2024 - The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA) and Afreximbank in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry organised a technical meeting to review the findings and recommendations of the prefeasibility study for implementation of a Transboundary Battery and Electric Vehicle industry Special Economic Zone in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia.

The overall objective of the workshop was to review the prefeasibility study for completeness and accuracy of the issues presented; assess the depth of its coverage, the accuracy of the analysis and the completeness of the report's observations and conclusions as guided by the terms of reference; provide inputs and recommendations towards improving the quality of the report through additional information to close the gaps in the analysis and recommend any specific actions needed to take the process forward to the next stage.

She indicated that, "Zambia and DRC are home to at least 70 percent of minerals required to actualise this vision. The Joint Initiative aims to utilise the mineral complementarities to enable the two countries to unlock economic opportunities and strengthen the value chain to produce battery precursors and batteries for electric cars".

In her remarks, Ms. Eunice Kamwendo, Director, ECA Office for Southern Africa, emphasised the benefits of the BEV initiative in the two countries especially, contribution towards socio- economic development and structural transformation; value addition to the minerals, attraction of domestic and foreign direct investment into the sector; creation of sustainable jobs, contribution to economic transformation and the facilitation of manufacturing agglomeration and also the generation of knowledge and technology to support value addition and the deepening of linkages.

The technical session included a detailed presentation of the findings and recommendations of the Prefeasibility Study by the ARISE IIP team led by Animesh Ahaskar, General Director followed by plenary discussions on the on legal/regulatory framework and the technical aspects.

The Ministry, Afreximank and UNECA appreciated the participation of stakeholders in the technical meeting and underscored that the review provided a platform for all stakeholders to delve into the details of the prefeasibility study to deepen understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in establishing the electric vehicle and battery and clean energy value chain. The need to proceed with speed in towards implementation was underscored.

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) have signed a framework agreement with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia for the

establishment of special economic zones for the production of electric vehicles and batteries as the continent looks to add value to surging demand for its critical minerals.

Both countries have major reserves of some of the critical minerals needed to produce batteries for electric vehicles and other technologies key to the green energy transition. The DRC accounts for approximately 70% of global cobalt supply and 88% of cobalt exports. The two countries together contribute 11% of all copper supply globally. Both countries also possess reserves of lithium, a key ingredient in electric vehicle batteries. But until now both nations have been relegated to the role of suppliers of unprocessed critical minerals to foreign manufacturers.

In order to ensure that the countries move higher up in the value chain, Afreximbank and ECA will lead the establishment of an operating company in consortium with public and private investors and Afreximbank's impact fund subsidiary, the Fund for Export Development in Africa. The new company will develop special economic zones (SEZs) dedicated to the production of battery precursors, batteries, and electric vehicles, in both nations.

SEZs come in many forms, and their effectiveness in Africa is the topic of much debate, but they are usually geographically limited areas where companies enjoy tax benefits and other legal privileges, set up in order to attract foreign investment and boost employment.

ARISE Integrated Industrial Platform, a pan-African infrastructure developer, has been selected as the technical consultant to conduct the pre-feasibility study for the establishment of the SEZs in DRC and Zambia.

The organisers say the project will deploy well-established and proven EV technology that will enable both countries to exploit their mineral resources at scale. It will accelerate the manufacture of pre-export value-added products, enabling them to capture more value within these states and it will result in new demand for skilled engineers with technical expertise, providing a significant boost to local labour markets.

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