

South Africa eyes key role in global shift toward battery-powered future

The world's reliance on batteries is growing rapidly, encompassing everything from vehicles to electronics and energy storage. This trend could position South Africa as a major contributor, says Oscar van Antwerpen, head of geological consulting firm Minrom.



A lithium processing plant in Africa

Van Antwerpen emphasises that battery minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, manganese, and graphite are essential to this transition. Yet, he expresses concern about South Africa achieving its renewable energy goals. The updated energy plan targets [and over 100GW of new capacity by 2050, but battery storage solutions are a crucial factor in realising these ambitions.](#)



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"Demand for these minerals has skyrocketed," states van Antwerpen, noting the expansion of e-mobility and renewable energy sectors. "Consumers need to understand the implications. It affects technological innovation, the availability of electric cars, and even our ability to overcome the ongoing energy crisis."

He also stresses that the price and supply of battery minerals directly influence the adoption and affordability of green energy technologies.

"Consumers invested in switching to cleaner energy sources and efficient storage solutions should be informed about the complexities within the battery mineral mining industry; these minerals are central to a sustainable transition," he adds.

Lithium development

There has been a dramatic change in how minerals like lithium are used in recent years. "While it has well-known applications in medicine, its role in powering a cleaner future is now paramount," he says.

Copper, vital for wiring, is another sought-after mineral as the shift to electric vehicles accelerates. Van Antwerpen's central question is how to responsibly satisfy surging global demand. This is where his company, Minrom, plays a key part in providing specialised geological expertise to locate and ethically develop mineral deposits.

"We prioritise maximising resources with minimal environmental impact," says van Antwerpen.

"Our team works across Africa, including countries like Namibia, the DRC, and Madagascar, to identify and responsibly extract these critical materials," he explains.

The battery revolution is far from over. With African companies aiming to meet global demands responsibly, South Africa could emerge as a significant force in the green energy landscape.

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