

Press Release

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Boliden launches new nickel strategy

Boliden will launch an independent nickel smelting business, buying nickel concentrates from external suppliers and selling nickel matte to nickel refineries. The annual production is estimated to remain at 25,000 tonnes of nickel in matte.

The combined copper and nickel smelter, Boliden Harjavalta in Finland, has been smelting nickel concentrates since the mid 1950's. For several years Boliden Harjavalta has been smelting nickel concentrates owned by external parties for a fee – a system known as tolling. In 2013, approximately 250,000 tonnes of nickel concentrates were processed into nickel matte, containing about 25,000 tonnes of nickel, for further treatment at external nickel refineries. In connection with the current tolling contract expiring, Boliden will change its nickel business model to more resemble the model for the Group's copper and zinc business. Instead of processing nickel concentrates for customers Boliden will buy concentrates from a variety of mines and sell the nickel matte to nickel refineries.

The global market for nickel is approximately 2 million tonnes per annum and the Chinese stainless steel producers are the most important buyers. Global smelter capacity reductions and new nickel mines coming on stream are expected to result in increased demand for nickel smelting.

“The timing is good and the change of business model gives us an exciting opportunity to start sourcing concentrates and supplying the growing market. As the only nickel smelter in Western Europe, Boliden Harjavalta is strategically positioned, with a short distance to a port and the lowest sulphur dioxide emissions per tonne of nickel of any nickel smelter in the world”, says Kerstin Konradsson, President Boliden Smelters.

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