

Scrap metals recycler Romco eyes green hydrogen to power furnaces in Africa

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Romco Metals, which recycles scrap aluminium in Nigeria and Ghana, is planning to expand output by more than five times to 100,000 tonnes a year, its CEO said, and is working on a project to create green hydrogen to power its furnaces.



Workers sort pieces of an aluminium engine at a Romco Recycling facility in Lagos, Nigeria. 2022. Source: Reuters/Seun Sanni

Romco, a UK-based non-ferrous metals recycling firm, said it was in advanced talks to raise \$50m in debt and equity to help drive the expansion plan.

CEO and founder Raymond Onowigun said Romco was looking at opening seven new plants in Africa in the next five years to meet growing demand for aluminium. The firm has recently started recycling copper.

Romco's recycling plants in Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos and Ghana use compressed natural gas to run furnaces that produce a combined 18,000 tonnes of aluminium ingots a year.

"We are looking at using solar, and we are currently working with a UK university taking the solar and creating green hydrogen for heat generation to power our furnaces. This is a medium to long term plan," Onowigun said.



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Green hydrogen, produced from splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, is seen as key to help decarbonise industry, though the technology remains immature and relatively costly.

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