

Recycling of telecom and IT equipment – now a statutory and mandatory requirement

## Sweden Europe's leading recycler of electronic waste

Top marks for copper

**One of the key materials in all modern telecom and IT equipment is copper. Due to its remarkable electrical conductivity copper is part of all electronic products used in our daily life, such as computers, mobile telephones and ADSL connections. According to the EU WEEE directive, which came into force in the Member States on August 13, copper is a vital contributor to sustainable development. 100 % recyclable, copper can be recycled over and over again without any loss of quality or performance.**

**“From an environmental perspective, copper’s outstanding recycling properties are especially valuable, as the copper demand increases. Furthermore, recycling copper requires 85 per cent less energy than mining new copper ore”, says Mariann Sundberg, Managing Director of the Scandinavian Copper Development Association SCDA.**

As of August 13, the Member States\* are required to transpose the WEEE Directive into national law. The directive, which was adopted on 13 February 2003, concerns the recovery and the recycling of waste from electrical and electronic equipment. Given the significant increase for this type of waste, the EU requires Member States to implement rules organising the collection and the sorting of electrical waste.

Manufacturers of electronic equipment are thus required to fund their collection and recycling by 2006.

The recovery rate of telecommunications and information technology equipment must by then reach 75%, with 65% for reuse or recycling.

The recycling properties of copper have been known since the Bronze Age, and this has given rise to a highly advanced industrial infrastructure capable of melting down practically 100 % of all copper scraps. According to the latest data issued from the International Copper Study Group (ICSG), an intergovernmental multilateral institution, deposited with the United Nations, more than 40% of the European copper usage is met through recycling.

### **New Boliden recycles a third of the world's electrical waste**

Rönnskär is in a class of its own as Europe's biggest recycler of electronic scrap. In global terms, a third of the world's electronic scrap, processed in smelters, is recycled here. The plant primarily recovers copper, silver, zinc, nickel and gold and has been recycling copper from electronic waste since 1967.

“We started to recycle electronic waste from the United States in the 60s. At that time, we didn't know that we were recycling the world's very first printed circuit boards”, says Theo Lehner, Development Manager. Since then, the Rönnskär plant has evolved into one of the world's most efficient smelting plants. Approximately one fourth of the materials processed at the plant are different kinds of electronic and telecom waste, copper alloys with precious metals, metal concentrates and pure scrap copper.

“Computers, mobile phones and other electronic devices contain 5-20 per cent copper. A computer can contain 1.5 kg copper, and according to the European Environment Agency 140 million computers were sold in 2003. When all this is scrapped, what we get is the equivalent of a copper mine with 210,000 tonnes of copper waiting to be reused. It is vital that we all make this connection and thereby ensure that all electronic waste is collected and recycled”, Mariann Sundberg says.

“The new WEEE directive provides New Boliden with strong opportunities”, says Theo Lehner. “Our objectives are to increase the share of electronic waste processed at Rönnskär and a positive side effect is that this also increase our contribution to a sustainable society.”

#### **For more information, please contact:**

Mariann Sundberg, Managing Director, SCDA, phone +46 (0)21 21198273 or +46 (0)707 669529, [scda.info@outokumpu.com](mailto:scda.info@outokumpu.com),  
Theo Lehner, Development Manager, Rönnskärsverken, phone + 46 (0) 910 - 77 34 95, 46 (0) 70 743 54 28, [theo.lehner@boliden.com](mailto:theo.lehner@boliden.com)  
Elisabeth Nyström, MünzÅlenius PR, phone +46 (0) 8 56228004, +46 (0)705 504790, [elisabeth.nystrom@munzalenius.se](mailto:elisabeth.nystrom@munzalenius.se)

SCDA, Scandinavian Copper Development Association in Västerås, Sweden serves as a link between international research bodies and users of copper and copper alloys. Its task is to promote the correct and efficient use of copper and copper alloys and to provide service in the form of information and advice on issues relating to copper in all its forms, both to its members and to the public. Another key task for SCDA is to spread awareness of the role played by copper in modern society. SCDA is a member of the European Copper Institute (ECI) and the International Copper Association Ltd (ICA). [www.scda.com](http://www.scda.com), [www.eurocopper.org](http://www.eurocopper.org)

\* With the exception of Greece, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta and Poland, all of which received a 24-month extension to the deadline.