

# News Release

P229/21e  
June 8, 2021

## Companies start partnership for sustainable Lithium mining in Chile

- **Responsible Lithium Partnership seeks to promote sustainable development and improved natural resource management**
- **BASF, Daimler AG, Fairphone, and Volkswagen Group fund the initiative at its inception**
- **GIZ to initiate a participatory process, inviting all relevant actors in the Salar de Atacama to work on a joint action plan**
- **Focus on protection of the Salar de Atacama watershed in Chile**

Several companies have initiated a “Responsible Lithium Partnership” aiming to work towards responsible natural resource management, including lithium, in Chile’s Salar de Atacama. This cross-industry partnership is funded at its inception by BASF, Daimler AG, Fairphone, and Volkswagen Group. The partnership intends to foster a dialogue among local stakeholders, generating -and synthesizing scientific facts- and seeking solutions in a participatory manner.

Due to the expansion of electromobility and digitalization, the demand for lithium as key material in batteries is expected to grow in the next years. The world’s largest lithium reserves and large parts of the total production are located in the Salar de Atacama. The region’s ecosystem is fragile and there is lack of consensus regarding the impacts and risks of lithium mining and other economic activity in the region. Potential risks derived from water and brine table shifts could potentially harm the ecosystems and affect local livelihoods. Addressing such water-related risks effectively requires the collaboration of stakeholders.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, commissioned by the companies, will coordinate the partnership seeking to find common ground by building a multi-stakeholder platform among all relevant actors in the Salar watershed, ranging from civil society groups including indigenous communities, government institutions, mining companies and beyond.

The platform aims to facilitate a common understanding of the status quo and jointly develop a shared vision for the future of the Salar de Atacama watershed. In addition, it intends the co-development of a joint action plan to improve long-term integrated natural resource management and undertake the first implementing steps. Another aim is to synthesize and verify available technical data, improve on it if necessary, and increase accessibility. The Responsible Lithium Partnership will commence in spring 2021, with a planned duration of 2.5 years. It does not intend to facilitate the sourcing of lithium nor the purchase or selling of any raw mineral.

The financing companies BASF, Daimler AG, Fairphone, and Volkswagen Group are aware of their responsibility along the entire supply chain, including their human rights due diligence for raw material sourcing and production. They have, therefore, initiated the “Responsible Lithium Partnership” to promote sustainable development, contribute to the reduction of potential negative impacts and strengthen the protection of human rights. The Responsible Lithium Partnership shows that in today’s highly interconnected value chains, responsible business conduct is not only based on collaborating with business partners, but also relies on constructive engagement with governments and civil society. As such, the Partnership aims at a holistic approach and seeks to connect all local stakeholders in a joint vision for the Salar de Atacama.

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