

Vedanta plans to invest \$2 b in Saudi Arabia copper projects

Bloomberg

Vedanta is set to invest \$2 billion to build copper-processing facilities in Saudi Arabia, a significant boost for the kingdom's ambitions to become a global metals and mining hub.

The firm, controlled by Indian billionaire Anil Agarwal, will build a smelter and refinery with a capacity of 4,00,000 tonnes per year, according to a statement on Tuesday. Vedanta also plans to set up a facility to produce over 3,00,000 tonnes of copper rods, a key raw material for electric cables.

"It's just impossible to ignore the demand for copper," Chris Griffith, Chief Executive Officer of Vedanta Base Metals, said in an interview. "This project ties in



very nicely, both with our own ambitions as Vedanta to grow our footprint in India and the Middle East, but also with the industrial growth strategy in Saudi Arabia and their desire to secure a copper supply chain."

PRODUCTION PLAN

The firm plans to commence operations in the kingdom with a 125 kilotonne per year copper rod mill project that will require an investment of about \$30 million, it said in a statement. Full commercial production is expected to

start in 2026. Vedanta's \$2 billion investment will be among the biggest by a foreign firm backing Saudi Arabia's metals strategy, and a major boost for Riyadh's efforts to attract foreign direct investment to help drive Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's economic diversification plan.

"This part of the Middle East is where the next wave of growth is happening," Griffith said. Vedanta hasn't yet inked further agreements with Saudi companies but there will be opportunities to partner with local firms, he said. The kingdom, which aims to become a hub for mining and metals processing for the Middle East and Africa, estimates it has untapped resources including phosphate, copper, gold and bauxite worth as much as \$2.5 trillion.