

Japan recycles to be resource-rich

Industrial demand for rare metals and other materials is making trash a top commodity in international trade, says Japan's *Asahi Shimbun*.

Companies have begun setting up cross-border arrangements for recycling, but the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry aims to improve efficiency even further by establishing a network in Asia.

Even that might be only a step to a larger goal. "If we make recycling a global industry, Japan could turn into a 'resource-rich' country," said a spokesman at the ministry's Recycling Promotion Division.

Indium, which is used in electrodes for liquid crystal displays, is another rare metal whose demand has been sharply increasing.

The metal's prices has shot up about 10 fold over the last two years. Dowa Mining, which has its own technology to recycle the metal, has the world's

largest share of indium recycling. Currently, the company collects indium only from discarded parts produced at LCD-panel factories in Japan and South Korea.

It has also established a technology to collect the metal from completed products for future implementation.

Despite the obvious advantages of recycling, such processing facilities are not always welcomed.

Fuji Xerox Co had to overcome legal barriers in Thailand on the trade of waste products, to establish a regional recycling centre for office equipment, such as copiers and printers.

Since December, Fuji Xerox Eco-Manufacturing Co in Thailand has been recycling discarded products collected from eight countries in Asia and Oceania, as well as Hong Kong. Products in Japan are processed separately.

Substances such as mercury and cadmium, which require advanced processing technology, are sent to plants in Japan.

Fuji Xerox, which achieved a recycling ratio of 99.97% in Japan in 2000, aims to spread its methods in the region. It hopes to establish a corporate image as an eco-friendly company.

The industry ministry aims to start a project with China by the end of the year to facilitate recycling of personal computers, copiers and components.

It plans to transport to China, for example, materials used in TV cathode ray tubes for recycling because such materials are no longer used in Japan.

Material containing lead and substances that complicate recycling would be shipped to Japan, which has the required processing technology.

Source: www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/

Skyworks and Qualcomm cross license

Skyworks Solutions Inc has settled patent infringement litigation with Qualcomm Inc, and granted Qualcomm a worldwide license to manufacture and sell ICs, under Skyworks' patents at issue.

San Diego-based Qualcomm has granted Skyworks a global license to make and sell radio frequency chips under the Qualcomm patents at issue in the litigation, and said all claims and counter-claims have been dismissed.

In addition, Skyworks has granted Qualcomm a global license under Skyworks' Selectable Mode Vocoder patent portfolio.

This agreement covers certain next-generation vocoders - including the 4GV vocoder - in software and Qualcomm's chips.

"We are delighted to settle our differences and move forward with Qualcomm under mutual beneficial cross licenses," said Mark V B Tremallo, VP and general counsel of Skyworks.

The company's ICs are made out of GaAs, a material that performs faster and consumes less energy than standard-use silicon.

The agreement settles litigation that was originally filed in San Diego in 2002.

However, Qualcomm is still under attack by Broadcom whose "unfortunate preference for the litigation forum rather than the negotiating table will require Qualcomm to proceed with litigation of its own," Louis Lupin, Qualcomm's general counsel is reported as saying.

Web: www.skyworksinc.com
Web: www.qualcomm.com
Web: <http://news.ft.com>

Low cost service trends

Low-cost MVNOs, shaking up a stagnant European prepaid market, are threatening to grab as much as 15% of the available market share over the next five years, according to "EasyMobile: Trends in Low-Cost Service Provision in Europe" from Strategy Analytics.

Operators finally waking up to this unpleasant truth, are reacting by launching their own low-cost offers, like "Simyo," from E-Plus, launched recently in Germany. However, the threat from no-frills players still looms large over the entire mobile industry.

Although prepaid users now account for 60% of mobile users in Western Europe, these

are now being targeted by low-cost MVNOs offering significantly lower call rates.

"Even though prepaid was the engine that accelerated mobile growth in Europe," said Sara Harris, senior industry analyst at Strategy Analytics, "the majority of prepaid offers today are not only expensive, but they ignore customer demands for drastically lower-cost pricing."

"Thus, low-cost MVNOs have been able to storm into the market, appropriating customers for whom price is king."

David Kerr, VP of the Global Wireless Practice, noted, "Existing operators are begin-

ning to fight back, but are constrained by fears of an all-out price war which could dilute brand loyalty."

The Simyo launch, a new, German, low-cost brand from E-Plus, goes head-to-head with Germany's thriving MVNO culture, adding much needed choice and value for money to the prepaid market.

Strategy Analytics' report establishes the status quo in the prepaid market today, detailing the impact of the emerging multiple low-cost MVNOs. It profiles a number of market players including Virgin Mobile, Telfort, EasyMobile and TeleFinland, and details the varying reactions to this latest business threat.