

# **Cobalt Market – Global Industry Size, Share, Trends, Opportunity, & Forecast 2018-2028 Segmented By Product (Cobalt Sulfate, Cobalt Oxide, Cobalt Metal, Others), By Application (Electric Vehicles, Other Batteries, Industrial Metals, Industrial Chemicals, Superalloys), By Region, Competition**

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## **Abstracts**

Global Cobalt Market was valued at USD 15.98 billion in 2022 and is anticipated to project robust growth in the forecast period with a CAGR of 6.19% through 2028. The transition to electric vehicles, supported by government incentives and environmental concerns, has led to a surge in demand for cobalt in lithium-ion batteries. Cobalt enhances battery performance and energy density, making it a crucial component in the EV industry's growth.

### **Key Market Drivers**

#### **Electric Vehicle (EV) Revolution**

The Electric Vehicle (EV) Revolution as a market driver for the global cobalt market is a transformative force with profound implications. As the world shifts toward sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation options, electric vehicles have gained significant momentum, and cobalt plays a crucial role in this industry's growth. The primary driver for cobalt demand in the EV industry is the substantial increase in EV sales and market penetration. Governments and consumers are increasingly recognizing the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels. This has led to a surge in EV adoption worldwide. Electric vehicles are now available in various segments, from compact cars to SUVs and even commercial

vehicles. Major automakers have committed to transitioning their fleets to electric, further driving EV market growth.

Cobalt's critical role in lithium-ion batteries, which power most electric vehicles, cannot be overstated. Cobalt is an essential component of the battery cathodes, particularly in high-energy-density batteries. Cobalt-containing cathodes offer advantages in terms of energy storage capacity, power density, and overall battery performance. As automakers seek to develop EVs with longer driving ranges and shorter charging times, the demand for cobalt remains robust. However, it's worth noting that there is also a push to reduce cobalt content in batteries due to concerns about supply chain sustainability and ethical mining practices.

The global cobalt supply chain faces challenges related to ethical sourcing. A significant portion of the world's cobalt production is concentrated in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where concerns about labor conditions and child labor have raised ethical concerns. As a result, companies and governments are increasingly scrutinizing the cobalt supply chain, leading to efforts to reduce reliance on DRC-sourced cobalt and promote sustainable and ethical practices. The electric vehicle industry continually seeks to innovate and improve battery technology to make EVs more accessible, efficient, and cost-effective. Research into alternative battery chemistries with reduced or no cobalt content is ongoing, and these innovations could impact the future demand for cobalt. New technologies and materials, such as solid-state batteries and alternative cathode materials, have the potential to change the dynamics of the cobalt market in the coming years. Governments worldwide are implementing policies and incentives to promote electric vehicle adoption. These measures often include subsidies, tax incentives, and stricter emissions standards. Government support significantly boosts EV sales and influences the cobalt market by increasing demand for electric vehicle batteries.

## Renewable Energy and Energy Storage

Renewable energy and energy storage are significant market drivers for the global cobalt market, as cobalt plays a pivotal role in the production of energy storage systems, particularly lithium-ion batteries used for grid-scale and home energy storage. Renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, have experienced substantial growth as the world seeks to reduce carbon emissions and transition away from fossil fuels. These sources are inherently intermittent, which makes energy storage systems crucial for storing excess energy generated during periods of high production and delivering it during periods of low production. Cobalt is essential in lithium-ion

batteries, which are widely used for this purpose.

The integration of renewable energy into the grid has created challenges related to grid stability and reliability. Energy storage systems, equipped with lithium-ion batteries, provide a solution by storing excess energy during periods of high generation and releasing it when demand is high or during periods of low renewable energy production. Cobalt-containing cathodes in these batteries enhance their energy density and overall performance, ensuring the reliability of energy storage systems.

The demand for energy storage solutions is steadily increasing in various sectors, including residential, commercial, and industrial. Energy storage systems are used to reduce electricity costs, manage peak demand, and provide backup power during outages. As businesses and households adopt these systems, the demand for cobalt in energy storage batteries grows. Moreover, the adoption of electric vehicles contributes to the growth of energy storage, as these vehicles can also function as mobile energy storage units, further driving the demand for cobalt-containing batteries. In remote and off-grid areas, renewable microgrids powered by solar panels, wind turbines, or other renewable sources are becoming more common. These microgrids use energy storage systems to ensure a stable and continuous power supply. Cobalt-containing batteries are vital components in these systems, further increasing the demand for cobalt in regions where traditional grid infrastructure is limited or unreliable. The energy storage industry is characterized by ongoing research and development in battery technology. Researchers are exploring advanced battery chemistries, such as solid-state batteries, to improve the performance and safety of energy storage systems. While these innovations aim to reduce or eliminate cobalt use, they also signify the importance of cobalt in the present generation of lithium-ion batteries.

## Consumer Electronics

Consumer electronics are a significant market driver for the global cobalt market due to the metal's essential role in lithium-ion batteries used in smartphones, laptops, and various portable devices. Consumer electronics have become an integral part of modern life, with smartphones, laptops, tablets, and other portable devices being widely used for communication, entertainment, work, and productivity. The global penetration of consumer electronics is extensive, and this leads to a consistent and substantial demand for cobalt.

The consumer electronics industry continually strives for miniaturization and lightweight designs while maintaining high energy density in batteries. Cobalt is a critical

component in lithium-ion batteries, particularly in the cathodes, due to its ability to enhance energy density and overall battery performance. This is crucial for enabling longer battery life and more efficient power management in these devices.

The consumer electronics sector is characterized by rapid technological advancements and product innovation. Each new generation of devices typically demands higher battery capacities and power efficiency. This constant innovation drives manufacturers to seek materials and technologies that can deliver improved performance, which maintains and even increases the demand for cobalt. Battery life is a key consideration for consumers, and manufacturers aim to extend the usage time between charges. This objective requires the use of high-energy-density batteries, which rely on cobalt for optimal performance. As devices evolve and consumers demand longer battery life, cobalt's role in these batteries remains pivotal. Emerging markets, such as those in Asia and Africa, are experiencing robust economic growth. With increasing disposable incomes, more consumers in these regions can afford consumer electronics, which leads to a surge in demand for devices and, consequently, batteries that contain cobalt.

### Aerospace and Defense

The aerospace and defense sector are a significant market driver for the global cobalt market due to its essential use in the production of cobalt-based superalloys, which are critical for various components in aircraft engines, gas turbines, and military applications. Cobalt-based superalloys are a class of high-performance materials designed to withstand extreme conditions, including high temperatures, pressures, and corrosion. These superalloys are used in aircraft engines, gas turbines, and other high-temperature applications. Cobalt's role in these superalloys is pivotal because it provides the necessary high-temperature strength, creep resistance, and corrosion resistance. As the aerospace and defense industry pushes the boundaries of performance and efficiency, the demand for these superalloys remains significant.

The aerospace sector, particularly in commercial aviation, is continually advancing engine technology to reduce fuel consumption, lower emissions, and enhance performance. These advancements often require more advanced materials, including cobalt-based superalloys, to endure the extreme conditions within jet engines. Cobalt's ability to maintain mechanical properties at high temperatures makes it indispensable in the development of more efficient and environmentally friendly aircraft engines. The defense industry relies on cobalt-based superalloys for critical components in military aircraft, naval vessels, and land-based military equipment. These materials offer the durability and high-temperature resistance needed for military applications. As military

spending and innovation continue, the demand for cobalt in these sectors remains strong.

The aerospace industry is characterized by steady global air travel growth. As more people choose air travel for business and leisure, the demand for commercial aircraft increases. The expanding airline fleets and the continuous development of new aircraft models contribute to the consistent demand for cobalt-based superalloys in the aerospace sector. The aerospace and defense sectors invest heavily in materials research and development to improve the performance and efficiency of their equipment. This includes exploring new superalloys, coatings, and manufacturing processes. While researchers aim to reduce reliance on cobalt for cost and supply chain reasons, cobalt-based superalloys continue to be a significant part of the materials portfolio.

## Key Market Challenges

### Supply Chain Vulnerabilities

One of the most significant challenges facing the cobalt market is its supply chain vulnerabilities. The majority of the world's cobalt production is concentrated in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a region plagued by political instability and ethical concerns related to mining practices. This concentration of supply in a politically unstable area poses risks of disruption due to labor strikes, political unrest, or regulatory changes. Any supply disruption in the DRC can have a significant impact on global cobalt availability and prices. Efforts to diversify cobalt sourcing to more stable regions are ongoing, but these efforts take time and can be costly.

### Ethical and Environmental Concerns

Cobalt mining in the DRC has faced criticism for environmental degradation and ethical issues, including child labor and unsafe working conditions. The environmental concerns include deforestation, water pollution, and inadequate waste management. Increased scrutiny and ethical consumerism have put pressure on the cobalt supply chain to address these issues. Companies are working on improving transparency, responsible sourcing, and sustainability. However, these efforts can increase production costs and may lead to supply chain disruptions as ethical standards are enforced.

### Efforts to Reduce Cobalt Content

While cobalt is a crucial component of lithium-ion batteries, there is a growing effort to reduce or eliminate cobalt in battery formulations due to concerns about supply chain stability and ethical considerations. Researchers are exploring alternative cathode materials and battery chemistries that use less cobalt or none at all. If successful, this could reduce the demand for cobalt in certain applications, particularly in consumer electronics and electric vehicles. Such advancements in battery technology could potentially reduce the growth potential of the cobalt market.

## Key Market Trends

### Transition to Ethical and Sustainable Sourcing

A significant trend in the cobalt market is the increasing emphasis on ethical and sustainable sourcing. Concerns about child labor, unsafe working conditions, and environmental degradation in cobalt mining, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), have prompted industry stakeholders to act. Companies are under pressure from consumers, investors, and regulatory bodies to ensure that their cobalt supply chains meet strict ethical and environmental standards. Ethical and sustainable sourcing practices are becoming a key priority. This trend involves efforts to track the origin of cobalt, promote responsible mining, and reduce the environmental impact of cobalt extraction. Sustainable and transparent supply chains are being developed to address these concerns and create a more responsible cobalt market.

### Battery Technology Advancements and Cobalt Reduction

Advances in battery technology are reshaping the cobalt market. Researchers and manufacturers are actively exploring alternative battery chemistries and cathode materials that can reduce or eliminate cobalt use in lithium-ion batteries. While cobalt has been essential for enhancing energy density and battery performance, there is a growing effort to reduce its content due to supply chain vulnerabilities and cost concerns. This trend includes the development of solid-state batteries, cathodes with lower cobalt content, and innovative materials that can maintain or improve battery performance while minimizing reliance on cobalt. As battery technology evolves, the cobalt market is likely to experience changes in demand patterns.

### Rise of Recycling and Circular Economy Initiatives

The global focus on sustainability and resource conservation is driving the rise of recycling and circular economy initiatives in the cobalt market. As more lithium-ion



batteries reach the end of their lifecycle, there is a growing recognition of the need to recycle and repurpose cobalt and other valuable materials to reduce reliance on primary mining. Recycling efforts are being developed to extract cobalt from used batteries, allowing it to re-enter the supply chain. This trend aligns with broader sustainability goals and contributes to a more responsible cobalt market. Companies, governments, and organizations are increasingly investing in recycling technologies and creating infrastructure to support these initiatives.

## Segmental Insights

### Product Insights

Based on the category of Product, the Cobalt Sulfate segment emerged as the dominant player in the global market for Cobalt in 2022. Cobalt sulfate is a crucial component in the cathodes of lithium-ion batteries, which are used in numerous applications, such as electric vehicles (EVs), consumer electronics, and energy storage systems. Cobalt sulfate enhances the energy density, performance, and stability of these batteries. The rapid growth of the EV industry, coupled with the increasing demand for energy storage solutions and portable electronic devices, has led to a significant surge in the need for cobalt sulfate. This trend is expected to continue as the push for cleaner and more sustainable energy sources gains momentum.

As the world transitions to electric vehicles, cobalt sulfate is a key ingredient in the lithium-ion batteries that power these cars. The growing awareness of environmental issues, coupled with government incentives and regulations, has accelerated the adoption of EVs. Cobalt sulfate's role in prolonging battery life and increasing the range of EVs has made it an indispensable element in this market. The dominance of cobalt sulfate is further underscored by its importance in EV battery chemistry.

Cobalt sulfate also plays a significant role in the production of batteries for consumer electronics, such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets. These devices rely on lithium-ion batteries to provide extended battery life and reliability. The constant demand for smaller, lighter, and more energy-dense batteries in consumer electronics contributes to the importance of cobalt sulfate in this sector. These factors are expected to drive the growth of this segment.

### Application Insights

The EVs segment is projected to experience rapid growth during the forecast period.

Lithium-ion batteries are the primary energy storage technology used in electric vehicles. Cobalt is an essential component of the cathodes in these batteries. Cobalt's role is to enhance the energy density, safety, and overall performance of the battery. As the electric vehicle market has expanded, so has the demand for cobalt in lithium-ion batteries.

The electric vehicle industry has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, driven by a global shift towards sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation. Governments worldwide are implementing policies to reduce carbon emissions, and consumers are increasingly adopting electric vehicles to lower their environmental footprint. This growth in the EV market has led to a corresponding surge in the demand for cobalt.

Major automakers are making significant investments in electric vehicle production. Companies such as Tesla, Volkswagen, General Motors, and others have committed to expanding their electric vehicle offerings. These investments include the development of new EV models and the construction of gigafactories to produce batteries at scale. This increased production requires a steady supply of cobalt to meet the growing demand for electric vehicles.

## Regional Insights

Asia Pacific emerged as the dominant player in the global Cobalt market in 2022, holding the largest market share in terms of both value and volume. Asia Pacific, and particularly China, is the epicenter of global electric vehicle production. China is the largest EV market in the world, and the rapid growth of the EV industry in the region has driven substantial demand for cobalt, a key component in lithium-ion batteries. This demand is expected to continue as China and other Asia Pacific nations aim to reduce carbon emissions and promote clean energy transportation. The Asia Pacific region is home to numerous cobalt refining and processing facilities. Companies in China, South Korea, and Japan are actively involved in the refinement of cobalt materials sourced from different parts of the world. This in-house processing capability allows the region to secure a stable supply of refined cobalt, reducing its reliance on cobalt from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other potentially unstable sources.

Many governments in the Asia Pacific region have introduced policies and incentives to support electric vehicle adoption and the development of the clean energy sector. These policies encourage investment in electric vehicle infrastructure, research and development, and the expansion of domestic cobalt mining and processing facilities.



Such investments strengthen the region's position in the global cobalt market. Asia Pacific is a global hub for consumer electronics manufacturing, with countries such as China, South Korea, and Japan being major players in this sector. Cobalt is a critical component in lithium-ion batteries used in smartphones, laptops, and other portable devices. The robust manufacturing industry in the region ensures a steady demand for cobalt.

The North America market is poised to be the fastest-growing market, offering lucrative growth opportunities for Cobalt players during the forecast period. Factors such as North America has been actively increasing its adoption of electric vehicles, with the United States and Canada making significant investments in EV infrastructure and manufacturing. This growth in the EV sector has driven a heightened demand for cobalt in lithium-ion batteries.

The North American region, particularly the United States, is implementing government initiatives and incentives to promote the electric vehicle industry. These efforts aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels, which further encourages the growth of the cobalt market in the region. North America is home to several leading companies and research institutions working on battery technology innovation. This includes efforts to reduce the reliance on cobalt in batteries, focusing on alternative cathode materials and recycling solutions. These innovations are expected to shape the cobalt market dynamics in the region. There is a growing emphasis on ethical and sustainable sourcing of cobalt, which aligns with North American consumers' and industries' sustainability concerns. This is likely to influence the supply chain practices and source of cobalt used in the region.

### Key Market Players

China Molybdenum Co., Ltd.

Eurasian Resources Group

Freeport-McMoRan Inc

Glencore Plc

Huayou Cobalt Co. Ltd.

Norilsk Nickel PJSC

Sumitomo Metal Mining Co., Ltd.

Umicore SA

Report Scope:

In this report, the Global Cobalt Market has been segmented into the following categories, in addition to the industry trends which have also been detailed below:

Cobalt Market, By Product:

Cobalt Sulfate

Cobalt Oxide

Cobalt Metal

Others

Cobalt Market, By Application:

Electric Vehicles

Other Batteries

Industrial Metals

Industrial Chemicals

Superalloys

Cobalt Market, By Region:

North America

United States

Canada

Mexico

Europe

France

United Kingdom

Italy

Germany

Spain

Asia-Pacific

China

India

Japan

Australia

South Korea

South America

Brazil

Argentina

Colombia

Middle East & Africa

South Africa

Saudi Arabia

UAE

### Competitive Landscape

Company Profiles: Detailed analysis of the major companies presents in the Global Cobalt Market.

### Available Customizations:

Global Cobalt market report with the given market data, Tech Sci Research offers customizations according to a company's specific needs. The following customization options are available for the report:

### Company Information

Detailed analysis and profiling of additional market players (up to five).

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