BASF announced its third acquisition in battery technology in two months, saying it would buy Merck KGaA's electrolytes business for high-performance batteries to tap into growing demand for electric vehicles.

"This acquisition enhances the expertise we offer to automotive and battery manufacturers around the world," BASF board member Andreas Kreimeyer said in a statement on Tuesday.

The two companies did not say how much BASF was paying in the deal, which includes technologies and products Merck developed to boost the performance of batteries, such as additives for electrolytes used to make lithium ion batteries.

Merck said it is selling the business because it has little in common with its other chemicals activities and meets only a fraction of the needs of customers who make batteries.

BASF late last year announced plans to pool all of its battery activities geared towards electromobility into a new business unit, joining the race for next generation lithium-ion battery cells for electric cars.

Since then, it has announced plans to buy U.S.-based nickel-metal hydride battery technology specialist Ovonic Battery as well as a stake in lithium-sulfur battery maker Sion Power.

Stricter laws governing greenhouse gas emissions, depleting fossil fuels and the rising price of crude oil are pushing carmakers across the world to roll out new zero-emission cars that can run entirely on electricity.

Since an electric car costs often twice the price of a conventional car powered by a combustion engine, researchers are searching for a way to make the lithium-ion lighter and less expensive.