# **Accepted Manuscript**

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PII: S0925-8388(18)31100-9

DOI: 10.1016/j.jallcom.2018.03.230

Reference: JALCOM 45460

To appear in: Journal of Alloys and Compounds

Received Date: 6 January 2018
Revised Date: 16 March 2018
Accepted Date: 17 March 2018

Please cite this article as: M. Dymek, M. Nowak, M. Jurczyk, H. Bala, Encapsulation of La<sub>1.5</sub>Mg<sub>0.5</sub>Ni<sub>7</sub> nanocrystalline hydrogen storage alloy with Ni coatings and its electrochemical characterization, *Journal of Alloys and Compounds* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.jallcom.2018.03.230.

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### ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Encapsulation of  $La_{1.5}Mg_{0.5}Ni_7$  nanocrystalline hydrogen storage alloy with Ni coatings and its electrochemical characterization

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#### **Abstract**

Nanocrystalline La<sub>1.5</sub>Mg<sub>0.5</sub>Ni<sub>7</sub> alloy has been synthesized by mechanical alloying and heat treatment (850°C) and a 20 - 50 µm fraction of its particles has been encapsulated with three kinds of Ni-based coatings: (i) electroless Ni-P. 1 um thick, (ii) magnetron sputtered Ni, 0.087 µm thick and (iii) magnetron sputtered Ni, 0.29 µm thick. The electrochemical charge/discharge multicycling of powder composite electrodes has been carried out in view of material potential usefulness for Ni/MH<sub>x</sub> batteries. The nanocrystalline La<sub>1.5</sub>Mg<sub>0.5</sub>Ni<sub>7</sub> alloy exhibits four times lower capacity fade as compared to a microcrystalline LaNi<sub>5</sub> reference compound. Modification of La<sub>1.5</sub>Mg<sub>0.5</sub>Ni<sub>7</sub> particle surface with comparatively thick layer of electroless Ni-P coating deteriorates electrode corrosion behavior and worsens kinetics of hydrogen electrosorption due to unsatisfactory adhesion of the coating to the Mg-containing substrate. Corrosion protection of the La<sub>1.5</sub>Mg<sub>0.5</sub>Ni<sub>7</sub> nanomaterial by magnetron sputtered Ni films depends on average film thickness. Relatively thick (0.29 µm) sputtered Ni film limits corrosion degradation and stabilizes exchange current density of H<sub>2</sub>O/H<sub>2</sub> system. Particle modification by Ni encapsulation does not affect the hydrogen diffusivity. Effective diffusion coefficient of hydrogen for La<sub>1.5</sub>Mg<sub>0.5</sub>Ni<sub>7</sub> nanocrystalline material, irrespectively of surface modification, is close to  $2 \cdot 10^{-10} \, \text{cm}^2 \text{s}^{-1}$ .

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