

Mako leverages proven processing methods

Mako Gold Ltd is looking to capitalise on recently proven manganese beneficiation techniques and is preparing to scrutinise promising targets at the Korhogo project in north-west Cote d'Ivoire.

Trek Resources Ltd demonstrated the effectiveness of low-cost beneficiation on manganese grades at its Hendeka project in Western Australia in October, returning grades of up to 36.9% manganese using dense media separation and to 29.86% using first pass ore sorting from a feed grade of 15.83% in test work.

Mako managing director Peter Ledwidge said the success of the relatively simple processing methods boded well for Korhogo.

"Trek are doing the same beneficiation tests that we're doing," Mako managing director Peter Ledwidge said. "In Cote

mapping and rock chip sampling at Korhogo – 70km along strike from the 360,000 tpa Lagonkaha manganese mine – in the lead up to metallurgical testing. The company plans to start an IP survey once it has reached a better understanding of the extent and positioning of mineralisation.

Ledwidge remembers being pleasantly surprised by the size and scope of the project's potential manganese footprint after early-stage exploration.

"We've got two parallel 7km bands which are anywhere from 100m to 300m wide," Ledwidge said.

"We originally did rock chip sampling when we learned the extent of that. That was only three days' work for one crew, they grabbed about 22 samples which all came back at over 20% manganese.

"We did a 10-hole RC drill programme

we're just criss-crossing that whole area and picking out every manganese outcrop we can find," Ledwidge said.

The company will base its conclusions on p-XRF and lab analysis before testing a 160kg metallurgical sample to determine the project's suitability to be mined for DSO.

Mako's plans for IP surveys are based on advice from its consulting geologists and Ledwidge was confident the method would provide a clear picture to work with.

"We've seen an IP programme done by the consultant on another manganese project in Cote d'Ivoire for which the owner let us have a look at," Ledwidge said. "It really picks out which way it is dipping and it will help us pick out the high grade."

Mako is taking expressions of interest in a partnership to advance Korhogo but Ledwidge said he was in no rush to offload the asset. He said Cote d'Ivoire's forgiving regulatory framework offered an opportunity for the company to bide its time.

"Manganese is not sexy yet, but in a year, or a year and a half it should be," Ledwidge said.

"The beauty for us is that these 100%-owned permits, we're two and a half years into a four-year permit and we've done enough to renew it. So, if we want to, we can be patient and wait for the manganese market to really pick up.

"If we have that [exploration] work done by then, it puts us in an enviable position."

Ledwidge dismissed the concept of an "African discount" and lauded the advantages of what he termed the "African premium."

"The governments [in Africa usually] get a 10% free-carry on a mining project so the incentive is there for them to help you out," Ledwidge said.

"For example, when I was with Orbis Gold in Burkina Faso we took the Boungou mine from discovery to production in only five years.

"That 10% free-carry is actually a bonus because if you get your mine into production that much earlier, you're making revenue earlier."

– Michael Cameron



Mako is mapping and taking rock chip samples from manganese outcrops at Korhogo

d'Ivoire there are actually four operating manganese mines, they're all private and they all use that technique. They're mining it, doing this simple beneficiation and shipping it down to the ports in the south.

"That's what we're looking at doing and those companies must be making money. They wouldn't be doing it if they weren't."

Mako has started detailed geological

only going down 50m and eight out of the 10 holes hit."

Ledwidge said despite follow-up rock chip sampling being slowed by "corn taller than the geologists," the company's exploration team was finding manganese outcrops in "areas they didn't think there were any".

"We've now got all hands on deck and