

Taking an Epic stand in South Sudan

Epic Exploration Pty Ltd managing director Murray Surtees likened South Sudan's predicament to that of Tanzania when mineral explorers started their quests in the East African nation.

"I was working in Tanzania during its exploration boom in the early 80s and South Sudan in its present state reminds me of how Tanzania was at the start of that boom," Surtees said.

"Today, there are seven or eight gold mines operating in Tanzania and hardly a square kilometre of the country is left unpegged. This we believe is where South Sudan is heading."

The prospecting direction Epic.Ex has taken since launching mid-2010 has been in the fields of gold and manganese. The company has 66,000sq km of ground granted covering four licence areas.

The company's story may not yet be well-known as its existence has been private however the aim is to list on the ASX via an IPO or reverse listing once market conditions prevail favourably for it.

At Africa Down Under Surtees said the company was riding out the seasonal wet season which made access to its projects impossible.

However the company hoped that with established camps difficulties associated with access during the rainy season would be lessened in the future.

Nevertheless a programme of work is planned at Kapoeta (gold) and Renk and Sobat (manganese) when weather permits.

"As a result of our research of the literature and follow up field reconnaissance of the Kapoeta licence we have a ready-made target in the Kawokono prospect. The mapping will be re-done and drilling into marble alongside the granodiorite dyke will be a likely starting point."

In addition to Kapoeta, the nearby Mundri licence is also a part of Epic.Ex's asset portfolio in the southern part of the country, a region associated with gold bearing structures in Uganda and DRC.

The potential of these areas is best exemplified by the 22 moz Moto and 5 moz Kilo projects in the DRC and numerous gold deposits in the Karamoja region of Uganda.



Murray Surtees

Similarly to its gold prospects, its manganese and iron ore titles are also in regions that demonstrate mineralisation.

Historic data from the Paloich borehole intersected 83m manganese mineralisation and hematite at 50m, with one zone of 3.66m

@ 32% manganese oxide, 38% iron oxide and 1.25% phosphate. Furthermore, reports from a nearby drill hole has indicated average grades of less than 6% manganese and iron mineralisation between 46-70% at Waibut.

"The manganese/iron ore exploration at Renk and Sobat requires four holes to 150m depth in diamond pattern around each of the two discovery holes. This will be phase one to establishing continuity and grade of the deposit," Surtees said.

Data has not been the easiest for Epic.Ex to access however

it has made a good fist of what it has been afforded; including help from villagers and literature dating back to 1971 acquired from an Antiquarian bookshop in France.

Nevertheless, the company is comfortable that it is well positioned – with Kapoeta, Mundri, Renk and Sobat and Maiwut (gold and manganese in the base rocks of the Ethiopian Highlands) – in what it believes to be the last exploration frontier in Africa.

And with the Mining Act – viewed as being amenable to and encouraging to investment – expected to be promulgated in October, there is an anticipated wave of interest coming South Sudan's way, Surtees said.

"South Sudan is at the starting point where the smaller, more entrepreneurial company can commence exploration with a high expectation of success. These companies will bring the Barricks' (Gold Corp) and Anglo Americans' (plc) in due course once it is demonstrated that progress can be made and mineral deposits defined."

– Mark Andrews



Gold One International Limited is a dual listed (ASX/JSE: GDO) mid-tier mining company with gold operations and gold and uranium prospects across Southern Africa. Focused on acquiring, developing and mining low technical risk, high margin precious metal resources in diversified jurisdictions, Gold One is committed to achieving its strategy of becoming a million ounce producer.

In 2009 Gold One commissioned Modder East, the first new gold mine to be built in South Africa's prolific East Rand Basin in 30 years. A benchmark cash cost producer, Modder East heralds Gold One's reputation as a new era mining company while the strategic 2012 acquisitions of Rand Uranium (Pty) Limited and Ezulwini Mining Company (Pty) Limited denote the beginning of Gold One's growing footprint in the Wits Basin's West Rand.

The company is majority-owned by a consortium comprising Baiyin Non-Ferrous Group Co. Limited (a subsidiary of the CITIC Group), the China-Africa Development Fund and Long March Capital Limited. The support of these strategic partners uniquely positions the company as an active participant in the consolidation of the African and global gold mining industries.

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