

## Metorex increases its production in March quarter

In its operational update for the quarter ended 31 March 2011, Metorex – currently the subject of a takeover bid by Brazilian miner Vale – reports that copper production was up by 8 % to 13 344 tons and cobalt production by 10 % to 1 041 tons compared to the December quarter. Ruashi copper and cobalt production increased by 20 % and 10 % respectively.

Commenting on the increases, Terence Goodlace, Metorex's Chief Executive Officer, said the improvement was pleasing and had been achieved despite seasonally high rainfall and the installation of a new modified transformer at Ruashi during March 2011

which affected production for three days. "Chibuluma continues to perform at planned levels of production. Sable throughput continues to be affected by a lack of third party ores," he added.

Ruashi is Metorex's copper and cobalt mine located near Lubumbashi in the DRC. The mine comprises three open pits and a modern solvent extraction/electrowinning processing plant. The mine has had a long and difficult ramp-up phase but the latest results indicate that it is finally starting to realise its potential.

Chibuluma is a modern mechanised under-

ground copper mine situated west of Kitwe near the town of Kalulushi in Zambia. The mine produces copper concentrate which is sold to smelters. Sable Zinc is located near the town of Kabwe in Zambia. The operation consists of a modern solvent extraction/electrowinning plant and an acid plant.

In other news, Metorex has announced an increase in group mineral resources, with a general upgrading of copper and cobalt resources from the inferred to the indicated and measured categories.

Total group copper mineral resources for the F2010 period increased by 44,9 per cent from 3,27 Mt to 4,74 Mt of contained copper, driven largely by the Dilala East and Lubembe deposits, two of Metorex's growth projects in the DRC.

Contained copper in resources at Dilala East and Lubembe increased by 563 kt (+100 per cent increase) and 756 kt (+72 per cent increase) respectively compared to the F2009 resource base. Incremental gains in total contained copper tonnage were also made at Kinsenda, another DRC growth project, where the total contained copper resource increased by 47 kt (+5 per cent increase), and the Ruashi Sulphides where the contained copper resource increased by 204 kt (+82 per cent increase).

Group cobalt mineral resources increased by 219 per cent from June 2009 to the end of December 2010. The Dilala East project in Kolwezi was the main driver behind these increases, contributing an additional 170 000 t of contained cobalt. ■



The Ruashi plant near Lubumbashi, where copper and cobalt production increased by 20 % and 10 % respectively in the March quarter (photo: Metorex).

## RSV achieves two safety milestones

Mining, engineering and project management company Read, Swatman & Voigt (Pty) Ltd (RSV) has once again achieved two significant safety milestones.

The first important milestone is the continued qualification for OHSAS 18001:2007 certification. RSV was recommended for recertification by German independent service provider Dekra. It is reportedly the first time that a consultant in Southern Africa has successfully retained certification, says RSV's Health, Safety and Environment Group Risk Manager, Izak Jooste.

RSV's projects extend from greenfield deep vertical shafts to brownfield declines and developments below existing workings. Jooste reports that the company's 'Gear Up!' safety management system contributed significantly to the retention of its OHSAS 18001:2007 certificate. "Gear Up! is also a major contributor in achieving our first million fatality-free shifts milestone, and we have just achieved the two million shift mark," says Jooste.

Gear Up! is a custom-designed software package specific to HSE management practice. Described as a user-friendly tool, it con-

tains linkages to all the relevant Regulations and Acts, demonstrates work activity through dynamic workflow and makes all the documentation and reports available to the user on site.

The second significant RSV safety milestone – the achievement of two million fatality-free shifts – was recorded in February 2011. "Many RSV projects have run without any injuries since their inception, which can only be achieved through good teamwork and dedication to health and safety. Project managers are enthusiastically engaged in driving team efforts to achieve their safety goals," says Jooste.

RSV has managed to reduce the number of injuries over the past three years by 54 % culminating in this exceptional milestone. At the same time, the RSV lost time injury frequency rate (LTIFR) for all projects under RSV supervision has improved by 29 %. An improvement in coaching and training has been a major contributor.

Before any work starts on a project, project personnel undergo a series of safety inductions run by their own company, by the client and then by RSV. During the induction sessions, personnel are made to focus on hazard identification, a key element in achieving a safe working environment. ■

## Turgis to undertake DBM scoping study

Wits Gold has appointed Turgis Consulting to complete a preliminary economic assessment or scoping study on its combined De Bron-Merriespruit South (DBM) project in the southern Free State goldfield.

Turgis will focus on producing preliminary mine design options to optimally exploit the DBM orebody. Emphasis will be placed on accessing the shallow high grade core at DBM in order to provide higher financial returns during the early stages of mining. This

is expected to result in a shorter capital expenditure payback period, as well as a possible higher IRR over the life of mine.

Using a 6 g/t cut-off, the high grade shallow reefs that are situated some 500 m below surface contain an indicated resource of 9,5 Mt at 7,9 g/t Au (2,4 Moz). Turgis will also consider the economics of mining the indicated resource of uranium that occurs within the Leader Reef, containing 17,0 Mt at 0,16 kg/t U<sub>3</sub>O<sub>8</sub> (6,1 Mlb). ■