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10:58 Tue 10 Aug 2021

Firefinch delivers high-grade gold results at Morila's Viper deposit with surface mining underway

Mining operations are underway at Viper following fast-track of pre-mining activities including grade control drilling, site clearing and topsoil removal.



The satellite Viper Deposit is part of Firefinch's 80%-owned 'Morila the Gorilla' gold operations in Mali.

Firefinch Ltd (ASX:FFX) has delivered further strong gold assays this morning providing further evidence of the growing strength of Morila Gold Project in Mali and prompting an improvement in share prices.

The Mali-focused miner has received high-grade results from Viper Deposit, part of the 80%-owned Morila Project, with surface mining underway at the deposit.

Firefinch is focused on the Morila Gold Mine that has produced 7.5 million ounces of gold since 2000 and aims to become a mid-tier gold producer in Mali.

The new results coincide with the start of mining operations at Viper after Firefinch fast-tracked pre-mining activities including grade control drilling, site clearing and topsoil removal.

Shares higher

Shares have been as much as 9.8 per cent higher to A\$0.505 while Firefinch's market cap is approximately A\$418.7 million.

Highlights of today's results include:

- 9 metres at 15.1 g/t gold from 40 metres, including 1-metre at 98.7 g/t;
- 5 metres at 11.7 g/t from 108 metres;
- 18 metres at 2.96 g/t from 54 metres, including 3 metres at 10.6 g/t;
- 2 metres at 12.5 g/t from 70 metres; and
- 4 metres at 6.36 g/t from 81 metres.

"Zones key to mining"

"We continue to generate excellent results from drilling the Viper system, which have enabled better definition of the deposit's higher-grade zones," Firefinch's managing director Dr Michael Anders said.

"Clearly these zones are key to mining and the next step is the commencement of mining operations in the southern part of the deposit.

"Importantly, Viper will add oxide ore to complement the Morila Pit 5 mining operations.

"Plans are in place to expedite mining and haulage of this ore to be part of the plant feed from mid-September and increase near-term gold production.

"The fast-tracking of Viper is another example of the effort our on-site team has put in to delivering the ramp-up plan at Morila."

Initial mining is designed to provide oxide feed to the Morila plant, increasing the ore types available for blending and processing.

The company has engaged two mining contractors at Viper to increase mining capacity and once the current drilling program is finished, Firefinch will update the Viper mineral resource estimate with an increase in classification, tonnage and grade anticipated.

Morila: quick history lesson

The Viper deposit is around 27 kilometres northwest of Morila and is supported by infrastructure including an established haul road.

The mine has historically been one of the highest-grade gold mines in the world under previous Barrick Gold and **AngloGold Ashanti (ASX:AGG)** ownership.

In May 2021, the mineral resources at Viper were updated based on drilling by Firefinch to:

- Indicated – 1.52 million tonnes at 1.04 g/t for 51,000 ounces
- Inferred – 20,000 tonnes at 4.41 g/t for 1,000 ounces
- Total – 1.55 million tonnes at 1.05 g/t for 52,000 ounces

Based on this, a probable ore reserve of 1.30 million tonnes at 1.46 g/t for 43,000 contained ounces of gold was declared for Viper.

What's next?

Firefinch will focus its drilling on other areas within the 1,600-metre-long mineralised system and will do so in conjunction with mining in the southern portion of Viper.

Firefinch intends to follow up high-grade intersections in previous drilling and delineate deeper high-grade zones within the Viper system to feed into the ongoing geological interpretation and updates to the mineral resource and optimised pit design.

Firefinch is updating the Viper mineral resource estimate to incorporate the new drilling results and to inform mining activities.

This updated estimate will be finalised and published once the resource drilling has been completed.

The company is also working with Malian owned and operated contractor EGTF, which has enabled these initial mining works to be completed as a standalone project prior to the mobilisation of the Mota Engil–InterMine (ME-IM) Joint Venture.

The JV has been awarded the contract to mine the Viper and N'Tiola satellite pits as well as stage 1 of the Morila Super Pit.

Mobilising both EGTF and ME-IM at Viper allows for accelerated material movement and a positive contribution to the near-term mining schedule.

ME-IM anticipates its full fleet mobilising on schedule during August and September.

Source: <https://www.proactiveinvestors.com.au/companies/news/957233/firefinch-delivers-high-grade-gold-results-at-morila-s-viper-deposit-with-surface-mining-underway-957233.html>