

EXPLORATION

Well Received

Local market welcomes launch of SRK Exploration Services

NADINE JAMES | CREAMER MEDIA STAFF WRITER

The local and sub-Saharan African markets have responded “very positively” to the establishment of SRK Exploration Services, a discipline-led division of SRK Global, says SRK Exploration Services Southern African exploration manager **Oliver Bayley**.

He explains that the Cardiff-based division expanded to Southern Africa in response to a steady increase in exploration activities in recent months. The Johannesburg office has since experienced a significant increase in the number of enquiries received from the region.

“Even though SRK Exploration Services (as a whole) celebrated the completion of 300 African

projects earlier this year, it is clear that having staff based in South Africa – who are immediately available to talk directly to clients and travel quickly in the region – is seen as a real benefit by our clients,” notes Bayley.

He adds that, given the renewed optimism for mining, it is the right time for SRK Exploration Services to be augmenting its services and locating nearer to clients.

“SRK Exploration Services complements the exploration consultancy offered by SRK South Africa by extending our range of services to include the provision of exploration geologists, geophysicists and operations management experts –

professionals who can manage and implement exploration programmes on behalf of clients,” says Bayley.

These programmes can range from a single geologist in the field to multimillion-dollar campaigns that may include establishing in-country support offices, building exploration camps and managing all the logistical and technical aspects of multidisciplinary exploration programmes.

Further SRK Explorations Services’ capabilities extend to the provision of construction management as well as safety and security training courses focused specifically on exploration and mining settings.

According to SRK South Africa (SA) partner and corporate consultant and economic geologist **Hennie Theart**, the local presence of SRK Exploration Services allows closer collaboration with the team of senior SRK SA consultants. “We have seen that many mining companies do not have the in-house ability to execute exploration programmes that meet international best practice standards,” said Theart.

Thus, an integrated consulting and project management exploration function offered from the Johannesburg office enables clients to conduct high-quality

exploration work, and avoid costly and time-consuming remedial actions that often result from substandard exploration processes, notes Theart. Bayley adds that, as exploration becomes more technically challenging, the growing ranks of midtier and junior mining companies who lack in-house technical ability have created an untapped market for SRK.

Additionally, SRK’s regular client base of junior explorers has been boosted by established mining companies, who are outsourcing specific brownfield exploration projects. Bayley explains that the commodities downturn led to the shedding of many traditionally in-house technical skills, and that this reduction has subsequently led to SRK Exploration Services growing its service provision over the last four years.

“Our presence in South Africa gives us [greater] exposure to this market, as well as to investment groups and government departments – leveraging our growing range of services,” Bayley states.

Theart also emphasised the value of the collaboration between SRK Exploration Services, with its focus on project execution, and SRK SA with its focus on traditional consulting services. ■

MINING WEEKLY COUPON ON PAGE 36 E485622

