

## MOMA PHASE 2 SLIPS INTO GEAR SMOOTHLY

All major expansion facilities at the US\$350 million second phase expansion of the Moma titanium minerals mine on the northern Mozambique coast are in ramp-up mode, and are adding meaningful production tonnage to the project.

The Moma operation is wholly-owned by Kenmare Resources plc, quoted on the Irish and London Stock Exchanges. Moma is Kenmare's principal project, and has a total resource 181Mt of ilmenite, with 12.6Mt of zircon and 4.1Mt of rutile. This means that the Moma project has 139 years of production life on its current resource base.

"Phase 2 is in final commissioning, and we are testing the circuits and sorting out the teething problems at the moment, none of which appear to be unusual or serious," says Kenmare managing director Michael Carvill.

"We have been processing ore in the new plant in June, and analyst consensus is that Kenmare will produce around 800,000t of ilmenite in 2013," he tells *Mining Review Africa*. "The plant and equipment have a capacity which (with the normal grade of the ore body) will produce 1.2Mtpa of ilmenite. We believe that we will be operating at that level of throughput by the end of the year," Carvill predicts.

Production during May was 104,300t of heavy mineral concentrate (HMC), 68,100t of ilmenite and 4,300t of zircon. Production of HMC during June was steady at



Dredge fully assembled and floating in the wet concentrator plant B mine pond at Moma.

101,600t. Due to a scheduled shutdown of the mineral separation plant (MSP) to integrate the new auxiliary ilmenite plant into the control systems of the existing MSP, production of ilmenite in June was at the reduced level of 36,400t and production of zircon was also reduced to 1,000t, according to the latest operational update. Consequently, a stockpile of 54,800t of HMC was built up as at 30 June.

July production of HMC was approximately 100,000t, with the new wet concentrator plant contributing materially to this total. Approximately 80,000 tonnes of ilmenite products were produced in July, including 16,500 tonnes from the auxiliary ilmenite plant, the report added.

The non-magnetic circuits, which produce zircon and rutile, were the last part of the expansion to be finished. This work is now substantially completed and the non-magnetic circuits are in ramp-up phase. Shipments during the second quarter increased to 245,600 tonnes of total products from 48,500 tonnes during the first quarter.

The update went on to talk about the way the uneven nature of global economic activity continues to cause a drag on market prices. Market conditions are improving in the rest of the world, particularly in the United States, but Chinese economic activity remains subdued resulting in somewhat softer ilmenite prices, it said. However, the pigment industry, the principal consumer of titanium feedstocks, has gradually reduced its finished goods inventory which had become too large in 2012, following a slow-down in off-take volumes by the paint and coatings industry. Inventory levels in the pigment industry are now approaching normal levels and this is expected to lead to a resumption of normal buying patterns and increased demand for feed-stocks.

In respect of the zircon market, the demand outlook continues to improve and Kenmare has achieved some modest price increases for recent shipments.

"We are greatly encouraged to see the expanded facilities operating and starting to contribute to meaningful production," said Carvill. "The company's operations team at Moma is now in full control of the plants, and we all look forward to completing the ramp-up as quickly as possible".

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