

Platfields shows preference to public from 12moz to 130moz

Platinum exploration junior, Platfields, are in the early stages of development of its properties, but this is expected to change quickly as it approaches a dual listing later this year. Laura Cornish recently spoke to Platfields CEO, Bongani Mbindwane (below), about the company's ambitious growth strategy, which is expected to see it emerge as one of the biggest junior platinum mining companies.

Platfields has three early stage prospective sites, and was recently granted prospecting rights for two of them. "At this stage, our focus is really on the dual listing on the JSE and the Toronto Stock Exchange's main board stock exchange," says Mbindwane.

Although Platfields cannot yet confirm the exact date of its listing, it is aiming towards some time in the third quarter of this year.

Should it successfully raise its target of R200m, the company will be in a strong position to advance its projects towards pre-feasibility and feasibility stages, and ultimately, a definitive resource.

Mbindwane explains that the reason behind a listing on the TSX is to increase its chances of raising its target capital requirements, adding that Toronto has become a key market player for new junior exploration companies.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) has been appointed as Platfields' sponsor and corporate advisor on the local listing, and Bowman Gilfillan as its legal advisor. In Canada, MacLeod Dixon will act as legal and corporate advisor.



BD5 drilling site in the Critical Zone of the Bushveld Complex which intersected Merensky Reef at 150m.



A test drilling site of the Berg project.

Drilling of borehole BD6 which successfully intersected UG2 Reef.

Says Mbindwane: "We also have a strong corporate acquisition tactic in place, with further intention of expanding the company's overall portfolio size and value."

Platfields is in the process of negotiations with neighbouring junior platinum explorers, regarding far advanced exploration projects, also located on the Eastern Limb of the Bushveld Complex.

In addition to this, it is investing a number of potential opportunities to acquire mineral properties in the surrounding vicinity to its current land rights, as well as greenfield platinum properties in Zimbabwe.

Over and above this, Platfields is simultaneously considering greenfield and brownfield platinum opportunities in southern Africa.

"We would really like to announce

an acquisition before, or as part of the listing, which would grow the size of the company, thereby increasing the value of our shares, as well as investor appetite," Mbindwane points out.

Platfields currently operates through over-the-counter (OTC) trading, with an average share price of about R2,20. Its market cap is about R800m.

While it does not have a single black empowerment partner, it does have a number of black private investor partners, who have a 37% shareholding in the company.

FROM PROSPECT TO PROJECT

According to previous drill results performed by other companies on the properties in the past, the platinum projects have a combined, estimated attributable exploration target of 12moz of platinum group metals.

Platfields is currently waiting for the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) to award additional prospecting rights to adjoining areas on its properties, which could increase the total platinum exploration target to 130moz of PGEs.

"With an exploration target of this size, we will be one of the biggest operators in the junior platinum mining sector," Mbindwane re-iterates.

BERG PLATINUM PROJECT

The Berg project is Platfields' most advanced flagship operation, with a 9km strike, and surface outcrop. Situated on the Eastern Limb of the Bushveld Complex, close to the towns of Roosnekal, Dullstroom and Lydenburg in Mpumalanga province, the project lies in close proximity to Aquarius Platinum's Everest South Mine, as well as the Booyensdal project.

The deposit contains UG2 and Merensky Reef across three contiguous farms, with a 1:1 ratio of platinum to palladium, and rhodium and gold constituting the four group metals.

Of the company's initial 12moz target resource, the Berg is expected to constitute 7moz at an estimated 2.5g/t grade.

The company also co-owns an



Directors of Platfields and company secretary, from left to right: Mr J.P. Hattingh (executive director), Mr S. Erasmus, Dr T.J. Motlatsi, Mrs J. Caddy (company secretary), Mr N. Cornish, Mr B. Mbindwane (chief executive officer).

additional property close to the Berg site together with Anglo Platinum. Mbindwane says the companies will look at devising a business strategy with regards to developing the area in the future.

From the point of listing, it should take about two years to take the project through construction phase and first mining. Platfields has spent about R35m to date on this project alone.

LEEUKOP PLATINUM PROJECT

Having acquired the prospecting rights to the property, Platfields' next step is to further define the resource, which was initially undertaken by Anglo Platinum.

The Leeuwkop project is situated at the north-western end of the Eastern Limb of the Bushveld Complex, and is directly adjacent to Anglo Platinum's and Anooraq's Lebowa mine – in actual fact is an extension of the Lebowa project.

Also a surface outcrop deposit, it has a shallow ore body (about 100m deep) with a 2km-3km strike length, and average grades of between 5.4g/t and 6.8g/t. While initial evaluations indicate the resource could be about 8moz, only 32% of that is attributable to Platfields.

Mbindwane says the company is looking to increase its stake in the project to about 80%.

GROOTFONTEINBERG GOLD PROJECT

This is Platfields' third project. Previous exploration studies indicate that it has a 1moz resource at high grades of about 18g/t.

"We aim to be on site from next month to commence with further exploration studies," says Mbindwane.

While Platfield's main focus does not lie in gold mining, it will not preclude this operation from contributing towards its overall growth strategy.

Platfields will invest equal attention to this project, and potentially form a joint venture with a gold company for its development.

The Grootfonteinberg project lies in the Transvaal Drakensberg gold fields, and consists of four separate discontinuous farm portions. The main focus of this project is the portion of the farm Grootfonteinberg 561KT, which is immediately adjacent to the historical Beta mine belonging to Simmer & Jack, and a few kilometres from the town of Pilgrim's Rest. ○

Site of the drilling of BD7 at the base of the Main Zone koppies.

