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EXPLORATION

Success Factor

Mining, exploration software helping Pan-African gold miner discover large deposits

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Gold-mining and exploration company Randgold Resources is discovering large gold deposits in Western and Central Africa, thanks in part to innovative technology from mining and exploration software provider Micromine. The Africa-focused mining company is currently undertaking exploration at the Loulo gold mine, in Mali, using the Micromine 2010 software package.

Randgold Resources has been using Micromine's software for the past nine years.

At Loulo, 20 geologists are currently using the software in the field. Randgold senior geologist **Ken King** says: "The software assists the company in terms of exploration because data can be easily broken down and interpreted."

Randgold has featured prominently in the Western African mining industry over the past 14 years, and the company has started expansion into the largely unexplored central region of the continent.

The gold price has remained strong through the financial crisis of the past few years but King admits that the biggest challenge facing the industry today is the urgency to find new reserves to

replace existing ones.

"Timing is essential in this industry. Companies always need to stay one step ahead to know where their next project will be. Central Africa is still widely unexplored, and this is where Randgold is currently branching out. Intensive exploration programmes are under way in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali and Senegal," says King. Major projects currently being undertaken by Randgold include the 2.9-million-ounce Goukoto deposit on the Loulo permit, in Mali, the Massawa project, in Senegal, and the Kibali project, in the DRC. Randgold acquired a 45% interest in the Kibali project, in 2009, which now stands at 9.2-million ounces of reserves, one of the largest undeveloped gold deposits in Africa.

Micromine regional manager for Africa **Neil Quin** explains that Micromine develops mining software solutions across the entire mining value chain from geological exploration and three-dimensional mine design applications to mine production management, mine production control and data management solutions.