

PGM miner opts for Micromine software

Micromine, which provides software solutions and services to the mining and exploration industry, has partnered with the minerals exploration and development company, Platinum Australia Limited (PLA).

PLA has tenements situated in Australia and South Africa. The company's key projects are made up of the Smokey Hills and Kalahari Platinum projects in South Africa and the Panton project in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

PLA's Exploration Manager, Dr Steve Hunns, says the company was formed in 2000 to explore for PGMs in Australia, and acquired the Smokey Hills project in South Africa in May 2004. "We commenced the feasibility drilling in July 2005 and the definitive feasibility study was completed in August 2006. Mining approval was granted in November 2007," he says.

Hunns notes that PLA chose and installed Micromine's software some 12 months ago, after the package the company was using proved to be somewhat cumbersome with regard to user friendliness.

"We looked around and had a few companies tender for our business," Hunns says. "We opted for the Micromine suite primarily

for its simplicity. Anyone can use it and you can be up and running in a few days. The significant savings we made in choosing Micromine made it a sensible buy for a junior mining company."

Micromine Africa CEO Sean Heathcote says that his company's software is user-friendly and is developed according to the needs of the client, gauged through constant client interaction and feedback. Developments are coded into the software during regular updates and patches, and are available to all users who have a current annual licence.

In employing both GBIS and Micromine, PLA is confident that the software will accommodate its entire business focus. "We take on PGM projects, from grassroots through to completion," says Hunns. "We will also take on an advanced project if it's feasible and accessible." It is this broad array of business needs that PLA must take into account when making IT purchases.

"Micromine products offer scalable solutions, which can be tailored according to the specific requirements of the client," notes Heathcote. "One licence may be based around exploration and another around mine design or surveying. This optimises the pur-

chase cost for cash constrained junior mining companies. The Smokey Hills project operates the full suite of modules in various licence configurations that can be modified at any time."

The GBIS and Micromine products were implemented at Kalahari Platinum (Kalplats) in North West Province, where Hunns says that PLA has been drilling and where it is "planning to have a definitive feasibility study completed in within two months."

Heathcote explains that the simplicity and ease of use of Micromine's software is regarded as a major benefit. "Junior companies often have data controlled by a 'power user', and incur significant future costs if the user leaves the business," he says.

"A three-day training course got us up and running," states Hunns. "I don't think that anyone is in a position to have staff members take up to a year to become fully familiar with a software package. We now have several people using the software, all of whom can back each other up." He adds that the service his company has received has been "excellent" and its first upgrade presented no problems.

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