

## IC Potash Expects to Finalise Feasibility Study by December

By: Henry Lazenby | 10th October 2013



TORONTO (miningweekly.com) – US-focused potash project developer IC Potash (ICP) on Thursday said it expected to complete a feasibility study on its flagship Ochoa sulfate of potash (SOP) project, in southeastern New Mexico, by December, which would pave the way for management to continue financing negotiations with prospective local and international partners.

The company said its technical professionals were working with a team of more than 100 industry consultants on the study, which would confirm the project's economic data and provide definitive cost assessments.

CEO **Sidney Himmel** explained that the company was focused on mining polyhalite, a potash mineral, and its processing into SOP, a premium-priced potash product used in the agriculture of fruits and vegetables and in salt-sensitive soils.

ICP said it had successfully completed the pilot plant testing in early September, and tests had demonstrated the “robust nature” of the flow sheet and converting polyhalite to SOP economically.

“The results were very positive, being consistent with the effective and efficient processing of polyhalite ore into various grades of SOP, and will be incorporated into the study to determine the final equipment selection and sizing and to determine the overall project capital and operational costs,” ICP said.

The pilot testing included crushing, grinding, washing and dewatering mined ore; calcination, which entailed controlled heating to remove entrapped water and thereby increasing ore solubility; leaching the calcined ore; and crystallizing SOP.

Earlier this summer, the US Army Corps of Engineers had determined that the Ochoa project area composed entirely of uplands and upland drainage, therefore, absolving it from requiring federal permits.

As a result, the Corps had issued ICP a jurisdictional determination confirming that its planned mining and processing operations would not require its authorization to proceed with mine and processing plant construction, nor would it be subject to ongoing monitoring once in commercial operations.

In September, the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer notified ICP that the company had met the state requirements to siphon water from the Capitan Reef for mining and industrial use, so long as the company complied with the standard metering and reporting requirements.

The water would be treated by reverse osmosis to reduce dissolved solids to the extent required for process water to be used in the leaching and crystallization processes required to produce SOP.

Further, the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management in early August made the draft environmental-impact statement (EIS) available for public scrutiny, and three subsequent public hearings were held in Carlsbad, Jal and Hobbs, New Mexico, to give interested stakeholders the opportunity to comment and make their opinions on the Ochoa project known.

The comment period closed on September 23.

ICP expected the permitting process to proceed as planned, culminating in clearing the final EIS in the first quarter of 2014.

“While the company continues to enjoy sufficient liquidity to complete the feasibility study and several months of operations thereafter, we recognize that the financial market environment for project funding could remain challenging for junior mining companies for the next 12 to 18 months,” Himmel said.

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