

Rio Tinto has earmarked \$ 2.4 billion for the construction of a lithium borate mine and processing plant for the Jadar project in Loznica, one of the largest lithium greenfield projects in the world.

The Jadar project is obliged to obtain all relevant approvals, permits and licenses and will continue to be implemented in cooperation with the local community, the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the non-governmental sector. This is an important milestone for the project and a strong confirmation of Rio Tinto's commitment to support Serbia as a leading lithium supplier, given the volume and high quality of the Jadar deposit composition.

It is planned that Jadar will produce lithium carbonate of quality suitable for the production of batteries, a sought-after mineral used for the production of batteries for electric vehicles and storage of renewable energy. In addition, Jadar is planned to produce borates used in the development of renewable energy equipment such as solar panels and wind turbines. The Jadar project includes an underground mine with associated infrastructure and equipment, including electric traction vehicles, as well as a chemical processing plant for lithium carbonate of quality suitable for the production of batteries. In order to minimize the impact on the local community, the mine will be built in accordance with the highest environmental standards, including the use of dry stacking of industrial waste. This innovative method enables the gradual recultivation of dry waste with vegetation and soil, without the need to build a dam for liquid waste.

After construction, Jadar will be a modern industrial plant, with a digitally networked underground mine, monitored in real time from a centralized operational center. In order to reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption, the underground mine will use a fleet of almost entirely electric vehicles. Water management will be carried out with the help of a state-of-the-art plant, thanks to which approximately 70% of water will be used from recycled sources or purified water from mines.

Jadar will also be the largest mining and process investment in Serbia. The project has the potential to contribute 1% directly and 4% indirectly to Serbia's GDP, including many Serbian suppliers during the mine construction phase. The realization of the project will enable Jadar to be a big employer in the region and in Serbia. In the construction phase, the project will enable the creation of about 2,100 jobs, while in the work phase of the mine and the processing of mineral raw materials, 1,000 people will be employed. Rio Tinto is also committed to helping develop local businesses, so they can support the operation of the mine for decades to come.

Rio Tinto CEO Jakob Stausholm pointed out: "We have great confidence in the Jadar project, we are ready to invest, provided we obtain all the necessary permits. This project will

enable Serbia and Rio Tinto to respond to the growing demand for lithium, in line with the global energy transition, and strengthen our supply, especially in the European market. Jadar has the potential to provide enough lithium to power over a million electric vehicles a year”.

“The Jadar deposit and its unique mineral Jadarit were discovered by Rio Tinto geologists in 2004 near Loznica. It contains a high quality composition of boron and lithium, thanks to which it can support long-term operations in the first quarter of operating costs for both products, “added Stausholm and continued”. We are committed to maintaining the highest environmental standards, minimizing impact and building a sustainable future in our communities. We are aware that we can only implement this project if we listen to and consider the views of all stakeholders”.

The next steps for the project are obtaining approvals for the exploitation field, as well as obtaining all permits and approvals. This includes the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment Study. As part of the environmental impact assessment, and in accordance with the regulations of the Republic of Serbia, Rio Tinto invites all interested parties to participate in the process of public discussion regarding the studies. In addition, Rio Tinto continues to organize roundtables with NGOs and the general public to encourage open dialogue.

Approval of the environmental impact assessment study is necessary for the start of works, and the construction of the mine is planned to begin during 2022.

1 Assuming 60kWh battery size

2 These production targets were previously reported in a release to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) dated 10 December 2020, “Rio Tinto declares maiden Ore Reserve at Jadar” (for battery-grade lithium carbonate it was 55,000 tonnes). All material assumptions underpinning the production targets continue to apply and have not materially changed.

Source: riotinto.com