

In-Situ leach mining at JV Inkai

Peter (Noel) Voykin, Cameco, Saskatoon, Canada

This presentation is submitted jointly by Anselme Diracca and Noel Voykin.

JV Inkai LLP was registered in the Republic of Kazakhstan in March 21, 1996. This partnership is a joint venture between Cameco Corporation (Cameco) registered in Canada, and National Atomic Company Kazatomprom JSC (Kazatomprom), which is ultimately controlled by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The partnership has undertaken a number of cost saving and efficiency improvements over the initial years of the mine life. These savings can be broken down as planning improvements, operations improvements, or improved quality.

In the planning category, there are a number of initiatives that improve both planning efficiency and effectiveness, each starting at the geological level. Some examples are:

- 3D modelling used to improve interpretation, estimation, and well screen placement;
- An effective planning tool implemented to apply effective scheduling techniques; and,
- Economic modelling integrated into mine scheduling.

In the operating category, initiatives that improve effectiveness have also been undertaken. Some examples are:

- Outsourcing used to increase expertise where required. It has also been used to limit the requirement for permanent staff on cyclical tasks such as drilling;
- U-tube technology used for elution to effectively double eluate concentrations and reduce milling costs; and,
- Drilling techniques which have evolved and improved over the life of the project.

In the quality category, Inkai continues to focus on quality operating practices. Today, Inkai has an effective method to track and address deviations in operations. Going forward, Inkai will continue to use proven methods to enhance quality as opportunities arise.

The partnership has, and continues to focus on, continuous improvement in all categories. It is clear that these methods are providing results as unit costs have dropped to approximately 50% of their initial values. The presentation will focus on these improvements.