



STL makes history with its first Germanium concentrates export from DRC

Lubumbashi, the 14th of October – This week, for the first time in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a Congolese company, the Société du Terril de Lubumbashi (STL), a 100% subsidiary of Gécamines, will export a shipment of germanium concentrates that were locally transformed from the tailings at Big Hill in Lubumbashi.

This first batch is part of a gradual ramp-up of germanium that is treated inside the DRC and will be shipped to Umicore in Belgium for further processing and use in high-tech applications. Previously, STL's germanium entered the market through third-party refiners outside of DRC but are now processed by STL's new hydrometallurgical plant. STL's recycled germanium, a strategic metal used in space, aeronautical, and optical technologies, is expected to represent a significant global supply source.

This success was made possible through the expertise and support provided by Umicore, with which STL and GECAMINES signed a technological and commercial partnership on May 8, 2024. The partnership aims to support the ramp-up of germanium that is recycled at STL's hydrometallurgical plant in Lubumbashi and ensures the offtake of its production to Umicore.

Umicore experts, present in Lubumbashi since June, assisted STL employees in ensuring the production of the germanium processing at this unique African plant. The plant was inaugurated on October 4 by His Excellency Mr. President of the Republic, Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo.

This fruitful cooperation has now resulted in the export of a first batch of germanium concentrate to Umicore's industrial facilities in Belgium, which will be soon followed by others.

In the short term, the aim is to increase the concentration and quality of exported germanium, as well as the total quantity produced, to generate additional revenue for STL. In the medium term, STL will assess the possibility of developing a germanium dioxide production plant at the Big Hill site.

The achievement of STL's first export of germanium marks an additional step in Gécamines' commitment to create a Congolese hub for the transformation of strategic



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metals in Lubumbashi. This milestone represents the desire to build a high-value-added mining industry in the DRC that generates tangible jobs and wealth for the Congolese nation. Moving beyond being a raw materials supplier, STL has chosen to operate throughout the value chain of critical metal refining.

Guy Robert Lukama, President of Gécamines / STL, stated: *"This inaugural shipment of germanium confirms our ambition, nurtured over several years, to make Congo a global hub for strategic metals. This applies not only to their extraction, which we are already partly involved in, but also to their local transformation in the future. With germanium production at STL, we can become a significant player in the global production of this strategic metal, granting the DRC a major geostrategic position in its relations with partners.*

Beyond germanium, we will ensure that STL engages in the production of gallium, cobalt, and zinc present in the Terril de Lubumbashi. Additionally, in the future, we aim to explore lithium, tin, cadmium, and coltan. Gécamines will reposition itself as the State's mining industrial arm to combat illegal industrial exploitation in the DRC, embodying the mining vision of His Excellency, President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo."

Grant Dempsey, General Manager of STL, stated: *"The partnership with Umicore is highly beneficial for STL, but I also believe it benefits Umicore by exposing them to different ways of working in a vastly different environment. Thanks to the support from Umicore's on-site teams, as well as their human and industrial resources in Belgium, our personnel are rapidly gaining proficiency in various techniques related to germanium production. It's essential to understand that their metals technology expertise is nearly unparalleled worldwide, especially concerning this highly specific metal. This partnership allows us to save valuable time. We are particularly pleased with this collaboration and are looking forward to the further steps in this project."*

GECAMINES COMMUNICATION SERVICE:

press@gecamines.cd

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