PRESS RELEASE
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Imerys Graphite & Carbon’s expansion in Natural Graphite production with a new mine in Namibia proceeds according to plan

The Joint Venture in Namibia forms a core part of Imerys Graphite & Carbon’s growth strategy to increase natural graphite supply capacity.

In 2016, Imerys Graphite & Carbon and Gecko Namibia formed a Joint Venture (JV) to develop the Namibian Otjiwarongo site, for the production of natural graphite that can be used in different applications, including lithium-ion batteries for electrical vehicles.

Hugues Jacquemin, Vice President & General Manager of Imerys Graphite & Carbon, says: “This industry is growing. We are already a well-established player and we are expanding quickly, organically and by acquisition. This JV helps us better serve customers with the objective to increase our market share.”

The JV has purchased a former Solvay Fluorspar processing plant on site, which has been retrofitted to process graphite. This has brought advantages regarding investment, anticipation of production timings and important environmental benefits, since the existing structure was a good alternative to building a greenfield plant.

Following the original plan, production in Namibia begins in early 2017 and product sampling is already available. The new product line is comparable to the one in use at Imerys Graphite & Carbon’s Lac-Des-Îles site in Canada. Both sources have very similar high quality ore, with abounding large flake content (+50 and + 80 mesh), easy to extract, process and deliver.

With a commitment to sustainability, safety and continuous improvement, the JV in collaboration with its employees, contractors and the local community is working to create a viable, long-term presence in Namibia. As part of the structural actions at the base of Imerys’ operations, the corporate health & safety system has already been implemented, and all EHS initiatives are fully in-place.

About Imerys Graphite & Carbon
Imerys Graphite & Carbon has a strong history in the production of high quality natural and synthetic graphite powders, conductive carbon blacks, and water-based dispersions. Imerys Graphite & Carbon belongs to Imerys, the world leader in mineral-based specialties for industry. The company’s core values include high standards in terms of employees’ health & safety, social behaviour and environmental responsibility.

About the JV partner, Gecko Graphite Namibia
Gecko Graphite Namibia has a long and successful track record in the African mining and mineral processing market. In Namibia, where natural graphite occurrences have been known for many decades, Gecko invested heavily in geologic prospection and modelling in order to consolidate the graphite mining potential in the region of Otjiwarongo. Imerys Graphite & Carbon joined Gecko as controlling party, contributing with technical and marketing expertise on natural graphite.