

Firm touts Kangankunde, set to start work in Sept

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Lindian Resources, an Australian Securities Exchange (ASX)-listed bauxite explorer, says the recent site visit for the impending exploration of rare earth elements at Kangankunde in Balaka has provided extensive surface mineralisation, boosting prospects for the mine.

The miner, which takes over the mine from Rift Valley Resource Developments who are the project's owners, has indicated that planning is underway for first phase of exploration and project development works to commence in September, including firm's maiden phase drill programme.

Lindian Resources chief executive officer Alistair Stephens said in a brief response on Tuesday the firm is positive on Kangankunde rare earths mine.

He said: "We have wasted no time getting on the ground in Malawi and assessing the Kangankunde and its potential. We have also held extensive discussions with government, regional representatives and other critical stakeholders all of which are supportive of developing Kangankunde.

"Kangankunde was the world's best undeveloped rare earths project, but is now becoming the world's best developing rare earth project. We look forward to leading the company on this



PHOTOGRAPH: NATION

Stephens: We have wasted no time

journey of development in what I believe will present as the best opportunity for a rare earths project ever."

Stephens said they will commence with a aerial topographic survey, re-establish site access tracks, establish drill pads and a drill programme this September.

He said a geophysical gravity survey has been postponed till next year due to clear lines through thick grass.

Meanwhile, the Kangankunde deposit has an outdated resource of 2.53 million tonnes grading 4.24 percent rare earths oxide (REO) and containing 107 000 tonnes of REO when using a cut-

off grade of 3.5 percent.

Back in 2007 when the project was in the hands of ASX-listed Lynas Resources, the firm justified the relatively low cut-off grade based on metallurgical test work supporting the deposit's amenability to a low-cost gravity separation method resulting in a 60 percent REO concentrate.

The progress made on Kangankunde has since excited Malawi Chamber of Mines and Energy national coordinator Grain Malunga, who described the development as positive towards the growth of the mining sector in Malawi.

"This is good news not only for the miner but for

the country as well as it means more revenue for the country," he said.

Malunga, a former minister of Energy and Mining, however, cautioned the country to be vigilant on deals of such nature to ensure they benefit the country.

He said: "Obviously this is some news for joy for the country coming at a time the economy is in dire need of diversifying. Mining is the sure way out of our misery.

"We need to collaborate with the company and deploy our experts to be part of the process at every stage to ensure smooth working relations and mutual benefit."

Meanwhile, government has earmarked the mining sector as key in the economy with potential to contribute to economic growth and job creation.

Ministry of Mining spokesperson Andrew Mkonda was yet to respond to our questions on Tuesday, but the Minister of Mining Albert Mbawala is on record as having said the country stands to benefit from the mining industry.

Growth in the mining sector has lately been on the decline falling from 7.4 percent attained in 2019 to 3.1 percent in 2020, according to the 2022 Malawi Government Annual Economic Report.

This year, growth for the sector is projected to reach 4.6 percent with the expectation that demand for quarry aggregate will increase. ■