

Kupang Smelter project takes off

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CONSTRUCTION of Gulf Minerals' Kupang Smelter project in West Timor will start in July following the appointment of Western Australia-based Como Engineers as project manager.



Gulf Minerals' Kupang Smelter project will comprise eight furnaces.

The engineering firm will oversee the project from its Indonesian office and has appointed South Africa's XRAM Technologies as the pyrometallurgical engineer and contractor responsible for the smelters, from design through to commissioning.

Construction of the alloying smelter facility will take four years to complete and will include eight furnaces for a total capital cost of \$A68 million. Each furnace is estimated to cost \$5.6 million and will have the capacity to produce 20,000 tonnes of alloy per year.

The first two furnaces are expected to come online in January next year, at which time first production of high carbon ferromanganese alloy will begin, with Gulf Minerals

expecting the metal to be 78% pure and comprised of high-grade Indonesian ore blended with overseas ores to enhance iron content. After this, XRAM Technologies will build a further two furnaces each year through to 2019.

Gulf Minerals expects the project will benefit from low operating costs including around the ore, labour and power, with the latter to be supplied by a third party on a user pay basis.

The company's chairman Graham Anderson welcomed Como engineers aboard the project.

"We are pleased to be working with the long established and respected Como Engineers which has a proven reputation of successfully operating within the mining industry in Indonesia on large projects with successful outcomes for many years," he said.

During construction Gulf plans to export more than 50% of manganese ore to provide early cash flows, with annual exports expected to start this year at 60,000t and increase by 30,000t per year to 180,000t in 2018. Ore will be sourced from West and East Timor together with other localities.

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