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Over 50 from several countries at start-up meeting with Norge Mineraler: "Now we are starting a new process"



KICKOFF: This week, Norge Mineraler have visits from companies they will be working with going forward. On the left is Chris Bay from Wales, who works as a mining engineering consultant at SRK Consulting. In the middle is Innocentia Mahlangu from South Africa, who works as a project manager in the mining development company Hatch. To the right is Norge Mineralers Managing Director Olav Skalmeraas. Photo: Ingunn Walderhaug

They refer to it as a creative kickoff. Most of the companies that cooperate with Norge Mineraler are currently gathered in Egersund. Now the work to set the concrete framework for potential new mining operations in Dalane begins, according to the management of Norge Mineraler.

"This is a kick-off meeting. Now we are starting a new process with the early feasibility study, and most of the parties involved are gathered. We will agree on what we should do, how we should cooperate and what goals we have, says Olav Skalmaraas, general manager of Norge Mineraler.

52 people from South Africa, Canada, England and Norway gathered for a meeting at the Grand Hotel on Tuesday morning.

The pre-feasibility study will be presented in 2024. Then they will prepare a final feasibility study. Once this is finished, an investment decision must be made. The plan is that mining start-up can take place in 2028 at the earliest.

Project Director Jørgen Stenvold in Norge Mineraler, says that based on the work that has been done so far, there are several possibilities for where and how new mining operations can be established. The aim of the early feasibility study is to agree on one case – one specific proposal for mining – which they will continue to work on until the investment decision.

"The goal is to zoom in on the project. And to do that work, we have engaged what at least I believe are the best competence environments in the world, because the task is demanding. We will do something that has never been done before, and then competence is crucial," he says.

Entering a creative phase

It is in the collaboration between the various companies and the expert communities that they can think new ideas," explains Stenvold. So, although nothing will be decided in the coming days in Egersund, they hope that the meeting will lead to new and creative proposals for solutions.

"Now we're in the creative phase. It's a bit silly not to be creative enough now, because then you suddenly have a need to get creative since. That's not good," smiles Stenvold.

The meeting on Tuesday was about Norge Mineraler's opportunities and objectives. On Wednesday, they will go out into the moors and give visitors an impression of the area. Furthermore, they will also visit the various port options.



LARGE MEETING: 52 people from several different countries gathered for a meeting at the Grand Hotel on Tuesday. The goal is to gather different communities of expertise to find new and creative solutions, according to Norge Mineraler's management. Photo: Erik Joa/Norge Mineraler

Will increase communication with citizens

"The whole point of such a kick-off meeting is that we should use it as a starting point for being able to work better together. It is only in this way that we solve the challenge of developing the project and build a mine where everyone who is affected gets more back than what they lose. This is the cornerstone of everything we do," says Stenvold.

He says that the different perspectives and broad expertise should be used to maximize the project's advantages and minimize its disadvantages.

"After the commencement of this work, there will be communication with the local community about what plans we are working towards. It will be a

process that starts almost immediately," says Olav Skalmeraas, and explains that in the future it will become more publicly known what the company is planning at any given time.

He points out that there has been a sticking point in the local population; that people haven't known what Norway Minerals is planning.

"And then you haven't been able to answer?"

"No, we haven't been able to answer. But now we have started to outline something," says Skalmeraas.

"They will be left with more than the costs that come

Only when the framework has been set will it be possible to discuss how to agree on the best solutions," explain Skalmeraas and Stenvold.

"We want to be a good neighbor for everyone. We just have to figure out what it's going to look like. We want to be a good neighbour in relation to those affected, but also to the local community, which will be given something back. They will be left with more than the costs that come. Because there's going to be change, there's going to be encroachment on nature. It is not possible to make an omelet without crushing an egg," says Skalmeraas.

"But I guess it's not possible to guarantee that this is how those affected will experience it; that they gain back more than they lose?"

"No, it's a challenge, of course. These are individuals who have completely different preferences and frameworks around what they are considering," Skalmeraas responds.

"And we have a clear mandate. The government has said that Norway will develop the world's most sustainable mineral industry. What does that mean? Well, sustainable also means that those who are affected will get more back than what they lose. But then you have to take a long look," adds Stenvold, and says that the goal is for those affected and the local community to benefit from the final product.

Signed contract with Norconsult

Stenvold makes no secret of his great ambitions; Norge Mineraler will set world records in how the project is solved, he believes.

"That's why we've gathered people from all over the world here today, because we have to bring together the best minds and get them a little bit against each other.

Among the companies represented at the meeting are Hatch, a Canadian mining development company already involved in Nordic Mining's project in Førdefjorden, the mining consultancy SRK, the engineering company Metier, and Norconsult, which has offices in Egersund.

The contract with Norconsult was signed last week.

"They are one of the companies that will help us bring the project all the way to operation. Norconsult will work on the impact assessment, the land-use planning process and all the permits we must have in place before production can start," explains Stenvold.

Norge Mineraler has also entered into an agreement with the Swiss headquartered multinational company ABB. ABB will help ensure the electrification and automation of Norge Mineraler's planned mining operations.

"We want to automate and electrify the entire operation, to have zero CO₂ emissions, but also to have better control. The leading player in this work is ABB, with whom we have entered into a strategic agreement," says Stenvold.

SGS is yet another company involved in the road ahead. They are a large testing laboratory with a lab in Canada.



LOCAL PARTNERS: Norconsult, which has offices in Egersund, will do an important job for Norge Mineraler in the future, say Olav Skalmeraas (left) and Jørgen Stenvold (right). In the middle is Norconsult's project manager Rune Tøndell. Photo: Ingunn Walderhaug

Will drill another 10,000 metres

Finally, among the meeting participants is the drilling company Arctic Drilling from Kautokeino. They start next week with what is scheduled to be the last period of test drilling in the area.

The large round of test drilling was completed earlier this year, and since then Norge Mineraler has concentrated on analysis of the findings and preparations for the start of the early feasibility study.

A further 10,000 metres will now be drilled.

"Now we've drilled here and we've drilled there. We believe that it is homogeneous between the locations we have already investigated, and that is assumed in the resource base. But in some places we want it confirmed," says Skalmeraas, explaining that a total of 36 holes will now be drilled.

The test drilling will take place in areas around Skeipstad and Storeknuten at Hetlandsheia, east of Helleland. The project will be completed in June next year.

"With this drilling program, we will be able to confirm to a large extent the resources that we believe are there, but for which we need confirmation," says Skalmæraas.

Unless completely new information emerges, this round of test drilling will be the last round before the investment decision is to be made.