

Semafo's On-Site Exploration Laboratory at Mana Begins Operations

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Assay time to be Reduced Substantially

MONTREAL, QUEBEC -- (Marketwire) -- 03/21/12 -- [Semafo Inc.](#) (TSX: SMF) (OMX: SMF) today announced that operations have begun at its on-site exploration laboratory at the Corporation's Mana Mine in Burkina Faso. Mana's new assay laboratory is NI-43-101 compliant and has a current processing capacity of between 500 and 600 samples per day.

Mana's preparation laboratory is housed in a newly constructed building, completely separate from the production test area. In addition to utilizing a Quality Assurance/Quality Control ("QA/QC") system in the laboratory, SEMAFO's exploration group adheres to stringent QA/QC protocols during the sample collection process that includes insertion and verification of standards, blanks and duplicates consistent with industry standards.

Furthermore, ALS Minerals Division of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso recently established an independent on-site preparation facility at Mana. This prep lab is designed to crush and pulverize up to 500 pulp samples per day and will also play an important part in significantly accelerating the overall assay turnaround time.

"We are determined to make every possible effort to reduce the turnaround time for assay results," said Michel Crevier, Vice-President, Exploration and Mining Geology and SEMAFO's Qualified Person. "The establishment of our new on-site laboratory as well as the ALS Minerals Division preparation facility will be instrumental to achieving this goal. With an initial 2012 exploration budget at Mana of \$36 million and the resultant significant number of samples that will be generated on a daily basis, these new assay testing and preparation facilities will be fundamental to improving our turnaround and reporting process moving forward."

In consideration of the 2012 exploration program at Mana, the Corporation is presently contemplating another expansion of the exploration preparation laboratory to increase the processing capacity to up to 900 samples per day. Expansion of the current facility would represent an additional investment of approximately \$150,000.

About SEMAFO

SEMAFO is a Canadian-based mining company with gold production and exploration activities in West Africa. The Corporation currently operates three gold mines: the Mana Mine in Burkina Faso, the Samira Hill Mine in Niger and the Kiniero Mine in Guinea. SEMAFO is committed to evolve in a conscientious manner to become a major player in its geographical area of interest. SEMAFO's strategic focus is to maximize shareholder value by effectively managing its existing assets as well as pursuing organic and strategic growth opportunities.

CAUTION CONCERNING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This press release contains forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and assumptions and accordingly, actual results and future events could differ materially from those expressed or implied in such statements. You are hence cautioned not to place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements include words or expressions such as "potential", "will", "contemplating", "expansion", "increase", "strategy", "committed", "evolve", "become", "pursuing", "growth", "opportunities" and other similar words or expressions. Factors that could cause future results or events to differ materially from current expectations expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements include the ability to reduce the turnaround time for assay results, the ability to increase the exploration preparation laboratory's processing capacity to up to 900 samples per day, the ability to execute on our strategic focus, fluctuation in the price of currencies, gold or operating costs, mining industry risks, uncertainty as to calculation of mineral reserves and resources, delays, political and social stability in Africa (including our ability to maintain or renew licenses and permits) and other risks described in SEMAFO's documents filed with Canadian securities regulatory authorities. You can find further information with respect to these and other risks in SEMAFO's 2011 Annual MD&A and 2011 Annual Information Form and other

filings made with Canadian securities regulatory authorities and available at www.sedar.com. These documents are also available on our website at www.semafo.com. SEMAFO disclaims any obligation to update or revise these forward-looking statements, except as required by applicable law.

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