

# Defense Metals Receives Hydrometallurgical Pilot Plant Proposal From SGS Canada Inc.

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VANCOUVER, BC, April 20, 2021 /CNW/ - [Defense Metals Corp.](#) ("Defense Metals") (TSXV: DEFN) (OTCQB: DFMTF) (FSE: 35D) is pleased to announce that it has received the formal Wicheeda Rare Earth Element ("REE") Project continuous hydrometallurgical pilot plant proposal from SGS Canada Inc. ("SGS").

Defense Metals is currently advancing the road accessible Wicheeda Critical Rare Earth Element (REE) Property, which is located close to infrastructure approximately 80 kilometres northeast of Prince George, British Columbia (BC). The Wicheeda project has indicated mineral resources of 4,890,000 tonnes averaging 3.02% LREO (Light Rare Earth Elements) and inferred mineral resources of 12,100,000 tonnes averaging 2.90% LREO<sup>1</sup>.

The Company's highly successful 26-tonne flotation pilot plant campaign, also completed at the SGS Lakefield, ON metallurgical test facility, yielded approximately 1,200 kilograms of high grade REE mineral concentrate. Initiation of the hydrometallurgical pilot plant test program is the next step in establishing overall flowsheet operability at scale.

The test program will utilize representative flotation concentrate generated during the flotation pilot plant campaign and is expected to be completed in stages comprising initial gangue leach; caustic crack; primary acid leach; caustic re-crack; impurity removal; and REE precipitation. Parallel investigations into operability of acid and caustic regeneration; operability of gangue leach and caustic crack and primary acid leach circuits using recycled reagents; in addition to tailings neutralization studies will also be completed.

Once initiated, subject to the Company securing sufficient financing, completion of the various staged pilot campaigns is expected to take approximately 6 months. Key objectives of the planned hydrometallurgical pilot plant will be:

- To provide proof of operability of the proposed hydrometallurgical flowsheet for treatment of flotation concentrate under representative processing conditions including recycled process streams;
- To produce sufficient purified mixed rare earth hydroxide sample for downstream REE separation testing (leading to the production of a saleable NdPr oxide product);
- To confirm final product purity;
- To generate representative samples for solid-liquid separation testing, for use in the development of engineering cost estimates for key equipment.

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<sup>1</sup> Technical Report on the Wicheeda Property, British Columbia, effective June 27, 2020 and prepared by APEX Geoscience Ltd. (Steven J. Nicholls, B.A. Sc., MAIG and Kristopher J. Raffle, B.Sc., P.Geo.) is available under [Defense Metals Corp.](#)'s profile on SEDAR ([www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com))

As previously announced SGS (see Defense Metals News Release dated March 1, 2021) SGS is nearing completion pre-pilot infill hydrometallurgical testwork, initiated during late 2020, designed to assist in the finalization of the pilot plant flowsheet. The Company expects SGS to complete the remainder of pre-pilot testwork within 4-6 weeks time.

Craig Taylor, CEO of Defense Metals, stated: "Since initiating its option to acquire 100% of the Wicheeda REE Project in late 2018 and subsequently collecting a 26-tonne bulk sample, Defense Metals has rapidly advanced Wicheeda from an attractive prospect to compelling resource-stage project. Flotation and hydrometallurgical flowsheet development was completed in parallel with our highly successful 2019 diamond drill campaign that led to an upgraded and expanded mineral resource estimate. We are now excited to take the next step in demonstrating scale-up operability of the Wicheeda REE beneficiation process, leading to the production of a saleable NdPr oxide product."

#### About the Wicheeda REE Property

The 1,708 hectare Wicheeda REE Property, located approximately 80 km northeast of the city of Prince George, British Columbia, is readily accessible by all-weather gravel roads and is nearby to infrastructure, including power transmission lines, the CN railway and major highways.

Geologically, the property is situated in the Foreland Belt and within the Rocky Mountain Trench, a major continental geologic feature. The Foreland Belt contains part of a large alkaline igneous province, stretching from the Canadian Cordillera to the southwestern United States, which includes several carbonatite and alkaline intrusive complexes hosting the Aley (niobium), Rock Canyon (REE), and Wicheeda (REE) deposits.

#### Qualified Person

The scientific and technical information contained in this news release as it relates to the Wicheeda REE Property has been reviewed and approved by Kristopher J. Raffle, P.Geo. (BC) Principal and Consultant of APEX Geoscience Ltd. of Edmonton, AB, a director of Defense Metals and a "Qualified Person" as defined in National Instrument 43-101 - Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects. Mr. Raffle verified the data disclosed which includes a review of the analytical and test data underlying the information and opinions contained therein.

#### About Defense Metals Corp.

[Defense Metals Corp.](#) is a mineral exploration company focused on the acquisition of mineral deposits containing metals and elements commonly used in the electric power market, military, national security and the production of "GREEN" energy technologies, such as, high strength alloys and rare earth magnets. Defense Metals has an option to acquire 100% of the 1,708 hectare Wicheeda Rare Earth Element Property located near Prince George, British Columbia, Canada. [Defense Metals Corp.](#) trades in Canada under the symbol "DEFN" on the TSX Venture Exchange, in the United States, under "DFMTF" on the OTCQB and in Germany on the Frankfurt Exchange under "35D".

Neither the TSX Venture Exchange nor its Regulation Services Provider (as that term is defined in the policies of the TSX Venture Exchange) accepts responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this news release.

#### Cautionary Statement Regarding "Forward-Looking" Information

This news release contains "forward-looking information or statements" within the meaning of applicable securities laws, which may include, without limitation, statements relating to the pilot plant proposal from SGS, the completion of the pilot plant and the expected outcomes, plans for its Wicheeda Property, the advancement and development of the Wicheeda Property, expected demand for REE products, the technical, financial and business prospects of the Company, its project and other matters. All statements in this news release, other than statements of historical facts, that address events or developments that the Company expects to occur, are forward-looking statements. Although the Company believes the expectations expressed in such forward-looking statements are based on reasonable assumptions, such statements are not guarantees of future performance and actual results may differ materially from those in the forward-looking statements. Such statements and information are based on numerous assumptions regarding present and future business strategies and the environment in which the Company will operate in the future, including the price of rare earth elements, the ability to achieve its goals, that general business and economic conditions will not change in a material adverse manner, that financing will be available if and when needed and on reasonable terms. Such forward-looking information reflects the Company's views with respect to future events and is subject to risks, uncertainties and assumptions, including those filed under the Company's profile on SEDAR at [www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com). While such estimates and assumptions are considered reasonable by the management of the Company, they are inherently subject to significant business, economic, competitive and regulatory uncertainties and risks. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those in forward looking statements include, but are not limited to, continued availability of capital and financing and general economic, market or business conditions, adverse weather conditions, failure to maintain or obtain all necessary government permits, approvals and authorizations, failure to maintain community acceptance (including First Nations), decrease in the price of rare earth elements, the impact of Covid-19 or other viruses and diseases on the Company's ability to operate increase in costs, litigation, and failure of counterparties to perform their contractual obligations. The Company does not undertake to update forward-looking statements or forward-looking information, except as required by law.

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