Ionic Rare Earths Limited - First Mixed Rare Earth Carbonate Produced at Makuutu

13.03.2024 | ABN Newswire

Melbourne, Mar 13, 2024 - The Board of Ionic Rare Earths Limited (ASX:IXR) (OTCMKTS) is very pleased to announce that Rwenzori Rare Metals Limited ("Rwenzori"), owner of the Makuutu Heavy Rare Earths Project ("Makuutu" or "the Project"), has successfully produced first quantities of Mixed Rare Earth Carbonate (MREC) at its newly commissioned Demonstration Plant facility in Uganda.

IonicRE currently owns 60% of Makuutu and has agreed terms with partners in RRM on increasing its ownership to 94%, which pending approval by shareholders, and is subject to satisfying conditions precedent, is expected to occur in H1 2024.

- Major milestone of the first production of Mixed Rare Earth Carbonate (MREC) from its newly commissioned Demonstration Plant on site at Makuutu in Uganda;

- MREC produced from Makuutu is rich in both magnet and heavy rare earth elements (REEs), and presents a key alternative, strategic future source for supply constrained Dysprosium (Dy) and Terbium (Tb), from which ~98% of global supply comes from China;

- Production of MREC advances further supply chain and off-taker engagement, providing sample product for customers and strategic partners to evaluate, and positions Makuutu for targeted Final Investment Decision later in 2024 and planned full commercial production in 2026;

- The Demonstration Plant facility at Makuutu continues to advance, with additional MREC production from the Phase 1 activity scheduled for the remainder of H1 2024;

- Major Milestone achieved within two months of being awarded its large-scale mining licence and nine months since breaking ground on facility in Uganda; and

- MREC production reinforces Makuutu as the most advanced Ionic adsorption clay project in development today, with product not committed to China and will supply new supply chains looking to decouple from existing sources.

The high proportion of heavy rare earths within the Makuutu MREC basket further enhances the Project's market positioning and strengthens its value proposition to global partners and stakeholders.

This major milestone marks a pivotal moment in the Project's trajectory and path to offtake and strategic partner discussions. The Demonstration Plant has displayed rapid progress through achieving this milestone within just nine months of breaking ground in Uganda, and two months after receiving its large-scale mining licence, LML00334, at Makuutu.

Commenting on the major milestone, Mr Tim Harrison, Managing Director of Ionic Rare Earths Limited stated;

"We are delighted to announce the successful production of our first mixed rare earth carbonate, on site at Makuutu in Uganda. The progress achieved over the past nine months from what was previously a sugarcane field, to now be a functioning technical facility producing magnet and heavy rare earths is a testament to the focus, dedication and expertise of our RRM and IonicRE team who made this happen."

"Achieving this major milestone, safely within such a short timeframe underscores our commitment to developing Makuutu as a disruptor to existing supply chains, providing an alternative, secure, sustainable and traceable source of heavy rare earths for new supply chains to emerge. This in combination with our Ionic Technologies Belfast recycling facility, Makuutu is key to us harnessing our technology to accelerate mining, refining, and recycling of magnets and heavy rare earths that are critical for the energy transition, advanced manufacturing, and defence".

"Looking ahead, IonicRE remains steadfast in its pursuit of operational excellence, innovation, and sustainable growth. With the successful commencement of MREC production, the Company is wellpositioned to capitalise on emerging opportunities and deliver long-term value to its shareholders and stakeholders."

The Company will continue to ramp up MREC production in Uganda at Makuutu in order to generate an adequate mass of product to provide samples to a number of groups who have requested samples for further evaluation.

*To view tables and figures, please visit:
https://abnnewswire.net/lnk/JFIY8606

About Ionic Rare Earths Limited

Ionic Rare Earths Limited (ASX:IXR) (OTCMKTS:IXRRF) is focused on developing its flagship Makuutu Rare Earths Project in Uganda into a significant long life, low-cost, supplier of high-value critical and heavy rare earths.

Makuutu is an advanced-stage, ionic adsorption clay-hosted project highlighted by near-surface mineralisation, significant exploration upside, excellent metallurgical characteristics and access to tier-one infrastructure.

The ionic adsorption clay-hosted geology at Makuutu is similar to major rare earths projects in Southern China, which are responsible for the majority of global supply of low cost heavy and critical rare earths, specifically the high value magnet metals (Dysprosium and Terbium) Heavy Rare Earths (>98% originating from ionic clays). Metallurgical testing at Makuutu has returned excellent recovery rates, which provide multiple avenues for a simple process route.

Makuutu is well-supported by tier-one existing infrastructure which includes access to major highways, roads, power, water and a professional workforce.

Rare Earths will play a critical role in the future of clean energy. Rare Earths are a key ingredient in the permanent magnets found in wind turbines and electric vehicles.

IonicRE is led by an experienced and proven team, who have the capabilities to deliver Makuutu into production and realise value for all stakeholders.

Contact

Tim Harrison
Ionic Rare Earths Limited
E: investors@ionicre.com
T: +61 (3) 9776 3434

For Investor Relations
Peter Taylor
NWR Communications
E: peter@nwrcommunications.com.au
T: +61 (0) 412 036 231