

IMR takes 60 % stake in Shaft Sinkers

In a R245-million deal, International Mineral Resources (IMR) recently acquired a 60 % stake in Shaft Sinkers (Pty) Ltd, one of the world's most experienced mining contractors with over 40 years' experience in shaft sinking and tunnelling around the globe.

IMR – headquartered in London – manages mining assets in Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The company has a significant shareholding in Samancor Chrome in South Africa. Other African interests include the Chambishi smelter and Luanshya copper mine in Zambia. IMR is also reported to be one of the largest nickel producers in Europe.

According to IMR and Shaft Sinkers Director Alon Davidov, Shaft Sinkers presented an excellent fit for IMR's worldwide expansion strategy. Having had a long-standing relationship with Bridgette Radebe, CEO of Mmakau Mining and existing Shaft Sinkers shareholder, IMR felt that the services and skills it would acquire in the buying of the company would be beneficial, and that IMR could offer huge opportunities for growth.

"There is a tremendous skills shortage in the market – from geologists through to extraction and processing specialists. Shafts are also going deeper, and Shaft Sinkers' experience in deep shafts is invaluable," says Davidov.

As one of the biggest privately-owned mining businesses in the world, with operations across Africa and Europe and affiliations in Central Asia and Russia, IMR operates in markets that Shaft Sinkers has never tapped.

Shaft Sinkers recently participated in a road show to Kazakhstan. Davidov notes that



IMR and Shaft Sinkers Director Alon Davidov (left) and Shaft Sinkers MD Peet Nel.

the country has a profile very similar to South Africa. In addition, the buyout will see Shaft Sinkers sharing IMR's focus on the African continent, Central Asia and Russia, where IMR has invaluable knowledge of the market.

Shaft Sinkers' MD Peet Nel has been re-

called from retirement to bring his years of vital experience to the new structure. Davidov says Shaft Sinkers' day-to-day management is stable, which is one of the reasons why IMR bought into the company. "IMR is here to assist, not to re-invent the wheel," he says. ■