

FERROALLOYS

On Schedule

ASA Metals' 600 000-t/y sinter plant nearing completion

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Engineering company Metix reports that it is nearing completion on Project Sunrise, at ASA Metals' ferrochrome plant near Burgersfort, in Limpopo, entailing the engineering and construction of a 600 000-t/y pelletising and sinter plant.

Metix engineering director **Andrew van Niekerk** says: "As the company's first ASA Metals project, the opportunities are exciting. It is also the company's largest lump-sum turnkey project to date, which has proven challenging in recent market conditions.

"This plant is important for ASA Metals' closed furnaces, as it allows the use of chromite fines or concentrates without adverse environmental effects."

Metix began the ASA Metals project at the end of October 2007, with a ready-for-hot-commissioning target set for the end of the second quarter of 2009. Some 543 construction personnel are currently on site, and the company has increased its construction management team to over 20 to ensure that it achieves its target date. Construction is complete in most of the plant areas and cold commissioning is currently being undertaken. The arrival of the ball mill shell at the end of April saw Metix working to get the structure erected.

"The ball mill ensures that the proportioned mix that feeds the pelletising and sinter furnace has the correct particle-size distribution," says Van Niekerk.



NEARING COMPLETION
ASA Metals' pelletising and sinter plant

The gearbox for the drive was also recently delivered, and the final drive installed and carefully aligned.

The mill's shell was manufactured in South Africa, with other components being sourced from various parts of Europe.

The ball mill has one of the longest lead times of all components, from procurement to arrival on site.

"Metix placed this order at a very early stage in the project, and we were pleased with its arrival and our ability to erect the unit quickly."

With many local tenders and prospects put on hold during the economic downturn, Metix is seeking to diversify and become more involved in international joint ventures and agreements.

"Offers on the table include the basic engineering and technology equipment package for a 70-MVA SiMn furnace in China, Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects, research and development ventures, as well as final contractual negotiations on a 600 000-t/y international sinter plant," Van Niekerk says.

However, he adds that Metix will remain focused on local projects and development, and will spend most of its resources in 2009 on the completion of existing projects, such as ASA Metals' ferrochrome project, Middelburg Ferrochrome's sinter plant, in Mpumalanga, and the enclosing of Herculite Ferrochrome's open furnace.

With the ASA Metals development due for completion around mid-2009, Metix is in the final stage of construction and is currently preparing for some of the precommissioning activities, after completion of the build.

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MAGNETIC SEPARATION

Separated from the Competition

South African firm commissions magnetic separators at Indian iron-ore operation

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PROCESS equipment manufacturer Multotec Magnetics has successfully commissioned two wet, high-intensity magnetic separator machines in an iron-ore application in India. The order was placed after Multotec Magnetics had shrugged off competition from international suppliers.

"The machine has features that include replaceable matrix

plates, making it maintenance friendly and easy to service," says Multotec Magnetics GM Dr **Arno Steinmuller**. He says that it is a more efficient design than earlier generations from an energy consumption perspective and, at 80 t/h to 100 t/h, the equipment has a higher capacity.

Prior to the manufacture of the two separators, Multotec Magnetics undertook testwork using samples from the plant to confirm the suitability of the



HIGH INTENSITY
One of the magnetic separators supplied by Multotec Magnetics to a customer in India

equipment for the application. On completion, the machines were dispatched and commissioned on site by a team of Multotec engineers and technicians.

Steinmuller points out that the

company's previous record in the supply of similar machines in both mineral sands and iron-ore applications, locally and internationally, played a big role in the project being awarded to Multotec.

"In addition to a significant improvement in serviceability, the capital expenditure and operating costs are significantly lower. This underlines the ability of Multotec not only to apply high levels of applications knowledge and technical expertise to produce customer-specific solutions, but also to do so in a manner that provides customers with a better bottom line," Steinmuller concludes.

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