

Drilling comes up with the goods

Drilling for the A\$28 million Havana Deeps Prefeasibility Study is now complete and has culminated in a 1.48 million ounce resource upgrade at the Tropicana Gold Mine, enabling the focus to turn to the study phase of the project.

This includes geotechnical and hydrogeological studies, open pit mine designs and an underground study, along with additional metallurgical test work. A trade-off study will be completed to determine the best combination of open pit and underground mining to optimise the resource.

The PFS is due to be finalised in the third quarter of this year and an Ore Reserve update is expected to follow shortly after.

Drilling has accounted for the lion's share of the PFS capital, with 94,000 metres completed between April 2011 and August 2012, in 180 holes, according to Tropicana Gold Mine Manager Exploration & Projects Bob Singer.

"We have tested Havana down to 1,400m vertically and had up to four multi-purpose drill rigs on site undertaking that work," Singer said.

"Further drilling will depend on the outcome of the PFS."

All drilling for the study was undertaken by Kalgoorlie-Boulder-based drilling contractor BlueSpec Mining. Most holes comprised reverse circulation pre-collars with NQ diamond tails, however as holes got deeper, and to control deviation, they were collared with HQ to 300m with NQ tails to final depth.

Drilling focussed on extending the deposit at depth with broad spaced drilling (100-200m spacing) and infilling outside the current Feasibility Study pit design to 50m spacing, to increase confidence. Typical recent results from this drilling included 34m at 3.75 grams per tonne gold from 426m, 27m at 3.07 g/t gold from 699m, 28m at 3.7 g/t gold from 525m and 15m at 7.9 g/t gold from 402m.

This additional drilling was a significant driver in boosting resources, which now total 118 million tonnes of ore grading 2.08 g/t gold for a contained 7.89Moz. Other contributors to this outcome were a lowering of the cut-off grade and use of a higher gold price (A\$2,000/oz).

Drilling results in 2012 indicate that a cutback on current pit designs is potentially an economically viable outcome. As a result open pit resources are now quoted within a A\$1,500/oz pit shell rather than within the feasibility pit design (\$970/oz) as previously modelled. The open pit Mineral Resource increased by 2.24Moz to 7.02Moz from 109.6Mt of ore grading 1.99 g/t gold.

Underground resources at Havana Deeps, previously reported outside the Havana pit design, were adjusted to reflect mineralisation that lies outside the re-optimised pit shell. This led to the underground Resource decreasing by 760,000oz to 870,000oz from 8.5Mt of ore grading 3.21 g/t gold.

With the ore at Havana plunging to the southeast, most drilling focussed on chasing the high grade mineralisation at depth. Drilling to the north east of Havana has, however, returned high grade results including an intercept of 18m at 5.38 g/t gold from 500m.

"This is an encouraging result and we are hopeful that we may have uncovered a new high grade shoot," Singer said.

"This will be a priority target for exploration drilling in 2013."

Mineralisation at depth beneath Tropicana and Boston Shaker remains data-constrained and testing of this will also form part of the 2013 exploration program.

"We focused drilling on Havana because it was the highest grade and showed the best depth potential," Singer said.

"But both Tropicana and Boston Shaker deposits have only had limited drilling at depth with some high grades recorded, especially at Boston Shaker."

Results from a four-hole drilling program undertaken at Boston Shaker late in 2012 are pending.



Drilling has accounted for the lion's share of the A\$28 million Havana Deeps Prefeasibility Study, with 94,000 metres completed between April 2011 and August last year.