

AURUM

GLOBAL EXPLORATION

AURUM'S MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL TEAMS INTEGRAL IN INCREASING GOLD RESOURCE AT CURRAGHINALT TEN-FOLD

PROJECT BRIEF

Canadian-based exploration company Tournigan Gold Corporation enlisted Aurum in 2003 to manage their flagship Curraghinalt Gold Project, an advanced gold exploration project in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. The deposit, a quartz vein-hosted mesothermal lode-gold system with a previously defined historical resource of 260,000 ounces of gold, was still open both down dip and along strike when Tournigan acquired it. The exploration acreage surrounding the project extended to 844 km² and was itself host to numerous other gold and VMS prospects and targets. The technical team of geologists and resource modelling experts was led by Aurum Founding Director Vaughan Williams, one of the company's Principal Geologists. It was tasked with increasing the resource by exploring the mineral potential beyond the area of the known deposit. The Curraghinalt Gold project was sold to Dalradian Resources in 2008 and Aurum's work continued with the new owners up to late 2011. Eight years of work programmes planned, executed and overseen by Aurum were fundamental in achieving a ten-fold increase of the gold resource, from 260,000 to 2.69 million ounces (measured, Indicated and Inferred categories).

CHALLENGES

The Curraghinalt Gold project posed a number of challenges for the Aurum team. The technical aspects included understanding and interpretation of the complex geology and mineralizing system, and designing a multimillion dollar exploration programme that would significantly enhance the gold resource and the overall value of the client's property. The logistical aspects covered planning and implementation of the diamond drilling programme, which amounted to 30,000 metres drilled over several hundred holes. Aurum dealt with up to five drill rigs over the eight-year period, managing the field teams and drilling contractors on site and maintaining strict environmental standards and controls on exploration activities. The project manager also had to ensure that the geological samples collected and sent for assay met the stringent quality assurance and quality control standards required for developing an NI 43-101 quoted gold resource.

SOLUTION

Aurum operated an eight-person geological team to execute the project exploration and development between 2003 and 2011. This work had two distinct areas of operation: developing the resource at Curraghinalt; and carrying out regional exploration across the wider licence block, focussing both on developing prospects with known mineralization and on regional grass roots exploration. The work also involved the oversight of two drilling contractors, operating five drill rigs and comprising up to twenty staff. Just as important was building and maintaining good working relationships with both the local residents and the wider community in the project area, over the eight years of Aurum's involvement with the project.

Recent work by Aurum on behalf of the client Resource development

- Aurum's geological team began by capturing and evaluating all of the historical data and bringing the data into a fully validated GIS database
- Using state of the art software packages, including Datamine and MapInfo, the historical drilling data was recreated in section and plan. This then enabled the team to build a new 3D geological model. Once developed, this more advanced geological interpretation formed the basis upon which the 30,000 m diamond drilling programme was planned and carried out between 2003 and 2011.
- As the new data came in from the drill rigs the geological model was expanded and improved, while the exploration model, developed ahead of the advancing drill rigs, successfully predicted new veins and zones of mineralization. These added new resource ounces to the overall model and a significant increase in project value to the client.
- The final phase of resource model development was carried out in association with Micon International Limited, where the 3D geological model developed by Aurum was modelled into a 2.69 million ounce resource in the Measured, Indicated and Inferred categories by Micon (released in January 2012).

Exploration

- The second part to Aurum's remit was to carry out exploration on the wider "regional" package of ground

- Key to this work was the capture of all the previous operator data and the development of a validated exploration database, which included geological, geochemical, geophysical and drilling data. A target generation exercise identified and prioritised both known mineralization and conceptual targets. Some of the best areas were then targeted for detailed mapping, geochemistry, geophysics and drilling, while some of the unexplored areas on the rest of the licenced area were successfully targeted with prospecting and sampling.

RESULTS

With an experienced project manager, dedicated technically skilled geologists and field exploration teams, Aurum advanced the Curraghinalt Project from a 260,000 ounce to a 2.69 million ounce resource (measured, Indicated and Inferred categories): a ten-fold increase. The exploration aspect yielded numerous gold and base metal targets for development across the licenced area. Entirely new prospects were also identified. These added an increased value to the project, from both resource and advanced exploration perspectives.

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