

The West Australian

Estrella hits high-grade manganese in new mineral frontier



Helen Barling SPONSORED
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📷 Estrella managing director Chris Daws on the ground at Timor-Leste. Credit: File

Estrella Resources is wasting no time as it looks to explore the potential of its freshly minted 500 sq kms of tenure in Timor-Leste with a high-grade manganese rock chip sample peaking at 60.8 per cent already on the table. As the ink dries on the historical agreement with state-owned Murak Rai Timor, Estrella is making history as one of the first companies to receive exploration rights in the country.

The sample was one of four taken on a reconnaissance field trip to the prospective patch in Lautém which has been untouched by modern exploration techniques.

Last week Estrella was presented with three exploration and evaluation licences in Timor Leste (formally East Timor) in addition to eight reconnaissance permits by Timor-Leste Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao.

It follows from a deal between Estrella and the State-run Murak Rai Timor (MRT), which will see the creation of a joint venture (JV) to explore for valuable deposits in Timor-Leste.

Timor Leste has been untouched by mineral explorers and Estrella's exploration permits are thought to be the first the country has ever handed out.

According to the details of the expected JV, MRT will be free-carried at 30 per cent up to the release of a definitive feasibility study (DFS) into the mining concessions granted to Estrella.

The fledgling nation, which only gained independence in 2002, is looking to build its mining industry in this resource-rich part of the world. The government recently passed legislation aimed at enabling a new mineral exploration and development industry in the country.

Mineral titles will be awarded across the country in a bid to inspire a new exploration and mining industry aimed at improving the fortunes of the small island nation that has been long devastated by conflict under Indonesian rule but is now thought to be a stable jurisdiction.

As one of only four companies awarded concessions, Estrella is on the front foot in the developing country that is starting a new resources industry from scratch.

The UN reports a mixture of known mineral occurrences in Timor-Leste including chromite, gold, silver, copper, phosphate and manganese.

Estrella says training of its new in-country geological team is underway as detailed mapping and sampling aimed at identifying mineral occurrences on the surface within the concessions has commenced.

Additionally, the company is mobilising crushing and other laboratory equipment to Timor-Leste to give it the ability to test and report multi-element pXRF results from within the country.

In its quest to expedite the exploration process, Estrella is also utilising an innovative Portable ppb gold detection system which enables same-day analysis of field samples, cutting down on lengthy time delays associated with sample transport.

Estrella's concessions are 170km from the capital city of Dili by sealed, all-weather roads and it is then a further 10km on all-weather unsealed roads south to the towns of Baduro or Daudere. Timor-Leste has a pronounced dry season that will assist land access and exploration in more remote areas.

As a first mover in a vastly under-explored nation, Estrella doesn't have the luxury of delving into a vast exploration data treasure chest - in fact it will get to create this for itself. And with 60 per cent manganese hits right off the bat, Estrella just might be onto something here in this new mineral frontier.

Estrella unveils 27km manganese trend in virgin Timor-Leste

By [Bart Bogacz](#)



Reconnaissance work by Estrella has identified an extensive trend prospective for manganese at its Lautém project in Timor-Leste. Credit: File

Estrella Resources is off and running at its Lautém manganese, copper and gold project in Timor-Leste (formally East Timor), with preliminary geological reconnaissance works identifying a 27 km manganese trend with serious grades up to almost 61 per cent. The company is undergoing systematic geological mapping and sampling at its newly granted 504 square kilometre land package after managing to lock down one of the first ever exploration licences in the mineral rich province

Multiple manganese exposures have been documented in historical mapping across the vast tenure held by Estrella, however the project is yet to see any comprehensive modern-day exploration.

Geological mapping and sampling conducted has now identified the Noni Formation as the host structure for the extensive manganese mineralisation, unveiling the 27 kilometre strike length at the Lalena prospect in the northern part of the landholding

Estrella collected a total of 15 grab samples during the recent site visit to Lalena, with other notable results from portable XRF readings including 57.2 per cent manganese and 48.1 per cent manganese

Management is currently mobilising crushing and other laboratory equipment to Timor-Leste to build capacity for testing and reporting multi-element XRF results in country with select samples to be sent to Australia for standard laboratory analysis as reference checks.

Management also noted the presence of copper and gold occurrences at the Luro prospect in the southern part of the tenure, identified through a review of historical data. It believes these showings are associated with the Legumau Range which stretches for about 14 kilometres at Lautém.

Future exploration works at the project are expected to consist of airborne geophysical surveys, ground geophysics and ultimately drill testing if warranted.

The recent grant of tenure follows Estrella's Managing Director, Chris Daws, fostering a long-term relationship with the government of Timor-Leste in anticipation of recently passed legislation designed to facilitate a new mineral exploration and development industry within the nation.

That Timor-Leste is essentially untouched from an exploration and mining perspective is quite remarkable and the first movers in country to take advantage of the new legislation will no doubt reap the rewards.

Estrella has only scratched the surface in its hunt for riches at Lautém, but the future could be bright for the Perth-based explorer if the early indications are anything to go by.

