Timor-Leste to Conduct Market Trial for 27,000 Tonnes of Manganese

DILI, (Timorpost.com, 14 Nov.2026)—The President of the National Minerals Authority, Public Institute (ANM, I.P.), Rafael Danilson Magno de Araújo, explained that the Government is currently preparing a jetty in Lautém Municipality to facilitate vessels exporting approximately 27,000 tonnes of manganese overseas.

According to him, this market trial process is intended to evaluate the pricing and quality of Timor-Leste's manganese prior to large-scale commercial exports.

"At this moment, we are working together with relevant ministries to develop a facility—not a full port, but a jetty—to allow vessels to berth in Lautém and subsequently ship out 27,000 tonnes of manganese for market testing," he informed journalists at the Multipurpose Hall in Bebora on Tuesday evening (10/11/2026).

He added that the destination country cannot yet be announced, as the shipment will pass through the Tenu Port facility to assess mineral quality and gauge feedback from international buyers.

Previously, ANM, I.P. had already dispatched manganese samples abroad for market testing. Preparatory work to extract and export the nearly 27,000-tonne shipment of manganese is therefore continuing.

"Preparatory work is steadily progressing. I expect that once the vessel berths, we will invite journalists to cover the event and share this information with our society and communities across the territory," he stated.

In addition to manganese operations in Lautém, he reported that the mineral licenses granted in the first licensing round involved 14 companies, and that the inaugural tender has yielded positive results, particularly regarding marble, which is expected to enter the development phase next year.

He also noted that two major drilling campaigns are currently underway: one conducted by Estrela Resources in Lautém, and another by Tivan, which is set to commence operations in the Ossuala area of Baucau.

Accordingly, he called on local community leaders to cooperate, emphasizing that these mineral activities will shape the future development of Timor-Leste's mining sector.

Previously, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Murak Rai Timor, José Manuel Gonçalves, stated that India and China have expressed interest in conducting market trials for Timor-Leste's manganese.

Murak Rai Timor, together with Estrela Resources, plans to dispatch manganese samples to two or three countries to evaluate ore quality and international market response, though no definitive export contracts have been signed yet.

In an official announcement published on October 13, 2026, Estrela Resources reported that it had received approval to export a manganese sample via overland transport to a client in West Timor, Indonesia, for processing trials at a manganese smelter.

Budget Execution Reaches 80%

The National Minerals Authority, Public Institute (ANM, I.P.), has executed over 80% of the US$4.9 million budget allocated to the institution by the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources for the 2026 fiscal year, and expects to achieve between 92% and 95% budget execution by the end of the year.

ANM, I.P. President Rafael Danilson Magno de Araújo explained that the institution will continue processing financial commitments and payments over the final months of the year to ensure budget execution meets its planned targets.

“For the National Minerals Authority through the end of this month, ANM received a total budget allocation of US$4.9 million from the Ministry this year. At present, we have executed more than 80%. We are confident that next month, with our ongoing commitments and payments, we can reach 92% to 95% overall budget execution in 2026,” he told journalists in Bebora on Tuesday evening (10/11/2026).

Under the 2026 General State Budget (OJE), the Government allocated US$4.9 million to ANM, I.P. as a public transfer/subsidy to support the institution’s mandate as the entity responsible for regulating and supervising mineral resources in Timor-Leste.

Regarding the 2027 General State Budget, deliberations in the National Parliament are currently underway, and ANM, I.P. is awaiting confirmation of the budget amount MPRM will allocate to the institution for the upcoming year.

“Discussions on the 2027 budget are currently underway in Parliament. We are waiting to see how much funding the Ministry will allocate to us. As the debate progresses, we will learn our exact allocation. You can follow the discussions in the National Parliament,” he said.

ANM, I.P. will continue implementing Government programs and its own institutional action plan by promoting the mineral sector and attracting investment to Timor-Leste to drive national economic growth.

Regarding human resources, he noted that ANM, I.P. employs 77 technical staff, though the majority still lack deep expertise and experience in the mining field, as the sector is newly emerging in Timor-Leste.

Therefore, ANM, I.P. will continue forging partnerships with international organizations and countries with advanced mining sectors to build the technical capacity and knowledge of its personnel.

He also mentioned that while existing equipment is sufficient for the authority to carry out its duties, ANM, I.P. continues to seek support from the Ministry to strengthen its equipment and workforce.

The ANM, I.P. President identified a lack of public awareness regarding the mining sector as one of the key challenges facing the institution, given that the sector has only been under development for three years.

Currently, ANM, I.P. oversees nearly 100 mineral activities being developed across the national territory.

“The duty of the Government and ANM, I.P. is to continue utilizing all available channels, including the media, to inform the public that although this sector is new, through joint efforts between the Government and ANM, I.P., we remain hopeful that we can develop this industry even further,” he concluded.

Timor-Leste to ship 27,000 tons of manganese overseas

DILI, 11 November 2026 (TATOLI) – Timor-Leste is preparing to transport about 27,000 tonnes of manganese from Lautém municipality to international markets for quality assessment and commercial testing, as the country explores opportunities to develop its mineral resources.

The National Minerals Authority (ANM) is coordinating with several government ministries to establish the infrastructure required for the shipment, including the construction of a small wharf in Lautém to facilitate the loading and transportation of the mineral.

Rafael de Araújo, president of the National Minerals Authority (ANM), said the planned export would follow geological surveys carried out by state-owned mining company Murak Rai Timor (MRT) alongside Australian firm Estrella Resources.

“One of the main requirements is a small wharf to allow ships to dock in Lautém and transport around 27,000 tonnes of manganese for testing in the international market,” Araújo told reporters.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony to award mineral resource prospecting and exploration licences at the GMN multipurpose hall in Dili on Tuesday.

Araújo said ANM was in discussions with the relevant ministries to ensure the necessary infrastructure and logistical arrangements were completed before the shipment could proceed.

He said the authority would provide further information once preparations were finalised and the necessary conditions were in place to begin loading the manganese. He also offered to facilitate media access to observe the operation.

The planned shipment follows exploration activities carried out in March by MRT and Estrella Resources, which involved extracting approximately 30,000 tonnes of manganese from three exploration blocks in Lautém municipality.

Exploration findings have described the manganese deposits as being of “world-class” quality, raising expectations about the potential of the mineral resource.

The proposed export of 27,000 tonnes is expected to provide an opportunity to assess the mineral’s quality under international market standards and determine its commercial viability and acceptance among potential buyers.

The results could help inform future decisions on the development and commercial exploitation of Timor-Leste’s manganese resources.

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