



Base Titanium gets nod to expand Kwale mine

Jun. 22, 2016, 5:00 am | By MARTIN MWITA [@mwitamartin](#)



Australian mining company Base Titanium has been granted permission to increase its mineral exploration area in Kwale.

The company yesterday said it has secured a license to explore for more minerals in Kwale, signaling a mine life extension for the Kwale mineral sand project.

Base said it has been granted exploration tenure on land surrounding its current Kwale operations, bringing the total prospecting area to 177 square kilometres from 56.

The expansion, the company said, was informed by a successful airborne survey conducted in June 2015, covering the South Coast region.

General manager for external affairs and development Joe Schwarz said the survey showed a huge potential for minerals.

“The exercise identified some potential for interesting anomaly that tends to suggest there may be some formation containing minerals,” Schwarz told the Star on phone.

It has also applied for a prospecting licence covering an area of 136 square kilometers extending South West from the current site towards the Tanzanian border.

Exploration is expected to commence end August to late December, involving up to 18,000 metres of aircore drilling.

“We are looking at a site that stretches from Ramisi towards Vanga region,” Schwarz said.

“With Kwale at steady state production and having mined 22.2 million tonnes since commissioning in October 2013, we are excited by the prospectivity of the new tenement area and the potential to further extend the mine life of the Kwale operations,” Base Titanium’s managing director Tim Carstens said.

The current mine has remained with 10-years, from the previous 13-year life line, when mining commenced. Base Titanium mines Ilmenite, Rutile and Zircon for export.

Mining Cabinet secretary Dan Kazungu yesterday said the ministry is in the process of setting up a Minerals Rights Board that will oversee licensing of mining companies, including Base Titanium if they find minerals at the new site.

“Prospecting is prospecting but before anyone starts mining, they will have to get proper approval,” Kazungu said.

He said the government is however keen to support investors in the mining sector, targeted to contribute 10 per cent to GDP by 2030, from the current 0.9 per cent.

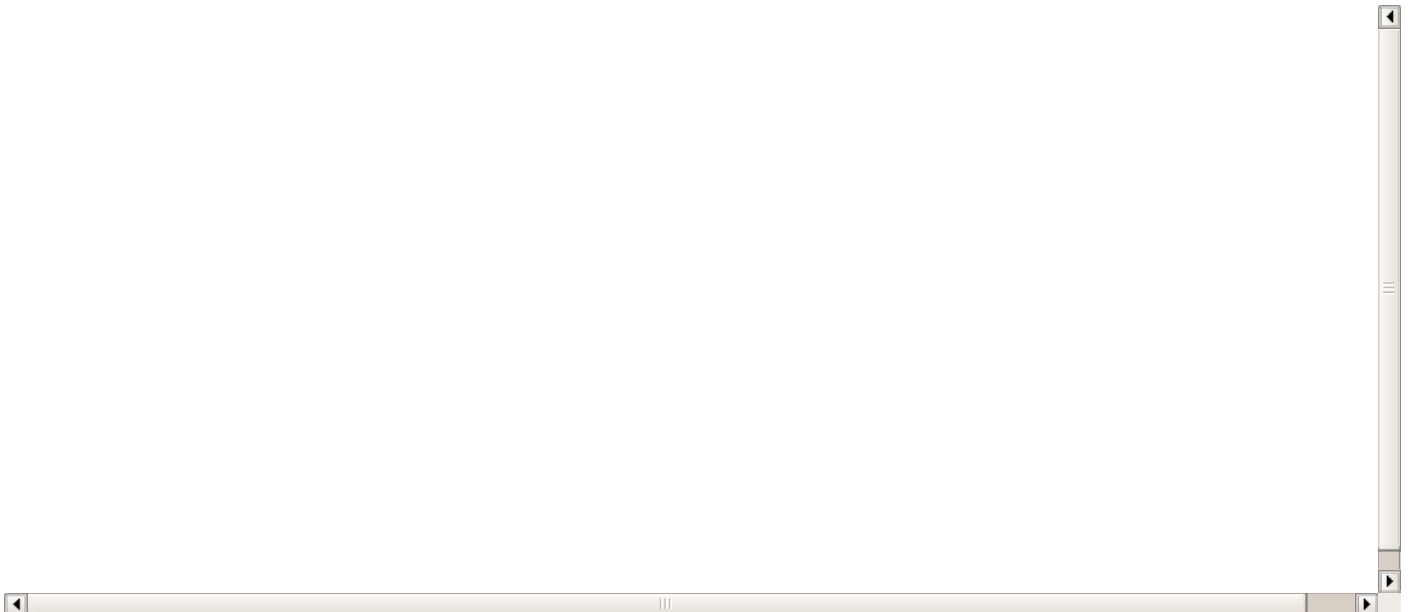
Kenya’s mineral earnings have grown since export of titanium minerals commences in 2014.

Overall value mineral output grew to Sh24 billion in 2015 from Sh21 billion in 2014, Economic survey 2016 shows.

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