

The feasibility study is expected to be complete at the end of 2021 and, if approved, construction could take up to four years, Rio said. Prefeasibility studies have shown that the Jadar project had the potential to produce battery grade lithium carbonate and boric acid. At mining major Rio Tinto's Jadar lithium/borate project, in Serbia, a maiden ore reserve of 16.6-million tonnes, grading 1.18% lithium oxide and 13.4% boron trioxide has been declared. The company announced that the project contained a mineral resource estimate of 55.2-million tonnes of indicated resource, at 1.68% lithium oxide and 17.9% boron trioxide, with an additional 84.1-million tonnes of inferred resource, at 1.84% lithium oxide and 12.6% boron trioxide.

The deposit is located on the doorstep of the European Union, one of the fastest growing electric vehicle (EV) markets in the world, and has the potential to provide lithium products into the EV value chain for decades. Boric acid is a key raw material for advanced glass and fertilizer products and would be integrated with and complementary to Rio's established position in this market.

The scale and high grade nature of the Jadar mineralisation provides the potential for a long-life operation in the first quartile of the industry cost curve for both products.

The project consists of an underground mine, sustainable industrial processing and waste facilities, as well as associated infrastructure. Jadar, one of the largest greenfield lithium projects in development, would be capable of producing about 55 000 t/y of battery grade lithium carbonate, as well as 160 000 t/y of boric acid and 255 000 t/y of sodium sulphate as by-products.

It represents a significant investment for Serbia with both direct and indirect economic benefits, and it would become the country's second largest exporter.

At the end of July, the project moved into feasibility study, with an investment of almost \$200-million on a scope that includes detailed engineering, land acquisition, and workforce and supply preparation for construction, permitting and the early infrastructure development.

Source: miningweekly.com