Shaft 1 construction now in fast-sinking mode

Shaft 1, with an internal diameter of 7.25 metres, will provide access to the Flatreef Deposit and enable the initial underground capital development to take place during the development of Shaft 2 and ultimately will become the primary ventilation intake shaft during the project’s four-million-tonne-per-annum (Mtpa) production case. Following the successful commissioning of the stage and kibble winders and ancillary equipment, the permanent sinking phase started in July 2016. The initial sinking phase was completed to 107 metres below surface and the main sinking phase has been initiated. Shaft 1 had reached a depth of 346 metres below surface as of May 8, 2017.

An average sinking rate of 45 metres per month is expected during the main sinking phase. The shaft includes a 300-millimetre concrete lined shaft wall. The main sinking phase is expected to reach its projected, final depth of 980 metres below surface in 2018. Shaft stations to provide access to horizontal mine workings for personnel, materials, pump stations and services will be developed at depths of 450 metres, 750 metres, 850 metres and 950 metres below surface.

Figure 1: A Platreef engineer examining geotechnical features of the Shaft 1 sidewall.