

Samarco concludes first phase of the Alegria Sul pit construction work

Company will resume operations after installing a tailings filtration system without need for a dam

Samarco will resume its operations after the full implementation of a revised tailings disposal and treatment system which does not require a dam, by filtering most of the waste for its subsequent dry-stacking and disposal in the Alegria Sul pit. In preparation for the coming restart, on Tuesday (28) the company concluded the first stage of the civil works at the Alegria Sul pit, which is part of the Germano complex in Mariana.

"The completion of this phase of the Alegria Sul Pit Tailings Disposal System is an important step towards resuming our operations. Our proposal is to make a come-back with a new approach, reinforcing our commitment to the communities and society as a whole. We will restart step by step, initially at 26% of our production capacity, operating without a dam for tailings disposal thanks to the application of new technologies, with safety as our priority. We will only start operations after the complete readiness of the filtration system, " says Samarco CEO Rodrigo Vilela.

The pit is a mined-out area which will have a capacity to receive 9.7 million cubic meters of tailings. Its use avoids environmental impact in other areas. The second stage, already in progress, consists of the electromechanical assembly of the pumping systems for slimes, tailings and reclaimed water.

With the implementation of new technologies, the slimes generated by the ore beneficiation process, accounting for about 20% of the total waste generated, will be processed and transported to the Alegria Sul pit. Since the pit is a stable rock formation, it allows natural containment with greater safety, in addition to avoiding new environmental impacts.

Most of the tailings, which are sandy and represent 80% of the total waste generated, will be filtered and dry-stacked. The filtration process will also permit the reuse of process water.

The works at the Alegria Sul pit started in October last year and are being monitored by independent auditors. In parallel, the Corrective Operational License (LOC) for the Germano Complex is being processed at the State Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development (Semad). This licensing process is necessary because all Samarco operating licenses were suspended in October 2016. The company expects to obtain the LOC in the coming months.

Samarco's proposal is to restart operations using only one of its three existing concentrators. The others will be reactivated gradually.

More safety

Mr. Vilela stresses that focus on safety is the top priority in all activities. "The use of new technologies and our Integrated Safety System, which includes the Integrated Monitoring Center and emergency drills, enhances safety in our operations and among the surrounding communities," he says.

Ever since the failure of the Fundão dam in 2015, Samarco has dedicated extreme attention to the reinforcement and monitoring of its geotechnical structures, in compliance with Brazilian standards and international safety requirements.

Monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by the Monitoring and Inspection Center (CMI), the Company's geotechnical structures have remained stable, possess Stability Certification and also undergo independent audits performed periodically in the Germano Complex. The corresponding reports are forwarded to the competent authorities.

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