PRESS RELEASE

Haelixa makes gold for Argor-Heraeus and Zürcher Kantonalbank traceable from mine level

Kemptthal, 13th April 2021 – Creating transparency in precious metal supply chains becomes crucial as consumers and regulators increase the pressure to ensure that social and environmental standards are respected. The gold producing industry is working continuously to improve the production standards and this new solution adds an additional security layer for the market.

The Haelixa traceability solution is based on DNA and allows to mark and trace products from the sourcing location. The marker can be used on precious metal such as gold, but also on diamonds, textiles and other materials, providing forensic proof for product authenticity and integrity. The marker itself is invisible to the naked eye and does not alter the product appearance or properties in any way. A unique marker is applied directly on gold bars at the mine or at the refinery following a strict protocol. A simple and quick forensic test, based on PCR (also used to detect Covid-19), allows to identify the marker and with that the gold bars themselves, providing reliable data to support origin claims and back up paper documentation.

The principle of the verification test is a “key-lock system”: the DNA sequence needs to be known to be read out, which makes it impossible to replicate and to be used in an unauthorised way. As each marker is specifically developed, it can be attributed to a specific source, such as a mine, a refinery or financial institution. The information about the provenance of the product stays safely embedded into the product itself and cannot be manipulated, which makes the solution tamper-proof.

The unique marker is directly applied on doré bars at the mine. When the gold arrives at the refinery of Argor-Heraeus, it is tested to verify its provenance. Once the origin has been confirmed the gold bars for Zürcher Kantonalbank are produced in a separate and segregated production line. Thanks to the unique DNA fingerprint the Zürcher Kantonalbank can prove that the gold is indeed coming from the carefully selected sources that produces according to the strict standards of Zürcher Kantonalbank. The first marked and verified gold bars originating from mines in South America and manufactured at Argor-Heraeus in a dedicated and segregated line have now arrived in the vault of Zürcher Kantonalbank.

Drazen Repak, Head Trading Precious Metal at Zürcher Kantonalbank states: "As the biggest gold trader in Switzerland we see an increasing demand for sustainably produced gold products coming from institutional investors. Being able to offer traceable gold therefore offers a competitive advantage to us. We at Zürcher Kantonalbank also see it as part of our mandate to promote transparent supply chains."
"With ca. three quarters of the worldwide gold bar production happening in Switzerland, it was a logical step for us as a refinery and Precious Metals service provider to be part of this important project. The mines we are working with have to fulfill strict production standards, so being able to prove the provenance of the gold with the Haelixa traceability solution creates a huge benefit for us" says Christoph Wild, CEO of Argor.

Michela Puddu, CEO and Co-Founder of Haelixa concludes: "Responsible sourcing of precious metals requires traceability and we are proud to support Zürcher Kantonalbank and Argor-Heraeus in their commitment to supply chain transparency and sustainability."

About Haelixa
Haelixa Ltd. pioneers the development and commercialisation of disruptive product traceability solutions to ensure full end-to-end supply-chain consumer good traceability, with special focus on sustainable and ethically manufactured products, such as organic textiles and conflict-free minerals. Haelixa marking technology is based on DNA markers, which are physically applied to the material and stay linked to it, providing a traceable physical fingerprint from producer to retail.
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