

Zimbabwe sells gold refinery stake for \$49m

Ten companies have agreed to pay \$49m to take 60% of Zimbabwe's sole gold refiner and exporter, now owned by the central bank, finance minister, Mthuli Ncube, said.



Zimbabwe finance minister Mthuli Ncube arrives to present the 2020 National Budget at Parliament Building in Harare, Zimbabwe, 14 November, 2019. Reuters/Philimon Bulawayo

The central bank announced in January that it would unbundle its gold refining and printing unit, Fidelity Printers and Refiners (FPR), into two separate companies and sell a 60% stake in the new gold refinery business to miners.

"Ten shareholders have so far accepted to take shareholding in Fidelity Gold Refinery at a total consideration of \$49m," Ncube told parliament.

Ncube did not name the 10 companies but the central bank has previously said firms would take shares based on the average quantity of gold delivered to FPR over the previous three years.

Among the country's biggest gold producers are Kuvimba Mining House, which the government unveiled last year and owns several mines, Caledonia Mining and locally listed RioZim.

Ncube said Zimbabwe's January-June gold output was 9.95 tonnes and that it was projected to reach 32 tonnes by the end of December, after tumbling by nearly a third last year.

FPR, which started operations in 1988, has an installed capacity to refine 50 tonnes of gold annually.