

OTC Markets Group:

Joining us today is Ali Haji the CEO of Ion Energy that trades on our OTCQB Venture Market under the ticker IONGF. Ion Energy is an early-stage lithium brine exploration company based in Mongolia and is poised to become a significant player in Asia's growing lithium market. Ali, thanks so much for joining us today.

Ali Haji:

Thanks, Cecilia. It's a pleasure to be here.

OTC Markets Group:

So Ali, tell us about your professional experience and how you got involved with Ion Energy.

Ali Haji:

Sure. I started my career in asset management Invesco here in Toronto know about 13 years ago worked in various roles along the lines of strategic initiatives operations mergers and acquisitions offshoring of operations and risk management. You might ask where my mining experience stem from and that's as a result of my father being in mining since 1998 in Zambia. So it sort of runs in the blood when I left Invesco around three and a half years ago upon my return to Toronto from London, England. I was taken on board by a group known as at capital markets as an advisor to step gold limited, which is currently a gold producer in Mongolia during one of my visits to Mongolia for step gold. My chairman and I sort of looked at each other and said, well lithium is bound to make a comeback. Lithium is bound to be something of importance much like any other mineral. It is cyclical. We know Mongolia quite well and given the fact that it is vastly underexplored and extremely close to some of the largest markets in the world. One for lithium in the country. So on the back of that Ion Energy was born. I co-founded it in August of 2017. And as you've rightly pointed out, we've been trading in the U.S. since January of this year.

OTC Markets Group:

So Ion was the first company to be granted a lithium license in Mongolia. Talk about your projects and the strategic advantages you have in the region,

Ali Haji:

Yes. Ion was the first lithium brine license ever granted in Mongolia. It is in fact our BA O license is the largest land package or largest exploration mining license ever granted to any company public or private by the government in Mongolia. It lies

only 24 kilo orders from the Chinese border. We recently acquired rug, which is an additional endo basin, which very much mirrors what you would find in the lithium triangle now, ultimately bringing foothold over hectares in country. So the strategic advantages that we have are one, we border the largest consumer on the planet from a lithium perspective. China produces 70% of the world's batteries today. They refine 80% of all global lithium that ends up in batteries and they consume as a nation 53% of all lithium in country. When you look at our proximity to that market relative to those that supply today those being Australia and south America our proximity cannot be denied. We ultimately have a strong, strong advantage there in terms of proximity. But beyond that, we've been not operating in Mongolia for over 11 years now. So we know the country quite well. The government is extremely supportive of what we do. They're. We are a very long Mongolia group and we ultimately see a lot of success coming out of a country that's vastly underdeveloped and under explored, but vastly resource rich as well.

OTC Markets Group:

What types of trends are you seeing in the global lithium market?

Ali Haji:

Well, prices have started to uptick since January in, in, in the Chinese markets. In fact, there up over 88% in the first two months this year which ultimately is driven primarily by the government spending in this space that is driving this green revolution as we're calling it. And there's very many brewers around the world would be referring to it. It ultimately means that on the back of the pandemic when you know, economies were faltering around the world governments had to print vast sums of money to help support the recovery from COVID the economic downturn that was faced by multiple countries and economies that spending had a number of different initiatives primarily around clean green energy or, or, or clean energy consumption, a movement away from fossil fuels which led to subsidizing electric vehicles for the consumer. But ultimately also gave the big blue chips such as you know, companies like Mercedes and or a subsidy that allowed them to go out and, and manufacture relationships with, with ultimate lithium suppliers. So, you know, an offtake agreement with Australia was born by a battery manufacturer in China by the name of Farsis, who then had a big investment from Mercedes as well. So this vertical integration has really allowed out the lithium market to, to take off and recover. In fact, even surpass where it was once a few years ago. And we're finding that more and more lithium sources are coming online around the world. The conventional ones, such as the hard rock in Australia or the Brians in Latin America. That's typically what you would think about when you think about lithium. But you know, Thacker pass in Nevada is coming online a number of different assets in Europe, in SIIA in Serbia rather as well as Portugal will be

coming online as well. So I think it's important for folks to see that these conventional sources are now sort of tapped out, so to speak and unconventional resources are coming into play. We're also seeing a shift where we continents and, and markets are generally looking for their supply more locally than they would have done in the past. So we're gonna see lithium become an extremely competitive market and it's very evident based on the prices that supply cannot keep up with demand.

OTC Markets Group:

So on that note, what is in your pipeline for your exploration program in 2021?

Ali Haji:

We have a pretty solid program on the back of our news announcement today. And for any of listeners, it's April 13th. We, we announced a, a bot deal financing that we closed this morning for in excess of 5 million Canadian that is going to go primarily into the ground on Baba. And both those large land packages have had some work done on them. Baba, we commenced expiration in October of last year, but for this year, we're gonna complete our geophysics programs on both assets. We're going to complete our micros sizely programs on both assets. That'll help dictate where we put the auger rig down it's company owned and currently on site. The auger will allow us to pull up the Brian samples and determine their quality validate the low impurity rate that we believe they have ultimately allowed us to take out our diamond core rigs and determine the porosity of the ultimate aquifer bodies. We should be in a position to, to have an early resource indication that may not be 43, 1 1 compliant, but we'll, we'll tell the market very well. What sort of asset we're sitting on with what quality and what quantity of lithium closer towards the end of the summer and should, should things allow for us to, to do so we, we will do some magnetic surveys as well. And you can see, you can expect to see the company release those results to market as, and when they're available. We, we see an exciting future ahead in terms of de-risking our assets that, that we currently hold today.

OTC Markets Group:

Excellent. And so Ion Energy began trading on the OTCQB Venture Market in January of 2021. And has also traded on the TSX-V. How does cross trading on the OTCQB Market enhance your investor strategy in the U.S.?

Ali Haji:

So we we've seen the, the U.S. sort of be a little more attuned to electric vehicles and sort of the electric vehicle market. And I think we have the celebrity that is Elon Musk to thank for that to some degree. But, ultimately the U.S. base is far

more EV friendly in terms of an investor base the Canadians are catching on. We found the U.S. marketing strategy and having an access to a market that is ultimately 10 times larger than Canada to be a really big win for us as an organization. And we expect to continue to, to enhance our presence through, through operating to, to the OTCQX in the U.S. and, and ultimately performing more marketing initiatives such as this podcast we're doing here today.

OTC Markets Group:

Well, thanks for your time. It's been great talking with you.

Ali Haji:

Absolutely. Cecilia. It's been a pleasure. I would just say that folks for those that are listening visit our website, www.ionenergy.ca, visit our Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter pages. And should you have any questions or comments feel free to come back to me directly, happy to take your calls and answer any questions you may have. So thank you.

OTC Markets Group:

Ion Energy trades under the symbol, IONGF on our OTCQB Venture Market.

**This is an autogenerated transcript and may contain typos.*