



# Investment Battlefield & Thor Exploration Case Study

**Mining Indaba: Where Investments Are Made & Game-changing Deals in the Mining Industry Are Done**

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#MiningIndaba2020 | @miningindaba



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# About the Investment Battlefield

In 2017, **Investing in African Mining Indaba** launched the Investment Battlefield, aimed at searching for Africa's most promising mining companies with a market cap of \$50 million or below.

**The Battlefield is a Dragon's Den style competition where Junior Miners pitch their project to a panel of judges – made up of high-profile investors and brokers.** The competition takes place over three days on its own dedicated stage in the centre of the Mining Indaba Exhibition - a high-visibility, high-traffic area for easy interaction and deal-making between investors and junior miners.

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*Mining Indaba has aligned the competition to its strategy of being Africa's premier deal-making platform.*

**Competing miners and explorers receive immediate feedback from the judges**, allowing them to get a sense of what investors are looking for, and how they should present their investment case.

Mining Indaba has aligned the competition to its strategy of being Africa's premier deal-making platform. With each year, the competition has become more successful and the number of participants has grown. The winner is awarded a free exhibition stand and speaking slot at the subsequent Mining Indaba, as well as publicity and Investor Relations Service opportunities.





# Success in action: Looking back at the 2018 winner

**Thor Exploration is a Canadian mineral exploration company** engaged in the acquisition, exploration and development of mineral properties in West Africa. In 2018, they decided to enter the Investment Battlefield on the back of some advice from their broker. Thor's flagship project is their **Segilola Gold Project**, based in **Osun State, Nigeria**.

**After pitching the project, Thor beat twenty-one participants to the coveted spot of being named the "Best Emerging Mining Project in Africa".**

## The pitch

Thor presented on advancing high-value gold projects in West Africa, providing an overview of the company's development and exploration assets, with a focus on Segilola. President and CEO, Segun Lawson, described Segilola as unique, calling it a landmark venture that would open doors in Nigeria.

The 2018 Investment Battlefield coincided with investor-friendly regulatory changes in Nigeria, most notably tax breaks designed to jump start the country's budding mining sector.

The Segilola Project is fully permitted and development ready, 100%-owned by Thor with a 25-year Mining Licence issued in September 2016, and environmental approvals are in place. It provides a high-grade, low-risk development opportunity with near-term cashflow.

Several pre-development optimisation opportunities had been identified and the mine has potential for future underground transition from initial open pit operations.

## Judges' feedback

"Segilola stood out as a high-quality open pit development project with excellent leverage to the gold price. Lawson presented a sound business case for the project and emerged a clear winner." commented Kael O'Sullivan, Director of Investor Relations at Mining Indaba after the final.

## What happened next?

After their win, media at the Mining Indaba and in Nigeria took an immediate interest in Thor. Segun was asked for a number of on-site interviews (on camera and live on radio) and over the next few days, more than thirty articles were published about Thor and the Segilola project.

Leading publications like: Mining Weekly, Mining Review, Business Report, Reuters, International Mining, and Africa News Agency covered story. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, publications including: Nigeria Today, Independent Nigeria, Invest in Nigeria, Lagos Post, The Nation Online, Latest Nigerian News, Blueprint and Punch supported Thor's win and gave considerable exposure to the project.

It wasn't long after that investors from the US and the UK were asking Lawson if they could visit Segilola project in person.

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*It was the first time that a lot of people heard the Thor story and it was the first time getting the story out to a more global investing audience. We had investors from Australia, North America, the UK and South Africa all there to listen to the story.*

Lawson explains the driving force behind these requests: “It was the first time that a lot of people heard the Thor story and it was the first time getting the story out to a more global investing audience. We had investors from Australia, North America, the UK and South Africa all there to listen to the story.”

“We were a very small company with a lean team, and up to this point, we had been focussed on advancing the company’s projects and hadn’t done a huge amount of marketing, so for us it was really ground breaking in terms of getting out from under the radar and increasing our exposure.”

On 4 February 2019, at the next Mining Indaba, Thor announced that the project had reached and completed the definitive feasibility or bankable stage, validating the economics of the project.

#### **Africa Finance Corporation backs the project and becomes long-term shareholder**

In April 2019, Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) announced their approval of a US\$78 million financing package for the construction and ramp-up of Segilola.

“This is a significant milestone for Thor and for the mining sector of Nigeria. The total finance capital requirement for the project is US\$87.5 million and the AFC has put in the bulk of the required financing. Not only have they put in debt, they have put down a \$9 million pre-payment on 4.4% of the gold and US\$15 million in equity, meaning that they are becoming both a lender and a long-term shareholder. We are very excited about having them on board,” says Lawson.



# Interview with **Segun Lawson**, President and Ceo of **'Thor Explorations'**



## **Let's go back to the beginning, what made you decide to enter Mining Indaba's Investment Battlefield?**

I actually entered almost by accident! I was deciding whether or not to go to the Mining Indaba, when my recently appointed broker forwarded me an email with the application form. He said to me: "you have got a really good project you should consider entering this competition". So late one evening I filled out the application and the next day I got an email saying that they were interested in having me present at the event, so I booked my ticket to Cape Town and entered the competition.

## **What was your overall experience of the Mining Indaba Investment Battlefield in 2018?**

I thought it was a great experience. It was the first time that a lot of people heard the Thor story and it was the first time getting the story out to a more global investing audience. We had investors from Australia, North America, UK and South Africa all there to listen to the story. We were a very small company with a lean team, and up to this point, we had been focussed on advancing the company's projects and hadn't done a huge amount of marketing, so for us it was really ground breaking in terms of getting out from under the radar and increasing our exposure.

I found the Q&A sessions at the end of each presentation extremely useful because they set me up for questions that I hadn't heard before, and it was very important to be on top of the project.

## **What was the most challenging part in preparing your pitch for the Mining Indaba Investment Battlefield?**

The most challenging part was easily the time limits I was given. Typically, an investor presentation is about half an hour to an hour with Q&As and I had to get the key points across in a five to ten-minute window. It was like an extended elevator pitch, having to select the parts I thought would really get the message across on how good this project was as well as introduce the company and the key people.

## **What has been the most rewarding part of taking part in the competition?**

That's easy, the exposure was almost instant. I remember from announcing that I had won, my LinkedIn views and friend requests went crazy over the next 48 hours. We were presenting a project that was first of its kind, a land mark project in Nigeria. The victory was very well received in Nigeria and by the Ministry of Mines, who have been promoting investment in the sector and supportive of Thor's work, so it was rewarding to see a project in their country come out on top. We were really embraced in Nigeria and featured in a lot of newspapers.

I think the most tangible thing that came out from it was that we came out from under the radar and started getting in front of more investors and more funds. We subsequently had investors from North America and the UK join us for site visits. Seven months later in September 2018, we closed equity financing of \$8 million, which included our first ever investment from a North American investor. 14 months later we secured a \$78 million project financing package including a \$15m equity investment from Africa Finance Corporation (AFC). You can see the tangible momentum that kicked off straight from Mining Indaba last year.

## **Since winning the Mining Indaba Investment Battlefield how has your portfolio changed?**

The project we presented at Mining Indaba was our flagship project in Nigeria. At the time we had completed our preliminary feasibility study, we knew that it was a good project and that the economics stacked up. The next big milestone was to get it to a definitive feasibility study stage which kicked off after the Indaba. We completed and announced that we had reached the definitive feasibility or bankable stage at Mining Indaba this year (12 months later), which validated the economics of the project.

Our project is at a bankable stage now, with a higher level of confidence. Our main focus and energy now is going to the development and construction of this mine.

We are very fortunate in the fact that if our project was anywhere else in the world, I believe it would have been mined 50 years ago. It's a high-grade project with the resource almost daylighting at surface, it has very simple metallurgy, it's clean and we have a 97% recovery rate. The exciting part for us is that it still has the potential to grow, we have done this on a pretty small budget compared to our peers.



We have also acquired additional exploration licenses in Nigeria, as we are confident that when the Segilola plant commences operation, we will be uniquely positioned to take advantage of further discoveries.

**After winning the Battlefield, it was reported that there was a possibility of listing on London's junior AIM market, is this still the plan?**

We haven't made any concrete plans. We are currently listed in Toronto, however, the management team is now based in London and there is an investor pool in the UK that is familiar with investing in African mining with whom we don't have good visibility through our TSX.v. listing. A secondary listing on the London market is therefore something we are very strongly considering as it offers the opportunity to improve our access to equity capital, widen our investor pool and increase liquidity as we progress from development to production.

**What does it take to pitch to investors and raise capital for a new mining project?**

Firstly, you must really believe in what you are pitching – having confidence in the project makes it an easier sell. It's important to know your project inside out and back to front. When I speak about this project, I can see the opportunity and I don't think a company our size would have a project this great if it wasn't in Nigeria. That's the opportunity we have being a first mover, being able to get such a great project.

On the flip side, because it's the first of its kind in Nigeria, there isn't a big investing audience – in fact no one has ever invested in a commercial gold mine in Nigeria. You've got to be relentless and have a strong appetite for rejection. Over the last three years we have had a huge number of rejections, people not even taking phone calls or ending phone calls when they hear the word Nigeria. You have to be able to take the rejections and just keep trying, looking where other people wouldn't look, looking all over the world to find the capital.

**What does the AFC \$78 million funding package mean for the future of Thor Explorations?**

Without over emphasising it, it's a huge milestone for us. It's the bulk of the required financing to get this project up and running. The total finance capital requirement for the project is \$87.5 million and AFC have put in \$78 million. But not only have they put in some debt, they have put in a \$9 million prepayment on 4.4% of the gold and \$15 million in equity which means that they are becoming a long-term shareholder for us.

Having an institution like AFC as a shareholder is a huge endorsement for Thor, not only does it get this project up and running, it's mitigation against perceived jurisdiction risk for investors. That's something that we have never had before, and we are very excited about having them on board.

**Do you feel like your exposure to investors and going through the pitch process at the Battlefield has helped you in your capital raising?**

I am the founder of this company and having my entrepreneurial hat on, I have to believe that I would have always endeavoured as hard as could to try and get this funding in place.



But without a doubt winning the Investment Battlefield gave us a lot of momentum and exposure. The exposure we had in Nigeria was incredible and that certainly wouldn't have happened without the Investment Battlefield.

**What advice do you have for future Investment Battlefield participants?**

I don't really see myself as an advice giver, but if I could take anything away from it, I think be well prepared and believe in your project.

The fact that I knew this project so well and I believed in it so much, there was nothing that anyone could ask me that would trip me up. The facts are the facts and I think that's key in being successful.



# Mining Indaba champions Junior Mining development

Mining Indaba launched the Investment Battlefield in 2017 to provide entrepreneurial exploration teams with a unique platform to **promote their African story** to international investors that attend Indaba. This was part of a wider initiative to **bring Junior Miners back to the forefront of Mining Indaba**. As in the case of Thor Explorations, participating companies, the winner and runner-ups particularly, **attract an unparalleled press coverage** and exposure during and after Mining Indaba.

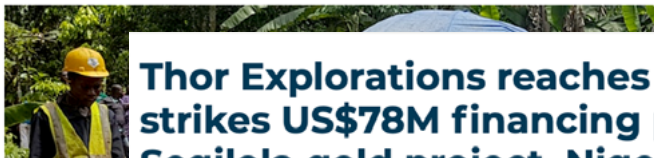
Nigeria gold mining project considers  
London listing



THE NATION

## Thor Explorations to build Nigeria's first large-scale gold mine

Cecilia Jamasmie | February 5, 2019 | 2:20 pm [Precious Metals](#)



Thor Explorations reaches milestone as it  
strikes US\$78M financing package for  
Segilola gold project, Nigeria

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## Nigerian firm emerges top at African Mining Indaba

by [The Eagle Online](#) — February 9, 2018 2 min read



## Thor Explorations Nigeria project now 89% funded

## Nigerian firm emerges top at African mining contest

Young Nigerian entrepreneur voted  
best emerging miner at annual

REPORTER



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Thor Explorations wins 2018  
Investment Battlefield

Feb 8, 2018 · 0



Thor Explorations acquires most  
advanced gold project in Nigeria





# Why you should get involved?

## WHY TAKE PART:

- ✓ Gain exposure and build relationships with Investors and Brokers
- ✓ Receive first-hand feedback from the Investors themselves
- ✓ Learn exactly what Investors are looking for and how to increase your appeal
- ✓ Establish yourself as one of the leading emerging mining companies
- ✓ Increase your company's brand awareness and exposure
- ✓ An opportunity to gain extensive press coverage
- ✓ Winner receives a whole list of prizes

## HOW IT WORKS:

- ✓ Projects are grouped together depending on their commodity and lifecycle stage
- ✓ Over several two-day sessions, junior miners pitch their projects to the judging panel
- ✓ Each company has 5 minutes to pitch
- ✓ The judges follow with a rigorous Q&A and feedback
- ✓ Winner and runner up are announced on the main stage on day 3

### WINNER RECEIVES:



A free exhibition stand at Mining Indaba 2021



An opportunity to gain an extensive press coverage



A free 10-minute speaking slot at Mining Indaba 2021



3 nights free hotel accommodation for one member of your team at the 2021 conference



3 free passes to attend Mining Indaba 2021



Inclusion in the post event report as the winner of the Investment Battlefield



Access to the Investor Relations Service for their meeting schedule at Mining Indaba 2021

### RUNNER UP RECEIVES



Inclusion in the post event report as the runner up of the Investment Battlefield



Access to the Investor Relations Service for their meeting schedule at Mining Indaba 2021



Two free passes to attend Mining Indaba 2021

# Past judges include



**Neil Gregson,**  
Portfolio Manager  
JP Morgan Asset Management



**Charl Malan,**  
Portfolio Manager  
Van Eck



**Namrata Thapar,**  
Global Head Mining  
International Finance  
Corporation



**Peter Ruxton,**  
Principal  
Tembo Capital



**Julian Treger, CEO**  
Anglo Pacific and  
Managing Partner  
Audley Capital



**Michael Barton,**  
Portfolio Manager  
Orion Resource Partners



**Michael Anderson,**  
Director  
Taurus Funds



**Ursula Maritz,**  
Chief Investment Officer  
Southern Charter



**Ingo Hofmaier,**  
Partner & Head of  
Metals & Mining  
Hannam & Partners



**David Twist,**  
Partner,  
African Mining  
Development Fund



**Heidi Sternberg,**  
Sector Specialist  
Public Investment Corporation



**Richard Crookes**  
Investment Director  
EMR Capital



**Willem Middelkoop ,**  
Founder & CIO  
Commodity Discovery Fund



**Amanda Van Dyke,**  
Portfolio Manager  
South River Asset Management



**Zeno van Gils,**  
Deal Analyst  
Barak Fund Management



**Joachim Berlenbach,**  
Adviser  
Earth Resource  
Investment Group



**Pim Kalisvaart,**  
Portfolio Manager  
Hawke's Point



**Stephen Motteram,**  
Global Head of Asset  
Development  
the Noble Group



**Johan Bester,**  
Portfolio Manager  
Thebe Investment Corporation



**Anthony Milewski,**  
Managing Director Pala  
Investments & CEO  
Cobalt27



**Guy de Freitas,**  
Principal  
Appian Capital



**Vera Ivanova,**  
Investment Director  
AMED Fund



**David Awram**  
Senior Vice President & Founder  
Sandstorm Gold



**Nthabeleng Ledwaba,**  
Fund Principal,  
Aluwani Mining Fund



**Adam Davidson,**  
Senior Associate,  
Resource Capital Fund



# SAVE THE DATE

## 3-6 FEBRUARY 2020

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### INVESTMENT BATTLEFIELD

If you think your business deserves to be crowned the next hottest emerging mining company in Africa and you'd like to pitch your project to a group of high-profile investors, get in touch with:

### Caroline Werner

Investor Relations Manager

T: +44 (0)203 545 9840

E: [caroline.werner@ite-exhibitions.com](mailto:caroline.werner@ite-exhibitions.com)

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### JUNIOR MINING SHOWCASE

If you are a Junior Mining company interested in securing a hybrid booth (designed to provide privacy for meetings whilst still delivering high visibility on the exhibition floor) and taking advantage of our dedicated concierge Investor Relations Service securing you meetings with the right investors, get in touch:

### Fred Noce

Director of Sales

T: +1 (619)656 9263

E: [fred.noce@miningindaba.com](mailto:fred.noce@miningindaba.com)

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For more information on our initiatives designed with Junior Miners and Investors in mind or what's on at Mining Indaba 2020 visit:

**[www.miningindaba.com](http://www.miningindaba.com)**

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