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Itabiruçu dam emergency level removal

Vale informs that, in line with its iron ore production resumption plan, the emergency level of the Itabiruçu dam, located at the Itabira Complex, has been removed after a thorough analysis of its geotechnical characteristics. As of this moment, the dam is in compliance with the legal safety parameters and released.

The Itabiruçu dam

In October 2019, stemmed from Vale's own assessment, in agreement with external inspection bodies, the disposal of tailings at the Itabiruçu dam was temporarily suspended. During the shutdown, the dam adopted the Level 1 emergency protocol, in accordance with the National Mining Agency ("ANM"), which did not require evacuation of the downstream population. Throughout this period, the Declaration of Stability Condition ("DCE") remained valid.

The removal of the emergency level came after an extensive geotechnical investigation campaign of the structure, which lasted about a year. During this period, with the support of the Engineer of Record (EoR) and other specialized companies, several studies of foundations, geology, construction method, among others, were carried out, which indicated, with greater precision, the current conditions of the dam. All the work was monitored by the external technical advisory body of the Public Prosecutor's Office of Minas Gerais (MPMG) and validated by the ANM.

The Itabira Complex

In 2020, 23.9 Mt of iron ore were produced at the Itabira Complex, substantially below its 40 Mtpa potential capacity. It is also important to clarify that complementary geotechnical investigations are underway to determine the engineering measures for the continuity of the dam raising construction works, thus increasing the operational flexibility of the complex, while the tailings filtration projects as a definitive solution for the complex are being implemented, with start-up expected in 2022.

The Itabiruçu dam's safety adequacy reinforces Vale's commitment to becoming one of the safest mining companies in the world and is another important step towards resuming 400 Mtpa of iron ore production capacity by the end of 2022.

More information



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