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Zinkgruvan Mining and Epiroc collaborate on teleremote drilling trial backed by LTE

Posted by Daniel Gleeson on 20th January 2022



Zinkgruvan Mining is feeling the effects of teleremote drilling using a 4G LTE network and Epiroc's Simba E7 rig at its underground base metal mine, according to a case study from the Sweden-based OEM*.

In early spring 2021, Zinkgruvan Mining, working in conjunction with Epiroc and IT, and telecom operator Telia, first connected its Simba E7 rig to an LTE (Long Term Evolution) network. Since then, remote production has taken off like a shot in the areas where the LTE network has been commissioned, according to Epiroc, while acknowledging this is still in trial mode.

The mine has a total of four Epiroc Simba rigs, with, at present, one of these connected via Simba Teleremote, some 350 m underground. In the future, operators may move to an office 800 m underground to get closer to the rig.



"So far, we've drilled seven pallets remotely," Operator, Jocke Lindblad (pictured on the left), said. "It runs very smoothly, and as soon as we find something that doesn't work, I can call the Epiroc service engineer who has been there from the start."

Lindblad monitors the rig from a quiet above-ground office, next to a window where daylight flows in.

"I like being down in the mine too, but it's certainly safer and better for the body to sit here," he said. "It's nice to be able to take a coffee break or get a breath of fresh air when I feel like it."

The fact the operators do not need to drive down into the mine on a regular basis means they can drill an average of four hours more per day, according to Epiroc. In purely technical terms, Lindblad can operate the rig from an office in the same way as he would down in the mine. The screens and levers are the same as on the rig.



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