Nyembezi-Heita appointed as CE of IchorCoal

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NONKULULEKO Nyembezi-Heita, the outgoing CEO of SA’s largest steel maker, ArcelorMittal, will join Berlin-listed IchorCoal as CE in March to head its increased South African focus.

Ms Nyembezi-Heita leaves ArcelorMittal next month also to take up the role of chairwoman of the JSE in March.

She joins the little known IchorCoal, which last month told shareholders of a new strategy which involved exiting its shares in HMS Bergbau and two mining projects in Poland, in order to focus on SA.

Coal mining veteran Andries Engelbrecht, the former chief operating officer of Riversdale Mining, will join her as IchorCoal’s chief operating officer.

According to IchorCoal’s 2012 annual report, it holds 74% of Vunene Mining. It also owns 30% of Mbuyelo Coal, a unit of strategic partner the Mbuyelo Group.

“This investment gives us access to nine coal mines and projects in SA,” then-CEO Heinz Schernikau said in the report, adding that IchorCoal had exposure to more than 1-billion tonnes of coal in reserves and resources.

Vunene owns the Usutu thermal colliery near Eskom’s Camden power plant, which was returned to service.

A supply agreement was signed with Eskom in March last year, the report said. IchorCoal’s involvement will mean Usutu will ramp up production and resume underground mining.

IchorCoal estimates it needs to spend R350m on underground mining and that it will generate 250,000 tonnes a month in 2015.