

# YELOMINE® PROVIDES EASY ASSEMBLY, RUGGED PERFORMANCE IN HEAP LEACH MINING OPERATION

The project at the El Abra copper mine in northern Chile's Antofagasta region is focused on leach mining to extract copper from copper sulfide ore and is expected to extend the mine's useful life by 10 years.

## CHALLENGE

Relix Water, a Chilean engineering and systems integration company that specializes in heap leaching lixiviation processes, recommended that Freeport-McMoRan switch from HDPE pipe to 16-inch Yelomine® restrained-joint PVC pipe to simplify and speed up pipe installation.

## APPLICATION

Yelomine restrained-joint PVC pipe system, from Westlake Pipe & Fittings, is providing an easy-to-assemble, rugged heap leach mining solution for U.S.-based Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold's ongoing Sulfolix project at the El Abra copper mine.

## SOLUTION

By using Yelomine, Relix was able to increase the installation rate from 164 feet (50m) to 1,640 feet (500m) of pipe per day, speeding up performance by 900%.

"Working with a durable, non-corrosive pipe product in the Sulfolix project that we could install quickly is of great importance," said Marcelo Lago, sales manager for Relix. "With the Yelomine system, our crews were able to assemble pipe joints quickly and manually, which helped us to install significantly more pipe in one day than with thermofusion. We're very pleased with the results."

Sulfolix is the third heap leach mining project Westlake Pipe & Fittings has done with Relix in Chile. According to Westlake Pipe & Fittings' Business Development Manager, there appears to be ample growth potential for heap leach mining throughout South America and the company is poised to provide restrained-joint PVC pipe solutions for future projects.



**Project Type:**  
Heap Leach Mining

**Application:**  
Open Pit Copper Mining

**Customer:**  
Freeport-McMoRan  
Copper & Gold

**Product Used:**  
16-inch Yelomine®  
Restrained Joint PVC Pipe

**Driller:**  
Rowe Drilling Company

**Engineering:**  
Relix Water