Volta Initiates Gallium Recovery Study with Laurentian University, Sudbury, Canada

written by Raj Shah | February 17, 2026

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Initial testwork delivered encouraging recoveries of up to 75% for gallium and 56%-100% for various REEs.**
- **Phase-two benchwork studies are underway, with results expected in Q3 2026.**
- **The bioleaching approach builds on methods successfully used in Chile's copper industry, based on research by Dr. Vasu Appanna of Laurentian University.**

February 17, 2026 (Source) – **Volta Metals Ltd. (CSE: VLTA) (FSE: D0W) (OTC Pink: VOLMF)** ("**Volta**" or the "**Company**") announces that it has commenced laboratory-scale bioleaching recovery test work primarily targeting gallium and secondarily rare earth elements ("**REEs**") at Dr. Vasu Appanna's laboratory of Biomine Research and Development at Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario. Laurentian University is a leading Canadian institution recognized for its applied research expertise in mining, mineral processing, and earth sciences.

The principal objective of the test program is to evaluate the use of bacteria and other non-invasive reagents to extract gallium from Volta's Springer Rare Earth and Gallium Deposit in Sturgeon Falls, east of Sudbury, Ontario (Figure 1).

Dr. Appanna is a recognized expert in gallium recovery and bioleaching technologies. Bioleaching is an innovative,

established metallurgical process that has been successfully applied at production scale in Chile’s copper industry for the recovery of metals in a low-impact and sustainable manner. Codelco operates the Radomiro Tomic mine in Chile, where full-scale bioleaching of low-grade run-of-mine ore has been implemented, with technical support from BioSigma S.A., a joint venture between Codelco and Nippon Mining and Metals. Bioleaching is also used at other major Chilean copper operations, including Escondida (owned by BHP, Rio Tinto and JECO), Spence (BHP), and Chuquicamata (Codelco).

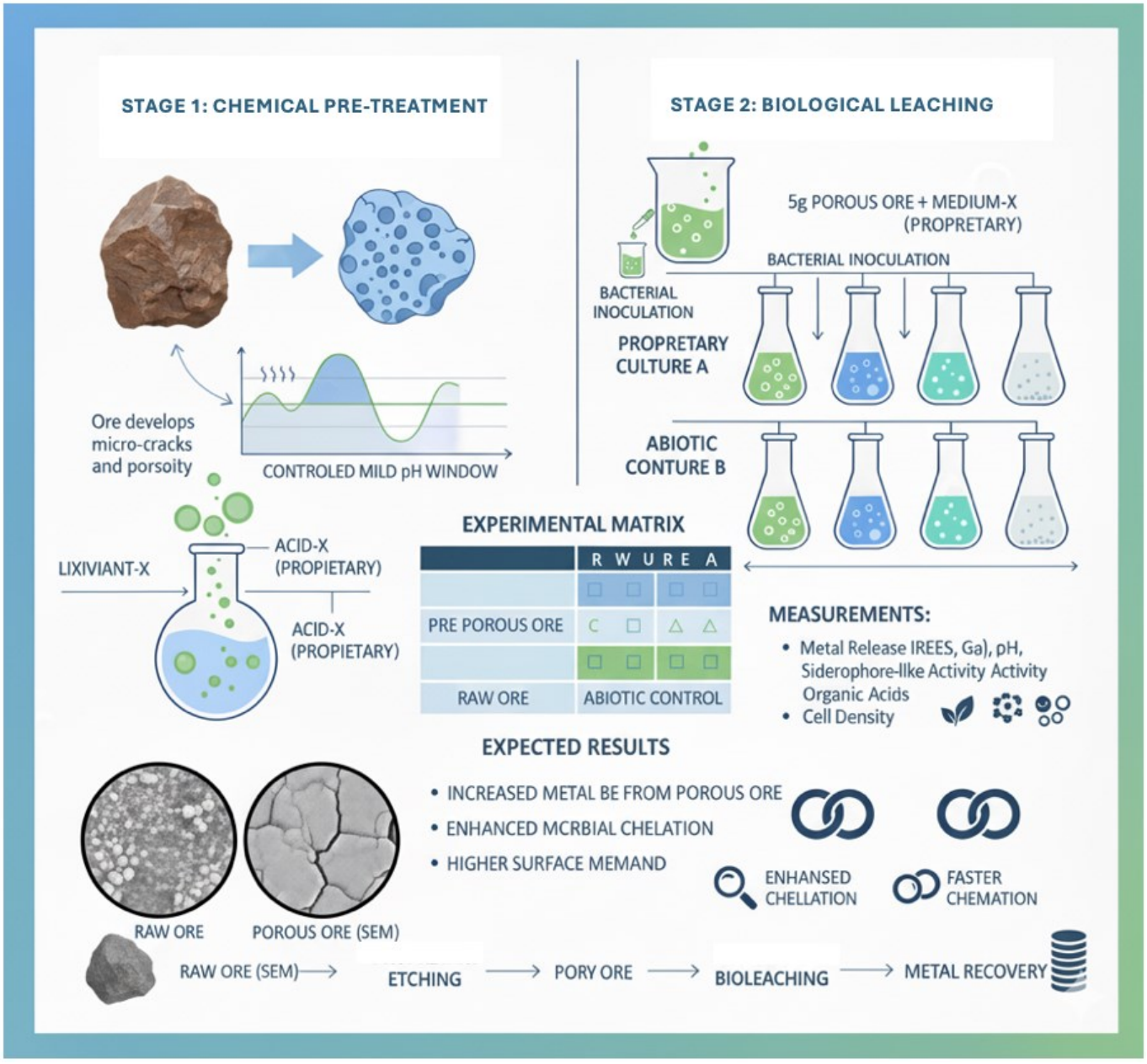

Figure 1. Dr. Appanna's Proprietary Bioleaching System to recover metals.

To view an enhanced version of this graphic, please visit: https://images.newsfilecorp.com/files/9598/283899_d950fea554c9182f_001full.jpg

Initial Tests Completed at Laurentian University

Volta has partnered with Dr. Appanna's laboratory to evaluate innovative technologies for the recovery of gallium (and REEs) from mineralized material from the Springer deposit using microbial and chemical leaching systems. The bio-enabled leaching platform integrates specialized microbial groups, environmentally friendly chemical media and specialized affinity columns designed for the selective recovery of gallium (and REEs).

Volta submitted a small batch of Springer master mineral composites, representative of mineralization intersected to date, to Dr. Appanna's laboratory for initial chemical leaching tests targeting gallium (and REEs). These initial tests successfully liberated multiple critical elements into solution, including gallium, neodymium, samarium and Heavy REEs such as gadolinium ("Gd"), dysprosium ("Dy"), and ytterbium ("Y") (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Recovered elements in solution from Springer Composites

To view an enhanced version of this graphic, please visit: https://images.newsfilecorp.com/files/9598/283899_d950fea554c9182f_002full.jpg

Next Phase: Dual Extraction Pathways

The next phase of laboratory-scale testing, currently underway, is designed to identify optimal chemical and microbial conditions to efficiently liberate gallium (and REEs) from the Springer Deposit's mineralized material matrices. Results are expected in Q3 2026.

Contingent on positive results, the testwork will form the basis

for subsequent bulk leach validation studies, advancing the process toward potential scale-up.

This sustainable extraction approach is expected to further unlock Springer’s potential by supporting the efficient, domestic supply of highly critical and strategic elements.

Dr. Vasu Appanna

Dr. Vasu Appanna is the former Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario. He has been at Laurentian since 1989 as a Professor of Biochemistry and served as the Department Chair for 6 years. He received his BSc from the University of Bombay, his MSc from the University of Wales, and his PhD from the University of Waterloo.

He has over 170 peer-reviewed publications in the fields of biotechnology, metabolism, cellular adaptation and toxicology. He supervised the first doctoral student at Laurentian University and over 185 highly qualified personnel (BSc, MSc, PhD, Post-doctoral, and research associates) throughout his career.

Dr. Appanna has led various industry and non-industry-funded projects globally. He is the editor of numerous journals and sits on various research organizations and boards.

He has served on various granting agencies like the Department of Energy (DOE, USA) and the Ministry of Research and Innovation, Ontario. He has consulted worldwide on biotechnology and has commercialized a biomining process as well as a method to detect homocysteine, a marker for numerous diseases.

About the Springer Rare Earth Deposit

The 2012 mineral resource estimate presented for the Springer Rare Earth Project is historical in nature. Volta’s Qualified

Person has not completed sufficient work to confirm the results of the historical resource. Volta does not treat this as a current mineral resource but considers it relevant as a guide to future exploration and includes it for reference purposes only. The historical resource was estimated by Tetra Tech Wardrop in 2012. Gallium was not included in this initial mineral resource estimate.

The block model and mineral resource for the Springer Rare Earth Project is classified as having both Indicated and Inferred Mineral Resources based on the number of boreholes, borehole spacing and sample data populations used in the estimation of the blocks. The mineral resource estimate for the deposit, at a 0.9% Total Rare Earth Oxides ("**TREO**") cut-off, is an Indicated Resource of 4.2 Mt at 1.14% TREO, 0.02% ThO_2, with approximately 6% of the TREO being made up of Heavy Rare Earth Oxides ("**HREO**"); and an Inferred Resource of 12.7 Mt at 1.17% TREO, 0.01% ThO_2, with approximately 4% of the TREO being made up of HREOs.

The 2012 mineral resource, based on 22 diamond boreholes, was estimated by Ordinary Kriging interpolation on uncapped grades for all 15 REOs and thorium dioxide. The TREO% is a sum of the 15 individual interpolations of the REOs. No recoveries have been applied to the interpolated estimates.

The 2012 mineral resource estimate categories are not compliant with the current CIM Definition Standards. No other resource estimates have been undertaken since the 2012 Tetra Tech Wardrop report. Volta is expected to finalize an updated mineral resource estimate this quarter based on the drilling completed by the Company in 2025 following the acquisition of the project to verify the historical estimate as a current mineral resource.

Qualified Person

The technical content of this press release, except for the "About Springer Rare Earth Deposit" section, has been reviewed and approved by Dr. Vasu Appanna, who is an independent Qualified Person ("**QP**") as defined in National Instrument 43-101, Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects.

The technical content in the "About Springer Rare Earth Deposit" section of this news release has been reviewed and approved by Dr. Julie Selway, P.Geo., who is an independent Qualified Person ("**QP**") as defined in National Instrument 43-101, Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects. The QP and the Company have not completed sufficient work to verify the historical information on the Springer deposit, and it is considered as "historic", particularly regarding historical exploration and government geological work.

For more information about the Company, please visit Volta's website at www.voltametals.ca.

ABOUT VOLTA METALS LTD.

Volta Metals Ltd. (CSE: VLTA) (FSE: D0W) (OTC Pink: VOLMF) is a mineral exploration company focused on rare earths, gallium, lithium, cesium, and tantalum. It owns, has optioned and is currently exploring a critical minerals portfolio of rare earths, gallium, lithium, cesium, and tantalum projects in Ontario, one of the world's most prolific and emerging hard-rock critical mineral districts. To learn more about Volta and its Springer and Aki Projects, please visit www.voltametals.ca.

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This news release contains forward-looking statements relating to product development, plans, strategies, and other statements that are not historical facts. Forward-looking statements are often identified by terms such as “will”, “may”, “should”, “anticipate”, “expects” and similar expressions. All statements other than statements of historical fact included in this news release are forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties. Forward-looking information in this news release includes, but is not limited to, that the newly designed drill program will provide sufficient data for an updated mineral resource estimate, which is scheduled to be completed in the first quarter of 2026. There can be no assurance that such statements will prove to be accurate, and actual results and future events could differ materially from those anticipated in such statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from the Company’s expectations include: the risks detailed from time to time in the filings made by the Company with securities regulators; the fact that Volta’s interests in its mineral properties are options only and there are no guarantee that such interest, if earned, will be certain; the future prices and demand for lithium, rare earth elements, and gallium; and delays or the inability of the Company to obtain any necessary approvals, permits and authorizations required to carry out its business plans. The reader is cautioned that assumptions used in the preparation of any forward-looking statements may prove to be incorrect. Events or circumstances may cause actual results to differ materially from those predicted, as a result of numerous known and unknown

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