Today, in Norilsk Nornickel presented its Sulphur Project, the company's largest environmental initiative that will help address the issue of sulphur dioxide emissions.

The event was attended by Sergei Ivanov, Special Presidential Representative for Environmental Protection, Ecology and Transport, Sergei Donskoy, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Alexander Neradko, Head of the Federal Air Transport Agency, Elena Bezdenezhnykh, Nornickel's Vice-President — State Secretary and Head of GR, Alexander Ryumin, Nornickel's Vice-President — Head of Polar Division, Viktor Tolokonsky, Governor of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, and Norilsk's Mayor Oleg Kurilov.

The event was hosted at the new Sulphur Project showroom designed to visualise the technologies that will reduce emissions in Norilsk by more than 75%.

By the end of 2017, Nornickel plans to choose one of the two sulphur dioxide capture and recovery technologies to be implemented going forward. In November 2016, Nornickel contracted Canada's SNC-Lavalin to prepare detailed design documents for the production of elemental sulphur at Nadezhda Metallurgical Plant. Concurrently, the company is considering an alternative way to solve the sulphur issue through sulphuric acid production with subsequent neutralisation.

The two technologies currently under review by Nornickel are available in the showroom as architectural models with augmented reality capabilities. The visualisation exercise offers a clear picture of the future process flowsheet including all the relevant chemical and physical processes.

The information and videos available in the showroom provide insights into the history of Nornickel, its project and wider environmental efforts of the company. The showroom also features a countdown panel demonstrating the exact number of seconds left to the project completion.

The Sulphur Project will cost up to USD 2 bn, with Nornickel's total environmental expenses through 2023 estimated at RUB 250 bn. The company's total capex for the same period stands at RUB 1 trillion.

"It is these initiatives that we will be channelling all our funding to. The impact will be visible and meaningful, as it will spread beyond the communities of Norilsk and the Kola Peninsula, benefiting other Russian regions as well. This is clearly very important for us," said Elena Bezdenezhnykh during the presentation.

"The Year of Ecology is only the beginning: it is the starting point in cracking down on the many environmental projects in Russia that have remained completely neglected for decades on end," said Sergei Ivanov. He added that the overwhelming majority of large industrial companies, including Nornickel, "have come up with plans to switch over to the best available technologies: in addition to production process upgrades as a way to improve the competitive position, these will also help reduce emissions and effluents, etc."

Sergei Donskoy also commented on Nornickel's environmental initiatives. "All environmental projects must go hand in hand with production upgrades. This is reflected in the Russian laws and regulations, and businesses are now gearing up to achieve this goal. Nornickel is a great example, as it launched preparations well in advance. Sometimes this results in plant shutdowns, which is only logical when upgrade costs outweigh the immediate outcomes. In other cases, the opening of new and revamped facilities are a more economically feasible option. Going beyond simple modernisation, the upgrade drive is a way to boost competitiveness, as the environmental focus is taking the centre stage globally and is now used as a competitive edge."

"Changing the environmental impact is the principal mid-term target for a lot of industries and producers today," said Viktor Tolokonsky. "Just like in many other instances throughout its history, Norilsk Nickel is once again blazing the trail here. I would like to thank the company's shareholders for that. <...> Nornickel's adoption of this strategic vision is something that makes a huge difference for our region."

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