# **Helium One Global**

2021 drilling programme derisked Rukwa's helium potential with Phase 2 Exploration to come

#### Tai drilling campaign has provided several positive datapoints

Helium One's share price has fallen heavily after reporting in August that the Tai drilling campaign failed to make a commercial helium discovery, the major reason for which was due to issues with the rig rather than the geology. Given this was the first helium exploration well in a large frontier basin in which it holds 3,500sqkm of acreage, there were plenty of reasons to be positive and encouragement for future exploration. In particular, HE1 has proved that there is an active working helium system in the basin with multiple helium shows, reservoir seal and trap over multiple horizons with charge and the data confirming the presence of a thick seal, removing one of the key pre-drill risks. A helium show in this virgin basin is highly significant as it proved the existence of helium in the subsurface for the first time. Management has been prudent with its spending, opting for a low cost rig but ultimately that proved an issue when attempting to test the deeper targets.

#### Helium market remains tight and corporate activity at high levels

The helium market has tightened up recently in 2021 with several plant outages such as in Algeria and with the shut-in of the BLM storage facility in the US for safety reasons. In terms of new capacity Russia's Amur plant seems unlikely to have any impact in 2021 given delays and Qatar's new capacity is likely to only ramp up slowly. Helium pricing into the key import markets remains healthy with pricing well above our conservative long-term assumption of US\$250/mcf which we use for modelling. Investor appetite for helium companies has been strong in 2021 with strong share price performance, several capital raises and new companies coming to market.

#### Phase 2 exploration: 2D seismic, geophysical investigation and shallow drilling

Despite the curtailment of the current drilling campaign, there remains several catalysts for the stock. There is a two-pronged approach focusing on shallow and deep targets. Near-term there is the potential to use simple geophysical techniques (magneto telluric, ground penetration radar, conductivity surveys), which could identify gas in situ in the shallow Lake Bed structural and stratigraphic traps, where high-grade helium shows have been encountered. This could lead to a shallow drilling campaign with a low-cost water rig (at a cost of just ~US\$50-100k per well) drilling between 10-20 wells initially to around 200m. HE1 has ~40bcf of unrisked prospective resources in shallow targets. HE1 is looking to mobilise a 2D seismic survey to better image under the top seal in the main Karoo target formation with the intention of getting started ahead of the wet season. We estimate a cost of around US\$1-2mm and this should help with HE1's well placement for the deeper targets next year. HE1 is likely to bring in a bigger rig to drill some of the Karoo targets around end-April 2022 with the wells likely to cost ~US\$3-5mm each. We also expect HE1 to carry out seismic on its other acreage in Eyasi and Balangida in 2022.

#### Valuation: maintaining our risked NAV of 25p/sh

Although the drilling campaign was negative for sentiment with the lack of a discovery, we believe that there were clear positives that came out of the drilling campaign to derisk future exploration including helium shows, a thick seal and good quality reservoir. Indeed, it is rare for a frontier basin to see commercial success with the first well and the exploration potential remains substantial, hence we are maintaining our 25p/sh risked NAV. Management has exercised strong cost control over its drilling campaign and its cash burn rate remains low with G&A of ~US\$100k per month. With the low-cost exploration planned for the rest of 2021, the company remains fully funded. It has ~US\$14mm in cash, which means it could also drill a deeper well next year or it could look to farm-down to fund a more material campaign. A simple way to look at the current valuation is that based on our NPV12 of ~US\$60/mcf, HE1's EV of ~US\$65mm is pricing in 1bcf of helium being discovered, relative to its unrisked prospective resource of 138bcf. Our risked NAV of 25p/sh is the equivalent of a ~5bcf helium discovery once fully derisked.

GICS Sector	Energy
Ticker	LN:HE1
Market cap 7-Sep-21 (US\$m)	75
Share price 7-Sep-21 (GBp)	9

### NAV summary (p/sh)

Asset	Unrisked	Risked
Deep targets	125	22
Shallow expl.	5	1
Cash/other	2	2
Total NAV	132	25



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## Valuation and NAV

A simple way to look at the valuation of HE1 is that based on our NPV12 of ~US\$60/mcf, the current EV of ~US\$65mm is pricing in 1bcf of helium being discovered relative to its unrisked prospective resource of 138bcf. Our risked NAV of 25p/sh is the equivalent of a ~5bcf helium discovery once fully derisked.

#### Valuation per share sensitivity to size of helium resource and chance of success

			Heli	um volum	e (bcf)	
		1.0	10.0	50	100	138
	10%	0.5p	5.3p	26p	53p	73p
Chance	25%	1.3p	13p	66p	132p	183p
of	50%	2.6p	26p	132p	265p	366p
Success	75%	4.0p	40p	199p	397p	548p
	100%	5.3p	53p	265p	530p	731p

Source: H&P estimates

#### NAV

	Gross		Net	NPV	Unrisked	Unrisked	Geo./techn.	Comm.	Well cost	Risked	Risked
Asset	bcf	Interest	bcf	US\$/mcf	US\$m	£/sh	CoS	CoS	US\$m	US\$m	£/sh
Kasuku (Rukwa)	5.2	84.0%	4.4	\$58	\$257	£0.28	28%	85%	\$1	\$62	£0.07
Itumbula (Rukwa)	5.4	84.0%	4.6	\$58	\$267	£0.29	19%	85%	\$1	\$45	£0.05
Mbuni (Rukwa)	7.0	84.0%	5.9	\$58	\$342	£0.37	20%	85%	\$1	\$58	£0.06
Tai (Rukwa)	5.9	84.0%	5.0	\$58	\$290	£0.31	15%	85%	\$1	\$38	£0.04
Lake Beds (Rukwa)	1.0	84.0%	0.8	\$58	\$49	£0.05	25%	85%	\$1	\$11	£0.01
Current cash					\$14	£0.02				\$14	£0.02
Options proceeds					\$5	£0.01				\$5	£0.01
G&A	@	2.0X			-\$4	£0.00				-\$4	£0.00
Total NAV					\$1,220	£1.32				\$229	£0.25

Source: H&P estimates

We have updated our NAV to factor in the cash spent year to date, the options that have been exercised and we have added in some value for the Lake Beds that are likely to be drilled later this year. We conservatively only include 1bcf of prospective resource which we see as worth 1p/sh risked or 5p/sh unrisked. Our risked NAV is unchanged at 25p/sh, which implies 150% upside from the current share price. In our base case scenario, we use a helium price of US\$250/mcf long-term flat from 2021 and a 12% discount rate from 1/1/2021. On an unrisked basis, we have a NAV of £1.26/sh or >10x upside. Further to this are the follow-on prospects that are not included in our NAV and its other exploration areas. A US\$50/mcf increase in the helium price would increase our risked NAV by 6p/sh and unrisked by 33p/sh.

#### NAV sensitivity to helium price and discount rate

ked			Heliu	m Price (§	\$/mcf)	
		\$100.00	\$175.00	\$250.00	\$325.00	\$400.00
	8%	8.8p	20.2p	31.5p	42.8p	54.2p
Discount	10%	7.6p	17.7p	27.8p	37.9p	48.op
rate	12%	6.5p	15.6p	24.7p	33.7 p	42.8p
	14%	5.6p	13.8p	21.9p	30.1p	38.2p
	16%	4.8p	12.2p	19.6p	26.9p	34.3p

Source: H&P estimates

## Tai well result review

#### Tai prospect seismic analysis



Source: Company data

HE1 completed an extended 200km 2D seismic shoot in early May over a 310km2 area (roughly 8.8%) of its Rukwa Licences. This survey focussed on areas of known prospectivity at the basin margin which were at shallow depth and could therefore theoretically be tested with a slim-line mineral rig. Modern seismic data was of a higher quality than earlier work, resulting in a better understanding of the subsurface and reassessment of geological risk across its portfolio. The initial data interpretation upgraded and expanded the Tai prospect, which had only been poorly defined on legacy seismic data, but now clearly demonstrates a faulted 3-way dip closure concurrent with a gravity high.

#### Helium shows

The Tai-1 well was spudded on 12<sup>th</sup> June and, on 19<sup>th</sup> June, at a depth of 70.5 metres, a helium show of 2.2% concentration was detected in the drilling mud. This show was encountered over an interval of 4-6 metres, below a 20m thick sealing shale sequence. This helium-bearing interval was encountered earlier than expected in the secondary target Lake Bed Formation. The upper section of the Lake Bed Formation is comprised of poorly consolidated fluvial-deltaic sands. The unconsolidated nature of these shallow reservoirs means it is not possible to perform a drill stem test on any pay zone in this interval as the side wall of the well may collapse during testing.

A second gas show was identified in the Red Sandstone Formation at a depth of 552 meters. The gas show, which was supported by indications of gas visually identified as bubbles in drilling mud returns at surface, continued to increase over a thickness of 9 meters at which point drilling was halted due to parted drill-pipe. The Red Sandstone Group was previously considered to be of low prospectivity due to a lack of effective sealing units. The gas show occurred beneath a thin clay horizon and demonstrated a working helium system where gas shows may be identified beneath even marginal sealing units.

A further five helium shows with a cumulative thickness of 91 meters were identified within the Karoo formation. Of these, one show occurred within thinly bedded sandstones in the Top-Karoo claystone, while the other four occurred in thicker and cleaner sandstones of the main Karoo reservoir. Frustratingly, due to poor and deteriorating hole conditions including large washouts across much of the Karoo, only the uppermost show within the sealing unit was tested with wireline and was indicated to be associated with saturated brine. However, the main reservoir units with thicker, better developed sands in the deeper Karoo were not able to be logged due to poor and deteriorating hole conditions. Therefore it was not possible to assess the helium gas-bearing potential of the deeper, thicker, reservoir intervals with demonstrated helium shows.

Due to various drilling difficulties, shows in the Lake Bed, Red Sandstone and main Karoo Formation reservoir units were not tested, meaning Tai-1 remains inconclusive for the identification of free-gas in the subsurface. **However, a major objective of the well was achieved, in that it identified helium shows within all three target formations, including five helium show intervals identified in the primary Karoo targets, as well as secondary targets in the Lake Bed and Red Sandstone Formations.** 

Helium shows demonstrate that the subsurface system is working and that reservoir, seal and trap are capable of storing helium in this basin. This is a key indicator in a basin that has never been drilled for helium before. We think it is important to distinguish between helium shows in this basin and an oil and gas show when drilling a hydrocarbon exploration well. A helium show in a virgin basin is highly significant as for the first time it proves the existence of helium in the subsurface. Only a relatively small volume of helium is required for commercial production as it is a high value gas. Also, we think that it is relevant that helium shows were detected directly below claystone sequences as it demonstrates that the helium is being trapped by traditional siliciclastic sediments which are found throughout the Rukwa sedimentary sequence.

#### Thick seal encountered and good quality reservoir

The well was also able to demonstrate the presence of a high quality 130m thick seal in the uppermost Karoo. One of the key unknowns pre-drill was whether there are sufficient sealing units to trap and store helium in the subsurface and this risk has been significantly reduced. HE1 could identify the seal in 2D seismic and shows that thickens towards the basin centre and thin towards the basin edge. This is a key indicator for future exploration, derisking a key component of the helium system and giving a clear direction for future exploration.

The Karoo reservoir had good potential with porosity levels of 15-20% in thinly bedded sands within the upper Karoo claystone sequence, and above the better developed, thicker sandstone units of the Karoo Formation. Petrophysical analysis presented no clear indications of free gas within the Top-Karoo seal. However, the main reservoir targets with thicker, better developed sands in the deeper Karoo were not able to be logged due to poor and deteriorating hole conditions. Therefore it was not possible to assess the reservoir characteristics of the deeper, thicker, reservoir intervals with demonstrated helium shows

The rig used by HE1 was a low-cost rig that drills slimline wells, which enabled HE1 to gather a large amount of data to de-risk the play at a total cost of only ~US\$2mm despite the longer than expected time to complete the well.

#### Shallow well on Tai

The Tai-2 well was completed without identifying helium gas in the Lake Bed stratigraphy. The well, drilled 20m from Tai-1, was targeting a shallow interval in which 2.2% helium was identified in Tai-1 in sandstone. However, the logging data identified clay in Tai-2 over the same zone, which suggests that the reservoir pinched out against clay, which acts as both lateral and vertical seal. The improved understanding of closure and sealing mechanism on shallow trapping structures from Tai-2 is key given that existing seismic data is not sufficient to accurately map traps at shallow depth. This was a low cost well given it took a week to drill.

Shallow trapping styles are an interesting result to come out of Tai drilling. Prior to drilling, shallow Lake Bed targets were considered as secondary targets as poorly consolidated shales would not be competent enough to act as seal against a helium gas phase. The identification of high-grade helium shows with good indicators of free gas beneath siliciclastic sealing units turns this theory upside-down and opens the door towards low-cost exploration and development of near surface deposits.

#### Phase 2 exploration

HE1 is in the process of formulating its forward drilling plans dependant on the result of low-cost geophysical surveys. There is the potential for HE1 to test some of the shallower prospectivity that showed up at Tai with a smaller rig in the near term. However, for future wells in the basin targeting the key deeper Karoo play it may make sense to bring in a rig capable of drilling wider diameter holes to avoid the drilling issues encountered in the Tai-1 well.

The go forward plan is to use low-cost geophysical techniques (magneto telluric, ground penetration radar, conductivity surveys) to test over known shallow targets in the Tai area, before deployment over a wider area in the basin. The upcoming seasonal rains from November have to be taken into account, but a light-weight water-rig possibly opens the option to conduct drilling operations on the shallow targets over the wet-season. This is a low cost exploration route and if extensive shallow trapping structures are identified could provide a cost effective path into development.

For the deeper targets Helium One will aim to mobilise infill seismic before November so that it can then design a deep drilling programme for 2022. HE1 has identified a number of deeper large structures, northern extensions of the Itumbula and Tai, identifiable on Falcon Gravity Gradiometry data as well as recent and legacy seismic data.

Helium One is well funded with a current cash position of £10mm and remains focused on cost-effective exploration. Management plan a return to geophysics, which is a cheap and efficient way to leverage knowledge gained from drilling to further derisk the basin without diluting existing shareholders. The shows a prudent approach to exploration with a focus on phased development and cash conservation.

The work undertaken so far in 2021, whilst not making a commercial helium discovery, has demonstrated a working helium system and derisked the

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exploration by demonstrating seal, reservoir, and trapping geometries as well as identified a charge mechanism in the basin away from known surface seeps.

#### Helium prospectivity

Helium migration can be halted by seals or traps. If trapping structures are present on the migration pathway, a gas phase can accumulate. The trap will be filled with helium-rich gas until full and then spill. The excess spilt fraction if not trapped further up in the system will escape at surface seeps. Intraformational seals identified in the Lake Bed and Red Sandstone formations are likely to be marginal – ie a thin or poorly consolidated seal will leak helium over geological time. The presence of helium shows in these horizons suggests a high level of charge where helium coming into the base of the system exceeds helium being lost to the surface through marginal seals. **The presence of helium in Tai-1 at multiple stratigraphic levels and beneath marginal sealing units suggests that the Rukwa Basin system is fill-to-spill**.

#### Rukwa Rift trapping styles



Source: InSeisive

Helium can be trapped at the top of the Red Sandstone by lacustrine shales at the base of the Lake Beds and anywhere within alternating sand/ shales throughout the Lake Bed sequence. In the Karoo play, beneath the thick Top-Karoo seal identified in Tai-1, the dominant trapping geometry is rotated extensional fault blocks creating 3-way dip closures with fault seal in the 4th direction. The trapping style within the Lake Bed play is more varied than for the Karoo: there are gentle 3-way closures against faults as tested by the Ivuna-1 well and minor inversion structures, low relief 4-way traps, stacked low-relief 3-way traps against the fault. Stratigraphic trapping may also be present within the rift.

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