



## A Top Canadian Stock to Buy Right Now

### Description

**First Quantum Minerals** ([TSX:FM](#)) has been finding innovative ways to improve efficiency and hence reduce the environmental impact of the company's operations. This appears to be resulting in decreased energy use, waste reduction, and lowered greenhouse gas emissions. In some areas, First Quantum has led the way in the development of [new mining technology](#) and production processes. These processes have significantly improved the company's performance.

### Clear, progressive, and realistic targets

The First Quantum approach to climate change is to set tangible targets and focus on the identification and execution of projects that produce real outcomes. During 2021 and in subsequent periods, the company plans on setting clear, progressive, and realistic targets with an identified pathway to achievement. First Quantum's intent appears to be to [deliver meaningful change](#) through the company's business.

Despite the challenges of fiscal 2021, First Quantum achieved record annual production with the company's costs at the lowest level in four years. First Quantum's 2020 total production of about 778,000 tonnes of copper represented an 11% increase on the previous year. This is a remarkable achievement for the company's shareholders.

### Demonstrating flexibility and adaptability

Kansanshi, a First Quantum mine, appears to remain a consistent producer, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability. In 2021, production rates at the mine are expected to be similar to those achieved in fiscal year 2020. Work is expected to begin on upgrading the smelter to be able to treat higher volumes of concentrate from the company's Sentinel and Kansanshi mines. The decision to move ahead with an expansion at Kansanshi remains dependent on financial outcomes and reaching an agreement with the Zambian government on investment stability. First Quantum appears to continue to engage in regular, constructive discussions with the government in this regard.

Further, First Quantum closed the year at Sentinel with a strong fourth quarter. Sentinel achieved throughput of 57 million tonnes in 2020, and the company expects it to continue at these rates in 2021. A fourth in-pit crusher is to be commissioned during 2021, which will provide to Sentinel an incremental increase in throughput. Unit costs improved from the previous year as a result of lower maintenance and fuel costs and some foreign exchange benefits.

## Expansion of mining assets

In addition, First Quantum's Cobre Panama mine returned to normal operations by the end of the fourth quarter and achieved records for mill throughput and production. Mill throughput appears to continue to ramp up towards the 2021 target rate of 85 million tonnes per year. Expansion of Cobre Panama to the 100 million tonnes per year throughput level is expected in 2023.

Additionally, First Quantum's Ravensthorpe nickel operation in Western Australia reopened and commenced exporting in early 2020. The company commenced the expansion of the mine with the development of the Shoemaker-Levy deposit. This new orebody should extend the life of the mine by 20 years. The first blast to open the new pit was undertaken just a few days before the end of 2020. First Quantum expects that the target production rate of 2,500 tonnes per month will be achieved later in 2021 after Shoemaker-Levy comes on stream. This could lead to a higher stock price.

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