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**Goldies charged with partner hunt for lithium play ioneer**

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Listed lithium play ioneer Ltd is powering up its search for a funding partner.

The \$193 million company, which tapped Goldman Sachs last year to help it find a funding partner for its lithium and boron project in southern Nevada, has formalised the data room and diligence materials for a handful of interested parties which have already been whittled down from a longer list.

Goldman is running the process out of its New York office and is understood to have approached Asian manufacturers keen to gain a foothold in the United States such as LG and Panasonic, as well as global chemical companies, ESG companies and financial investors.

Ioneer unveiled a definitive feasibility study for its Rhyolite Ridge project to the market in April, which revealed a total capital expenditure of \$US785 million (\$1.15 billion) was required to complete the project, including an 8 per cent contingency.

Enter the need for a strategic partner.

Ioneer was sitting on \$53.2 million cash as of March 31 this year. The new investor would be expected to finance some of that funding shortfall to get the project, which has an estimated mineral resource of 146.5 million tonnes, up and running.

No doubt Goldman was spruiking it as a chance to get involved in a project that's expected to mine and process 63.8 million tonnes of lithium and boron over a 26-year mine life, or 2.5 million tonnes a year.

Interestingly, US billionaire John Arnold, who owns almost 10 percent of ioneer via his investment fund Centaurus Capital, was hoovering up stock via Goldies last week. Arnold emerged as a substantial holder in January.

Local institutional investors include Regal Funds Management, Julian Babarczy's Jigsaw Investments and Melbourne family money.