KO Gold Announces Application for OTCQB Venture Market Listing and Q2 2026 Drilling Plans in the Otago Gold Belt, New Zealand

Toronto, Ontario – March 16, 2026 – KO Gold Inc. (**CSE:KOG**) ("**KO Gold**" or the "**Company**") is pleased to announce that it has submitted an application to OTC Markets Group Inc. (the "OTC Market") for the Company's common shares to be eligible to trade on the OTCQB Venture Market ("OTCQB").

OTCQB listing intended to enhance visibility with U.S. investors and improve trading accessibility

The OTCQB is a U.S. marketplace operated by OTC Markets that is designed for early-stage and developing companies that are current in their disclosure and meet applicable eligibility requirements. The Company believes that obtaining an OTCQB quotation could increase the visibility of KO Gold with U.S. investors and provide U.S.-based investors with improved access to the Company's common shares through U.S. brokerage platforms.

The Company also intends, in connection with an OTCQB quotation, to pursue eligibility with The Depository Trust Company ("DTC") for electronic clearing and settlement of the Company's common shares in the United States. Any DTC eligibility remains subject to the applicable requirements and approval processes of DTC.

No new securities will be issued in connection with the OTCQB application. The Company's common shares will continue to trade on the Canadian Securities Exchange under the symbol "KOG". The Company's OTCQB application is subject to OTC Markets' review and approval. KO Gold will provide further updates as appropriate.

The OTCQB listing is expected to expand KO Gold's exposure to U.S. investors, increase trading accessibility and liquidity, and support the Company's efforts to build a broader international shareholder base as exploration and drilling activities accelerate in New Zealand.

Exploration Update - Otago Gold District, New Zealand

KO Gold continues to systematically advance its district-scale land position in the Otago Gold District of New Zealand's South Island and is preparing for an active exploration and drilling season in 2026.

Key highlights and planned activities include:

- KO Gold holds four 100%-owned exploration permits (EP) - Smylers Gold, Glenpark, Hyde, and Carrick - covering approximately 400 km² within the Otago Gold District of New Zealand, with one EP application pending over a large area immediately south of the Carrick EP.
- The Company also maintains net smelter return (NSR) royalty interests on three additional permits (Garibaldi, Raggedy Range and Rough Ridge South) in Otago covering an additional ~340 km².
- KO Gold has invested more than C$3 million in exploration programs across its Otago permits

over the past 5 years, including reverse circulation (RC) and diamond drilling at the Smylers Gold EP.

- The Company has identified multiple high-priority drilling targets across its permits based on geological mapping, geochemical surveys and interpretation of historical exploration data.

- Drilling is planned to commence on its Smylers Gold EP, located adjacent to OceanaGold's (TSX: OGC) Macraes Mine, to test the continuity of previously intersected gold mineralization and expand known zones of mineralization with the objective of evaluating the continuity and scale potential of the mineralized system.

- KO Gold also plans to initiate drilling within the Carrick EP, targeting the historic Carrick Goldfield, with drilling designed to validate significant historical gold intersections through twin holes and step-out drilling. KO Gold is also in the process of submitting an access agreement with the NZ Department of Conservation (DOC) to drill on DOC lands within its permit area in the Carrick Goldfield. Historical drilling at the Carrick Goldfield intersected multiple zones of gold mineralization associated with the Carrick and Potters fault zones, including high-grade quartz vein systems that remain largely untested by modern systematic exploration methods.

- The Carrick EP is located near the feasibility-stage Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project being advanced by Santana Minerals (ASX: SMI) under New Zealand's fast-track permitting regime, highlighting the broader exploration potential of the district.

- The Company is targeting Q2 2026 to commence RC and diamond drilling programs initially on the Smylers Gold EP followed by the Carrick EP, and surface exploration programs and drilling on its other permits throughout 2026 as part of an expanded exploration campaign in the Otago Gold Belt.

New Zealand's transparent Crown Minerals permitting framework, combined with the recently implemented fast-track approvals regime, provides improved regulatory certainty and clearer development timelines for qualifying projects. This strengthening policy backdrop has been reflected in New Zealand's improved standing in the Fraser Institute's Annual Survey of Mining Companies, reinforcing the country's position as a stable and increasingly competitive mining jurisdiction. These improvements highlight New Zealand's growing attractiveness as a destination for responsible mineral exploration and development.

With a substantial exploration footprint adjacent to an emerging development-stage gold project at Bendigo-Ophir, exposure to a proven multi-million-ounce hard-rock gold belt, and a strategy aligned with successful regional developers, KO Gold is well positioned to pursue high-impact discovery and long-term value creation within one of the Southern Hemisphere's most attractive orogenic gold terrains.

KO Gold believes its strategic land position along key structural corridors within the Otago Gold Belt provides significant potential for district-scale hard-rock gold discoveries.

"*KO Gold has assembled a highly prospective land position in the Otago Gold Belt, and we are now preparing to test several priority targets through drilling,*" said Greg Isenor, CEO of KO Gold. "*With drilling planned at both the Smylers Gold and Carrick EPs, we are entering an exciting phase of exploration in a district that is seeing renewed momentum. The progress Santana Minerals is making at the nearby Bendigo-Ophir project further demonstrates the potential of this gold belt. Our OTCQB listing will also broaden our investor reach as we advance exploration across our Otago gold portfolio.*"

Cautionary Statement

This news release contains scientific and technical information with respect to adjacent properties to the Company's properties in the Otago Gold District, which the Company has no interest in or rights to explore. Readers are cautioned that information regarding the geology, mineralization, and mineral resources on adjacent properties is not necessarily indicative of the mineralization on the Company's properties.

Qualified Person Statement

All scientific and technical information contained in this news release was prepared and approved by Paul Ténière, P.Geo., Vice President of Exploration and Director of KO Gold Inc. who is a Qualified Person as defined by NI 43-101.

About KO Gold Inc.

KO Gold is a Canadian junior exploration company listed on the CSE under "KOG". The Company's strategy is to acquire and explore highly prospective gold properties within the Otago Gold District in New Zealand. KO Gold presently has four 100%-owned exploration permits within the Otago Gold District for a combined land package of 400 km^2 (including the Carrick Range exploration permit application). The Company's Smylers Gold, Hyde, and Glenpark EPs are located adjacent to OceanaGold's Macraes Gold Mine and the Carrick EP hosts the historic Carrick Goldfield which holds promise as a significant gold deposit near Santana Minerals' Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project. The Company also has an NSR on three additional permits, Garibaldi, Raggedy Range, and Rough Ridge South totaling 340 km^2. KO Gold has spent over C$3M in exploration and drilling on its permits in the Otago Gold District over the past five years including RC and diamond drilling on its Smylers Gold EP.

For further information, please contact:

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Forward-Looking Information

This news release contains certain forward-looking statements within the meaning of applicable Canadian securities laws. Forward-looking statements are frequently characterized by words such as "plan," "expect," "intend," "anticipate," "propose," "estimate," "may," "will," "would," "potential," or variations of such words and phrases, or statements that certain actions, events or results "may occur". All statements, other than statements of historical fact that address activities, events, or developments that the Company believes, expects or anticipates will or may occur in the future, are forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements in this news release include, but are not limited to, statements relating to: the Company's application for its common shares to be eligible to trade on the OTCQB® Venture Market;

the anticipated benefits of obtaining an OTCQB quotation, including enhanced visibility and improved access for U.S. investors; the Company's intention to pursue DTC eligibility for electronic clearing and settlement in the United States; and the timing and outcome of the OTCQB application and any DTC eligibility process.

Forward-looking statements are based on management's current expectations and assumptions, including, without limitation: the Company's ability to satisfy applicable eligibility criteria and continued disclosure requirements; the timely receipt of any required approvals, consents or acceptances; and the absence of material adverse changes affecting the Company or the markets in which its securities trade. Forward-looking statements are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. These risks and uncertainties include, without limitation: the risk that OTC Markets may not approve the Company's application or may take longer than expected to review it; the risk that DTC eligibility may not be obtained on acceptable terms or at all, or within the anticipated timeframe; changes to applicable laws, regulations or OTC Markets and/or DTC requirements; general business, economic, market and geopolitical conditions; and other risk factors described from time to time in the Company's public disclosure filings available under the Company's profile on SEDAR+.

Although the Company believes that the forward-looking statements and assumptions contained herein are reasonable, forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and undue reliance should not be placed on them. The Company expressly disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by applicable law.