

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

RWANDA

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In recent years, Rwanda, which is in Central Africa, has been known to produce gold ores and concentrates of columbium (niobium)-tantalum, tin, and tungsten, most of which has been designated for export. The country has also produced cement and small quantities of natural gas, most of which was for domestic consumption. The Rwandan minerals industry (along with the rest of the country's economy) collapsed in 1994 because of extended civil strife, and recovery has been inhibited by continuing instability. A series of massive population displacements, a civil insurgency, and Rwandan involvement in two wars during the past 4 years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to hinder Rwanda's efforts (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2000, p. 415).

The Rwandan mineral industry consisted mostly of a number of small cooperatives and individual artisanal miners in scattered locations, generally in a zone about 30 kilometers (km) wide extending east-west through Kigali. A major development in the minerals industry in 1999 was the Government's announced plan to privatize the state mining exploration company Régie d'Exploitation et de Développement des Mines by the end of 2000.

Rwanda's resources of cassiterite were estimated to be at least 90,000 metric tons. The deposits of methane under Lake Kivu were reported to have resources of more than 50 billion cubic meters (Worldinformation.com, 2000, Rwanda country profile, accessed March 1, 2001 at URL <http://www.worldinformation.com/World/Africa/Rwanda/profile.asp?country=250>). Rwanda is also known to have deposits of beryllium, kaolin, and peat.

In 1999, Rwanda's gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to about \$5.9 billion at purchasing power parity, which was an increase of 5.3% compared with that of 1998. Industry accounted for about 20% of GDP (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2000, p. 417). In 1998, the mining sector employed 1% of the workforce. Tungsten and tin ores and concentrates accounted for 5% of Rwanda's exports (Worldinformation.com, 2000, Rwanda country profile, accessed March 1, 2001 at URL <http://www.worldinformation.com/World/Africa/Rwanda/profile.asp?country=250>).

Rwanda consumed 165 million kilowatt-hours (MkWh) of electricity in 1998. Production of electricity totaled 159 MkWh; hydroelectric power sources provided 97.48% and natural gas provided 2.52%. The remainder of the country's electricity was supplied by power stations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwanda's transportation network comprised about 12,000 km of roads, of which 1,000 km was paved. Lake Kivu was navigable by shallow-draft barges and native craft (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2000, p. 417).

The outlook for Rwanda's mineral industry depends on the resolution of political instability and favorable world market conditions for columbium (niobium)-tantalum, gold, tin, and tungsten.

Reference Cited

U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2000, Rwanda: World Factbook 2000, p. 415-417.

TABLE 1
RWANDA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/ 2/

Commodity		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 e/
Cement	metric tons	10,000	42,000 3/	60,000 3/	50,000	50,000
Columbite-tantalite, ore and concentrate: e/						
Gross weight	kilograms	149,000 3/	99,000 3/	256,000 3/	250,000	250,000
Nb content	do.	40,000 3/	30,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Ta content	do.	28,000	25,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Gold, mine output, Au content	do.	26	4	13	25 e/	25
Natural gas, gross e/	thousand cubic meters	970	970	100	100	100
Tin, mine output, Sn content	metric tons	242	150	75	100 e/	100
Tungsten, mine output, W content	do.	47	109	57	40 e/	40

e/ Estimated.

1/ Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

2/ Includes data available through September 2000.

3/ Reported figure.