



2009 Minerals Yearbook

BURUNDI

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF BURUNDI

By Thomas R. Yager

In 2009, Burundi's production of gold, limestone, niobium (columbium) and tantalum ore and concentrate, peat, sand and gravel, tin ore, and tungsten ore was not significant in global terms. Burundi was not a globally significant consumer of minerals. Manufacturing, mining, and energy accounted for nearly 11% of Burundi's gross domestic product in 2008 (the latest year for which data were available) (Banque de la République du Burundi, 2009).

Production

Mineral production was estimated to have remained nearly unchanged in 2009. In 2008, tantalum production increased by 79%; niobium, 64%; tungsten, 35%; and peat, 30%. Tin output also increased sharply (table 1).

Structure of the Mineral Industry

Privately owned Comptoir Minier des Exploitations du Burundi S.A. (COMEBU) and artisanal miners produced Burundi's gold, niobium, tantalum, tin, and tungsten. State-owned Office National de la Tourbe was the country's only producer of peat (table 2).

Commodity Review

Metals

Cobalt, Copper, and Nickel.—Nyota Minerals Ltd. of Australia (formerly Dwyka Resources Ltd.) and BHP Billiton Ltd. of Australia engaged in exploration at Nyota's Muremera nickel project in northeast Burundi. BHP Billiton withdrew from Muremera in March. Nyota planned to spend a total of \$2 million on exploration in 2010 and 2011 (Winter, 2010).

In June 2007, the Government cancelled the license for the Musongati, the Nyabikere, and the Waga nickel-cobalt-copper deposits held by Argosy Minerals Inc. of Australia. Argosy filed complaints with the International Court of Arbitration in France in an attempt to regain control of the deposits. In March 2009, Argosy decided to withdraw from arbitration after

the Government reportedly awarded Musongati to a Chinese company. In December, the licenses to Musongati, Nyabikere, and Waga were reportedly awarded to Samancor Chrome Ltd. of South Africa (Africa Mining Intelligence, 2009a, b).

Gold and Vanadium.—International Gold Exploration AB (IGE) of Sweden suspended exploration at the Butara gold deposit and the Mukanda vanadium deposit at the beginning of 2009 because of the worldwide economic crisis. At the end of the second quarter, IGE returned its licenses to the Government (International Gold Exploration AB, 2009a, p. 5; 2009b, p. 6).

Mineral Fuels and Related Materials

Petroleum.—In October, the Government awarded exploration licenses for Blocks A, B, and C on Lake Tanganyika to Terra Seis International of Canada, Surestream Petroleum Ltd. of the United Kingdom, and South African Mineral Resources Corp. of South Africa, respectively. Surestream also held Block D (Africa Energy Intelligence, 2009).

Uranium.—In July 2008, the Government awarded IGE an exploration license for the Musigati area in northwest Burundi. The company suspended exploration at the beginning of 2009 because of the worldwide economic crisis and returned its license to the Government at the end of the second quarter (International Gold Exploration AB, 2009a, p. 5; 2009b, p. 6).

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TABLE 1
BURUNDI: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity ²		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 ^e
Gold, mine output, Au content ^e	kilograms	750	750	750	750	750
Niobium (columbium) and tantalum, ore and concentrate:						
Gross weight	do.	42,592	16,177	51,550	83,854	84,000
Nb content	do.	8,384	3,200	10,000	16,400	16,400
Ta content	do.	9,188	2,868	9,140	16,371	16,400
Peat		4,871	9,762	7,489	9,764 ^r	9,800
Tin, mine output:						
Gross weight		8	79	5	50	50
Sn content		4	46	2	21	21
Tungsten, mine output:						
Gross weight		295	668	455	608	610
W content		94	238	144	194	194

^eEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. ^rRevised. do. Ditto.

¹Table includes data available through June 3, 2010.

²In addition to the commodities listed, brick clay, limestone, and sand and gravel were produced, but available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

TABLE 2
BURUNDI: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2009

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Gold kilograms	Artisanal miners	Citiboke and Muyinga Provinces	750 ^e
Niobium (columbium) and tantalum, columbite-tantalite ore and concentrate	Comptoir Minier des Exploitations du Burundi S.A. (COMEBU)	Kabarore in Kayanza Province and Murehe in Kirundo Province	84 ^e
Peat	Office Nationale de la Tourbe (ONATOURE)	Buyongwe, Gisozi, Gitanga, and Matana	20,000
Tin, cassiterite ore and concentrate	Comptoir Minier des Exploitations du Burundi S.A. (COMEBU)	Murehe in Kirundo Province	190 ^e
Tungsten, wolframite ore and concentrate	Artisanal miners	Vumbi in Kirundo Province	38 ^e
Do.	do.	Busoni in Kirundo Province	37 ^e
Do.	do.	Kirundo in Kirundo Province	12 ^e

^eEstimated. Do., do. Ditto