



# 2009 Minerals Yearbook

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## NAMIBIA

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# THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF NAMIBIA

By Omayra Bermúdez-Lugo

Diamond, fluorspar, and uranium were the most significant mineral commodities to Namibia's economy. In 2009, Namibia was ranked third among the world's top diamond producers in terms of the value of production in dollars per carat, sixth in terms of the total value of diamond production, and eighth in terms of the volume of production. Namibia was also the world's seventh ranked producer of fluorspar, accounting for about 1% of world production, and the fourth ranked producer of uranium, accounting for about 9% of world production. The country also accounted for about 1% of world arsenic production. Other metals produced in the country included gold, lead, manganese, silver, and zinc. Industrial minerals included dolomite, granite, marble, salt, semiprecious stones, sodalite, sulfur, and wollastonite (Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, 2010; Olson, 2010; World Nuclear Association, 2010).

## Minerals in the National Economy

In 2009, the mining and quarrying sector was estimated to have contracted by 48.3%. A dwindling international demand for Namibia's mineral products as a result of the global financial crisis was among the reasons cited for the slowdown. The decrease in mining activity was attributed to the weak performance of the diamond and gold sectors and the closure of the country's copper mines. The uranium and zinc sectors however, performed well. Onshore diamond mining was suspended during the first quarter of the year. Government revenues from taxes and royalties from mining companies decreased, as did foreign direct investment in the mining sector (Bank of Namibia, 2010a, p. 6, 18, 89, 98, 104-106).

The economic slowdown forced companies to reduce their workforce throughout the year. De Beers Marine Namibia, Namdeb Diamond Corporation (Pty) Ltd., Namibia Diamond Trading Co., Sakawe Mining Corp., and Weatherly International plc were among the companies that reported reductions in workforce in 2009. Total employment in the mining sector decreased by about 18%. Nearly 24% of the people employed in the sector worked for Namdeb and about 23% worked for Rössing Uranium Ltd. (Chamber of Mines of Namibia, The, 2010, p. 3-6, 79).

## Production

In 2009, the most significant decrease in mineral production was for diamond, which decreased by about 51% to 1.19 million carats from about 2.4 million carats in 2008. The drop in diamond production was the result of the temporary shutdown of some of the country's operations and the drop in demand from international markets. Production of acid-grade fluorspar decreased by 32% to 80,857 metric tons (t) compared with 118,263 t in 2008; and lead in concentrates increased by 42% to 20,000 t compared with 14,062 t in 2008. Production data for most of the remaining mineral commodities produced in

Namibia were estimated. Data on mineral production are in table 1.

## Structure of the Mineral Industry

The Ministry of Mines and Energy and its Diamond Affairs, Energy, and Mining Directorates regulate Namibia's mining and petroleum industries. The Ministry grants exploration and mining licenses for minerals in Namibia; compiles national exploration and mining databases; and develops exploration and mining policy and regulations. The Ministry's Geological Survey of Namibia undertakes geologic mapping and research. The Ministry of Trade and Industry is responsible for regulating manufacturing activity, which includes mineral beneficiation, the production of cement, and the processing of semiprecious stones. The Ministry of Trade and Industry also promotes resource-based development. Table 2 is a list of major mineral industry facilities.

## Mineral Trade

In 2009, Namibia's exports to the United States were valued at about \$329 million compared with about \$301 million in 2008. Nuclear fuel materials and fuels accounted for about 84% (\$276 million) of these exports in terms of value, and diamond accounted for about 12% (\$40.8 million). Imports from the United States were valued at about \$202 million in 2009 compared with \$280 million in 2008; these included nearly \$44 million in fuel oil, nearly \$27 million in excavating machinery, and \$15 million in drilling and oilfield equipment (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, b).

## Commodity Review

### Metals

**Copper.**—All copper mining operations in Namibia, which were owned by Weatherly International plc, continued to be closed during the year. The Kombat Mine was closed in 2008 as a result of flooding caused by the irregular supply of electricity from NamPower. The continuous decline in copper prices during 2008 and 2009 forced the company also to close its remaining operations in the country, which included the Otjihase, the Matchless, the Tschudi, and the Tsumeb West Mines, and to place them on care-and-maintenance status. The company's Tsumeb smelter, however, continued to operate by processing imported copper concentrates from Chelopech Mining EAD, which was a wholly owned subsidiary of Dundee Precious Metals Inc. of Canada, and from Louis Dreyfus Commodities Metals Suisse SA. Weatherly was evaluating the possibility of reopening and resuming production at the Otjihase and the Matchless Mines during the third quarter of 2010 (Weatherly International plc, 2009, p. 1-5; 2010, p. 1-4; Bank of Namibia, 2010a, p. 104-106; 2010b, p. 8-13).

International Base Metals Ltd. of Australia through its subsidiary Craton Mining and Exploration (Pty) Ltd. (Craton) postponed a definitive feasibility study that it had planned to conduct at the Omitiomire copper project because it was unable to raise capital for the project as a result of the global credit crunch. The company had completed a resource assessment and prefeasibility study for Omitiomire in 2008, which yielded a resource estimate of 98 million metric tons (Mt) at an average grade of 0.51% Cu. Omitiomire is located about 140 kilometers (km) northeast of Windhoek (International Base Metals Ltd., 2010, p. 27-28).

**Gold.**—The Navachab Mine was the only industrial gold operation in Namibia. Gold was also recovered in small quantities from the country's copper mines. The decline in production during 2009 was reportedly the result of a 14% decrease in the tonnage treated owing to the processing of harder material from the pit's footwall. AngloGold Ashanti Namibia (Pty.) Ltd., which was the company that operated the mine, planned to commission a dense media separation plant in 2010 to process higher grade ore. Gold production for 2010 was expected to be between 3,000 kilograms (kg) and 3,100 kg (AngloGold Ashanti Namibia (Pty.) Ltd., 2010, p. 70-71).

### *Industrial Minerals*

**Cement.**—Schwenk Zement KG of Germany was in the process of developing a 700,000-metric-ton-per-year (t/yr) cement factory to be located in the Otjozondjupa region between Otavi and Tsumeb in northern Namibia. The plant, which would be Namibia's only cement factory, would have access to local limestone deposits. More than 300,000 t/yr of cement was expected to be destined for domestic consumption and the remainder was to be exported to southern Angola, western Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia. The plant was expected to come online in 2011 and to create between 250 and 300 jobs (Bause, 2009; Duddy, 2009).

**Diamond.**—De Beers Société Anonyme mined diamond onshore and offshore Namibia through Namdeb Diamond Corporation (Pty.) Ltd. (NDC) and De Beers Marine Namibia (DMN). De Beers Société Anonyme was owned by Anglo American plc of the United Kingdom (45%); Central Holdings, a company owned by the Oppenheimer family (40%); and the Government of Botswana (15%). In 2009, NDC's diamond production decreased by about 73% to 300,000 carats from 1.1 million carats produced in 2008. DMN's offshore operations decreased by 45% to 600,000 carats from 1.1 million carats produced in 2008. The company attributed the decrease in output to the maturity of its onshore operations and to a decrease in the demand for luxury items from international markets, in particular, from the United States. NDC's operations were halted in April when De Beers announced a production holiday as part of the company's cost-saving measures following the decrease in demand for diamond as a result of the global financial crisis. During the 3-month production holiday, all workers reportedly remained on pay while the mine was undergoing maintenance. NDC was a joint venture between De Beers (50%) and the Government (50%). DMN was a joint venture between De Beers (70%) and NDC (30%)

(Shejavali, 2009; Bank of Namibia, 2010a, p. 104-106; 2010b, p. 9; De Beers Société Anonyme, 2010, p. 18-19).

**Fluorspar.**—Production at the Okorusu Mine was temporarily suspended during the month of August owing to the low demand for fluorspar in the international market. The mine, which was 100% owned by Solvay Fluor GmbH of Germany through its subsidiary Okorusu Fluorspar (Pty.) Ltd., produced 97.5% pure acid-grade fluorspar. Fluorspar was exported to Solvay's processing plants in Germany and Italy for the manufacturing of hydrofluoric acid (Kaira, 2009; Chamber of Mines of Namibia, The, 2010, p. 36).

### *Mineral Fuels and Related Materials*

**Uranium.**—In 2009, Namibia accounted for about 9% of the world's production of uranium. The country had two uranium mines in operation, and three other mines were expected to come online by 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively. During the year, the Rössing Mine, which was operated by Rio Tinto plc of the United Kingdom, processed a total of 12.6 Mt of uranium ore and produced 4,150 t of uranium oxide compared with 4,067 t produced in 2008. Uranium oxide was exported to power utilities globally. A total of 1,415 people were employed at the mine. Rio Tinto was in the process of building a heap-leach plant that was expected to be commissioned in 2010 (Bank of Namibia, 2010a, 104-106; Rio Tinto plc, 2010, p. 49; World Nuclear Association, 2010).

Production at the Langer Heinrich Mine increased by 59% to 1,225 t of uranium oxide compared with 771 t produced in 2008 owing to planned expansions projects. The company planned to continue with phase III of its expansion project and to increase production capacity to about 2,400 t/yr by 2010 (Paladin Energy Ltd., 2010, p. 14).

Forsys Metals Corp. of Canada was developing the Valencia uranium deposit, which is located 40 km north of the Langer Heinrich Mine. The company was granted a 25-year mining license in 2008 and, in 2009, announced the completion of an independent mineral resource study for Valencia. Measured and indicated resources were estimated to be 32,000 t of  $U_3O_8$ . Inferred resources were estimated to be 5,000 t of  $U_3O_8$ . The company expected to begin production in 2011. The mine life of Valencia was estimated to be 15 years (Forsys Metals Corp., 2009).

Paris-based Areva Group was in the process of developing the Trekkopje Mine, which is located 70 km northeast of Swakopmund. Once in operation, the Trekkopje would process 100,000 metric tons per day of ore to produce about 3,000 t/yr of yellowcake. The company was in the process of building a desalinization plant to produce fresh water, which was to be used at the mine's heap-leach plant. Production was expected to begin in 2012 with an expected mine life of more than 12 years based on preliminary estimates (Areva Group, 2010).

Bannerman Resources Ltd. held an 80% interest in the Etango project, which is located southwest of the Rössing Mine about 41 km east of the town of Swakopmund. The company held an exclusive prospecting license for Etango, which it considered one of the world's largest undeveloped uranium deposits. Bannerman envisioned the development of a mine with a

capacity to produce 2,300 to 3,200 t/yr of uranium oxide. As of yearend the company had completed a preliminary feasibility study for Etango and was in the process of establishing a definitive feasibility study. Measured and indicated mineral resources were estimated to be 205.4 Mt at an average grade of 227 parts per million  $U_3O_8$ . Inferred mineral resources were estimated to be 102.9 Mt at a grade of 217 parts per million  $U_3O_8$ . The mine was expected to be operational by 2013 upon completion of a bankable feasibility study. Other companies exploring for uranium in the country included Deep Yellow Ltd., Toro Energy Ltd., and West Australian Metals Ltd. of Australia; and Xemplar Energy Corp. of Canada (Bannerman Resources Ltd., 2010, p. 11, 23).

## Outlook

The Namibian economy was projected to expand by 4.2% during 2010, driven by the resurgence of the mining sector and the strong performance of the construction sector. The primary industry was forecasted to grow by 7.8% following a contraction of 25.8% in 2009, driven mainly by the diamond mining sector. The diamond mining sector was projected to grow by 18.8% following a contraction of 58.2% in 2009, despite the depletion of onshore diamond, because of an expected upturn of the global economy. Expansion plans at the Langer Heinrich Mine and the Rössing Mine and the reopening of the country's copper mines were also expected to strengthen the industry in the short run. The construction sector was also forecasted to grow by 18.0%, driven mainly by the upgrading and renovation of Government buildings; the construction of the Ohorongo cement factory, the Caprivi interconnector link, and Areva Trekkopje's desalination plant and mine; and expansions at the country's major uranium mines (Bank of Namibia, 2010a, p. 104-106; 2010b, p. 8-13). In the longer run, uranium mining will likely surpass diamond mining as the major contributor to Government revenues and to the gross domestic product if plans to develop new uranium deposits come to fruition.

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TABLE 1  
NAMIBIA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity <sup>2</sup>	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 <sup>e</sup>
METALS					
Arsenic, white, 99% arsenic trioxide	89	-- <sup>e</sup>	813	763	800
Copper:					
Mine output, concentrate (26%-30% Cu):					
Gross weight	40,542	25,000 <sup>e</sup>	32,450	37,956	--
Cu content	10,157	6,262	6,580	7,471	--
Metal, blister:					
From domestic concentrates <sup>e</sup>	10,000 <sup>e</sup>	6,200	8,000	--	--
From imported toll concentrates <sup>e</sup>	13,600 <sup>e</sup>	15,700	12,600	16,271 <sup>r</sup>	21,543 <sup>3</sup>
Total	23,551	21,918	20,600 <sup>e</sup>	16,271	21,543 <sup>3</sup>
Gold, Au content of mine output kilograms	2,703	2,790	2,496	2,126	2,022 <sup>3</sup>
Lead, mine output, concentrate:					
Gross weight	24,689	21,402	21,875	27,656	39,000
Pb content of Pb and Pb-Zn concentrates	14,320	11,830	10,543	14,062	20,000 <sup>3</sup>
Manganese, mine output, concentrate (35% Mn):					
Gross weight	7,320	18,918	47,620	28,387	28,000
Mn content <sup>e</sup>	2,600 <sup>e</sup>	6,600 <sup>e</sup>	16,700 <sup>e</sup>	9,900 <sup>e</sup>	10,000
Silver, mine output, Ag content of concentrates kilograms	30,003	31,307	30,000 <sup>e</sup>	30,000 <sup>e</sup>	30,000
Zinc:					
Gross weight, mine output, concentrate (49%-56% Zn)	126,123	105,134 <sup>r</sup>	94,323	92,190	94,000 <sup>3</sup>
Zn content of Zn and Pb-Zn concentrates <sup>4</sup>	69,368	55,455	46,335	38,319	47,000
Metal, refined, primary	132,818	129,897	150,080	145,396	150,400 <sup>3</sup>
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS					
Diamond thousand carats	1,902	2,356	2,266	2,435	1,192 <sup>3</sup>
Fluorspar, acid grade (97% CaF <sub>2</sub> ) <sup>5</sup>	114,886	132,249	118,766	118,263	80,857 <sup>3</sup>
Salt	573,248	603,501	810,942	732,000	781,800 <sup>3</sup>
Semiprecious stones: <sup>e</sup>					
Agate	150	150	141 <sup>3</sup>	141 <sup>3</sup>	140
Amethyst kilograms	40,000	40,000	7,020 <sup>3</sup>	7,000 <sup>e</sup>	7,000
Blue chalcedony do.	50	50	5 <sup>3</sup>	5 <sup>3</sup>	5
Garnet do.	100	100	88 <sup>3</sup>	-- <sup>3</sup>	--
Picture stone	200	200	200	200	200
Pietersite	--	--	17 <sup>3</sup>	23 <sup>3</sup>	20
Rose quartz	--	--	22,878 <sup>3</sup>	19,975 <sup>3</sup>	20,000
Sodalite	--	--	104 <sup>3</sup>	1,450 <sup>3</sup>	1,500
Tourmaline kilograms	100	100	100	100	100
Stone:					
Dolomite	14,000 <sup>e</sup>	14,000 <sup>e</sup>	27,150	27,000 <sup>e</sup>	27,000
Granite	21,380	21,000 <sup>e</sup>	36,390	22,664	23,000
Marble	5,112	5,100 <sup>e</sup>	4,538	9,438	9,000
Sodalite	100	100 <sup>e</sup>	--	--	--
Sulfur, pyrite concentrate:					
Gross weight (49%-51% S) <sup>e</sup>	1,035 <sup>3</sup>	--	8,500	8,500	8,500
S content	520	-- <sup>e</sup>	4,300 <sup>e</sup>	4,000 <sup>e</sup>	4,000
Wollastonite	253	55	55 <sup>e</sup>	50 <sup>e</sup>	50
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS					
Uranium, U <sub>3</sub> O <sub>8</sub> content	3,711	3,617	3,680	4,838 <sup>r,3</sup>	5,375

<sup>e</sup>Estimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown. <sup>r</sup>Revised. do. Ditto. NA Not available. -- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>Table includes data available through August 27, 2010.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to the commodities listed, Namibia produced blister copper, which contained gold and silver coproducts, and lead dusts, but available information is inadequate to estimate output.

<sup>3</sup>Reported figure.

<sup>4</sup>Ore from the Skorpion Mine is leached onsite and the zinc is recovered by solvent extraction-electrowinning; the zinc ore mined at Skorpion is therefore not included in the zinc concentrate data.

<sup>5</sup>Fluorspar production shown in wet metric tons; approximately 8% moisture content.



TABLE 2  
NAMIBIA: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2009

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies and major equity owners		Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
<b>Copper:</b>				
Copper concentrates	Weatherly Mining Namibia Ltd. (Weatherly International plc, 100%)		Central operations, includes the Otjihase Mine and concentrator, about 30 kilometers north of Windhoek; and the Matchless Mine, 80 kilometers southwest of the Otjihase Mine	1,000,000 <sup>1</sup>
Do.	do.		Northern operations, includes the Tschudi and the Tsumeb West Mines, and the Tsumeb concentrator	500,000 <sup>1</sup>
Do.	do.		Kombat operations, includes Kombat Mine and concentrator, 440 kilometers north of Windhoek	400,000 <sup>1</sup>
Metal, blister copper	Namibia Custom Smelters (Pty.) Ltd. (Weatherly International plc, 100%)		Smelter at Tsumeb	30,000
Diamond	carats	Namdeb Diamond Corporation (Pty.) Ltd. (Government, 50%, and De Beers Société Anonyme, 50%)	Mining Area 1, from Orange River to 145 kilometers north of Oranjemund; includes Pocket Beaches	1,000,000
Do.	do.	do.	Northern Areas and Elizabeth Bay Mines, 24 kilometers south of Luderitz	180,000
Do.	do.	do.	Orange River Mines, from mouth of Orange River east to Sendelingsdrif; includes the Auchas and the Daberas Mines	120,000
Do.	do.	do.	Beach and marine contractors	68,000
Do.	do.	De Beers Marine Namibia [De Beers Société Anonyme, 70%, and Namdeb Diamond Corporation (Pty.) Ltd., 30%]	Atlanta 1 license area, offshore Sperrgebiet	1,050,000
Do.	do.	Sakawe Mining Corp. (LL Mining Corp. BV)	Offshore mining licenses, near Luderitz Bay	260,000
Do.	do.	Joint venture of Diamond Fields (Pty.) Ltd. (Diamond Fields International Ltd., 100%) and Bonaparte Diamond Mines NL	Mining License 111, offshore Luderitz	NA
Do.	do.	Diaz Exploration (Pty.) Ltd.	Offshore operation	15,000
Fluorspar, acid grade	Okorusu Fluorspar (Pty.) Ltd. (Solvay Fluor GmbH, 100%)		Mine and plant at Okorusu	120,000
<b>Gold:</b>				
Ore	AngloGold Ashanti Namibia (Pty.) Ltd.		Navachab Mine, 170 kilometers northwest of Windhoek	1,440,000
Metal	kilograms	Namibia Custom Smelters (Pty.) Ltd. (Weatherly International plc, 100%)	Coproduct contained in blister copper produced at the copper smelter at Tsumeb	400
Lead, Pb content of concentrate	Rosh Pinah Zinc Corporation (Pty.) Ltd. [Exxaro Resources Ltd., 93.9%, and PE Minerals (Namibia) (Pty.) Ltd., 6.1%]		Rosh Pinah Mine, near Rosh Pinah	20,000
Pyrite, concentrate	Weatherly Mining Namibia Ltd. (Weatherly International plc, 100%)		Otjihase Mine and concentrator, near Tsumeb	32,000
Salt	Salt & Chemicals (Pty.) Ltd. [Walvis Bay Salt Holdings (Pty.) Ltd., 100%]		Salt pan at Walvis Bay	670,000
Do.	Walvis Bay Salt Refiners (Pty.) Ltd. [Walvis Bay Salt Holdings (Pty.) Ltd., 100%]		Salt refinery at Walvis Bay	650,000
Do.	Salt Company (Pty.) Ltd.		Swakopmund	120,000
Do.	Cape Cross Salt (Pty.) Ltd.		North of Henties Bay	40,000
<b>Silver:</b>				
Concentrate, Ag content	Rosh Pinah Zinc Corp. (Pty.) Ltd. [Kumba Resources Ltd., 89.5%, and PE Minerals (Namibia) (Pty.) Ltd., 6.1%]		Rosh Pinah Mine, near Rosh Pinah	25
Metal	Namibia Custom Smelters (Pty.) Ltd. (Weatherly International plc, 100%)		Coproduct contained in blister copper produced at the copper smelter at Tsumeb	23

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 2—Continued  
 NAMIBIA: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2009

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Uranium, uranium oxide	Rössing Uranium Ltd. (Rio Tinto Group, 69%; Government of Iran, 15%; Industrial Development Corp. of South Africa Ltd., 10%; Government of Namibia, 3%; other minority shareholders, 3%)	Rössing Mine, 65 kilometers northeast of Swakopmund	4,800
Do.	Langer Heinrich Uranium (Pty.) Ltd. (Paladin Energy Ltd., 100%)	Langer Heinrich Mine, 80 kilometers east of Walvis Bay	1,180
Wollastonite	Namibia Mineral Development Co. (Pty.) Ltd.	Usakos Mine	800
<b>Zinc:</b>			
<b>Mine:</b>			
Concentrate, Zn content	Rosh Pinah Zinc Corporation (Pty.) Ltd. [Exxaro Resources Ltd., 45.79%; Jaguar Investments, 38.98%; PE Minerals (Namibia) (Pty.) Ltd., 8%; Rosh Pinah Mine Holdings, 4.26; Rosh Pinah Employee Empowerment Participation Scheme Trust, 2.98%]	Rosh Pinah Mine, near Rosh Pinah	110,000
Ore	Skorpion Mining Co. (Pty.) Ltd. (Anglo American plc, 100%)	Skorpion Mine, 25 kilometers north of Rosh Pinah	1,500,000
Metal	Namzinc (Pty.) Ltd. (Anglo American plc, 100%)	Skorpion solvent extraction facilities and electrowinning refinery, 25 kilometers north of Rosh Pinah	150,000

Do., do. Ditto. NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Closed in 2009.