



2014 Minerals Yearbook

BENIN

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF BENIN

By John R. Matzko

Mining did not play a significant role in Benin's economy. Benin produced mostly industrial minerals, which included cement, clay, limestone, marble, and sand and gravel. Cassiterite, colored gemstones (aquamarine and tourmaline), gold, and tantalum ore have been produced in small quantities by artisanal miners (Thomas, 2013; U.S. Department of State, 2015, p. 5; van Wyngaardt, 2015).

In 2014, Benin's real gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 6.5% compared with an increase of 5.9% in 2013. The nominal GDP was \$8.9 billion¹ in 2014. The extraction industries (mineral mining and oil production) were less than 1% of the GDP. The total value of Benin's exports to the United States in 2014 was \$5.4 million, which was an increase of 73% compared with that of 2013. The total value of imports from the United States was \$781 million, which was an increase of 29% compared with that of 2013. In 2014, Benin's imports from the United States included petroleum products (\$2.7 million), iron and steel products (\$2.6 million), and finished metal shapes (\$420,000) (Banque Centrale des Etats de L'Afrique de L'Ouest, 2014, p. 3, 23; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a, b; U.S. Department of State, 2015, p. 5).

Production

Although metals and various industrial minerals were produced in Benin in 2014, cement was the only commodity for which production data were available. Cement production in 2014 was approximately 1.40 million metric tons (Mt), which was essentially unchanged from the 1.42 Mt produced in 2013. Data on mineral production are in table 1. Table 2 is a list of the major mineral industry facilities in the country.

Structure of the Mineral Industry

The Government of Benin owns all mineral deposits in the country and grants exclusive rights for exploration, development, and mining. The Government had identified the energy, infrastructure, and mining sectors, among others, as its development priorities and had been revising its mining laws to attract foreign investment. Towards this end, the Mining Code was under review to simplify procedures for awarding mining permits, to increase the duration of mining permits, and to establish special categories for artisanal and semi-industrial mining (Afristone, 2012; Thomas, 2013).

¹Where necessary, values have been converted from Communauté Financière Africaine francs (XOF) to U.S. dollars (US\$) at an average rate of XOF494.47=US\$1.00 for 2014.

Commodity Review

Metals

Iron Ore.—Minergy Resources Ltd. of India, through its subsidiary Minergy Metals BVI Ltd., was exploring the Loumbou-Loumbou and the Madekali iron ore deposits in the northern part of the country. The deposits had estimated reserves of more than 500 Mt of ore grading 50% iron (Sékodo, 2013; Thomas, 2013).

Industrial Minerals

Cement.—Cement was produced at four plants—Cimbenin S.A. (HeidelbergCement AG, 52.51%); Nouvelle Cimenterie du Bénin (NOCIBE) (Les Ciments du Sahel, 100%); Onigbolo Cement Co. Ltd. (Dangote Industries Ltd., 43%, and Société des Ciments du Benin, 51%); and Société des Ciments du Benin (Government and LaFarge Group, 50% each). Combined, the plants had an annual capacity of 3.1 Mt (table 2).

The first batch of cement at NOCIBE, a greenfield plant located at Adja-Ouere about 110 kilometers north of Cotonou, reportedly was produced in November 2013. The crusher, cement mills, and packing facilities were commissioned in November 2013 and the rotary kiln was commissioned in July 2014. A second line was in the planning stage. Upon completion, the facility would be the largest cement plant in Benin, with a capacity of 1.5 million metric tons per year, and would double the country's capacity (Agence Française de Développement, 2010; Cemnet, 2013; Sezen, Ozer, and Saalbach, 2015, p. 42).

Mineral Fuels

Petroleum.—In 2014, Hunt Oil Co. of Texas continued offshore oil exploration in Benin and Elephant Oil Ltd. of the United Kingdom signed a contract to explore for oil in Benin's onshore Block B. In 2004, SAPETRO took 100% interest and operatorship of Block 1, which contains Benin's only oilfield, the Seme offshore field, under a production-sharing contract with the Government of Benin. The Seme field was abandoned in 1998 as uneconomic. SAPETRO expected to redevelop the field with new chemical-injection technology and oil-recovery systems, which would enable peak production of 6,000 barrels per day and add an estimated 16 years of production. The first oil production was expected by late 2015 (Petroleum Africa, 2013; Buchanan, 2014; Direction Generale du Tresor, 2014; Masin, 2014; Ejekwu, 2015; U.S. Department of State, 2015, p. 3).

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TABLE 1
BENIN: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity ²	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Cement, hydraulic	1,305	1,460	1,390	1,422	1,396

¹Table includes data available through October 22, 2015.

²In addition to the commodity listed, cassiterite, clay, gemstones, gold, limestone, marble, sand and gravel, and tantalum were produced, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

TABLE 2
BENIN: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2014

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Cement	Cimbenin S.A. (HeidelbergCement AG, 52.51%, through its subsidiary Scancem International SA)	Cotonou plant	300
Do.	Onigbolo Cement Co. Ltd. (Dangote Industries Ltd., 43%, and Société des Ciments du Benin, 51%)	Onigbolo plant	600
Do.	Société des Ciments du Benin (Government, 50%, and LaFarge Group, 50%)	do.	700
Do.	Nouvelle Cimenterie du Bénin (NOCIBE) (Les Ciments du Sahel S.A., 100%)	Adja-Ouere, 110 kilometers north of Cotonou	1,500

Do., do. Ditto.