



2006 Minerals Yearbook

BURUNDI

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF BURUNDI

By Thomas R. Yager

In 2006, Burundi's production of niobium (columbium) and tantalum ore and concentrate, gold, limestone, peat, sand and gravel, tin ore, and tungsten ore was not significant in global terms. Burundi was not a globally significant consumer of minerals. Mining and energy accounted for 1% of Burundi's gross domestic product in 2005 (the latest year for which data were available) (International Monetary Fund, 2006, p. 80).

Production

Gold accounted for more than 97% of the reported value of mineral production. In 2006, gold production increased by 10% compared with that of 2005. The output of tin and tungsten increased sharply. In 2006, the production of tantalum decreased by 69%, and niobium (columbium), by 62%. Peat production was estimated to have continued to decline because of aging equipment (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs, 2006; Damien Riragonya, Director General of Mines and Geology, Burundi Ministry of Energy and Mines, September 9, 2007).

Structure of the Mineral Industry

Small privately owned companies produced most of Burundi's gold, niobium (columbium), and tantalum. Artisanal miners produced tin and tungsten. The state-owned Office National de la Tourbe was the country's only producer of peat.

Commodity Review

Metals

Cobalt, Copper, and Nickel.—In April 2007, Argosy Minerals Inc. of Australia planned to discuss the continuation of its mining convention for the Musongati nickel deposit with the Government. The company expected to engage in metallurgical test work, a prefeasibility study, and a feasibility study at Musongati if negotiations were successful. Until April 2005, political instability prevented Argosy from conducting work at Musongati. Resources at Musongati were nearly 185 million metric tons (Mt) that graded 1.31% nickel, 0.17% copper, and

0.08% cobalt. The Nyabikere deposit had 46 Mt of resources that graded 1.45% nickel, and the Waga deposit, 35 Mt that graded 1.38% nickel (Songore, 1999; Argosy Minerals Inc., 2007, p. 2, 5).

Gold.—In 2006, International Gold Exploration AB (IGE) of Sweden acquired an exploration license at a gold deposit in the Mabayi-Butara area in northwestern Burundi. IGE planned to complete a prefeasibility study on gold mining within 2 years. The Government had carried out exploration at the gold deposits in the Mabayi-Butara area since 1998 (International Gold Exploration AB, 2007, p. 15).

Niobium (Columbium) and Tantalum.—The value of niobium (columbium) and tantalum exports amounted to less than 1% of Burundi's total exports in 2006 compared with about 3% in 2002. From 2002 to 2006, tantalum production declined by 80% (Banque de la République du Burundi, 2007).

Vanadium.—In 2006, IGE acquired an exploration license for the Mukanda vanadium deposit. IGE planned to start drilling and test mining, and to conduct a prefeasibility study in early 2007; the company planned to reach a decision about investment in a new mine by early 2009. Resources at Mukanda amounted to 9.7 Mt that graded 0.63% vanadium (Burundi Ministry of Energy and Mines, 1991, p. 25; International Gold Exploration AB, 2007, p. 15).

References Cited

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TABLE 1
BURUNDI: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Gold, mine output, Au content	kilograms	483	2,855	3,229	3,905	4,313
Niobium (columbium) and tantalum, ore and concentrate:						
Gross weight	do.	72,441	24,382	23,356	42,592	16,177
Nb content	do.	NA	4,300	4,598	8,384	3,200
Ta content	do.	14,500	5,769	5,038	9,188	2,868
Peat		6,977	4,580	4,643	4,871 ^r	4,000 ^e
Tin, mine output, Sn content		--	5	9	4	46
Tungsten, mine output, W content		--	13	8	94	238

^eEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. NA Not available. ^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Includes data available through September 18, 2007.

TABLE 2
BURUNDI: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2006

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Cement	Burundi Cement Plant ¹	Bujumbura	20,000.
Gold	Machanga Ltd.	NA	NA.
Do.	Burundi Mining Corp.	Masaka	18,300 ore processing
Do.	kilograms do.	do.	33 gold.
Niobium (columbium) and tantalum	Asyst Mines, Comptoirs Miniers d'Exploitations du Burundi S.A., Hamza, and Habonimana	Kayanza and Kirundo Provinces	NA.
Peat	Office Nationale de la Tourbe	Highland Bogs	20,000.
Tin	Artisanal miners	Murehe	NA.
Tungsten	do.	do.	NA.

NA Not available.

¹Has not operated since 1996.

TABLE 3
BURUNDI: MINERAL RESOURCES IN 2006¹

Commodity	Deposit	Tonnage	Grade	Mineral content
Cobalt, copper, and nickel	Musongati	185 Mt	1.31% Ni; 0.08% Co; 0.17% Cu	2.4 Mt Ni; 150,000 t Co; 310,000 t Cu.
Do.	Nyabikere	46 Mt	1.45% Ni; 0.031% Co; 0.012% Cu	670,000 t Ni; 14,000 t Co; 5,500 t Cu.
Do.	Waga	35 Mt	1.38% Ni; 0.048% Co; 0.028% Cu	480,000 t Ni; 17,000 t Co; 9,800 t Cu.
Gold	Masaka	8 Mt	1.8 g/t	14 t.
Do.	Other deposits in Muyinga Province	NA	NA	45 t
Kaolin	Vyerwa	16 Mt	NA	NA.
Do.	Matongo	2.7 Mt	NA	NA.
Limestone	do.	1 Mt	NA	NA.
Peat	Akanyuru Valley	NA	NA	36 Mt.
Vanadium	Mukanda	9.7 Mt	0.63% V	61,000 t V.

NA Not available.

¹Abbreviations used in this table for commodities include the following: Co--cobalt; Cu--copper; Ni--nickel; and V--vanadium. Abbreviations used in this table for units of measurement include the following: Mt--million metric tons; t--metric tons; and g/t--grams per metric ton.

Sources: Burundi Ministry of Energy and Mines, 1991; Burundi mineral resources—An investment brochure: Bujumbura, Burundi, Burundi Ministry of Mines and Energy, 41 p.

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