

GUINEA, LIBERIA, AND SIERRA LEONE

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GUINEA

In recent years, Guinea, which is a small country in western Africa, has been known to produce alumina, bauxite, diamond, and gold, most of which has been designated for export. The country has also produced cement and salt.

In 2002, Guinea's mine production of bauxite rose to nearly 1.75 million metric tons (Mt) from 1.73 Mt in 2001. Shipments of metallurgical grade bauxite increased to nearly 1.41 Mt in 2002 from 1.38 Mt in 2001. In 2002, the value of metallurgical grade bauxite shipments amounted to \$282.2 million. The production of alumina was 701,936 metric tons in 2002 (Alkaly Yamoussa Bangoura, Deputy Director, Guinea Ministry of Mines, written commun., 2003).

Guinea's production of gold increased to 16,666 kilograms (kg) in 2002 from 16,264 kg in 2001. The value of national gold production amounted to \$162.1 million in 2002. Societe Ashanti Guinee was Guinea's largest gold producer. In 2002, gold production at the Siguiri Mine fell to 8,376 kg from 8,809 kg in 2001. Ashanti planned further exploration at Siguiri in 2003. The company also planned to spend \$32 million on an expansion of the Siguiri Mine that would be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2004 (African Mining Bulletin, 2002b; Africa Mining Intelligence, 2003; Ashanti Goldfields Co. Ltd., 2003, p. 25; Alkaly Yamoussa Bangoura, Deputy Director, Guinea Ministry of Mines, written commun., 2003).

Société Minière de Dinguiraye mined gold at Lero; in 2002, production rose by 5% to 3,367 kg. The company planned to spend \$9 million on exploration at Lero by July 2004 and to conduct a feasibility study on a new processing plant with a capacity of 8 million metric tons per year of ore. The plant would yield nearly 11,000 kilograms per year (kg/yr) of gold (Mining Journal, 2002).

In April 2002, Semafo Inc. started gold production at the Kiniero Mine (formerly known as the Jean Gobebe Mine); the company planned to produce nearly 1,900 kg/yr. Australian United Gold Exploration Ltd. and Mincor Resources NL resumed exploration at the Bankole gold project (Africa Mining Intelligence, 2002; Wright and Sylla, 2002).

National diamond production rose to 491,000 carats in 2002 from 364,000 carats in 2001. The value of Guinea's diamond production amounted to \$26.7 million in 2002. In fiscal year 2001-02, Trivalence Mining Corp. produced 36,676 carats from the Aredor Mine, which was an increase from 35,126 carats in fiscal year 2000-01. In 2002, Searchgold Resources Inc. announced plans to start bulk mining at the Mandala River diamond project (African Mining Bulletin, 2002a; Trivalence Mining Corporation, 2002; Alkaly Yamoussa Bangoura, Deputy Director, Guinea Ministry of Mines, written commun., 2003).

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LIBERIA

Liberia was a producer of cement, diamond, and gold. In 2001, the United Nations imposed sanctions on Liberian diamond exports because of the Government's support for the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone. In 2002, the Washington Post reported that the al-Qaeda terror network cornered the diamond trading market in Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2001. Senior al-Qaeda operatives reportedly purchased \$20 million of diamond from Liberia and Sierra Leone; the President of Liberia allegedly received a \$1 million payment to harbor the operatives. The Government of Liberia has denied the accusations (Farah, 2002; Mining Journal, 2003).

The Western Region, which accounted for more than 75% of Liberia's diamond and gold production, was inaccessible because of political and social instability in 2002. Officially reported gold exports amounted to 40 kg at a value of \$317,000. This figure was probably a small fraction of total production; gold was suspected to be mined behind rebel lines (Mining Journal, 2003).

Mano River Resources explored for gold at King George Larjor and Weaju. The company also signed a joint-venture agreement to explore for diamond in the Weasua area. American-Liberia United Minerals explored for gold at the Kukoya gold field. Freedom Gold carried out drilling at its gold prospect at Bukon Gedeh (Mining Journal, 2003).

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SIERRA LEONE

In 2002, national diamond production rose to nearly 352,000 carats from about 223,000 carats in 2001. Gem-quality diamond production amounted to about 147,000 carats at a value of \$37.9 million, and industrial diamond, 205,000 carats at a value of \$4 million. Exports of diamond increased to \$41.7 million in 2002 from \$26 million in 2001 and \$10.7 million in 2000 (Mining Journal, 2003; Femi I. Kamara, Sierra Leone Ministry of Mineral Resources, written commun., July 4, 2003).

Branch Energy Ltd. (a subsidiary of Diamond Works Ltd.) resumed work on the Koidu kimberlite project in May 2002. The company planned to start diamond production at Koidu in 2003. Mano River Resources explored for diamond at the Nimini, the Njaiama Nimikoro, and the Yengema licenses in early 2002 and planned further exploration in 2003. Africa Diamond Holdings Ltd., which held 12 exclusive prospecting licenses in Sierra Leone, planned to explore for diamond in the Sewa River area (Wright, 2002; Mining Journal, 2003).

The development of the Koidu and the Tongo kimberlites could increase the value of Sierra Leone's diamond exports to as much as \$180 million per year by 2006. In the fifth year of production, the combined output from Koidu and Tongo could

be about 800,000 carats at a value of \$111 million. The issue of corruption was a substantial impediment to these plans (Mining Journal, 2002).

Sierra Leone produced small amounts of gold. In May 2002, Golden Prospect Ltd. and Mano River Resources signed a joint-venture agreement to explore their licenses at Lake Sonfon. Results of a regional geochemistry and trench sampling program were expected by March 2003 (Mining Journal, 2003).

Sierra Rutile Ltd. (SRL) planned to start rehabilitation at its mine near the Imperri Hills in April 2003. The production of ilmenite and rutile was expected to resume in January 2004; the mine would have a life of more than 25 years (Mining Journal, 2003). SRL also held an exploration license for ilmenite, rutile, and zircon at Rotifunk.

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TABLE 1
GUINEA, LIBERIA, AND SIERRA LEONE: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country and commodity	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	
GUINEA ²						
Alumina:						
Production:						
Hydrate ^e	490	500	550	710	702 ³	
Calcined	500	568	541	674 ^r	670	
Shipments, calcined	511	480	480 ^e	500 ^e	500 ^e	
Bauxite:						
Mine production:						
Wet basis ⁴	17,300	17,320	17,950	17,267 ^r	17,480	
Dry basis ⁵	15,570	15,590	15,700	15,100 ^e	15,300 ^e	
Calcined	100 ^e	100 ^e	100 ^e	75 ^r	--	
Shipments (dry basis):						
Metallurgical	14,000 ^e	14,000 ^e	14,000 ^e	13,850 ^r	14,087	
Calcined	100 ^e	100 ^e	100 ^e	75 ^r	--	
Cement	277	297	300	315 ^r	360	
Diamond ^{6,7}	thousand carats	392	383	369	364 ^r	491
Gold ⁷	kilograms	7,835	12,001	13,104	16,264 ^r	16,666
Salt ^e		NA	15	15	15	15
LIBERIA ^{e,8}						
Cement, hydraulic ⁹	10	15	120 ^{r,3}	130 ^{r,3}	140	
Diamond	carats	300,000	200,000	170,000	170,000	80,000
Gold	kilograms	800	1,000	1,000	1,000	500
SIERRA LEONE						
Cement ¹⁰		100 ^e	100 ^e	110 ^r	110 ^r	120 ^e
Diamond ¹¹	carats	8,500 ^{r,12}	9,300 ^{r,12}	77,372 ^r	222,520 ^r	351,860
Gold ^e	kilograms	15	30	30	30	30
Gypsum ^e		4	4	4	4	4
Salt ^e		1	1	1	1	1

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

¹Table includes data available through November 6, 2003.

²In addition to the commodities listed, Guinea produced modest quantities of crude construction materials (clays, sand and gravel, and stone); but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.

³Reported figure.

⁴Metallurgical plus calcinable ore estimated to be 13% water.

⁵Data are for wet-basis ore estimated to be 13% water reduced to dry basis estimated to be 3% water.

⁶Production is approximately 70% to 80% gem quality.

⁷Figures include artisanal production.

⁸In addition to the commodities listed, Liberia produced a variety of industrial minerals and construction materials (clays, gypsum, sand and gravel, and stone); but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.

⁹Cement production from the Liberian Cement Corporation had been reported as zero in 1997 because of the civil war. The Scancem AB 1997 annual report indicates the cement plant was open during most of the civil war.

¹⁰Production from imported cement clinker.

¹¹Does not include smuggled artisanal production; national diamond production was estimated to be 250,000 carats in 1998 and 600,000 carats per year from 1999 to 2001.

¹²Exports.

TABLE 2
GUINEA, LIBERIA, AND SIERRA LEONE: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRIES IN 2002

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country and commodity		Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
GUINEA				
Alumina		Alumina Co. of Guinea (Manro Haydan, 75%; Government, 15%; Aluminum Company of America Inc., 10%)	Friguia plant	700,000.
Bauxite		Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinee (Government, 49%; Alcan Inc., 24%; Aluminum Company of America Inc., 21.9%; Pechiney Group, 5.1%)	Bidikou, Sangaredi, and Sildara	14,000,000.
Do.		Société de Bauxite de Kindia (Government, 100%)	Kindia	2,500,000.
Do.		Alumina Co. of Guinea	Friguia mine	2,300,000.
Cement		Ciments de Guinee (Holcim Ltd., 51%; Government, 44%)	Onigbolo plant	360,000 mill.
Diamond	carats	Trivalence Mining Corp. of Canada	Aredor Mine	40,000.
Gold	kilograms	Société Ashanti de Guinee (Ashanti Goldfields Co. Ltd., 85%; Government, 15%)	Siguiro Mine	9,000,000 ore; 9,300 gold.
Do.	do.	Société Minière de Dinguiraye (Kenor ASA of Norway, 85%; Government, 15%)	Lero-Karta Mine	3,400.
Do.	do.	Semafo Inc. of Canada	Kiniero Mine	1,900.
LIBERIA				
Cement		Liberia Cement Corp. (Scancem International of Norway, 64%)	Monrovia plant	220,000 mill.
SIERRA LEONE				
Bauxite ¹		Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Co.	Mokanji Mine	1,500,000.
Cement		Sierra Leone Cement Corp. Ltd. (Scancem International, 50%)	Freetown plant	110,000 mill.
Petroleum products	42-gallon barrels	Sierra Leone Petroleum Refining Co. Ltd.	Freetown	365,000.
Titanium: ¹				
Ilmenite		Sierra Rutile Ltd (MIL Investments SARL, 75%; U.S. Titanium, LLC, 25%)	Imperri Hills	65,000 concentrate; 39,000 TiO ₂ content.
Rutile		do.	do.	200,000 concentrate; 192,000 TiO ₂ content.

¹Not operating in 2002.