

CAMEROON

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In 1998 (the last year for which data are available), the gross domestic product for this agrarian nation of about 14.5 million people was estimated to be \$8.7 billion¹ (World Bank, 2000, Cameroon Country Tables, accessed May 4, 2000, via URL <http://www.worldbank.org/countrydata/countrydata/html>). Crude oil production was the most significant segment of the mineral industry of Cameroon and accounted for more than 40% of the country's foreign exchange earnings. The mineral policy of Cameroon was based on the Mining Code, Law 64-LF-3 of April 6, 1964, and Decree 64-DF-163 of May 26, 1964. In 1999, the overhaul of the mining code and the revision of the petroleum code began (Africa Energy & Mining, 1999a, b). The Ministère des Mines, de l'Eau et de l'Energie was responsible for the administration of the mining sector.

Foreign companies were usually involved in joint ventures with Cameroonian partners. Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures was the state-owned company involved in hydrocarbon production, and the Société Nationale de Raffinage was the state-owned company that managed the crude oil refinery. The aluminum smelter at Edéa was managed by Compagnie Camérounaise de l'Aluminium (Alucam), which was a joint venture of Pechiney of France (58%) and the Government (42%). Alucam processed alumina imported from Guinea. Gold was recovered from small-scale artisanal operations.

In 1999, crude oil production declined to an estimated 100,000 barrels per day (bbl/d). The main petroleum operators in Cameroon were Elf Serepca, which was a subsidiary of the Elf Aquitaine Group of France; Pecten Cameroon Co., which was a subsidiary of Shell Oil Co. of the United States; and Perenco plc of the United Kingdom. In 1999, a number of oil companies were preparing to increase exploration efforts.

Funding negotiations for the proposed 225,000-bbl/d pipeline from Chad's Doba Basin to a loading terminal at Kribi, Cameroon, were postponed in November when Elf and the

Royal Dutch/Shell Group proposed reductions in their equity interest in the pipeline consortium (Africa Energy & Mining, 1999c).

Cameroon had installed electrical-power-generating capacity of 729 megawatts (MW), which was provided by hydroelectric stations, but demand exceeded supply. The development of the offshore Sanaga South gasfields by Ocelot International Ltd. of the United Kingdom was delayed while the Government divested itself of the state electricity company (Ocelot International Ltd., 1999). Ocelot had proposed to power a 75- to 150-MW thermal-electricity-generating station with the natural gas from the Sanaga South Fields.

The development of a diversified mineral industry in Cameroon was adversely affected by the diminished availability of project financing related to the deterioration of the international economic situation during 1998. With the new mineral legislation under consideration, the recovery of international oil prices in March 1999, and increased oil exploration, Cameroon was poised to expand the mineral industry's contribution to the national economy.

References Cited

- Africa Energy & Mining, 1999a, Cameroon—New mining code: Africa Energy & Mining, no. 248, March 17, p. 8.
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———1999c, Chad—Cameroon—Doba victim of globalization: Africa Energy & Mining, no. 264, November 24, p. 2.
Ocelot International Ltd., 1999, Interim report—Third quarter 1999: St. Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands, United Kingdom, Ocelot International Ltd., 4 p.

Major Source of Information

Ministère des Mines, de l'Eau et de l'Energie
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¹Where necessary, values have been converted from Communauté Financière Africaine Francs (CFAf) to U.S. dollars at the average rate of CFAf615=US\$1.00.

TABLE 1
CAMEROON: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity 2/		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Aluminum metal, primary		79,300 3/	82,000	90,000	60,000 r/	85,000
Cement, hydraulic		552,000 r/	600,000 r/	620,000 r/	450,000 r/	450,000
Gold, mine output, Au content	kilograms	800 3/	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Petroleum:						
Crude	thousand 42-gallon barrels	39,400 3/	33,945 3/	43,000	45,000	37,000
Refinery products	do.	9,000	9,200	9,200	10,000	10,000
Pozzolana		90,000	80,000	100,000	105,000	90,000
Sand, silica		12,000	12,000	12,000	12,500	12,000
Stone:						
Limestone		57,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Marble	thousand cubic meters	550	560	560	580	580
Tin, ore and concentrate:						
Gross weight	kilograms	2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Sn content	do.	1,500	750	750	750	750

r/ Revised.

1/ Includes data available through May 4, 2000.

2/ In addition to the commodities listed, modest quantities of unlisted varieties of crude construction materials (clays, gravel, sand, and stone) presumably are produced, but output is not reported, and available information is inadequate to make estimates of output levels.

3/ Reported figure.