

THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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The Central African Republic is a landlocked agrarian nation with a resident population of about 3.5 million. Agriculture accounted for more than 50% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), which was estimated to be about \$1.2 billion (World Bank, [undated], Macro-economic profile for Central African Republic, accessed May 2, 2000, via URL <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/afr/aftbrief.nsf/>). The mining sector, which was dominated by the production of diamond, accounted for about 4% of the GDP.

Gold was recovered by artisanal miners primarily from the Bandas and the Bogoin-Boali Greenstone Belts that outcrop in the western Central African Republic. In June 1999, Asquith Resources Inc. of Canada formed a joint venture with Axmin Ltd. of the United Kingdom. Axmin's local subsidiary drilled and explored the Roandji gold prospect (Asquith Resources Inc., January 18, 2000, Asquith Resources Inc.—Axmin exercises option—Begins follow-up programs, accessed January 19, 2000, at URL <http://www2.cdn-news.com/scripts/ccn-release.pl?2000/01/18/0118079n.html>).

Central African Mining Co. S.A.R.L. was marketing diamond produced on its eastern Central African Republic concessions (Canada Newswire Portfolio Email, written commun., January 18, 2000). In the N'Zako area, Minedia S.A.R.L., which was a joint venture of Ateba Mines Inc. of Canada and local Central African parties, reportedly held a diamond exploration permit, and VOCAR S.A.R.L., which was a subsidiary of J.A.B. International, Inc., of the United States, (formerly J.A.B. International Trading Co., Inc.), held an exploration permit for diamond and gold (Engineering & Mining Journal, 1999; Ateba

Mines Inc., 1999, 1999 annual report, accessed November 29, 1999, at URL <http://www.ateba.com/ateba99ar.htm>). Artisanal diamond production in the Central African Republic supported a labor force that was estimated to be between 40,000 and 80,000.

Other mineral occurrences reported in the Central African Republic included clay, copper, graphite, ilmenite, iron ore, lignite, limestone, manganese, monazite, rutile, tin, and uranium (Direction Générale des Ressources Minérales, 1995, p. 14-18). The lack of adequate transportation and industrial infrastructure hindered the development of the nation's mineral industry, consequently, little of the country's 400,000-square-kilometer Precambrian terrane has been explored by using modern techniques (Knopf, 1999).

References Cited

- Direction Générale des Ressources Minérales, 1995, The mineral sector of the Central African Republic—An introduction: Bangui, Central African Republic, Ministère des Ressources Énergétiques et Minérales, 38 p.
- Engineering & Mining Journal, 1999, Central African Republic: Engineering & Mining Journal, v. 200, no. 6, June, p. 22.
- Knopf, David, 1999, Gold targets in Cameroon, Chad and the CAR: Mining Journal, v. 332, no. 8521, March 5, p. 160-161.

Major Source of Information

Ministère des Ressources Énergétiques et Minérales
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TABLE 1
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

(Carats unless otherwise specified)

Commodity 2/	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Diamond	530,000	470,000	500,000	530,000	550,000
Gold	97 3/	90	90	100	100

1/ Includes data available through May 2, 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.