

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

SWAZILAND

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Mining was a small but important factor in Swaziland's economy and accounted for about \$17 million, which was less than 2% of the kingdom's estimated \$1.2 billion¹ gross domestic product (Central Bank of Swaziland, Annual report 1998-99, accessed February 27, 2001, at URL http://www.centralbank.sz/eport99/ar99_4.html; World Bank, September 12, 2000, Swaziland at a glance, accessed February 27, 2001, via URL <http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html>). Mining employed fewer than 1,000 workers in Swaziland; an additional 1,000 Swazis processed timber that was exported to mines in South Africa, and 10,000 to 15,000 Swazis were employed in South African mines. Wage repatriation from miners in South Africa contributed to the Swazi economy; the collapse of international gold prices and subsequent downsizing of the South African gold mining labor force, however, resulted in layoffs of a number of Swazi miners.

Asbestos, coal, and crushed stone remained the country's main mining products (table 1). The Maloma Mine, which was the sole coal producer, switched from open pit to underground operations during 1999 and was producing at a rate of 480,000

¹ Where necessary, values have been converted from Swazi emalangeni (E) to U.S. dollars at the rate of E6.11=US\$1.00 for 1999.

metric tons per year of high-quality anthracite [James Hall, Business Day Online (Johannesburg), May 13, 1999, Coal leads the way as Swazi mines crank up mineral output, accessed June 18, 1999, at URL <http://www.bday.co.za/99/0513/world/w9.htm>].

For more extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Swaziland, see the 1998 Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East.

Major Sources of Information

Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy

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TABLE 1
SWAZILAND: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

Commodity 2/	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
Asbestos, chrysotile fiber	metric tons	28,570	26,014	25,888	27,693	28,000
Coal, anthracite	thousand metric tons	172	129	203	410	400
Diamond	carats	75,000	75,000	--	--	--
Stone, quarry products	thousand cubic meters	114	221	456	453	450

-- Zero.

1/ Reported data from Swaziland Geological Survey and Mines Department. Includes data available through February 2001.

2/ In addition to the commodities listed, modest quantities of crude construction materials (brick clay, sand and gravel) and pyrophyllite are produced, but output is not reported quantitatively, and information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.