



# 2019 Minerals Yearbook

---

**BURUNDI [ADVANCE RELEASE]**

---

# THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF BURUNDI

By Thomas R. Yager

In 2019, Burundi produced about 2% of the world's production of tantalum. The country also mined aggregates, clay, gold, limestone, niobium (columbium), peat, rare earths, tin, and tungsten. Burundi was not a globally significant consumer of minerals (Callaghan, 2021).

The manufacturing sector accounted for 13.2% of the gross domestic product in 2018 (the latest year for which data were available), and the mining and quarrying sector, 0.5%. Mineral fuels accounted for about 18% of Burundi's imports in 2019, and cement, 5%. A 2016 World Bank report estimated that between 14,000 and 27,000 miners were involved in producing gold. In the fourth quarter of 2019, niobium, tantalum, tin, and tungsten mining employed a total of about 8,500 miners in the mine sites covered by the ITRI Tin Supply Chain Initiative (iTSCI) (World Bank Group, 2016, p. vii; Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2020a, p. 28–30; International Tin Research Institute, 2020b; African Development Bank Group, 2021).

In October 2013, the Government passed the Mining Code of Burundi (law No. 1/21 of October 15, 2013), which partially replaced the Mining and Petroleum Act of 1976 (Decree-Law No. 1/138 of July 17, 1976). The exploration for and mining of minerals and mineral fuels other than petroleum and natural gas were governed by the Mining Code of Burundi. At the end of 2019, the natural gas and petroleum subsector still was governed by the Mining and Petroleum Act of 1976. The Ministry of Energy and Mines was responsible for issuing licenses and regulating the mineral sector.

In July 2010, the U.S. Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which contains provisions in Section 1502 concerning the use of minerals to finance military operations in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo [Congo (Kinshasa)]. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued regulations in final form in accordance with the Dodd-Frank Act in August 2012.

In April 2014, the Government of Burundi and the International Tin Research Institute (ITRI) started iTSCI for domestically produced tantalum, tin, and tungsten to meet end users' requirements under the Dodd-Frank Act. In the fourth quarter of 2019, 174 mine sites were covered by the iTSCI in Burundi, of which 127 were active (International Tin Research Institute, 2020b).

Before June 2015, license fees for mining cooperatives were more than \$13,000. Licenses expired at the end of the calendar year in which they were issued. In June 2015, the Government cut the license fees by two-thirds and made licenses valid for 12 months. In September 2016, the Government decentralized mining services, which allowed mining cooperatives to obtain licenses from regional offices instead of traveling to Bujumbura (International Tin Research Institute, 2018).

In November 2019, the Government banned mining cooperatives and companies from selling gold to private buyers.

The Central Bank was established as the sole buyer of gold (Manishatse, 2019).

## Production

The production of peat increased by 55% in 2019; tungsten, by an estimated 30%; and tin, by an estimated 20%. Between 2015 and 2019, tin production increased by an estimated 433%; peat, by 362%; and niobium and tantalum, by an estimated 280% each. In 2019, rare-earth production decreased by an estimated 68%; cement, by an estimated 25%; and niobium and tantalum, by an estimated 12% each. Decreased tantalum production could be attributable to lower prices on world markets, and decreased cement production, to equipment problems. Data on mineral production are in table 1 (Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2017, p. 185; 2019, p. 26; International Tin Research Institute, 2020a; Padilla, 2020).

## Structure of the Mineral Industry

Most mining operations were privately owned. Gold, niobium, tantalum, tin, and tungsten were produced by artisanal and small-scale miners. State-owned Office Nationale de la Tourbe (ONATOUR) was Burundi's only peat producer and privately owned Burundi Cement Co. (BUCECO) was the country's only cement producer. The Government held a 10% share in the rare earths mine. Table 2 is a list of major mineral industry facilities.

## Commodity Review

### Metals

**Niobium (Columbium), Tantalum, Tin, and Tungsten.**—Columbite-tantalite was mined by artisanal miners and CDP, CODEMIBU, Comptoir Minier des Exploitations du Burundi S.A., DUTEZANYIMBERE, GIRUMWETE NTEGA, Tantalum Mining Co. (TAMINCO), and other companies. In 2019, Burundi's columbite-tantalite production was 193,174 kilograms (kg) compared with 219,003 kg in 2018 and 53,093 kg in 2015 (Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2017, p. 185; 2019, p. 26; International Tin Research Institute, 2020a).

Cassiterite was mined by artisanal miners and GATETE DUSHIREHAMWE, PAMBU, TAMINCO, and other companies. In 2019, Burundi's cassiterite production was 382 metric tons (t) compared with 318 t in 2018 and 72 t in 2015 (Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2017, p. 185; 2019, p. 26; International Tin Research Institute, 2020a).

Wolframite was mined by artisanal miners and Coop. Minière de Gashoho, DUKEREBUKE MW'ITERAMBERE, GATETE DUSHIREHAMWE, Société d'Exploitation et de Commercialisation des Minerais du Burundi, and other companies. In 2019, Burundi's wolframite production was 265 t compared with 192 t in 2018 and 19 t in 2015

(Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2017, p. 185; 2019, p. 26; International Tin Research Institute, 2020a).

Increased production of cassiterite, columbite-tantalite, and wolframite between 2015 and 2019 was partially attributable to the reduction in licensing fees, extension of license terms, and decentralization of services for artisanal and small-scale miners. Decreased civil unrest in 2017 also contributed to increased production (International Tin Research Institute, 2018).

### *Industrial Minerals*

**Cement.**—BUCECO's cement production was an estimated 75,000 t in 2019 compared with 100,000 t in 2018. Decreased output was attributable to a breakdown in the company's plant; Burundi experienced cement shortages as a result. The plant resumed operations by December 2019 (table 1; CemWeek, 2019).

**Rare Earths.**—In December 2017, Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd. of the United Kingdom restarted mining at the Gakara rare-earth deposits in Bujumbura Province, which were shut down in 1978 because of inconsistent ore grades in the deposit. By the end of 2017, the company had produced 75 t of concentrates. Rainbow planned to produce 3,900 t of concentrates during a trial mining period that would last for nearly 2 years. Cerium oxide was expected to account for 46% of production; lanthanum oxide, 31%; neodymium oxide, 16%; praseodymium oxide, 5%; and other rare-earth oxides, 2% (Kotze, 2017; Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., 2018).

In 2018, Rainbow exported 1,075 t of rare-earth concentrates. The company also estimated that resources at Gakara were 1.2 million metric tons at a grade of 2.2% total rare-earth oxides, which included high-grade veins with nearly 12,500 t at a grade of 55% total rare-earth oxides. Rainbow produced 338 t of concentrates in 2019; decreased production was attributable to operations shutting down after rains and the unpredictable geologic conditions, such as discontinuity in the high-grade veins (Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., 2019, 2020b).

Rainbow planned to complete a revised resource estimate at Gakara by the end of the first quarter of 2020. Depending on the results of future exploration, the company planned to produce 10,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of rare-earth concentrates for at least 10 years. Rainbow could increase production subsequently to 20,000 t/yr—depending on the results of a feasibility study—and start downstream processing (Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., 2020a, p. 26–27).

### *Mineral Fuels and Related Materials*

**Peat.**—ONATOUR's peat production increased to 18,330 t in 2019 from 11,801 t in 2018. The increase was broadly based, with higher output from all ONATOUR's mines in 2019. The Gitanga Mine produced 7,529 t in 2019; the Gisozi Mine, 4,247 t; the Buyongwe Mine, 3,466 t; and the Matana Mine, 3,088 t. In recent years, the company's production was consumed mostly by the Burundian military (table 1; Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2017, p. 185; 2020b, p. 20).

## References Cited

- African Development Bank Group, 2021, Burundi, *in* African statistical yearbook 2020: African Development Bank Group, p. 147–152. (Accessed June 17, 2021, at <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/african-statistical-yearbook-2020>.)
- Callaghan, R.M., 2021, Tantalum: U.S. Geological Survey Mineral Commodity Summaries 2021, p. 164–165.
- CemWeek, 2019, Buceco's cement line breakdown causes cement shortage in Burundi: CemWeek, December 10. (Accessed August 14, 2020, at <https://www.cwgrp.com/cemweeknews/markets-competition/521645-buceco-s-cement-line-breakdown-causes-cement-shortage-in-burundi>.)
- Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2017, Annuaire statistique du Burundi 2016 [Statistical yearbook of Burundi 2016]: Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, December, 302 p. (Accessed April 27, 2018, at <https://www.isteebu.bi/statistiques/>.) [In French.]
- Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2019, Bulletin de conjuncture du deuxième trimestre 2019 [Newsletter for the second quarter 2019]: Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, May 15, 56 p. (Accessed July 20, 2020, at <https://www.isteebu.bi/b-conjoncture/>.) [In French.]
- Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2020a, Bulletin du commerce extérieur de marchandises—Premier trimestre 2020 [Foreign merchandise trade bulletin—First quarter 2020]: Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, May 29, 52 p. (Accessed July 20, 2020, at <https://www.isteebu.bi/b-conjoncture/>.) [In French.]
- Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, 2020b, Bulletin de conjuncture du deuxième trimestre 2020 [Newsletter for the second quarter 2020]: Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, August 14, 56 p. (Accessed July 20, 2020, at <https://www.isteebu.bi/b-conjoncture/>.) [In French.]
- International Tin Research Institute, 2018, New Burundi mining regulation stimulates investment: International Tin Research Institute, April, 1 p. (Accessed August 6, 2020, at [https://www.itsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1801-ITSCI-story\\_BU\\_new-mine-reg\\_EN.pdf](https://www.itsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1801-ITSCI-story_BU_new-mine-reg_EN.pdf).) [In French.]
- International Tin Research Institute, 2020a, ITSCI data summary—Q1 2014 to Q4 2019: Hertfordshire, United Kingdom, International Tin Research Institute, 10 p. (Accessed August 6, 2020, at <https://www.itsci.org/mineral-tonnage-data/>.)
- International Tin Research Institute, 2020b, iTSCI overview—Quarter 4 of 2019: Hertfordshire, United Kingdom, International Tin Research Institute, 1 p. (Accessed August 6, 2020, at <https://www.itsci.org/status-report-public/>.)
- Kotze, Chantelle, 2017, Big in Burundi—Rainbow Rare Earths' Gakara project: Mining Review Africa, no. 5, May, p. 24–27.
- Manishatse, L.J., 2019, Only Burundi Central Bank to buy and sell gold: Iwacu English News, November 27. (Accessed September 3, 2020, at <https://www.iwacu-burundi.org/englishnews/only-burundi-central-bank-to-buy-and-sell-gold/>.)
- Padilla, A.J., 2020, Tantalum: U.S. Geological Survey Mineral Commodity Summaries 2020, p. 164–165.
- Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., 2018, Gakara production and operations update for the three months to 31 March 2018: Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., April 24, 5 p. (Accessed August 2, 2018, at <http://rainbowrareearths.com/news/>.)
- Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., 2019, Interim results for the six months ended 31 December 2018: Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., March 12, unpagued. (Accessed August 6, 2020, at <http://rainbowrareearths.com/news/>.)
- Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., 2020a, Developing a long-term strategic source of rare earths: Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., January, 35 p. (Accessed September 3, 2020, at <http://rainbowrareearths.com/investors/corporate-documents/>.)
- Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., 2020b, Interim results for the six months ended 31 December 2019: Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., March 30, unpagued. (Accessed August 6, 2020, at <http://rainbowrareearths.com/news/>.)
- World Bank Group, 2016, The Republic of Burundi final report—Transparency in revenues from artisanal and small-scale mining of tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold in Burundi: World Bank Group, 41 p. (Accessed August 28, 2019, at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/563321468184727489/pdf/103086-WP-P145997-Box394854B-PUBLIC-Burundi-English-1607197-Web.pdf>.)

TABLE 1  
BURUNDI: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons, gross weight, unless otherwise specified)

Commodity <sup>2</sup>		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>METALS</b>						
Gold, mine, Au content	kilograms	549	396	953	598 <sup>r</sup>	567
Niobium, mineral concentrate, columbite-tantalite:						
Gross weight	do.	53,093	31,687	143,419 <sup>3</sup>	219,003 <sup>3</sup>	193,174 <sup>3</sup>
Nb content <sup>c</sup>	do.	10,000	6,200	28,000	43,000	38,000
Rare-earths, mineral concentrate:						
Gross weight		--	--	75	1,075 <sup>3</sup>	338
Rare-earth oxide equivalent		--	--	40 <sup>e</sup>	620 <sup>e</sup>	200 <sup>e</sup>
Tantalum, mineral concentrate, columbite-tantalite:						
Gross weight	kilograms	53,093	31,687	143,419 <sup>3</sup>	219,003 <sup>3</sup>	193,174 <sup>3</sup>
Ta content <sup>c</sup>	do.	10,000	6,200	28,000	43,000	38,000
Tin, mine, cassiterite:						
Gross weight		72	22	229	318	382 <sup>3</sup>
Sn content <sup>c</sup>		45	14	140	200	240
Tungsten, mine, wolframite:						
Gross weight		19	131	233	192	265 <sup>3</sup>
W content <sup>c</sup>		9	63	120 <sup>r</sup>	100 <sup>r</sup>	130
<b>INDUSTRIAL MINERALS</b>						
Cement, hydraulic <sup>c</sup>		100,000	100,000	45,000	100,000	75,000
Sand and gravel, unspecified <sup>c</sup>		1,200,000	1,300,000	1,400,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
<b>MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS</b>						
Peat, fuel use		3,967	9,541	13,948	11,801 <sup>r</sup>	18,330

<sup>e</sup>Estimated. <sup>r</sup>Revised. do. Ditto. -- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>Table includes data available through August 19, 2020. All data are reported unless otherwise noted. Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to the commodities listed, brick and other clay and limestone may have been produced, but available information was inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

<sup>3</sup>Reported exports.

TABLE 2  
BURUNDI: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2019

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Cement		Burundi Cement Co. (BUCECO)	Plant in Cibitoke Province	330,000
Clay		do.	NA	NA
Gold	kilograms	Artisanal miners	Various sites in Bujumbura, Cankuzo, Cibitoke, Muyinga, and Ruyigi Provinces	1,000 <sup>c</sup>
Niobium (columbium) and tantalum, columbite-tantalite ore and concentrate		Various producers, including the following: CDP CODEMIBU Comptoir Minier des Exploitations du Burundi S.A DUTEZANYIMBERE GIRUMWETE NTEGA Tantalum Mining Co. (TAMINCO) do. Other cooperatives and artisanal miners	Of which— Kidunduri Mine in Kayanza Province Muhuhuri Mine in Cibitoke Province Kivuvu Mine in Kayanza Province Buvyukana Mine in Kirundo Province Taba Mine in Kirundo Province Gatete Mine in Kirundo Province Manenge Mines in Kayanza Province 6 mines at various locations	260 <sup>c</sup>
Peat		Office Nationale de la Tourbe (ONATOUB) (Government, 100%)	Buyongwe, Gisozi, Gitanga, and Matana	20,000
Rare-earths		Rainbow Mining Burundi SM (Rainbow Rare Earths Ltd., 90%)	Gakara Mine in Bujumbura Province	2,800 <sup>c</sup>
Tin, cassiterite ore and concentrate		Various producers, including the following: GATETE DUSHIREHAMWE PAMBU Tantalum Mining Co. (TAMINCO)  Other cooperatives and artisanal miners	Of which— Bidogo Mine in Kirundo Province Mpinga Mine in Kirundo Province Gatete, Kibuba, Munege, Murehe, and Ryamukona Mines 11 mines at various locations in Cibitoke, Kirundo, and Ngozi Provinces	430 <sup>c</sup>
Tungsten, wolframite ore and concentrate		Various producers, including the following: Coop. Minière de Gashoho DUKEREBUKE MW'ITERAMBERE  GATETE DUSHIREHAMWE Société d'Exploitation et de Commercialisation des Minerais du Burundi Other cooperatives and artisanal miners	Of which— Cumba Mine in Kirundo Province Buhorana II Mine in Muyinga Province Runinya Mine in Kirundo Province Kuwinkona Mine in Muyinga Province 20 sites in Kirundo and Muyinga Provinces	600 <sup>c</sup>

<sup>c</sup>Estimated. do. Ditto. NA Not available.