



2020–2021 Minerals Yearbook

CAMEROON [ADVANCE RELEASE]

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF CAMEROON

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Note: In this chapter, information for 2020 is followed by information for 2021.

Mineral production was a small part of Cameroon's economy. In 2020, the major mineral commodities produced were aluminum, diamond, gold, natural gas, crude petroleum, and pumice (pozzolan). Cameroon accounted for 2% of global pumice production. Other undeveloped mineral resources included bauxite, cobalt, iron ore, rutile, and uranium (Ministry of Mines, Industry, and Technological Development, 2021a; Crangle, 2022).

The real gross domestic product (GDP) of Cameroon increased by 0.3% in 2020 compared with an increase of 3.5% in 2019. The nominal GDP was about \$41 billion. The mining, quarrying, and petroleum and natural gas extraction sectors combined represented about 2.2% of the GDP. Of the \$930 million in budgetary revenues generated for the Government by the extractive sector, hydrocarbon production contributed the most revenue (accounting for 91.7% of the revenue received), followed by the transportation of hydrocarbons (8.2%) and other mineral production (0.1%) (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2022, p. 8; National Institute of Statistics, 2022, p. 7, 9; World Bank, The, 2023).

The country's energy and mineral resources belong to the Government. The legislative framework for the mining sector is governed by the Mining Code, which was established by law No. 2016/017. The law repealed the previous Mining Code set forth by law No. 001–2001 and its amendments. The petroleum industry is governed by the Petroleum Code, which was established by law No. 2019/008. The law repealed the Petroleum Code set forth by law No. 99/013 and its amendments. The natural gas industry is governed by the Gas Code, which was established by law No. 2012/006 (Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures, 2012; 2021b, p. 2; Fialho and others, 2019).

Production

In 2020, increases in mineral output included that of sand and gravel (for construction), which increased sixfold; pozzolan production, which increased by 56%; clay, 52%; diamond, 40%; and cement, 24% (estimated). Cameroon did not produce refined petroleum in 2020 because the country's Limbe refinery remained closed during the year. The refinery was idled in 2019 owing to a fire (Kimberley Process Rough Diamond Statistics, 2021; Turner, 2021). Data on mineral production are provided in table 1.

Structure of the Mineral Industry

The Ministry of Mines, Industry, and Technological Development (MINMIDT) oversees the mineral industry of Cameroon. The Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) is responsible for sustainable management of natural resources (Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development, 2021; Ministry of Mines, Industry, and Technological

Development, 2021b). Table 2 is a list of major mineral industry facilities.

The principal Government organizations regulating the upstream crude petroleum and natural gas sector are the MINMIDT and the state-owned Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH). The MINMIDT is in charge of granting mineral licenses and authorizations and for regulating petroleum operators. The SNH is responsible for developing and monitoring petroleum activity in the country and for managing the Government's interest in the crude petroleum industry. Other state-owned companies involved in mineral-related activities included the Compagnie Camérounaise de l'Aluminium, which operated an aluminum smelter at Edea, and the Société Nationale de Raffinage, which operated the Limbe petroleum refinery. Notable private companies included the Cimenteries du Cameroun (which produced industrial minerals), Ciments de L'Afrique (cement), and Dangote Group (cement).

Commodity Review

Metals

Bauxite and Alumina.—In 2020, Canyon Resources Ltd. of Australia held a 100% interest in the Minim Martap project in the Adamaoua Region. The project included the Minim Martap and the Ngaoundal deposits. In August, the company reported a Joint Ore Reserves Committee (JORC)-compliant probable bauxite reserve estimate of 97.3 million metric tons (Mt) at grades of 51.1% alumina and 2.3% silica. The Minim Martap project, along with Canyon Resources' nearby Birsok bauxite project, were located about 10 kilometers (km) from the Camrail rail line, which ran from the project areas to the Douala Port and the Kribi Port (Canyon Resources Ltd., 2020, p. 6–8).

Iron Ore.—Altus Strategies plc of the United Kingdom continued to develop the Bikoula iron ore project, which was owned by Aluvance Ltd., a 97%-owned subsidiary of Altus Strategies. The Bikoula project was composed of the Bikoula and Ndjele exploration licenses and was located about 150 km southeast of the capital of Yaounde and less than 100 km from the Gabon border in southern Cameroon. Altus Strategies reported a JORC-compliant resource estimate of 46 Mt grading 44% iron at the project and noted that it was located adjacent to a road to the deepwater Kribi Port (Altus Strategies plc, 2020, p. 28; 2021, p. 34–35).

Sundance Resources Ltd. of Australia continued with the development of the Mbalam iron ore project, which straddled the border of Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo [Congo (Brazzaville)]. The project was wholly owned by Cam Iron SA, which was a 90%-owned subsidiary of Sundance Resources. In October 2020, Sundance Resources reported that although its exploration permit had expired, it was seeking financial

assistance from AustSino Resources Group Ltd. of Australia to continue developing the mine and building rail and port infrastructure. The company estimated a probable iron ore resource of 154 Mt grading 62.9% iron at the Mbalam site (Sundance Resources Ltd., 2020, p. iv, 4, 50, 60).

Titanium (Rutile).—Several international companies held exploration licenses for rutile in Cameroon in 2020. In April, BWA Group plc (BWA) of the United Kingdom was awarded an exploration license at Dehane, which is located 166 km from Yaounde in southwestern Cameroon (about 30 km from the coast). In the 132-square-kilometer (km²) area at Dehane, BWA planned to explore for rutile-containing heavy-metal sands, gold, ilmenite, and kyanite. The company was also awarded an exploration license in December 2019 at Nkoteng, which is located 60 km north of Yaounde in central Cameroon. The company planned to explore for rutile sands and other minerals, such as ilmenite, kyanite, and zircon, in a 497-km² area at Nkoteng. In November 2019, Eramet S.A. of France was awarded five permits to explore for rutile in a 2,500-km² area surrounding the town of Akonolinga, located 135 km east of Yaounde (Kalkine Media, 2020; Bloomberg, 2021; Eramet SA, 2023).

Mineral Fuels

Petroleum.—In August 2020, Perenco plc of the United Kingdom announced the discovery of more than 5 million barrels of crude petroleum reserves in its Tiko Marine Field and Ekoundou Marine concession in the Rio del Rey Basin. Also in August, Tower Resources Cameroon S.A. (a subsidiary of Tower Resources plc of the United Kingdom) announced that it had engaged in talks with investors for additional funding for development of its Thali Block, which is also located in the Rio del Rey Basin. Tower Resources received a production-sharing contract for the Thali Block in 2015 (Business in Cameroon, 2020; Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures, 2020, 2021a; Tower Resources plc, 2020, p. 4–5; 2021; Perenco plc, 2021).

MINERAL INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2021

The real GDP of Cameroon increased by 3.6% in 2021. The growth rate of the mining, quarrying, and petroleum and natural gas extraction sectors combined was –2.5% owing to a 3.2% decrease in hydrocarbon extraction activities. The nominal GDP was about \$45 billion. The output value of the mining, quarrying, and petroleum and natural gas extraction sectors combined represented about 3.9% of the GDP (up from 2.2% in 2020); the sectors' increased contribution to the GDP was attributed to an increase in the price of crude petroleum (National Institute of Statistics, 2022, p. 2, 7, 9; World Bank, The, 2023).

In 2021, cement and aluminum production increased by 31% and 25%, respectively. The increased cement output was driven by an increase in domestic consumption to about 4 Mt in 2021 from 3.5 Mt in 2020. Refined petroleum production continued to be halted owing to the closure of the Limbe refinery (table 1; Global Cement, 2022).

Oriole Resources plc of the United Kingdom completed a 6-km diamond-drilling program for 49 holes and a 100-by-100-meter soil-sampling program for the Bibemi gold project

in the North Region in 2021. The company planned to report the results of the exploration program in early 2022. Oriole Resources was also engaged with another gold exploration project in the North Region, the Wapouze project, which was at an earlier stage of development than the Bibemi project (Oriole Resources plc, 2021, p. 8).

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TABLE 1
CAMEROON: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons, gross weight, unless otherwise specified)

Commodity ²	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
METALS					
Aluminum, metal, primary ^c	75,000 ^r	71,000 ^r	74,000 ^r	68,000	85,000
Gold, mine, Au content kilograms	701	478	341	326	330 ^e
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS					
Cement, hydraulic thousand metric tons	2,560 ^r	2,830 ^r	2,780 ^r	3,440 ^e	4,500 ^e
Clay, unspecified	10,462	6,339 ^r	4,814 ^r	7,340	7,300 ^e
Diamond, gem, unspecified ³ carats	1,757	1,805	1,737	2,439	2,670
Pumice and related materials, pozzolan, ash for cement	96,408 ^r	108,886 ^r	180,000 ^r	280,000	280,000 ^e
Stone, sand, and gravel, construction:					
Sand and gravel	490,000 ^r	620,000 ^r	600,000 ^r	3,700,000	3,700,000 ^e
Stone, crushed, limestone	113,786	146,339 ^r	170,941 ^r	184,000	180,000 ^e
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS					
Natural gas million cubic meters	393	1,463	2,006	2,130	2,100 ^e
Petroleum:					
Crude thousand 42-gallon barrels	27,726	25,133	25,996	26,556	25,000 ^e
Refinery do.	11,000 ^e	10,000 ^e	5,000 ^e	--	--

^eEstimated. ^rRevised. do. Ditto. -- Zero.

¹Table includes data available through February 22, 2023. All data are reported unless otherwise noted. Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²In addition to the commodities listed, gypsum, kyanite, lime, and sapphire may have been produced, but available information was inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

³From artisanal mining.

TABLE 2
CAMEROON: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2021

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location	Annual capacity
Aluminum		Compagnie Camerounaise de l'Aluminium (Alucam) (Government, 93.4%; Agence Française de Développement (AFD), 5.6%; Alucam staff, 1%)	Smelter at Edea	100
Cement		Cimenteries du Cameroun (CIMENCAM) (Holcim S.A., 55%; Government, 43%; Cimenteries du Cameroun staff, 2%)	Plant at Bonaberi near Douala	1,600
Do.		do.	Grinding plant at Figuil	100
Do.		do.	Plant at Nomayos near Yaounde	500
Do.		Ciments de L'Afrique (CIMAF)	Plant at Bonaberi near Douala	1,600
Do.		Dangote Cement Plc (Dangote Group)	Grinding plant at Douala	1,500
Do.		Egin SA	Plant at Douala	500
Do.		Medcem Cameroon (Eren Holdings, 100%)	do.	600
Clay		Cimenteries du Cameroun (CIMENCAM) (Holcim S.A., 55%; Government, 43%; Cimenteries du Cameroun staff, 2%)	Quarry at Figuil	NA
Diamond	carats	Artisanal	Various locations	12,000 ^e
Gold, mine, Au content	kilograms	do.	do.	2,000 ^e
Natural gas		Gaz du Cameroun S.A. (Victoria Oil and Gas Plc, 100%)	Logbaba and Matanda gas fields	NA
Do.		Noble Energy, Inc., and Société National Hydrocarbures (SNH)	Yoyo offshore gas field	NA
Do.	million cubic meters	Perenco Cameroon S.A. (Perenco plc, 100%)	Sanaga offshore gas field	8,760
Petroleum:				
Crude	barrels per day	Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH) joint ventures with other companies	Offshore and onshore oil fields	100,000
Do.	do.	Glencore plc, 50%, and Perenco Cameroon S.A., 50%	Bolongo Block offshore oil fields	10,000
Refined	do.	Société Nationale de Raffinage S.A. (SONARA) (Government)	Limbe refinery ¹ at Limbe	72,000
Pumice and related minerals, pozzolan, ash		Cimenteries du Cameroun (CIMENCAM) (Holcim S.A., 55%; Government, 43%; Cimenteries du Cameroun staff, 2%)	Quarries at Figuil and Foubot	NA
Sand		do.	Quarry at Figuil	NA
Do.		Artisanal	Various locations	NA
Stone, limestone		Cimenteries du Cameroun (CIMENCAM) (Holcim S.A., 55%; Government, 43%; Cimenteries du Cameroun staff, 2%)	Quarry at Figuil	275

^eEstimated. Do., do. Ditto. NA Not available.

¹Halted in May 2019 owing to fire.