



2020–2021 Minerals Yearbook

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC [ADVANCE RELEASE]

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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

Gold and diamond were the only mineral commodities produced in the Central African Republic in 2020, although the country may have also produced industrial minerals for the construction sector. According to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), the country was ranked 15th among the world's leading producers of rough diamond by weight and value in 2020 (Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, 2022a). The country's diamond export revenues amounted to \$6.9 million in 2020, or 2% of the total value of goods and services exports. The real gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 0.96% in 2020 compared with an increase of 3.0% in 2019. The country's nominal GDP was \$2.39 billion in 2020. The slowdown in economic growth was likely attributable to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic (World Bank Group, The, 2021, p. 10; 2022; International Monetary Fund, 2022).

The Central African Republic had been in a state of civil unrest for more than a decade. In 2013, a set of international measures was imposed on the country and included sanctions by the United Nations Security Council, the temporary suspension of the country from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and a temporary suspension of rough diamond exports imposed by the KPCS. Among these measures, the export ban by the KPCS was lifted in 2016 following an agreement between the KPCS and the Government that included provisions for the monitoring and certification of diamonds. Rough diamond exports under the 2016 agreement were permitted only from areas deemed to be compliant with KPCS standards (and not influenced by rebel activity), such as Berberati City in the southwest of the country. In February 2019, the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation was signed between the Government and 14 armed groups. Peace negotiations took place under the auspices of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic supported by the African Union and the United Nations. The negotiation process excluded some militia and social groups; this exclusion, as well as the violation of the peace agreement's terms by all parties (including the Government) and a troubled election led to increased violence in the country. By yearend 2020, 640,000 people had fled the Central African Republic, more than 800,000 were internally displaced, and an estimated 3.4 million people in the country were in need of humanitarian assistance. No commercial exploration activity had taken place in the Central African Republic in almost a decade owing to the high levels of political and civil instability (United Nations Security Council, 2013a, b; Dembassa-Kette, 2016; United Nations, 2019, 2020; World Bank Group, The, 2021, p. 10; USA for UNHCR, 2024).

Commodity Review

All mineral production in the Central African Republic was performed by artisanal miners, with notable diamond production taking place in the Prefectures of Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Lobaye, Mambere-Kadei, and Sangha-Mbaere, and notable gold production taking place in the Prefectures of Basse-Kotto, Mambere-Kadei, Nana-Mambere, and Ouaka. In 2019 (the most recent year for which comprehensive data were available), there were an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 artisanal miners engaged in diamond and gold mining in the country. Diamond production increased by 124% to 61,844 carats in 2020 from a revised 27,549 carats in 2019. Gold production was estimated to be 760 kilograms (kg) in 2020, which was an increase of 112% compared with the 359 kg produced in 2019. According to the United States Agency for International Development, about 93% of diamond production and 98% of gold production were estimated to be illegally exported from the Central African Republic through Cameroon, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), and Sudan. Data on mineral production are provided in table 1. The table does not include estimates for informal production of diamond and gold because information was inadequate to make reliable estimates of output owing to the country's political instability. Table 2 is a list of major mineral industry facilities (Jaillon and de Brier, 2019, p. 52; Levin Sources, 2020, p. 17).

MINERAL INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2021

In 2021, the real GDP of the Central African Republic increased by 0.98% and the nominal GDP was \$2.58 billion. Diamond exports accounted for 3.2% of the country's total value of goods and services exports. The country was ranked 13th among the world's leading producers of rough diamond by weight and 15th by value in 2021 (International Monetary Fund, 2022; Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, 2022b; World Bank Group, The, 2022).

The EITI board lifted the country's suspension from the EITI nationwide in October 2021 after lifting the suspension in certain local areas in 2016. The country created an adapted approach to EITI implementation, which focused on formalizing the mining sector, improving governance, and adopting flexible reporting. Diamond production increased by 50% to 92,772 carats in 2021. Gold production was estimated to be 900 kg in 2021, which was an increase of 18% compared with estimated production of 760 kg in 2020 (table 1; Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2022; Lamarche, 2022).

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TABLE 1
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Gross weight)

Commodity ²		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
METALS						
Gold, mine, Au content	kilograms	108	142	359	760 ^e	900 ^e
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS						
Diamond, gem and industrial	carats	47,637	13,572	27,549 ^f	61,844	92,772

^eEstimated. ^fRevised.

¹Table includes data available through September 7, 2022. All data are reported unless otherwise noted. Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²In addition to the commodities listed, clay, quartz crystals, and sand and gravel may have been produced, but available information was inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

TABLE 2
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2021

Commodity		Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Diamond	carats	Artisanal mining operations	Various sites across the country, notably within the Prefectures of Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Lobaye, Mambere-Kadei, and Sangha-Mbaere	93,000
Gold:				
Ore		do.	Various sites across the country, notably within the Prefectures of Basse-Kotto, Mambere-Kadei, Nana-Mambere, and Ouaka	NA
Refinery		Government	IBI gold foundry, District 2, Bangui	NA
Do.		do.	Sawa Sawa foundry, District 1, Bangui	NA
Do.		Société Fonderie D'or Gonga	Gonga foundry, Bangui	NA

Do., do. Ditto. NA Not available.