



Minerals Yearbook

NAURU [ADVANCE RELEASE]

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF NAURU

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Nauru, which is an island country located south of the Marshall Islands and northeast of the Solomon Islands in the Pacific Ocean, has a total land area of 21 square kilometers. In 2021, the country's nominal gross domestic product (GDP) was \$133 million compared with \$114 million in 2020. The country's real GDP increased by 0.7% in 2020 and 1.6% in 2021. Phosphate rock was produced by Government-owned Republic of Nauru Phosphate Corp. (RONPHOS). Phosphate rock mining was the major source of Government revenues until the early 2010s when 80% of Nauru's land had been mined for phosphate rock, leaving areas with pinnacles of limestone unmined. The average annual real GDP growth rate was 1.5% from 2015 to 2019 compared with 19.8% from 2011 to 2014; the significant decrease in the rate of GDP growth was primarily owing to reduced phosphate rock mining activities. According to the United Nations, Nauru's exports of phosphate rock, by volume, for the period 2015 to 2019 totaled 493,000 metric tons (t) and those for the period 2011 to 2014 totaled 1.33 million metric tons. In 2021, Nauru produced an estimated 260,000 t of phosphate rock (gross weight), which was a 30% increase compared with the amount produced in 2020. Production of crushed construction stone from the pinnacle limestone and subsequent extraction of uncovered phosphate rock under the limestone were likely the reasons for the production increases in 2020 and 2021. Data on mineral production are in table 1 (Clifford and others, 2019; International Monetary Fund, 2022a, p. 5, 42; 2022b; United Nations, 2023).

The RONPHOS Act 2005 provides the legislative framework under which RONPHOS is permitted to operate in Nauru. In fiscal year 2021, which ran from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, RONPHOS accounted for 7.9% of Nauru's public sector workforce (3,462 people). Government-owned Nauru Rehabilitation Corp. produced crushed stone used in construction and in the rehabilitation of sites previously mined by RONPHOS. Nauru Rehabilitation accounted for 4.1% of Nauru's public sector workforce in fiscal year 2021. Table 2 is a list of major mineral industry facilities (table 2; Parliament of Nauru, 2013; Ministry of Finance, 2022, p. 17, 29).

In fiscal year 2021, phosphate rock exports were valued at 18 million Australian dollars, or \$13.5 million,¹ which accounted for 76% of Nauru's total exports of about \$17.8 million. Nauru's reexports of mineral fuels were valued at \$5.7 million in fiscal year 2021. The reexports of mineral fuels consisted mainly of sales of imported jet fuel to visiting aircraft. Imports of petroleum products were valued at \$3.8 million, and imports of petroleum gas and portland cement were valued at \$230,000 each (Ministry of Finance, 2022, p. 12, 14).

References Cited

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¹Where necessary, values have been converted from Australian dollars (AUD) to U.S. dollars (US\$) at the annual average exchange rate of AUD1.332=US\$1.00 for 2021.

TABLE 1
NAURU: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons)

Commodity ²	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS					
Phosphate rock:					
Gross weight	130,000	90,000	-- ^r	200,000	260,000
P ₂ O ₅ content	49,000	35,000	-- ^r	70,000	95,000

^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Table includes data available through October 17, 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, crushed stone and other construction materials may have been produced, but available information was inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

TABLE 2
NAURU: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2021

Commodity	Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Phosphate rock metric tons	Republic of Nauru Phosphate Corp. (RONPHOS) (Government, 100%)	Mine in Aiwo District	260,000 ^e
Stone, crushed	Nauru Rehabilitation Corp. (Government, 100%)	Quarry in Aiwo District	NA

^eEstimated. NA Not available.