

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

GABON

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The equatorial African nation of Gabon has an area of 257,670 square kilometers and supported a population of about 1.2 million in 1997, with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$5,000 based on 1996 purchasing power parity data. The mineral industry was dominated by crude petroleum production, which accounted for about 60% of Government revenues and more than 40% of GDP. Petroleum was produced by three companies, in order of decreasing output—Shell Gabon of the Netherlands, Elf Gabon of France, and Perenco Plc. of the United Kingdom. Although Gabon withdrew its membership in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1996, its petroleum production remained level at around 362,000 barrels per day in 1997.

On the mining side, the country was an important world source of manganese and uranium ore. The uranium mine at Mounana

in Haut Ogooué Province was, however, nearing depletion, and Compagnie des Mines d'Uranium de Franceville planned to close it in 1999. During 1997, the Eramet Group of France increased its ownership in Compagnie Minière de l'Ogooué S.A. (Comilog) to more than 50% and took over management and operating control of Comilog's manganese mine near Franceville. Several junior exploration companies were exploring for gold, and the Government-owned (62%) Société Minière du Moyen Ogooué consortium was actively seeking investors to develop phosphate from the Mabounié carbonatite complex near Lambaréné in the west-central portion of the country. For more extensive coverage of the minerals industry of Gabon, see the 1996 Minerals Yearbook, Volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East.

TABLE 1
GABON: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity 2/	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997 e/
Cement:					
Clinker	132,398	124,600 r/	132,398 r/	162,000 r/	176,000
Cement, hydraulic 3/	141,283	147,798 r/	153,953 r/	180,000 r/	200,000
Diamond, gem and industrial e/	500	500	500	500	500
Gas, natural, gross	153	129	150	100 r/	99
Gold, mine output, Au content e/ 4/	120	72	70	70	70
Manganese:					
Metallurgical-grade ore, gross weight (50% to 53% Mn) 5/	1,257,000	1,366,000 e/	1,844,000	1,933,000	1,860,000
Pellets, battery- and chemical-grade, gross weight (82% to 85% MnO ₂)	33,000	70,000 e/	86,000	50,000	44,000
Total 5/	1,290,000	1,436,000	1,930,000	1,983,000	1,904,000 6/
Petroleum:					
Crude	114,000	126,000	133,000	134,000	134,000
Refinery products	5,800	6,900	5,466 r/	6,043 r/	6,315 6/
Uranium, content of concentrate	592	589	653	623	472 6/

e/ Estimated. r/ Revised.

1/ Table includes data available through July 2, 1999.

2/ In addition to the commodities listed, a variety of crude construction materials (clays, sand and gravel, and stone) is also produced, but output is not reported and available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.

3/ Includes cement produced from imported clinker.

4/ Gold production figures do not include production smuggled out of the country, which in recent years was estimated to exceed 400 kilograms per year.

5/ Data are rounded to four significant digits.

6/ Reported figure.