

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

TOGO

By Philip M. Mobbs

Agriculture, phosphate mining, and regional trade continued to dominate Togo's economy. During 1995, a new mining law was under Government consideration. Enactment was anticipated in 1996.

Output of phosphate rock continued its rebound from the strike-depressed production volume of 1993. In recent years, phosphate production and exports have accounted for 20% to 30% of export earnings, 10% to 13% of Government revenues, and 6% to 10% of the gross domestic product, respectively. The Government-owned phosphate producer, Office Togolaise des Phosphates (OTP), remained Togo's largest foreign exchange earner and one of Togo's largest employers.

OTP operated the phosphate mines clustered around Hahotoe and Akoumape. The company's treatment plant and export terminal was at Kpeme, about 30 kilometers (km) from the mines. OTP recovered 1 metric ton (t) of exportable phosphate rock for each 2 t of raw ore processed at the Kpeme plant. Exports were shipped primarily to Canada, India, the Philippines, and South Africa.

In recent years, OTP experienced a decline in phosphate rock exports to its traditional Western European and North American markets. European fertilizer producers were reducing the cadmium content of products generated from phosphate imports to less than 15 parts per million (ppm). Togo's recent high-grade (36% P_2O_5) phosphate ore production averaged 40 to 50 ppm of cadmium.

Industry sources estimated that Togo had phosphate reserves of approximately 260 million metric tons (Mt), or about 130 Mt of exportable rock.¹ Besides phosphate rock for export and limestone for cement, exploitation of minerals in Togo was negligible. Ciments du Togo, a joint venture between the Government and Scancem International, a Norwegian/Swedish joint venture, operated a 600,000-tons-per-year cement factory in Lomé.

A number of mineral deposits were known, but development depended upon more detailed exploration and significant infrastructure improvements. An iron ore deposit near Bassar, which averages more than 40% iron, mainly as magnetite, has been studied periodically by the local Bureau

National de Recherches Minières (BNRM) and most recently in conjunction with France's Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières (BRGM).² In the past, the BNRM and BRGM exploration teams had sampled gold anomalies east of Bassar and had investigated diamond indications on the d'Akposso Plateau and in the surrounding alluvial basins, about 50 kilometers north of Palimé. The exploration teams also had located chromite, rutile, and uranium mineralization in the northwestern part of the country.

Most of Togo's mineral requirements were imported through the Port at Lomé. Togo had long been a regional trade center; and its highway network facilitated trade between Lomé and Benin, Burkina Faso, and Ghana. All of the developed mineral deposits were accessible by the railway that connected Lomé with the cities of Anecho, Blitta, and Palimé. Exploitation of the known iron, manganese, and phosphate deposits in the northern part of the country would require transportation improvements.

Togo's mineral economy is expected to continue to be dominated by the phosphate industry well into the next century. New industry attracted to the country by the Government's economic policies could provide an important economic buffer during periods of low phosphate prices. However, even with optimistic growth projections, the industrial sector is not diverse enough to isolate Togo from economic slowdowns when phosphate prices are low.

¹U.S. Department of State, Country Commercial Guide, accessed Aug. 12, 1996 via the World Wide Web at URL <http://www.state.gov>

²Mining Magazine. Togo Mineral Programme. June, 1984. p. 521.

Other Source of Information

Ministère des Mines de l'Energie et des Ressources
Hydrauliques
BP 12489
Lomé, Togo
Telephone: (228) 22-16-81
Fax: (228) 22-17-16

TABLE 1
TOGO: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity 2/	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995 e/	
Cement e/ 3/	388,000 r/ 4/	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	
Iron and steel, semifinished e/ 5/	6,000	--	--	500	500	
Phosphate rock, beneficiated product:						
Gross weight	thousand metric tons	2,965	2,083	1,794 r/	2,149 r/	2,560
P2O5 content e/	do.	1,076	760	540	800	720
Stone, marble: e/						
Blocks		250	--	--	--	--
Crushed		600	--	--	--	--

e/ Estimated. r/ Revised.

1/ Includes data available through Aug. 16, 1996.

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

3/ Produced from imported clinker.

4/ Reported figure.