

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF GEORGIA

By Richard M. Levine

Georgia has a diverse mineral industry, producing ferrous and nonferrous metals, ferroalloys, industrial minerals, and fuels. Georgia had been a major producer of manganese from the Chiatura deposit, but production had fallen precipitously in the post-Soviet period. The manganese was used domestically for ferroalloy production at the Zestafoni ferroalloys plant. A small amount of iron ore also was mined. At the Madneuli complex in Georgia, a copper-barite polymetallic ore deposit was exploited for barite, copper, and a range of byproduct minerals, including gold and silver. Lead and zinc were mined at the Kvaisi lead-zinc deposit, and arsenic was mined from the Lukhumi and the Tsansa deposits. The steel mill in Rustavi had the capacity to produce 1.4 million metric tons per year of crude steel, as well as the capacity to produce, coke, pig iron, sinter, rolled products, and tubes and pipes (Metal Bulletin Books, 1997, p. 131).

Georgia produced a range of industrial minerals, including bentonite, diatomite, talc, and zeolites, and also mined semiprecious stones. A large number of deposits of decorative stone were mined for use as building materials, with mining occurring at more than 100 deposits (Georgian Investment Center, 1998, Overview of the economic sectors of Georgia—Mining, accessed July 2, 1998, at URL

<http://www.georgia.net.ge/gic/Sector/Mining.>). Also, many clay deposits were used in the production of bricks and ceramic products as well as high-quality quartz sand and sand and gravel deposits.

The country also produced some coal, gas, and oil, and has an oil refinery at Batumi. However, Georgia possesses limited domestic hydrocarbon resources, and its importance for the world energy market is as an oil transit center between the energy-rich Caspian Sea countries and Western markets. It appears that Georgia will attempt to revive and expand production at its existing mineral-production enterprises and will try to increase its role as a transport corridor for and refiner of oil from the Caspian Sea.

For more extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Georgia, see the 1997 Minerals Yearbook, Volume III, Mineral Industries of Europe and Central Eurasia.

Reference Cited

Metal Bulletin Books, 1997, Iron and steel works of the world: [Surrey, England], Metal Bulletin Books Ltd, 12th edition, 726 p.

TABLE 1
GEORGIA: REPORTED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Cement		100,000	100,000	84,708	90,600	85,000 e/
Coal		40,000	40,000	6,100	4,200	14,700
Manganese, marketable ore		--	100,000	70,395	35,112	50,000 e/
Natural gas	billion cubic meters	0.010	0.003	0.003	NA	NA
Petroleum, crude		70,000	40,000	100,000	133,800	119,200
Steel, crude		141,000	84,000 e/	84,870	104,242	100,000 e/
Zeolites		NA	NA	1700	6000	NA

e/ Estimated. NA Not available.

1/ Table lists only those commodities for which reported multiyear production data exist and includes data available through December 19, 1999. For 1997, data for certain commodities were reported for a U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Questionnaire by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Georgia. The following 1997 production data were reported in metric tons unless otherwise specified: agate, 1,600 metric tons; bentonite, 20,000 metric tons; copper, mine output, gross weight, 411,200 metric tons; copper, mine output, copper content, 4,100 metric tons; copper, concentrate production, 19,900 metric tons averaging 17.9% copper; diatomite, 3,000 metric tons; dolomite, 35,000 metric tons; gold, 505,000 kilograms; and silver, 2,700 kilograms.

TABLE 2
GEORGIA: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 1998

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating entities	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity e/
Arsenic, mine output	Lukhumi deposit Tsana deposit	Upper Racha region Lower Svanetiya region	2,000 total.
Arsenic, metal and compounds	Racha mining and chemical plant	Racha region	NA.
Do.	Tsana mining and chemical plant	Tsana	NA.
Barite	Chordskoye deposit	Onskiy rayon	70,000.
Bentonite	Gumbrskoye and Askanskoye deposits	Gumbra, Askana regions	200,000.
Cement	Rustavi cement plant	Rustavi	1,500,000.
Coal	Tkibuli-Shaorskoye, Tkvarchelskoye deposits	Tkibuli, Tkvarcheli, Akhaltsikhe regions	300,000 total.
Copper, copper content of ore	Quartzite company	Madneuli region	12,000.
Diatomite	Kisatibskoye deposit	Kisatibi region	150,000.
Ferroalloys	Zestafoni plant	Zestafoni (now Zestap'oni)	100,000 (ferromanganese).
Do.	do.	do.	250,000 (silicomanganese).
Do.	do.	do.	250,000 (manganese sinter).
Gold	Madneuli complex	Madneuli region	2.
Lead-zinc	Kvaisi deposit	Kvaisi region	1,200 (lead).
Do.	do.	do.	3,000 (zinc).
Manganese, marketable ore	Chiatura complex	Chiatura region	600,000.
Petroleum:			
Crude	About 60 wells accounting for 98% of output	Mirzaani, Teleti, Supsa regions	200,000.
Refined	Batumi refinery	Batumi	NA.
Steel, crude	Rustavi steel mill	Rustavi	1,400,000.

e/ Estimated. NA Not available.