


AREAS OF GROWTH

According to the Ministry of Mines and Metals, Iran has 5% of the world's known lead deposits, 3.5% of its copper and 2% of its zinc. Special significance is attached to five "strategic" metals - steel, copper, aluminium, lead and zinc and the development of the ore mines to sustain their manufacture. Decorative and construction stones have also been given priority as major export revenue earners.

Iron Ore



Output of iron ore rose by 24% to 2.6 million tonnes in 1990. The target figure stands at 5.4 million tonnes per annum by the end of the 1990-94 plan period. Anticipated iron ore requirements are estimated at 10 million tonnes per annum once the country's steel production capacity reaches 5.5 million tonnes in the mid-1990s from the current level of 3 million tonnes. Reserves of the four biggest mines are estimated at 2,000 million tonnes. Current production is mainly by the mines at Bafq, of which Choghart is the most important. The other three mines at Chadour Malou, Golgohar and Sangan are at the design and development stage. EBE from Germany has been awarded the project for Chadour Malou, Acres from Canada is acting as consulting engineers to the Golgohar project which has established reserves of 185 million tonnes. Feasibility studies for the Sangan project with estimated reserves of 280 million tonnes have been awarded to BHP engineering of Australia.

Copper

Two new copper deposits are being developed to feed the Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex in Kerman which produced 120,000 tonnes of copper last year. Plans are being studied to increase the capacity to 200,000 tonnes in future. Total reserves at Sarcheshmeh are estimated at 1,224 million tonnes with an average copper content of 0.7%. In 1989 some 5.7 million tonnes of copper ore were extracted which was increased to 7 million tonnes in 1990.

Alumina

Two big mines are being developed to supply the Iran Aluminium Company (IRALCO) plant at Arak which has a current capacity of 75,000 tonnes, and the joint venture Bandar Abbas Smelter with the Dubai based IDC consortium with a capacity of 220,000 tonnes. SNC-Lavalin is following up on IRALCO expansion project in consortium with Pechinery and Technip (France) to increase aluminium production from the above mentioned current level to 200,000 tonnes. Technoexport of Czechoslovakia has been awarded a US \$322 million contract for a bauxite mining and alumina plant project in the Semnan region. The plant is designed to produce 150,000 tonnes of alumina per year. Proven reserves are 22 million tonnes.

Lead and Zinc

There are some 330 lead and zinc mines across the country with estimated reserves of 60 million tonnes. The Mehdiabad mine with an estimated deposit of 24 million tonnes tops the list. Total output of the lead and zinc mines was 360,000 tonnes in 1989 which rose to 480,000 tonnes in 1990. Contract has been awarded by the National Iranian Lead & Zinc Co for building 60,000 tonnes Zanjan zinc plant as part of consortium with Kloeckner-Ina of Germany with substantial Canadian involvement.

Coal

Major emphasis is also being placed on developing the country's coal mines and processing plants to produce coking coal suitable for the expanding steel industry. The Tabas Coal project with one billion tonne reserves of coking coal is one of the most important coal mines in Iran and Adam Consultants (Acres Davey Mcfee, ICML) were awarded the contract for both feasibility and detailed engineering.