

i) Mineral Development

The Saudi Arabian Five-Year Plan, 1981-85, emphasizes the national requirement to develop the country's non-ferrous metals and minerals industry. These developments are under the supervision of the Director General of Mineral Resources, located in Jeddah, in the Ministry of Petroleum. For many years the U.S. Geological Survey has been active and a staff of Saudi geologists and geophysicists has been built up. Technical assistance has also been provided by the French BRGM, which has helped the establishment of two subsidiaries of Petromin for drilling and geophysical work. More recently contracts for technical assistance have been awarded to Rio Tinto Zinc and the British Steel Corporation. The existence of metal deposits in the ancient rocks on the west side of the country has been known since very early times. Gold, copper, lead, zinc, silver and iron are all possible targets for development, although no deposits of a size and quality that would unquestionably justify production, have yet been found.

The mining code lays down three stages of development, requiring in turn a reconnaissance permit, an exploration licence and a mining lease proper. In both the latter two stages, Petromin will expect to participate, normally with 50 per cent of the operation. In addition to the work in progress in the Western Province, Petromin is reported to be considering the possibilities -- at presently only theoretical -- of the discovery of metals in the sedimentary rocks of the Eastern Province and in the bed of the Red Sea. Of non-metallic minerals, large deposits of phosphates are known in the northern part of the country, and there has already been extensive quarrying of limestone and gypsum for the construction industry.

Mapping of sedimentary and Phanerozoic rocks of the central and eastern regions, studies in geomorphology, classification of the Arabian shield formations, as well as a study of the Red Sea Coastal Plain and Shelf, will also be required. (See Appendix A for a list of existing and new mine operations.)

ii) Education

High priority has been given to education and training under the current Five-Year Plan and this sector offers exciting opportunities for Canadian companies. Higher education, particularly in the fields of engineering, science, medicine, commerce, administration and vocational training, is receiving particular emphasis. Thirty-eight billion dollars will be spent over this period. In an attempt to diversify away from American and British suppliers, Canadians will be in an excellent position to capitalize opportunities for sales of equipment such