Liberia Netherlands Business & Culture Council (LNBCC)



Mineral Sector in Liberia

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About the Liberia Netherlands Business and Culture Council

The Liberia Netherlands Business and Culture Council (LNBCC) is an organization that represents the business interests of both Liberian and Dutch companies. The LNBCC has been active in the capital - Monrovia - since 2016, and is an extension of the Ghana Netherlands Business and Culture Council (GNBCC). Both organizations work closely together with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ghana.

The LNBCC's core business is the promotion and fostering of trade relations between Liberia and the Netherlands, under the mantra of 'growing together'. Currently two employees - Stanley Slagmolen and Tracy Kollie - are working together in developing a membership base, producing sector scans on subsections of the economy and organizing networking events.

Besides those core activities, the LNBCC offers services to both members and non-members in the following areas:

- Business development services: the LNBCC executes market studies for businesses wanting to
 extend their services to Liberia. Company profiling and company visits can be set with possible
 local partners. The LNBCC can also represent organizations locally. With researchers on board
 with extensive experience in qualitative research methods, the LNBCC can provide local and
 context specific information on a wide variety of topics.
- Business support services: The LNBCC provides advice on financial constructions, accounting, bookkeeping, registering processes in Liberia, manners to get subsidies for business models and trainings for accountants.
- Travel support services: LNBCC can negotiate prices for / provide car rentals, hotel bookings, visa and immigration requirements.
- Trade mission & event services: Through our network we bring together authorities, experts and entrepreneurs. The LNBCC organizes events such as plenary sessions, workshops, trainings and meet & greets by taking on the event planning and management.

This sector scan is part of the LNBCC's efforts to attract foreign companies to engage in business with Liberia.

Chapter 1| Executive Summary

Liberia is a country located on the Western fringe of Africa, bordering on the Atlantic Ocean. The country has promising mining sector that has largely been unexplored. Before the 14-year long civil war (1989-2003), the mining sector thrived with large operations in iron ore mining in several sites throughout the country. Mining activities slumped during the war, and slowly rebuilt afterwards until the sector received a double-blow from the Ebola virus Outbreak and the iron ore crisis.

Although the sector shows considerable opportunities, current constraints include lack of geological up-to-date data, unskilled labourers, accusations of corruption and conflicting policy structures. However, the Government of Liberia (GoL) is currently undergoing changes and has committed to investing in the sector, including the review of policies to attract foreign investment and increase transparency.

This document provides background information on the country, the current and historic state of the mining sector and areas of opportunity for Dutch companies to enter the sector locally. These opportunities include:

Gold	Upgrade artisanal and small-scale mining to large scale operations	
Diamonds	Investment and exploration of new alluvial diamond deposits	
Iron Ore	Processing and mining of high-grade iron ore	
Bauxite	Bauxite mining and bauxite processing (alumina)	
Rare metals	Polymetallic base metals (copper, lead, nickel, tin, tungsten and zinc), and niobium, tantalum, zirconium	
Other minerals	Liberia has preserves of: barite, manganese, heavy mineral sand, kyanite, phosphate, kaolin-rich clay and silica sand.	
Logistics	Infrastructure issues cause sector constraints as well as opportunities; construction of robust industry infrastructure is high in demand. Liberia is strategically located on the west coast of Africa, and part of the Mano River Union.	

Chapter 2 | Acronyms

AfDB -African Development Bank

CBI - Center for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries

DFID UK - Department for International Development United Kingdom

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia

GDP- Gross domestic product

GoL- Government of Liberia

LCA - Liberia Local Content Agency

UN -United Nations

UNDP - United National Development Program

Chapter 3 | The Liberian Context

Overview

The Repuplic of Liberia is located in West Africa, and bordered by Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and the Atlantic Ocean. The country is geographically divided into 15 counties, Montserrado county being the most densely populated and where Monrovia, the capital city is located. Liberia continues to rank low on the Human Development Index and is considered a low-income county. However, Gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2017 was estimated at 2.5% compared to a deceleration of 1.6% in 2016 and zero percent growth in 2015¹.

With 16 languages spoken across 15 counties, Liberia was declared a nation in 1847 by freed and freeborn black Americans who had arrived at its shores 26 years earlier. Between the 50s and 70s Liberia was a pillar of strength as many African nations were moving away from colonialism and in 1959 hosted the inception meeting of what is now called the African Union. With strong ties to the United States, the biggest rubber plantation in the world, and an abundance of minerals Liberia was wealthy and stable for decades.

Liberia has a large percentage of young inhabitants (60% under 25), a religiously tolerant society with 80% Christians and 10-20% Christians, and a large diasporic community whom predominantly reside in the USA.

Civil war and Ebola Virus

From 1983- 2003 Liberia suffered from a rebel civil war that greatly affected the economy of the country during the conflict and in the aftermath. Since peace ensued in Liberia in 2003, the Liberian economy has again been viewed with optimism as aid-driven recovery and growth started shifting into private sector driven growth. In 2005, Liberia had \$82 million in Foreign Direct Investments, and by 2013 this figure had risen significantly to \$700m, peaking in 2011 to \$1.3 billion. Most of these investments were from mining, oil palm and forestry, where \$16 billion worth of agreements were signed. Harnessing this private sector potential has become a priority for the Liberian government, which was aiming to narrow the gap of growth and revenue between large (foreign) corporations and small local businesses.

The 2014 outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) slowed down the economic recovery significantly. The World Bank estimated a decrease of 11.7% of the country's GDP in 2014. Research showed 10% of businesses closed in relation to the crisis and overall employment decreased by 33%. However, the same research also showed businesses' optimism that employment and revenues would increase within the next 6 months.

EVD posed the most daunting threat to the momentum Liberia's economic growth since the civil wars. However, the growth of the marketplace in both diversity and capability in the preceding ten years provides a solid ground for the economy to - with the right support - bounce back. Liberia's current Agenda for Transformation (AfT) strategy holds as priority broad-based economic growth and employment creation.

¹ World Bank. Liberia Overview (2017). Retrieved from: https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/liberia/

Economy and politics

Liberia recently had a change of power with president George Weah being sworn in on the 22nd of January 2018. It marked the first democratic transition since 1944. The main economic activities of Liberia are mining and agriculture; including rubber plantations. The government is making concerted efforts towards strengthening infrastructure, healthcare, energy supplies and trade facilities.

Liberia has a coastline of 579 kilometers and four ports; Monrovia Port, Buchanan Port, Greenville and Harper Port. Monrovia and Buchanan have compliancy with International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS).

Chapter 4 | Country Overview

Bordering countries: Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire

Land size: 111,369 km

Total population: 4,818,000²

Literacy rate: 42.9%

Urban population: 48%

GINI Index: 38.2

GDP: 3.264 billion USD³

Real GDP Growth: 3.1%⁴
Mobile penetration: 75%
Internet penetration: 21%
Trade and Economic Memberships:

ECOWAS

Mano River Union

African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)

EU - Everything but Arms (EBA)

China Preferential Trade Agreement with Developing Counties

Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

² In 2018. World Bank. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/country/liberia

³ In 2018. World Bank. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/country/liberia

⁴ In 2018. Trading Economics. Retrieved from https://tradingeconomics.com/liberia/gdp-growth-annual

Chapter 5 | The Mining Sector

Introduction

The mining sector has been a central component in the Liberian economy since iron ore was discovered in the Bomi Hills in the 1940s. From the 1960s until the 1980s Liberia was ranked as the largest exporter of Iron Ore in Africa and the third largest in the world and contributed more than 60% of the export revenue and about 25% of the country's GDP⁵.

However, the civil war (1986-2003) severely impacted mining operations, causing all large-scale operations to cease production by the end of the war. The end of the war (2003) marked the beginning of new collaborative efforts from the government of Liberia, the private sector and other international bodies to rebuild the mining sector and other sectors.

The Ebola Virus Outbreak (2014-2016) and the fall in international iron ore prices around the same time caused a slump in the growing economy as it is one of the core contributors to national GDP.

Nevertheless, since the end of the civil conflicts, the mining sector alone is estimated to have attracted USD 7.6 billion worth of investments and is responsible for the creation of about 10,000 employments opportunities⁶.

In 2018, George Weah's government was sworn into the presidency among his campaign policies was his commitment towards helping the private sector conduct business in the country with ease. He publicly declared "Liberia opened" for business in one of his campaign trails in 2017

Mineral Resources

Liberia is renowned for its high quality and quantity of diamond, iron ore and gold deposits. However Liberia has ten additional identified mineral deposits that include: barite, bauxite, manganese, heavy mineral sand, kyanite, phosphate, kaolin-rich clay and silica sand.

In addition, according to the Liberian Geological Survey, the Liberian soil has the potential for harboring polymetallic base metals (copper, lead, nickel, tin, tungsten and zinc) and for niobium, tantalum, zirconium, and rare earth metals used in the technology industry.

In 2012, African Petroleum discovered oil deposits off the coast of Liberia. However, extraction of these deposits remain non-existent.

⁵ The mining sector of Liberia: current practices and environmental challenges. Samuel T. K. Wilson1 & Hongtao Wang & Martin Kabenge & Xuejiao Qi2, 2017, p.1.

⁶ Ministry of Finance (2013) Annual Economic Review. Republic of Liberia.

⁷ Minerals Survey. British Geological Survey in association with the Liberian Geological Survey, Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy. (2014) https://www.bgs.ac.uk/lgs/downloads/Liberia_overview_brochure_lowres.pdf, p. 2.

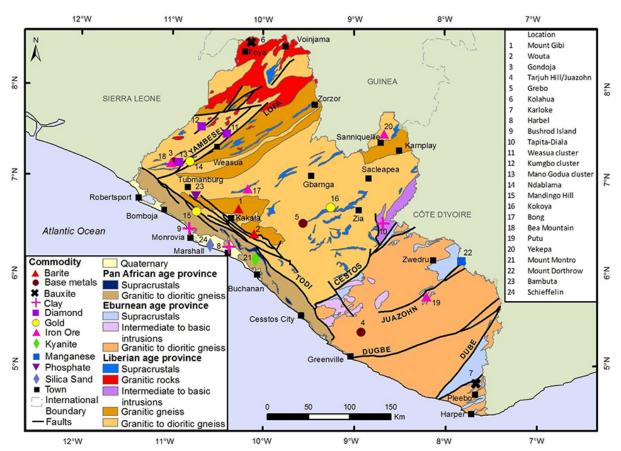


Figure 1. Mineral Deposits in Liberia. Source: Minerals Survey. British Geological Survey in association with the Liberian Geological Survey, Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy. (2014)

Finance and economics

In 2010–2015, the mining sector accounted for 52.74% of the total revenue generated in the extractives industry and 15.68% of the total revenue collected from all sectors by the government of Liberia. In 2016 mineral exports was valued at 471 million USD (a 31% increase from 2015), or 91% of export earnings.

In 2014, the exporting activities registered the total of about US\$561 million and Iron Ore is said to have dominated that figure-- accounting for 70 per cent of the total export. The extractive industry of Liberia in 2015 is responsible for 48.97% of the total employment percentage in the country. With mining and quarrying taking just 3.34% (over 18,000 jobs) of that percentage, which can be explained by the Ebola virus outbreak and global drop in iron ore prices which caused a drastic reduction in employment.

The sector is expected to register a significant growth when current companies ramp up full operations after recovering from the 2014-2015 crisis. 10 According to the World Bank overview of the Liberian economy, the sector is expected to receive a 1.4% growth in 2019,

⁸ LEITI (2016). EITI Report for the year ending June 30th 2015, p. 9.

⁹ LEITI (2016) EITI report for the year ended 30 June 2015. p,11

¹⁰ www.worldbank.org/en/country/liberia/overview

which is a small but vital move from the 1.2% it received in 2018. ¹¹By the end of the year 2019, the mining sector is projected to attract a growth of 7.8% due to a committed increment in the production of gold and iron ore.

Active mining operations

Based on the data published in 2010 by the Ministry of Lands, Mining and Energy (which has since become the Ministry of Mines and Energy), there were 1293 acknowledged mining operations in Liberia and 1142 (88.3%) are artisanal small scale mining, 65 (5%) are medium size, 78 (6%) are exploration companies, and 8 (0.6%) are large-scale mining operations.

The table below shows an overview of nationwide active mining operations.

Gold/Diamond	Iron Ore
African Diam Company	Arcelor Mittal Liberia
Golden Bar Trading	China Union Liberia
Royal Company	Putu Iron Ore
Bea Mountain Mining	Western Cluster
Golden Mass Trading	BHP Billiton
The Diamond Star Plus	
Dibodo Import & Export	
Golden View Trading	
West African Diamond	
Earth Source Mineral	
Golden Vision Trading	
West African Gold & Diamond	
Global Diamond Company	
Lee Yam Diamond	
Zwedru Mineral Business	

Figure 2: Mining Companies operating in Liberia Source: LEITI (2016) EITI report for the year ended 30 June 2015. p,17.

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¹¹ ibid

Chapter 6 | Opportunities: Mining

Liberia offers a multitude of opportunities within the mining sector, which are listed in this chapter. Due to the fact that the mining sector lacks up-to-date geological survey data, it is expected that there are a wealth of opportunities currently not covered in this report. As the Government of Liberia is investing in increasing the transparency of the sector, and hence provide factual data, it is also expected that the following years will unveil details on mineral-rich soils.

Apart from mining there are opportunities in technological innovation and expertise, resource mobilisation, collaborations, logistics, and human resources.

Mining

Mining is one of the most promising investment opportunities in Liberia. There are five different types of mining licenses available for investors; prospecting License, Exploration License, Class C mining license, Class B mining license, and Class A mining license. (for more details see: LEITI (2016) EITI report for the year ended 30 June 2015. p,19)

Gold Mining

Liberia has two main types of gold deposit; both quartz-carbonate vein deposits, which is a subtype of lode gold deposits found in verities of rocks and alluvial placer deposits¹². There are more than 500 discoveries of gold throughout the country in areas such as: Bea Mountain,Bopolu-Wuesua-Tawalata, Masawo-Zolowo-Zorzor, Mano River-Wologizi Range, St. John River-Kokoya, Cestos River, Putu Range-Zwedru and Bukon Jedeh.

The industry is predominantly small-scale artisanal mining. A World Bank Report published in 2012 stated that the artisanal mining industry of Liberia is estimated to have employed 100,000 people, of which the majority are Liberians.¹³

In 2014, the first ever gold refinery was scheduled to commence operations. Prior to this, artisanal mining of gold was the only known method through which the product was mined. ¹⁴ Between 2014-2015, over 20 million USD worth of gold were exported from Liberia, accounting for more than 22,000-ounce gold produced between those years.

Despite the establishment of a gold refinery in the country, the gold mining industry has still not seen the transformation that is needed to experience a great boom. Artisanal mining, which is plagued by inadequate resources, mining equipment and the absence of a proper financial structure and network is still common in the country.

¹² https://www.bgs.ac.uk/lgs/downloads/Liberia_gold_brochure_lowres.pdf, p,3

¹³ World Bank Report 2012: Artisanal Mining in Critical Ecosystems. A Look at Gabon, Liberia and Madagascar. (Online). <a href="http://www.profor.info/sites/profor.info/sit

^{14:} LEITI (2016) EITI report for the year ended 30 June 2015. p,10-11

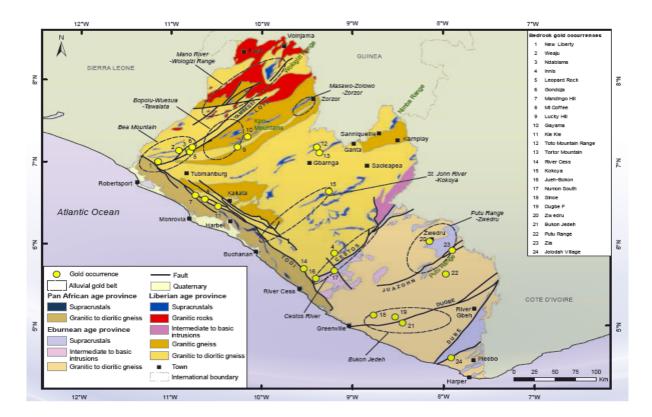


Figure 3: Gold Deposits in Liberia. Source: British and Liberian geological survey; (https://www.bgs.ac.uk/lgs/downloads/Liberia_gold_brochure_lowres.pdf)

Diamond Mining

Diamonds are one of the most sought after resources in the far west of sub Saharan Africa. It was widely reported to have been used to finance both the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively. The rising demand for it in the international scene makes it a profitable commodity that is capable of benefiting involved actors, as well as contributing to the local economy.

A significant amount of diamond deposits has been identified in the regions of Liberia since the early 1960s.¹⁵ The exported value of diamond between 2014-2015 was way over 40 million USD, representing more than 100,000 carats of diamond.

The diamond mining industry is dominated by artisanal miners. According to the USGS and LGS regional surveys conducted in the mid- 1970s, there are several alluvial placers and kimberlite indicator minerals in central and western areas of Liberia. Recent explorations and small-scale mining activities has confirming the presence of diamond in these areas. These areas include: Mano, Kumgbor and Morro-Gbeya rivers, Yaa River, Boe and Nzar creeks, Sinoe River, Du River and Lofa River. 16

¹⁵ LEITI (2016) EITI report for the year ended 30 June 2015. p,10-11

¹⁶ https://www.bgs.ac.uk/lgs/downloads/Liberia_diamondBrochure_lowres.pdf, p,5

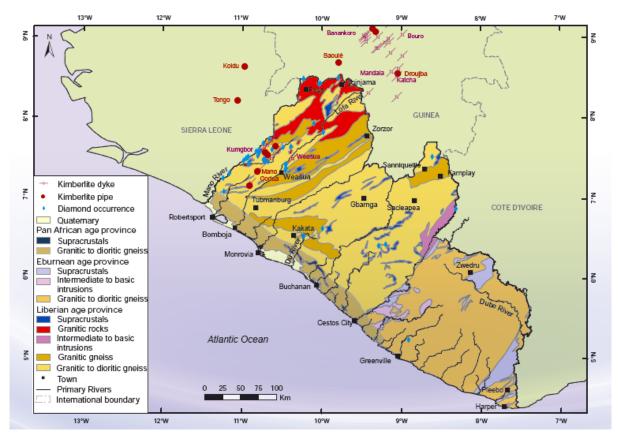


Figure 4: Diamond deposits in Liheria. Source: British and Liherian geological survey; (see https://www.bgs.ac.uk/lgs/downloads/Liheria diamond_brochure_lowres.pdf)

Iron ore

Iron ore is the first mineral to receive a large-scale investment in Liberia. The product was first discovered in the 1940s in the Bomi Hills. Between 1960s and 1980s, iron ore was contributing more than 60% ¹⁷ of the export revenue and about 25% of the country's GDP. Such contributions were very key in the development of the country. During that period, Liberia was considered to be the largest exporter of iron ore in Africa and the third largest in the world. The 14 years civil war crippled the iron ore industry significantly. However, since the war ended in 2003 and the democracy of the country was restored, the industry has been making significant progress. Despite the Ebola outbreak in 2014-2015, that disturbed the industry and the fall in price of iron ore, the country managed to export over 400 million USD worth of iron ore which was just over 8 million metric tons. ¹⁸According the geological survey of Liberia, the country is said be covered around 65% in Archean rocks, which is the main source of iron ore in the world currently. ¹⁹ Presently there are eight areas that have shown to hold millions of iron ore deposits respectively. These places are, the Nimba Range, Yekepa, Bong, Wologizi Range, Putu, Mofe Creek, the Buchanan Fines, the Goe Fantro Range.

¹⁷ The mining sector of Liberia: current practices and environmental challenges, Samuel T. K. Wilson1 & Hongtao Wang2 & Martin Kabenge1 & Xuejiao Qi2, Springer-Verlag, Germany, 2017, p,9

¹⁸ LEITI (2016) EITI report for the year ended 30 June 2015. p,10-11

¹⁹ https://nww.bgs.ac.uk/lgs/downloads/Liberia ironore brochure lowres.pdf, p,4,5,6,7

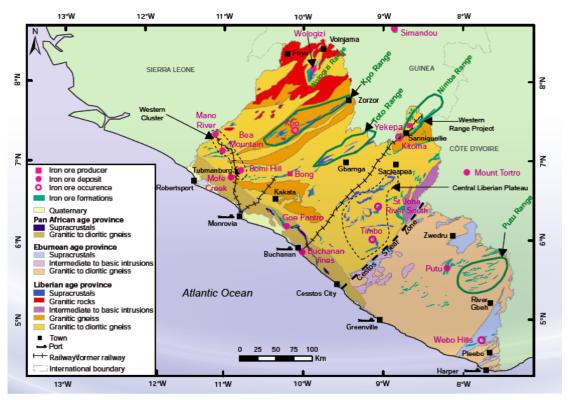


Figure 5: Iron ore deposits in Liberia Source: British and Liberian geological survey; (https://www.bgs.ac.uk/lgs/downloads/ Liberia_ironore_brochure_lowres.pdf)

Logistics and asset management

The demand for logistics (machinery and technical expertise) in the mining sector in Liberia is considerably high. Only a handful of companies exist in the country that can efficiently and effectively bridge the gap. The development of a robust transport network for the mineral sector is of importance for the private, as well as the public sector.

Considering the fact that Liberia has 15 international mining companies that can start running on full capacity within the following years, private investors have the opportunity to make profitable investments by providing the necessary equipment such as tractors, heavy duty trucks, and other machinery needed for mining and exploration activities.

Due to the heavy freight of mining transportation, road deterioration is a serious challenge. Poorly-constructed roads require higher maintenance than quality roads. Opportunities lie in surveying and road rehabilitation with a specialisation in supporting heavy machinery and freight.

For information on tenders, please visit:

http://www.cwctenders.com/construction_tenders_liberia.htm

https://www.export.gov/article?id=Liberia-Construction.

Chapter 7 | Policy Framework

Policy Framework

The strategies and policy's framework designed by the Government of Liberia emphasises generating revenues, drafting and regulating mining policies and frameworks, facilitating exploration and mining opportunities, creating job opportunities for citizens and strengthening private sector investments and partnership. In ensuring proper regulatory mechanism, the GoSL and its relevant agencies, institutions and organizations have created/enacted the following policies and structural frameworks that governs the establishment, sustainability and operations of mining investments in the country.

According the mining policy of Liberia published in 2010, the following were designed to be the key purpose of the mining policy of the country:

- A sustainable and well-governed mining sector that effectively garners and deploys resource rents and that is safe, healthy, gender & ethnically inclusive, environmentally friendly, socially responsible and appreciated by surrounding communities;
- A mining sector that has become a key component of a diversified, vibrant and globally competitive industrialising Liberian & African economy;
- A mining sector that has helped establish a competitive Liberian & African infrastructure platform, through the maximisation of its propulsive local & regional economic linkages;
- A mining sector that optimises and husbands Liberia's finite mineral resource endowments and that is diversified, incorporating both high value metals and lower value industrial minerals at both commercial and small-scale levels; and
- A mining sector that is a major player in vibrant and competitive national, continental and international capital and commodity markets.²⁰

Acts and licenses regarding mining:

Liberia minerals and mining laws of 2000

The minerals and mining law of 2000 is the primary document that regulates the mining sector of the country. The document contains laws ranging from how, who and when an individual or a group can acquire the rights to operate a mining business in the country. It also regulates the relationship between the miners and the environment in order to protect the environment and to attracts investments opportunities.

Find documents here: https://mlmeliberia.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/liberia-minerals-and-mining-law-2000.pdf

²⁰ https://mlmeliberia.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/liberia-mineral-policy.pdf

Liberia mineral policy

The policy outlines the frameworks and strategies for the mining industry of Liberia. it specifically illustrates the country's roadmap, expectations, and visions for the mining sector.

Find documents here: https://mlmeliberia.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/liberia-mineral-policy.pdf

Liberia revenue code

The Liberia revenue code is an act adopted in 2000 and amended by the consolidated tax amendments acts in October 2011. Its main purpose is to govern taxation and any other revenue related activity in the country

Find documents here: https://mlmeliberia.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/revenue-code.pdf

Liberia exploration regulations

This regulation governs the administration of exploration licenses issued under the minerals and mines acts of 2000.

Find documents here: https://mlmeliberia.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/liberia-exploration-regulationseffective-2010.pdf

Liberia national petroleum policy 2012

This policy advocates for and governs Liberia's upstream petroleum sector, including activities related to reconnaissance, exploration, development, production, transportation of non-refined petroleum and decommissioning, as well as provisions for management of revenues granted by upstream petroleum.

Find documents here: http://www.eisourcebook.org/cms/January%202016/ Liberia%20National%20Petroleum%20Policy%202012.pdf

Acts and licenses regarding the environment:

Environmental code

Find documents here: https://mlmeliberia.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/environmental-code.pdf

Land rights acts of 2014

Find documents here: https://mlmeliberia.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/land-rights-act.pdf

Acts and license regarding labour:

Liberia labour law of 2004

Find documents here: https://www.google.com/url?

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Local content initiatives of Liberia

Find documents here: https://www.nocal.com.lr/social_relations/local-content
https://www.oecd.org/trade/topics/trade-in-raw-materials/documents/trade-raw-materials-liberia-country-note.pdf

Chapter 8 | Institutional Framework

Ministry of Mines and Energy

The Ministry of Mines & Energy is the statutory agency of government in charge of administering the mining sector of Liberia. It was established by an act of Legislature as part of the executive branch of government. The fundamental legal instrument used to administer the mineral sector is the New

Minerals and Mining Law of Liberia which was approved and became effective in April of 2000. While the Ministry is the lead agency in managing the sector, it also plays a major role in other related sectors

(text from Ministry of Mines and Energy website).

Website: https://mme.gov.lr/

Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia

The EPA-Liberia was established with the goal of creating and enforcing a strict regulatory framework

for environmental regulation in Libera.

Website: http://epa.gov.lr/

Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI)

LEITI is a body that had it inception due to the share need to establish a solid and greater sense of transparency and accountability in the extractive industries. It is an extended body of the Extractive

Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) having it office in Norway.

Website: http://www.leiti.org.lr/

Ministry of Finance

The ministry of finance is responsible for the formation and implementation of all economic policies and financial managements in the country. It is the umbrella body for all the financial institutions and

regulatory bodies in Liberia.

Website: https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/

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Further reading and reference list

- Extractives Hub: https://www.extractiveshub.org/resource/list? TextString=liberia, an extensive overview of the latest analysis, reports and data on the extractives sector. This platform is an initiative of the Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy from the University of Dundee
- The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is the global standard to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources: https://eiti.org/liberia
- The Liberia National Concession Portal: The Government of Liberia and Trimble Land Administration have developed this Concession Cadastre Portal to improve transparency and promote investment in Liberia. http://portals.flexicadastre.com/liberia/

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