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New cadastre to take Guinea mining to the next level

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The Republic of Guinea decided to implement Spatial Dimension's enterprise-scale land management solution, FlexiCadastre as its new mining cadastre to increase the capacity and performance of government institutions in the mining sector following an international tender process.

Project implementation started in the fourth quarter of this year and is expected to take 20 months. It will be done with the support from the country's Project d'Appui à la Gouvernance dans le Secteur Minier (Pagsem).

The Pagsem project is funded by the World Bank to the value of \$20-million, with government organisations within Guinea, such as the Ministries of Mines and Geology, Economy, Finance, Budget, Environment, and Transport, earmarked to benefit from the new mining cadastre.

As mining is a critical sector in Guinea, accounting for about 25% of the country's gross domestic product and 95% of its export earnings, government has made vital strides to improve the management and performance of the mining sector, including obtaining compliant-country status from the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative and the publication of mining agree- ments, notes Spatial Dimension president **Bill Feast**.

"Although this initial mining cadastre project focuses on providing back office solutions to meet the immediate licensing and compliance management functions of the Department of Mines and Geology, the country's long-term vision is to implement an end-to-end egovernment portal," he tells *Mining Weekly*.

According to Feast, Spatial Dimensions has deployed egovernment solutions in a number of other African countries, such as Kenya and Tanzania with great success.

Through these egovernment portals, all statutory processes are migrated online with real-time applications, renewals and transfers. The egovernment site also facilitates the secure submission of reports and payments.

"We look forward to assisting the Republic of Guinea in their modernisation programme," he adds.

Some of the major mining operations the enterprise-scale land management solution will cater for include key domestic players such as the Association pour la Recherche et I' Exploitation du Diamant et de I' Siguri Gold Property and Société AMIG Mining International SARL, as well as foreign companies with operations in Guinea, such as Bellzone Holdings, Compagnie Des Bauxites De Guinee SA and Crew Gold Corporation.

Guinea's Resources

Guinea is home to 25% of the world's largest reserves of high bauxite, which is the world's main source of aluminium and iron-ore reserves.

The West African country has not benefited fully from its rich mineral resources, owing to sustained instability, continuing political risks and lack of infrastructure.

Most of Guinea's high-end iron-ore reserves exceed 60% grade but the deposits are largely untapped, which presents significant opportunities for mining companies, with the country earmarked to become the world's fourth-largest bauxite producer by 2017.

Other key commodities include diamonds. The country produced 300 000 ct of diamonds in 2011 at a total value of about $30 million, followed by the production of 266 800 ct produced in 2012. In 2007 and 2008, it produced 1 018-million carats and 3.1-million carats respectively, culminating in Guinea being ranked eighth in the world for total carats of diamonds produced.

Meanwhile, Guinea is also experiencing a surge in gold exploration funding, as investors continue to monitor the business and politi- cal environments.

In the past five years, an estimated $2.5 billion has been invested in Guinea's mining sector, which remains relatively weak, compared with the country's mineral-rich neighbours such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where mining accounts for 64% of the economy. However, Rio Tinto's Simandou project is set to become the world's largest iron-ore mine and infrastructure venture, providing access to one of the world's largest untapped resources, comprising more than two-billion tons of high-grade iron-ore, which could potentially make Guinea one of the largest iron-ore producers.

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