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Overview of NORM Related industries in Ghana

Mining and mineral processing from the extractive industry are the main NORM- related industry in Ghana. Mining in Ghana for several decades has included the extraction of gold, bauxite, manganese, diamond and iron ore in commercial quantities. Among these, gold mining is the most prominent and contributes to about 93% of the exports. In Ghana, there are about 200 mining companies operating from small, medium to large scale mining.

In addition to the mainly gold mining companies, Ghana also recently (in 2010) became an oil producing country, producing oil in commercial quantities. Currently, there are three producing oilfields located in the country, with seventeen (17) active Petroleum Agreements (PAs) currently for offshore concessions mostly in the Western Basin engaged in various exploration and exploitation activities.

The NORM extractive industries are not being regulated for NORM in most non-developed countries including Ghana. In this regard, a national programme to establish baseline radioactivity measurements in the environmental compartments which can be affected by extractive industries that have just started operations as well as for existing ones are vigorously being pursued by the Radiation Protection Institute of Ghana since 2010, with the purpose of gathering reference data which will also assist in the decision making by the regulatory Authority in the establishment of a NORM regulation which is in progress.

In this paper, an overview of the Ghanaian NORM-related Industries, and data from radioactivity measurements for the various extractive industries conducted within the past decade is presented and discussed.

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