Congo Brazzaville Mining Report Q3 2016

Description: Mining activity in the Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) is significantly underdeveloped and the country's has yet to begin leveraging its vast mineral reserves, which include high grade iron ore as well as phosphates and other products. The international mining community has taken steps to begin operations in the country, with Zanaga Iron Ore and Sundance Resources among the companies leading the charge, although a lack of sufficient transport infrastructure and energy supply remains a major impediment. Meanwhile, continued decline in global iron ore prices threatens to deter new investment and delay existing projects.

Latest Developments & Structural Trends

- Sundance Resources has delayed the start date off its Mbalam-Nabeba iron ore project spanning the border between the Republic of Congo and Cameroon after the company's infrastructure partner, Gezhouba Group Company reportedly pulled out of an agreement to construct connecting port and rail infrastructure for the project due to the recent slump in ore prices.

- The re-election of Republic of Congo president Denis Sassou Nguesso in March 2016 brought the issue of the country's mining sector development to the fore as the government continues to pursue plans to diversify the economy to ease its reliance on oil exports. However, during his campaign, opposition candidate Guy Brice Parfait Kollelas pointed to the government's lack of investment in infrastructure needed to support the growth of the industry.

- Falling iron ore prices present significant downside risk to the mining industry's growth in the short term. Forecasts suggest global ore prices to fall by 32% in 2016 to USD38/tonne.

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