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Geoscience Information and Data in the Moroccan Geological Survey

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Morocco is well-endowed with natural resources, including precious and base metals, phosphates (of which Morocco is considered to have the world's largest reserves) and industrial minerals onshore, and the potential for hydrocarbons offshore. A well-managed digital repository for the geoscience knowledge base of the country is essential if these resources are to be promoted and exploited to their fullest potential. Mining companies use high-quality data to guide their exploration planning, investors use it to provide confidence in company plans, and the government requires it to guide decisions on regulation and licencing.

Much of the digital data within the Geological Survey was generated by a national geological mapping programme (Programme Nationale de Cartographie Géologique, or PNCG) that ran between 1996 and 2005, under which numerous geological, geophysical and geochemical maps covering parts of Morocco were produced by several contractors including BGS, the French BRGM, and the Council for Geosciences of South Africa (CGS). These data, together with older non-digital maps and geological reports comprise a valuable and comprehensive geoscientific data set covering much of the country.

The Ministry of Energy, Mine, Water and Environment launched a 10-year (2015-2025) 'Road Map' a year ago to develop the nation's geological and geothematic infrastructure. This includes plans to update and greatly increase the geologic and geothematic map (geophysical and geochemical) coverage of Morocco. The availability of quality geological infrastructure is also vital as the geology can be used to highlight the natural resources for investors.

Now the Geological Survey is being re-invigorated and plans, over the next decade, to update existing geological maps, to survey un-mapped regions, to computerize its data, and to make a national digital geological map. Potential funding sources need to be explored. There is the potential to make Morocco an extremely attractive place for investment in the minerals and energy resources sectors, with a wealth of geoscientific information readily available in modern and consistent formats.

