

Brazil Gets Its Own Digital Atlas

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The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) launched the National Digital Atlas of Brazil, December 27, in Rio de Janeiro. This is the Institute's first publication in a DVD ROM format, and it represents the largest publication of its type ever edited in Brazil.

The Atlas contains 400 maps, 1,030 photos, 532 texts, and 30 videos, for a total of three gigabytes. The hydrochemical maps of the Surface and Subterranean Waters of the Northeast and the second edition of the Basic Vocabulary of Natural Resources and Environment are also scheduled for release.

Geological Map

On July 2, at the inauguration of the Sossego copper mine, in Canaã dos Carajás, in the state of Pará, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva had announced the completion of the first Geological Map of Brazil on a 1:1,000,000 scale.

The task was accomplished by the Geological Service, part of the Ministry of Mines and Energy. "It is the most significant and important set of digitally available data in geology, geochemistry, and geophysics," the President underlined.

Lula also announced the allocation of US\$ 56.6 million (160 million reais) for the production of new geological maps until the end of his term in office. The new maps will cover 2.5 million square kilometers of Brazilian territory, a 72% increase in scope compared to what currently exists.

"In Carajás, beneath this soil, there are immense riches that have greatly contributed to Brazil's development and social progress. With the production of this and the other mining companies associated with the project, it will be possible for Brazil to achieve self-sufficiency in copper and increase its export capacity in the mineral sector," the President affirmed.

According to the President, the goal is to expand the areas mined in Brazilian territory by 30%, adding US\$ 1.9 billion (6 billion reais) in mineral wealth to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generating 500 thousand new direct and indirect jobs, as well as improved safety conditions for the companies and the population involved.

According to Lula, some researchers contend that other Carajáses - belts containing reserves of iron, manganese, copper, and other mineral ores - may exist in Brazil.

"But the State did not invest in mapping the subsoil to attract domestic and international private capital to the mineral sector. For three decades there have been no investments to discover the wealth we possess in our soil and subsoil," he stated.

The Sossego mine is Vale do Rio Doce Company's first copper project in the region, with an annual production capacity of 140 thousand tons of copper concentrate. It is estimated that by 2007, when the Sossego Project is in full operation, the five mines - Sossego, Alvo 118, Salobo, Alemão, and Cristalino - will create 1500 jobs.

Translation: David Silberstein
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