

Revival plan for asbestos mines expected soon: Zimbabwe

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The Zimbabwean government will soon craft a revival plan for Shabanie and Mashava asbestos mines after the completion of the handover process.

The mines, under the administration of Afaras Gwaradzimba since 2004, were recently handed over to the Government, with the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation spearheading the revival of the only asbestos mines in the country.

Mines and Mining Development Deputy Minister Gift Chimankire said the government would put in place the revival plan to ensure the mines resumed operations.

Estimates suggest that about \$200 million will be needed to reopen the mines. Shabanie and Mashava used to produce about 180,000 tonnes a year of fiber for asbestos.

Analysts say the government should treat with urgency the revival of the mines, considering the world's fastest growing economies' demand for asbestos.

Brazil, Russia, India and China have eclipsed some uncertainties over the continuity of asbestos mining after some European countries imposed a ban on the mineral. South Africa, which was the biggest importer of Zimbabwean asbestos, has stopped using asbestos products.

According to Turnall Holdings, local asbestos has a strong market, with a capacity to absorb \$2 billion worth of the mineral per annum.

Asbestos could be the only mineral in the country that has not experienced growth over the past two years and Zimbabwe has been spending millions of dollars on fiber imports from Russia and Brazil.

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