

Egypt Asec signs Sudan gold concession deal

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Asec Co. for Mining, Egypt's biggest publicly traded mining company, is set to sign an agreement with the Sudanese government for a gold concession in Africa's largest country, Chairman Fayez Gress said.

"We are now preparing the contract between us and the ministry of mining and energy in Sudan," Gress said in a phone interview today from Cairo, where the unit of private equity firm Citadel Capital is based. He expects the agreement to be concluded "within a couple of months."

The company aims to "at least" double its revenue, net income and investments within five years, he said. "This is the minimum that we are looking for."

Asec Co. has a presence in countries that include Egypt, Algeria, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Ethiopia, where it won a gold concession in 2008.

The targeted concession in Sudan is located along the Ethiopian border southeast of the capital Khartoum, Gress said. The company has also bid for two concessions to explore for gold in Egypt, he said in a competition organized under the supervision of the Oil Ministry.

"We are still waiting. We have about three months to know," he added.

Asec is looking for acquisitions to strengthen its position as an integrated group with operations ranging from extraction of raw materials to production, Gress said. "This is what we are looking for to enlarge the value chain of our business."