

VALLEY OF THE RIO DOCE CO

Form 6-K

December 24, 2003

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**United States
Securities and Exchange Commission**

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 6-K

Report of Foreign Private Issuer
Pursuant To Rule 13a-16 or 15d-16
of the
Securities Exchange Act of 1934

For the month of
December 2003

Valley of the Rio Doce Company

(Translation of Registrant's name into English)

Avenida Graça Aranha, No. 26
20005-900 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

(Address of principal executive office)

(Indicate by check mark whether the registrant files or will file annual reports under cover of Form 20-F or Form 40-F.)

(Check One) Form 20-F Form 40-F

(Indicate by check mark whether the registrant by furnishing the information contained in this Form is also thereby furnishing information to the Commission pursuant to Rule 12g3-2(b) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.)

(Check One) Yes No

(If "Yes" is marked, indicate below the file number assigned to the registrant in connection with Rule 12g3-2(b). 82-)

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Press Release

CVRD Receives the Environmental License to Operate Sossego

Rio de Janeiro, December 23, 2003 Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD) informs that the Secretary for Science, Technology and Environment of the state of Pará, Brazil, provided license for operation of the Sossego copper project, in Carajás, state of Pará.

Sossego is the only greenfield copper project in the world to start operations in 2004. It will be commissioned in the first quarter of 2004 and is scheduled to begin full commercial production in mid-2004, at an estimated level of 470,000 tons of copper concentrate per year, equivalent to 140,000 tons of copper metal.

For further information, please contact:

Roberto Castello Branco: roberto.castello.branco@cvrd.com.br +55-21-3814-4540

Barbara Geluda: barbara.geluda@cvrd.com.br +55-21-3814-4557

Daniela Tinoco: daniela.tinoco@cvrd.com.br +55-21-3814-4946

Eduardo Mello Franco: eduardo.mello.franco@cvrd.com.br +55-21-3814-9849

Rafael Azevedo: rafael.azevedo@cvrd.com.br +55-21-3814-4700

Rafael Campos: rafael.campos@cvrd.com.br +55-21-3814-4353

This press release may contain statements that express management's expectations about future events or results rather than historical facts. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those projected in forward-looking statements, and CVRD cannot give assurance that such statements will prove correct. These risks and uncertainties include factors: relating to the Brazilian economy and securities markets, which exhibit volatility and can be adversely affected by developments in other countries; relating to the iron ore business and its dependence on the global steel industry, which is cyclical in nature; and relating to the highly competitive industries in which CVRD operates. For additional information on factors that could cause CVRD's actual results to differ from expectations reflected in forward-looking statements, please see CVRD's reports filed with the Brazilian Comissão de Valores Mobiliários and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

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Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized.

Date: December 24, 2003

COMPANHIA VALE DO RIO DOCE
(Registrant)

By: /s/ Fabio de Oliveira Barbosa

Fabio de Oliveira Barbosa
Chief Financial Officer