



# 2006 Minerals Yearbook

---

MALTA

---

# THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF MALTA

By Harold R. Newman

In 2006, Malta remained an important transshipment center in the Mediterranean area. Its political and strategic importance has traditionally emanated from its geographic position in the center of the Mediterranean Sea and its natural deepwater harbor. The transshipment and reexport of goods continued to be significant to the country's economy. International trade activities represented Malta's economic lifeline.

## Production

The mineral industry, which consisted mainly of the quarrying of golden limestone (*globigerina*) and salt production, all for domestic consumption, was small (table 1). Malta depended almost completely on imports of raw materials and fuels.

The mineral-related economy of the country depended mainly on trade and the storage of crude oil in the Malta Freeport. The Malta Freeport offers modern transshipment facilities, which include storage, assembly and processing operations, and an oil terminal with bunkering facilities.

In 2006, Malta and Tunisia signed an agreement for joint oil exploration in zones of the continental shelf located between

the two countries. Both countries agreed to determine the coverage of these zones by setting up a joint group of experts (Alexander's Gas & Oil Connections, 2006).

RWE Dea entered into a farm-in agreement with Global Petroleum Inc. on Malta's offshore exploration Blocks 4 and 5 in area 3 located in the southern area of the Ragusa Trough. RWE Dea planned to conduct seismic work and possibly drill an exploration well (Offshore Engineer, 2006).

More-extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Malta can be found in the 2004 and the 2005 Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Area Reports—International—Europe and Central Eurasia, which are available on the World Wide Web at <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country>.

## References Cited

- Alexander's Gas & Oil Connections, 2006, Malta and Tunisia sign deal on oil exploration and exploitation: Alexander's Gas & Oil Connections, February 27. (Accessed April 21, 2006, at <http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news/nta61277.htm>.)
- Offshore Engineer, 2006, Exploration: Offshore Engineer, v. 31, no. 8, August, p. 18.

TABLE 1  
MALTA: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1,2</sup>

(Cubic meters)

Commodity <sup>3</sup>	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Limestone	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
Salt	13,000	13,000	6,000 <sup>r</sup>	6,000 <sup>r</sup>	6,000

<sup>r</sup>Revised.

<sup>1</sup>Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Table includes data available through April 2007.

<sup>3</sup>In addition to commodities listed, small amounts of cement, fertilizer, lime, and plaster are produced, but available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.