



# 2008 Minerals Yearbook

---

## INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

---

# THE MINERAL INDUSTRIES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

## COMOROS, MAURITIUS, REUNION, AND SEYCHELLES

By Harold R. Newman

### COMOROS

The Comoro Islands form an archipelago of four islands—Anjouan, Grande Comore, Mayotte, and Moheli. The archipelago is the result of volcanic action along a fissure in the seabed running west-northwest to east-southeast. Grande Comore is the largest and youngest of the islands. Comoros, which is one of the world's poorest countries, has few transportation links between its islands, a young and rapidly increasing population, and few natural resources. Economic growth from 2006 to 2008 averaged only about 1% (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2009).

Comoros did not play a significant role in the world's production or consumption of mineral resources. The mineral industry of Comoros continued to be limited to producing only common local building materials, such as clay, crushed stone, gravel, and sand during 2008.

The demand for cement, steel, petroleum, and petroleum products was met through imports. In 2007 (the latest year for which data were available), Comoros imported 41,508 metric tons (t) of cement, 35,837 t of petroleum products, and 3,167 t steel (International Monetary Fund, 2009, p. 57).

Mineral production data were not available; however, mineral production was presumed to be low because no significant construction projects were reported in 2008. The outlook is for little change in the foreseeable future.

#### References Cited

- International Monetary Fund, 2009, Union of the Comoros—Selected issues and statistical appendix: Washington, DC, International Monetary Fund, February, 68 p.
- U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2009, Comoros, *in* The world factbook: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. (Accessed July 15, 2009, at <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/CN.html>.)

### MAURITIUS

The islands of Mauritius consist of the main island of Mauritius, the smaller island of Rodrigues, and two smaller groups of islands. All islands are of volcanic origin and are surrounded by coral reefs.

The mineral industry of Mauritius was a negligible factor in the economy. The country has few mineral resources. Historically, mineral output consisted of basalt construction stone, coral sand, lime from coral, and solar-evaporated salt. The demand for cement, fertilizers, iron and steel, flat-rolled metal products, and petroleum products was met through imports. In 2008, imports included mineral fuels and related products (21.4%), machinery and equipment (19.6%), manufactured

goods (18.9%), and other unidentified products (40.1%). The Mauritius Free Port handled 72,617 t of imports and 85,195 t of reexports (United Nations Statistics Division, 2009).

Polymetallic nodules occur on the ocean floor at a depth of about 4,000 meters (m) and extend from 400 kilometers (km) to 800 km north of Port Louis, which is located northeast of Tromelin Island. The nodules each average more than 15% iron and manganese and more than 0.3% cobalt. The abundance of global land-based resources made it unlikely that these offshore resources would be developed in the foreseeable future (Nations Encyclopedia, 2008).

Mauritius did not play a significant role in the world's production or consumption of minerals. Data on mineral production are in table 1. The outlook for exploration of minerals other than for construction materials was negligible.

#### References Cited

- Nations Encyclopedia, 2008, Mining—Mauritius: Nations Encyclopedia. (Accessed August 19, 2009, at <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Mauritius-MINING.html>.)
- United Nations Statistics Division, 2009, Import profiles—Mauritius, *in* United Nations commodity trade statistics database: United Nations. (Accessed July 15, 2009, at [comtrade.un.org/pb/FileFetch?docID=3025](http://comtrade.un.org/pb/FileFetch?docID=3025).)

### REUNION

Reunion is a volcanic island located in the Indian Ocean about 200 km southwest of Mauritius. Administratively, it is one of the overseas departments of France and, as such, is part of the Eurozone.

Mineral commodity production represented only a small part of the economy of Reunion in 2008 as in previous years. Although little quantitative information on mineral production was available, aggregates, cement, and seacoast coral continued to meet local consumption needs. Mineral fuels and petroleum products were imported. The most significant producer of mineral products was Holcim (Reunion) S.A., which was a privately owned cement company.

### SEYCHELLES

The Seychelles archipelago, which comprises 74 coralline islands and the Mahe group of 41 granitic islands, lies in the western part of the Indian Ocean and was part of a former microcontinent. The coralline group was, for the most part, only a little above sea level.

Seychelles has very limited mineral resources. Mining was limited mainly to granite quarrying and salt pans. Mineral

production consisted mostly of the production of such construction materials as clay, coral, sand, and stone. There was occasional mining of guano, an organic phosphate fertilizer composed of bird droppings, that was not reported by the Government. Seychelles has no indigenous sources of coal, natural gas, or petroleum. As there is no petroleum refinery, petroleum refinery products must be imported to meet the country's requirements (Institute for Security Studies, The, 2008).

The Government is likely to continue to promote the petroleum potential of Seychelles.

### Reference Cited

Institute for Security Studies, The, 2008. Seychelles—Fact file: The Institute for Security Studies. (Accessed August 20, 2009, at [http://www.issafrica.org/static/templates/tmpl\\_html.php?node\\_id=3110&slink\\_id=5644](http://www.issafrica.org/static/templates/tmpl_html.php?node_id=3110&slink_id=5644).)

TABLE 1  
MAURITIUS, REUNION, AND SEYCHELLES: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country and commodity	2004	2005	2006	2007 <sup>c</sup>	2008 <sup>c</sup>
<b>MAURITIUS<sup>2</sup></b>					
Cement <sup>3</sup>	650,000	694,000	717,000	616,000	811,000 <sup>4</sup>
Fertilizers <sup>3</sup>	89,400	85,000	86,000	86,000	86,000
Salt, marine	7,000	7,900	7,408 <sup>r</sup>	6,650 <sup>r,4</sup>	6,800
Sand	60,000	60,135	91,422	91,232 <sup>4</sup>	102,972 <sup>4</sup>
Steel, rebar <sup>3</sup>	59,000	60,500	62,000	70,000	70,000
<b>REUNION<sup>e,5</sup></b>					
Aggregates	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000
Cement	380,000	380,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
<b>SEYCHELLES<sup>c</sup></b>					
Aggregates	120,000	120,000	117,794 <sup>r,4</sup>	128,014 <sup>r,4</sup>	130,000
Dimension stone, granite	135 <sup>r</sup>	140 <sup>r</sup>	141 <sup>r,4</sup>	149 <sup>r,4</sup>	150
Gravel and crushed stone	210,000	210,000	142,584 <sup>r,4</sup>	135,888 <sup>r,4</sup>	140,000
Sand	8,100	8,100	8,100	8,100	8,100

<sup>c</sup>Estimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. <sup>r</sup>Revised.

<sup>1</sup>Table includes data available through July 31, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to the commodities listed, asphalt, basalt, and lime are also known to be produced, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

<sup>3</sup>Imports

<sup>4</sup>Reported figure.

<sup>5</sup>In addition to the commodities listed, coral and volcanic rock are also known to be produced, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

TABLE 2  
MAURITIUS, REUNION, AND SEYCHELLES: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRIES IN 2008

(Metric tons)

Country and commodity	Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
<b>MAURITIUS</b>			
Aggregates	United Basalt Products Ltd.	La Mecque	660,000 <sup>c</sup>
Do.	Gamma Civic Ltd.	Beau Bassin and Solitude	NA
Fertilizers	Mauritius Chemical and Fertilizer Industry Ltd.	Port Louis	100,000
Salt	Mont Calme Ltd.	Tamarin	NA
Steel	Samlo Koyenco Steel Co. Ltd.	Port Louis	65,000
<b>REUNION</b>			
Aggregates	Holcim (Reunion) S.A.	Bras Panon and Saint-Joseph	1,300,000 <sup>c</sup>
Cement	do.	Le Port	400,000
<b>SEYCHELLES</b>			
Granite	Gondwana Granite Ltd.	Victoria	NA
Gravel and crushed stone	United Concrete Products (Seychelles) Ltd.	Anse des Genets	150,000 <sup>c</sup>
Do.	Civil Construction Company Ltd.	Brilliant	97,000 <sup>c</sup>

<sup>c</sup>Estimated. Do., do. Ditto. NA Not available.