



2011 Minerals Yearbook

AZERBAIJAN

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF AZERBAIJAN

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Azerbaijan produced a wide range of metals and industrial minerals, including alumina, aluminum, iron ore, and steel. Its major importance as a world mineral producer, however, was based on its crude oil extracting industry. The country had been a significant crude oil producer for more than a century, but the focus since independence in 1991 was on developing offshore resources in the Caspian Sea. Oilfield and gasfield development was concentrated in two projects—the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli (ACG) offshore oilfield complex and the Shah-Deniz offshore gas condensate field (U.S. Department of State, 2012; U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2012).

Minerals in the National Economy

In 2011, the real gross domestic product (GDP) of Azerbaijan increased by 0.1%. This was, however, a decrease in the rate of growth compared with the 5% rate of growth in 2010, and was an even more significant decrease in the rate of growth compared with the real growth rates of the previous decade. The nominal GDP amounted to \$64.78 billion and industrial production contributed 54.5% to the total GDP. Mining and quarrying accounted for 80.5% of the country's industrial output whereas the rest of the industrial output was produced by manufacturing (14.3%) and electricity, heating, and water production and distribution (5.2%). In 2011, production by the mining and quarrying sector decreased by 8.4% compared with that of 2010, primarily because of decreased production of oil and natural gas (State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2012; U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

In 2011, Azerbaijan exported about \$33.4 billion worth of goods and services. Of that amount, \$29.1 billion came from crude oil and natural gas exports; other export commodities were diesel fuel, kerosene, and steel pipes. The main export partners of Azerbaijan were Italy (which received 35.2% of Azerbaijan's total exports), France (15.2%), the United States (6.8%), Russia (4.5%), Indonesia and Ukraine (3.4% each), and Israel (3.1%). Azerbaijan's total imports in 2011 were valued at about \$9.8 billion, and the main imported commodities included chemicals, foodstuffs, machinery and equipment, metals, and petroleum products. The country's major import partners during the year were Russia (which provided 16.8% of Azerbaijan's imports), Turkey (13.4%), Germany (8.7%), the United States (6.5%), China (6.4%), France (6.2%), Ukraine (5.7%), and the United Kingdom (5.0%). With net exports of \$23.6 billion, Azerbaijan was able to continue investing in infrastructure, stabilizing the economy, and reducing poverty in the country (State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2012; U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

Production

In 2011, production of salt in Azerbaijan increased by 324%; that of iron ore, by 271%; lime, by 178%; steel pipes, by

169.5%; gypsum, by 105%; crude steel, by 80%; caustic soda, by 57.6%; sulfuric acid, by 53.5%; bentonite, by 14.5%; sand, by 13.3%; and cement, by 11.4%. At the same time, production of silver decreased by 18.9%; copper, by 13%; crude oil, by 10.3%; gold, by 6.6%; and natural gas, by 1.9%. Other data on mineral production are in table 1.

Commodity Review

Metals

Aluminum.—In the middle of 2011, Azerbaijan restarted production of primary aluminum at the OJSC Azerbaijan Aluminum (Azeral) plant in Sumqayit. Prior to that, both the Azeral aluminum plant in Sumqayit and the Ganja alumina plant had been idle for several years. During the course of the year, Azerbaijan exported 9,800 metric tons (t) of primary aluminum and received \$12.5 million in revenue (Belyi, 2011).

In 2008, Azeral started planning construction of its second aluminum plant in Ganja. The new plant was expected to have an annual smelter capacity of 100,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of primary aluminum and to cost \$230 million to build. The plant would use modern technology that requires less energy—only 13,600 kilowatt hours (KWh) would be used to produce 1 t of aluminum compared with about 20,000 KWh at the old aluminum plants in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The plant would also have a modern gas-purifying system that would purify 98% of emissions produced during the production process. The construction was expected to be completed by 2010, but no information was available as to whether it had been completed on time. Azeral was owned by the private Azerbaijani company Det. AL Aluminium, which was partially owned by Noble Group Ltd. (a trade company from Hong Kong) (Infogeo.ru, 2008; Noble Group Ltd., 2008; Polpred.com, 2008).

In 2011, the Tajik aluminum company TALCO, which was the leading aluminum producer in Central Asia, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Noble Group and Det. AL Aluminium to restart production of alumina at the Ganja alumina plant and to supply the produced alumina to TALCO. The MOU also included the intent of the signatories to cooperate in supplying petroleum coke from Azerbaijan to Tajikistan and in supplying anodes for the new aluminum plant from Tajikistan. Tajikistan would also supply caustic soda, synthetic cryolite, and carbon products for the metallurgical sector in Azerbaijan (Aluminiumleader.com, 2011).

Gold.—In 2009, Anglo Asian Mining PLC of the United Kingdom began gold production at the Gedabek gold, silver, and copper mine, which is located about 55 kilometers (km) from the city of Ganja. In 2010, the company reported producing 1.9 t of gold. In August 2010, the company produced a record amount of 273 kilograms (kg) in a 1-month period. In 2011, however, gold production was reduced by 6.6% to 1.775 t. Anglo Asian

was controlled by R.V. Investment Group Services (51% interest), and the Azerbaijan Government [through the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR)] owned a 49% interest (Azeritoday, 2011a).

In October, the resource estimate for the Gedabek deposit was updated, and the resources were quadrupled compared with the previously reported figures. According to the latest estimates, the Gedabek deposit contained 37,000 t of copper, 23 t of gold, and 190 t of silver. The Government expected that the country as a whole was capable of producing about 10 to 15 metric tons per year (t/yr) of gold. Anglo American was planning to increase gold production to 8.5 t/yr by 2015. In the past 3 years, the gold from Gedabek had been sent to Belgium and Switzerland for processing and production of ingots (Azeritoday, 2011c).

Anglo Asian held licenses to six goldfields in southwestern Azerbaijan—the Gedabek, the Gosha Bulag, the Gyzyul Bulag, the Ordubad, the Soyutlu, and the Vezhnali fields. The Ordubad, the Soyutlu, and the Vezhnali are located in the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region where conflicts with ethnic Armenians took place in 1988 to 1994. In addition to gold, the ore in those fields contains significant amounts of silver and copper. According to the contract signed in 1997, the company was expected to produce 400 t of gold, 2,500 t of silver, and 1.5 million metric tons (Mt) of copper during the life of the mine. Anglo Asian was planning to start production at the Gosha Bulag deposit in the second part of 2012 (Akhmedbeily, 2011; Azeritoday, 2011b; Pugacheva, 2011).

Iron and Steel.—OAO Azerboru's steel plant, which was located in the city of Sumqayit, had been increasing the production of steel pipes. In the first quarter of 2011, the Azerboru plant produced 21,000 t of pipes, 97% of which was exported; the major customer of the pipes was OAO Lukoil of Russia. Overall, in 2011, Azerboru exported 71,000 t of steel pipes to Russia; most of the pipes were for use in the oil and gas industry. The Government owned 97% of Azerboru, and the other 3% was owned by the plant workers. Azerboru employed 1,150 workers who earned an average monthly wage of 300 manats (about \$237)¹ (Azeri.ru, 2011).

In 2008, the Government of Azerbaijan started construction of a new integrated steel complex in Ganja that was expected to cost \$800 million. The new complex would include an iron ore concentration plant with a capacity of 2 million metric tons per year (Mt/yr), a pellet plant with a capacity of 2 Mt/yr, a direct-reduction plant with a capacity of 1.1 Mt/yr, and a steelmaking plant that could produce 1 Mt/yr. The complex was expected to be completed by 2012 (Ukrudprom.com, 2008; Thebusinessyear.com, 2012).

Baku Steel Casting, which was an Azerbaijani maker of ingots, announced in May 2011 that it was planning to conduct a reconstruction of the plant and possibly to replace its electric arc furnaces. The plant had three such furnaces, and all of them had been installed in the 1960s. According to the plant management, the majority of the company's products were sold domestically. The raw materials base for Baku Steel Casting was ferrous

metals scraps supplied from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Russia (Ukrainian Association of Steel Makers, 2011).

Platinum-Group Metals.—In May 2011, the MENR reported that geologists had discovered polymetallic ores with high content of platinum in the Geigel and the Shamkir regions of Azerbaijan. The ministry confirmed the lab analyses that demonstrated platinum concentration levels sufficient for commercial mining. According to Azerbaijani geologists, platinum resources in the discovered deposits were between 80 and 100 t. The geologists were continuing prospecting work to obtain more precise estimates of the platinum resources (Mekhtieva, 2011; Polpred.com, 2011).

Mineral Fuels

Natural Gas.—In 2011, Azerbaijan produced 25,753 million cubic meters of natural gas, which was a decrease of 2.3% compared with the level of output in 2010. Of this amount, only 16,361 million cubic meters was sold as a commodity. As of January 2011, according to Oil and Gas Journal, Azerbaijan's gas reserves were approximately 30 trillion cubic feet (about 850 billion cubic meters). Almost all Azerbaijani gas was produced in two offshore fields—the ACG complex and the Shah-Deniz field (Oilcapital.ru, 2012).

According to the economic forecasts of the Government through 2016, Azerbaijan was planning to produce 28 million cubic meters in 2013 and then gradually to increase production to 30 million cubic meters in 2016. Azerbaijan's future natural gas production increases were expected to come from the continued development of the Shah-Deniz field. Phase 1 of the field's development began producing in 2006, and, in 2010, the field produced 6.9 billion cubic meters of gas and 15 million barrels of gas condensate. The full field development was expected to start producing in 2017. The peak capacity of the entire field was projected to be almost triple that of phase 1. Eventually, the Shah-Deniz field would be able to supply European markets with natural gas (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2012).

Petroleum.—In 2011, the volume of crude oil production in Azerbaijan decreased to 45.6 Mt, or by 10.3% compared with that of 2010. According to previous Government forecasts, the country had been projected to produce 51.55 Mt. The reduction in production volume could be explained by the need to conduct geologic work at drilling holes, which necessitated halting petroleum production for some time in 2011. Another explanation offered by Government officials, however, stated that the reduction in petroleum production was artificial and was intended to prolong the term of oil production from the fields by about 15 to 20 years. Azerbaijan's exports of crude oil also decreased in 2011 by 12.2% to 37.45 Mt (Ismailov, 2011; Abc.az, 2012; Rustambekov, 2012).

The country's largest hydrocarbon basins are located offshore in the Caspian Sea. The largest field is the ACG field, which is located 62 miles (99.78 km) east of Baku in the Caspian Sea and covers 430 square kilometers. The ACG field has an estimated 5 billion barrels of reserves; it produced mostly Azeri Light, which is a medium-light and sweet crude that is valued for its middle-distillate yield (State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic, 2012; U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2012).

¹Where necessary, values have been converted from Azerbaijani manats (AZN) to U.S. dollars (US\$) at an annual average exchange rate of AZN0.7897=US\$1.00 for 2011.

Azeri crude oil was refined domestically at two refineries, the Baku refinery and the New Baku refinery. The total refining capacity of both refineries was about 400,000 barrels per day (about 20 Mt/yr). Both refineries were in need of modernization that could cost a total of \$600 to \$700 million. By 2018, Azerbaijan was planning to build a new oil refinery in Sangachaly that would have the capacity to produce 15 Mt/yr. Another oil refinery that would refine Azerbaijani oil was under construction by Azerbaijan in Ceyhan in Turkey; the planned capacity of the Ceyhan refinery was 10 Mt/yr. In 2011, only a small fraction of the crude oil was being refined at local refineries. Most of the crude oil was exported by way of pipelines. Azerbaijan had three export pipelines—the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), the Baku-Novorossiysk, and the Baku-Supsa—and about 80% of the petroleum was exported through the BTC pipeline (Vladimirov, 2008; U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2012).

Outlook

Azerbaijan's high economic growth from 2003 through 2008 was fueled by increased crude oil exports and opened new opportunities for the country. In the past few years, the country has made serious attempts to diversify its economy—it started developing new polymetallic deposits containing gold, silver, and copper, and it is reviving its steel and aluminum production capacities. Azerbaijan is also investing resources in building petroleum processing and petroleum transporting facilities, both domestically and abroad, to provide export opportunities for Azerbaijani oil as well as to expand the national petroleum industry beyond extraction of crude oil.

In the next few years, it is likely that natural gas and oil production will not increase as fast as they did in the previous 10 years but will have moderate and controlled growth rates. At the same time, gold and copper mining are likely to develop faster. Also, significant investments in ferrous and nonferrous metals facilities of the past several years will likely result in significantly increased production in those sectors (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

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TABLE 1
AZERBAIJAN: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
METALS					
Alumina	184,483	164,879	9,600	--	6,200
Aluminum, primary and secondary	39,241	61,607	--	-- ^r	20,000 ^e
Copper ore, metal content	--	--	--	184	160 ^e
Gold					
kilograms	--	--	333	1,900	1,775
Iron ore, marketable:					
Gross weight	17,600	28,100	--	57,800	214,300
Fe content ^e	8,800	14,900	--	32,900	113,600
Silver					
kilograms	--	--	--	1,500	1,217
Steel:					
Crude	273,393	74,800 ^r	78,874	128,600 ^r	231,600
Pipes	25,706	28,196	6,918	36,545	98,500
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS					
Bentonite	50,459	40,700	10,581	18,073	20,700
Bromine ^e	2,000	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500
Caustic soda	18,013	20,635	7,041	6,220	9,800
Cement	1,692,800	1,594,900	1,286,300	1,278,800	1,425,000
Gypsum	22,037	38,375	45,630	49,200 ^r	100,800
Iodine ^e					
kilograms	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
Lime, construction	15,294	1,318	684	802 ^r	2,229
Limestone	1,413,031	1,363,978	1,228,775	1,173,863	1,200,000 ^e
Salt	7,127	7,527	5,466	4,449 ^r	18,848
Sand, construction	702,100	1,247,200	877,200	1,178,000	1,335,200
Sulfuric acid	24,800	39,400	12,400	10,100	15,500
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS					
Natural gas					
million cubic meters	10,832	16,337	16,325	16,673	16,361 ²
Petroleum:					
Crude:					
In gravimetric units	43,336,197	44,720,275	50,416,000 ^r	50,838,000	45,626,000
In volumetric units ^e	42-gallon barrels	315,000,000	325,000,000	351,000,000	352,000,000
315,000,000					331,610,000 ³
Refinery products:					
In gravimetric units	8,088,500	6,885,300	5,430,200 ^r	5,543,000	5,500,000 ^e
In volumetric units	42-gallon barrels	60,224,000	58,807,000	46,428,210	47,392,650 ^r
47,392,650					47,025,000

^eEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. ^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Table includes data available through December 12, 2012.

²Only natural gas sold as a commodity.

³Reported figure.

TABLE 2
AZERBAIJAN: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2011¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies, main facilities, or deposits	Locations or deposit names	Annual capacity ^c
Alumina	Ganja refinery	Ganja	450,000
Aluminum	OJSC Azerbaijan Aluminum [Azeraluminum (Azeral)] Sumqayit smelter Owned by Det. AL Aluminum	Sumqayit	60,000
Alunite ore	Zaglik alunite mining directorate	Zaylik, Dashcasan region	600,000
Cement	Plants: Karadagly Tauz	Locations: Karadagly Tavuzcay region	2,000,000 ²
Clays, bentonite	Dash-Salakhinskoye deposit	do.	100,000
Copper ore	Karadagskiy complex	Samkir region	30,000
Gold	Anglo Asian Mining PLC	Gedabek	NA
Iodine and bromine	Baku, Karadagly, and Novaneftechala plants	Plants in Baku, Karadagly, and Neftcala	NA
Iron ore, marketable	Dashkasan mining directorate	Daskasan region	50,000
Natural gas, processing	Karadagly plant	Karadagly region	NA
Petroleum and natural gas:			
Crude petroleum and gas condensate	Azerbaijan International Operating Co., (AIOC) in conjunction with BP p.l.c., Chevron Corp., State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR), Total S.A., Inpex Corp., Statoil ASA, Exxon Mobil Corp., Türkiye Petrolleri A.O. (TPAO), Itochu Corp., Devon Energy Corp., and Delta Hess (joint venture of Delta Oil and Hess Corp.)	Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli (ACG) offshore oilfields in the Caspian Sea	55,000,000
Natural gas	billion cubic meters International consortium consisting of BP p.l.c., Statoil ASA, OAO Lukoil, Oil Industries' Engineering and Construction (OIEC), State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR), Total S.A., and Türkiye Petrolleri A.O. (TPAO)	Shah-Deniz gas condensate field	7.1
Refined petroleum	Azernefteyag refinery	Baku	12,000,000 ³
Do.	Heydar Aliiev Baku refinery	do.	8,000,000 ³
Rock salt	Hehram and Pusyan deposits	Naxcivan region	2,500,000
Steel:			
Crude	Baku Steel Works	Baku	400,000
Pipe, tubes	Azerboru JSC	Sumqayit	400,000
Ingots	Baku Steel Casting	Baku	NA

^cEstimated. Do., do. Ditto. NA Not available.

¹Many location names have changed since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Many enterprises, however, are still named or commonly referred to based on the former location name, which accounts for discrepancies in the names of enterprises and that of locations.

²Capacity estimates are totals for all enterprises that produce cement.

³Capacity for crude petroleum distillation.