



2011 Minerals Yearbook

INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

THE MINERAL INDUSTRIES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

COMOROS, MAURITIUS, REUNION, AND SEYCHELLES

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COMOROS

The Comoros Islands form an archipelago of four islands—Anjouan (Nzwani), Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Mahore (Mayotte), and Moheli (Mwali)—which is located at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel about two-thirds of the way between northern Madagascar and northern Mozambique. The archipelago is the result of volcanic action along a fissure in the seabed running west-northwest to east-southeast. Comoros, which is a former French colony and one of the world's poorest countries, had few transportation links between its islands. Grande Comore is the largest and youngest of the islands (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

The country had very few natural resources and did not play a significant role in the world's production or consumption of mineral resources in 2011. Mineral production data continued to be unavailable; however, mineral production was presumed to be low because no significant construction projects were reported in 2011.

In 2011, the only mineral commodities produced in Comoros continued to be small quantities of common local building materials, such as clay, crushed stone, gravel, and sand for domestic consumption. The country was dependent on imports to meet its cement, petroleum, petroleum products, and steel requirements. France was Comoros's major trading partner (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

Outlook

The outlook for mineral output is for little change in the foreseeable future owing to Comoros' very limited mineral resources and weak infrastructure. Deforestation and import dependence may encourage the development of the country's geothermal resources.

References Cited

- U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012, Comoros, *in* The world factbook: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. (Accessed April 26, 2012, at <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cn.html>.)
- U.S. Department of State, 2011, Comoros: U.S. Department of State background note. (Accessed April 29, 2011, at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5236.htm>.)

MAURITIUS

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

In 2011, the mineral industry of Mauritius was a negligible factor in the country's economy. The country had few mineral resources. Historically, mineral output consisted of basalt for construction, coral sand, lime from coral, and solar-evaporated salt. Small organic phosphate fertilizer (guano) resources exist on the islands of Agalega, Cargados, and Rodrigues. Imported fuel oil was the main source of energy used for electricity generation (Trade Chakra, 2011). Data on mineral production are in table 1.

Mineral commodities were not significant in Mauritius's export trade, which consisted mainly of beverages, miscellaneous manufactured articles, and tobacco. Mauritius's main mineral commodity imports were lubricants and mineral fuels and related materials (UN Comtrade, 2012).

Mauritius developed the Mauritius Freeport Authority as a building block towards becoming a regional distribution center. The Freeport is a duty-free logistics distribution and marketing hub for the region. The advantages that the Mauritian economy derived from the Freeport included more trade between Mauritius and neighboring countries. Warehousing facilities, located on a site of 50 hectares of land, were available for the transshipment, consolidation, storage, and processing of goods, including mineral commodities. The total facilities were 180,000 square meters in size. In 2011, there were more than 260 Freeport operators compared with 225 operators in 2010. The Freeport had a total trade volume of more than 381,000 metric tons of goods in 2011, which was an 18% increase from that of 2010. Mauritius offered preferential access to the more than 425-million-consumer markets of Eastern and Southern Africa through its membership in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Southern African Development Community (Mauritius Freeport Portal, 2011).

Outlook

The possibility for exploration of minerals other than construction materials was negligible owing to lack of knowledge regarding the occurrence and location of possible mineral deposits and the infrastructure. It was expected that coral mining would be reduced owing to environmental concerns.

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- Mauritius Freeport Portal, 2011, The Mauritius Freeport: Mauritius Freeport Portal. (Accessed May 17, 2011, at <http://www.efreeport.com/default.aspx>.)
- Trade Chakra, 2011, Industrial policy of Mauritius: Trade Chakra. (Accessed April 26, 2012, at <http://www.tradechakra.com/economy/mautitius/renewable-resources-in-mauritius-329.php>.)
- UN Comtrade, 2012, International trade statistics—Mauritius: UN Comtrade. (Accessed September 9, 2012, at <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/countryPages.aspx?y=2011>.)

REUNION

Reunion is a volcanic island located in the Indian Ocean about 200 kilometers (km) southwest of Mauritius. Administratively, it is one of the five overseas Departments of France, along with French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Mayotte. As such, it is also part of the eurozone (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

Piton de la Fournaise [Furnace Peak], which is situated in the southeast corner of the island, is one of the world's most active volcanoes. This basaltic shield volcano erupted for the first time about 50,000 years ago, and records note that it has erupted about 180 times since such eruptions started being recorded in 1640. The most recent eruption took place in 2004. Piton de la Fournaise has been monitored by scientists and Government surveillance facilities since 1980 (Reunionisland.net, 2011).

Mineral commodity production represented only a very small part of the economy of Reunion in 2011, as in previous years, although little quantitative information on mineral production was available. Aggregates, cement, and seacoast coral production continued to meet local consumption needs. Reunion had no identified resources of coal or petroleum; all demand for metals, mineral fuels and petroleum products was met through imports.

Outlook

Little change in future mineral resource activity in Reunion is anticipated.

References Cited

- Reunionisland.net, 2011, Piton de la Fournaise: Reunionisland.net. (Accessed April 26, 2012, at <http://www.reunionisland.net/Piton-de-la-Fournaise.aspx>.)
U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012, France, *in* The world factbook: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. (Accessed July 24, 2011, at <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fr.html>.)

SEYCHELLES

The Seychelles archipelago, which comprised 74 coralline islands and the Mahe group of 41 granitic islands, lies in the western part of the Indian Ocean. Seychelles was not a globally significant mineral producer or consumer. Mining was limited mainly to granite quarrying and salt pans. Mineral production consisted of mostly unreported quantities of such construction materials as clay, coral, sand, and stone. Small quantities of an organic phosphate fertilizer (guano) was occasionally mined

but not reported by the Government. Dimension stone in the bedrock on the island of Mahe was not exploited in 2011, although it had been exploited in the past. Seychelles had no identified resources of coal, natural gas, or petroleum. All demand for mineral fuels and petroleum products was met by imports (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

The mineral industry is regulated by the Ministry of Industry. The Mineral Ordinance, 1962, governs mineral extraction and mining.

Although multinational companies have explored the waters around the islands off and on for several years, no natural gas or petroleum had been found as of yearend 2011 (Afristone, 2011). The petroleum potential of the entire Seychelles region continued to be promoted by the Government's Seychelles Petroleum Company (Sepec). In early 2011, WHL Energy Ltd. of Australia acquired a 100% interest in 20,476 square kilometers (km²) of exploration holdings off the southern Seychelles coast through the acquisition of Seyco Energy Pty Ltd. of Australia and its wholly owned subsidiary Petroquest International Inc. WHL Energy's interpretation of its acquired two-dimensional (2-D) data was continuing, and 23 leads and prospects had been identified. The 2-D data provided an improved confidence level in the mapping and assessment of the area. The region had attracted other investors, including Afren plc of the United Kingdom. Afren concluded a takeover of Black Marlin Energy Holdings Ltd. of the United Arab Emirates. Black Marlin Energy was a holder of 11,000 km² of exploration interests off the Seychelles coast (WHL Energy Ltd., 2012).

Outlook

Sepec is expected to continue to promote the petroleum potential of the entire Seychelles region.

References Cited

- Afristone, 2011, Countries—Seychelles: Afristone. (Accessed April 26, 2012, at <http://www.afristone.com/countries.asp?country=SYC>.)
U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012, Seychelles, *in* The world factbook: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. (Accessed July 24, 2011, at <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/se.html>.)
WHL Energy Ltd., 2012, Offshore Seychelles a "Flagship" project: WHL Energy Ltd. (Accessed April 26, 2012, at <http://www.whlenergy.com/irm/ShowStaticCategory.aspx?CategoryID=220&masterpage=4>.)

TABLE 1
MAURITIUS, REUNION, AND SEYCHELLES: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons)

Country and commodity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 ^e
MAURITIUS²					
Fertilizers	-- ^r	-- ^r	31,014 ^{r,3}	24,326 ^{r,3}	25,000
Salt, marine	6,650	5,042	2,301	1,349 ^r	2,400
Sand	66,850	102,972	87,506	68,708	70,000
Steel, rebar	66,500	60,000	31,000 ^{r,3}	32,000 ^{r,3}	30,000
REUNION^{c,4}					
Aggregates	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000
Cement	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
SEYCHELLES^e					
Aggregates	128,014 ³	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000
Dimension stone, granite	149 ³	150	150	150	150
Gravel and crushed stone	135,888 ³	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000
Sand	8,100	8,100	8,100	8,100	8,100

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

¹Table includes data available through April 30, 2012.

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

³Reported

⁴In addition to the commodities listed, coral and volcanic rock are also known to be produced in Reunion, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

TABLE 2
MAURITIUS, REUNION, AND SEYCHELLES: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRIES IN 2011

(Metric tons)

Country and commodity	Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
MAURITIUS			
Aggregates	United Basalt Products Ltd.	La Mecque	660,000 ^e
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, rebar	Samlo Koyenco Steel Company Ltd.	Midlands	12,000 ^e
REUNION			
Aggregates	Holcim (Reunion) S.A.	Bras Panon and Saint-Joseph	1,300,000 ^e
Cement	do.	Le Port	400,000
SEYCHELLES			
Granite	Gondwana Granite Ltd.	Victoria	NA
Gravel and crushed stone	United Concrete Products (Seychelles) Ltd.	Anse des Genets	150,000 ^e
Do.	Civil Construction Company Ltd.	Brilliant	97,000 ^e

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