



2011 Minerals Yearbook

SYRIA

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF SYRIA

By Mowafa Taib

Crude oil and phosphate rock were Syria's major contributions to the world supply of minerals in 2011. The country was responsible for about 1.6% of the world's supply of phosphate rock and ranked ninth in the world in terms of the volume of its phosphate rock production (Jasinski, 2012). Syria produced 0.4% of the world's crude oil and 0.3% of the world's natural gas output in 2011. Other mineral commodities that were produced in Syria were cement, gypsum, industrial sand, marble, natural crude asphalt, nitrogen fertilizer, phosphate fertilizer, salt, steel, and volcanic tuff; these commodities were produced mainly for domestic use (BP p.l.c., 2012, p. 8, 22).

In March, street protests erupted in many cities and towns throughout Syria demanding political reforms, including changing the regime that had been ruling the country for more than 40 years. The Government cracked down violently on the protesters who were inspired by the Arab Spring popular democracy movement, which began in Tunisia and spread to Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. The protests continued in Syria throughout 2011 and escalated into an armed conflict between the Syrian army and opposition groups. Several countries and international organizations responded to the crackdown by imposing economic sanctions on the Government. The United States, the Arab League, and the European Union (EU) led on implementing the sanctions and were later followed by Australia, Canada, Norway, and Turkey. The United States, which already had trade sanctions imposed on the Syrian Government before 2011 as part of Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Act of 2003, added new sanctions that prohibited trading with crude oil and natural gas produced in Syria (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

Production

Notable changes in the production of mineral commodities in 2011 compared with that of 2010 included the decrease in crude oil production (including condensate) by 13.8%. Natural gas production reportedly increased by 7.8% in 2011 compared with that of 2010 according to BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2012 but was reported to have decreased by 20.2% during the same period of comparison according to the Annual Statistical Report 2012 of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries. Except for crude oil and natural gas data, no reliable information on mineral production in 2011 was available and the figures in table 1 are based on estimates of BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2012 (table 1; BP p.l.c., 2012, p. 22; Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, 2012, p. 34).

Structure of the Mineral Industry

Law No. 26 of 2009, granted the state ownership of all surface and subsurface mineral resources within the country's borders

and territorial waters. Law No. 91 of January 24, 2010, of the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources designated the General Establishment of Geology and Mineral Resources (GEGMR) as the Government agency in charge of all mining and quarrying activities in the country. In 2010 (the latest year for which data were available), GEGMR awarded 720 quarrying and mining licenses, of which 652 were awarded to private sector companies and 68 were awarded to public sector companies (General Establishment of Geology and Mineral Resources, 2011a, b).

Law No. 14 of 2009 created the General Corporation for Refining and Distribution of Petroleum Products, which included Baniyas Refinery Co., Homs Refinery Co., Syrian Company for Distribution and Storage of Petroleum Products, and Syrian Company for Gas Distribution. Law No. 15 of 2009 created General Petroleum Corp. (GPC), which included Syrian Gas Co., Syrian Petroleum Co., and Syrian Petroleum Transportation Co. GPC aimed to establish policies related to the development of, exploration of, and investment in the hydrocarbon sector and to monitor international oil companies' projects in the country (Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, 2009a, b).

GPC was a partner in several joint-venture companies that produced crude oil and natural gas in Syria. These companies included Al Bou Kamal Petroleum Co., Al Furat Petroleum Co., Dier Ez-Zor Petroleum Co., Dijla Petroleum Co., Hayan Petroleum Co., Oudeh Petroleum Co., and Syria-Sino Al Kawkab Co. Additionally, a number of international oil companies were at different stages of exploration for and production of crude oil and natural gas. These companies included Gulfsands Petroleum p.l.c. of the United Kingdom (Block 26); Hadi Bouchamaoui Sons International Ltd. of Tunisia (Block 22); INA Industrija Nafta of Croatia (Block 10); IPR Mediterranean Exploration Ltd. of the United States (Block 24); Loon Latakia Ltd. (partially owned by MENA Hydrocarbons Inc. of Canada) (Block 9); ONGC Videsh Ltd. (a subsidiary of Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd. of India) (Block 24); a joint venture of Petrofac Ltd. of the United Kingdom and Royal Dutch Shell p.l.c. of the Netherlands (Blocks 57 and 58); Sayuz Co. of Ukraine (Block 12); Suncor Energy Inc. of Canada (Al Shaer and Al Sharefa gasfields and Block 2); and Total S.A. of France (Deir ez Zour permit) (Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, 2011; Gulfsands Petroleum p.l.c., 2011; General Petroleum Corp., 2012; Syrian Petroleum Co., 2012).

Several Chinese oil companies had been active in the Syrian oil market in recent years. China National Petroleum Corp. (CNPC) was developing oilfields owned by GPC. CNPC held 35% equity interest in Syrian Shell Petroleum Development Co. B.V. (SSPD). SSPD had interests in three oil production licenses that cover 40 oilfields in Deir ez Zour. CNPC was also a 50-50 partner with Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd. (ONGC) of India in joint venture with Himalaya Energy Syria B.V., which owned

an 18.75% interest in Al Furat Petroleum. China Petroleum and Chemical Corp. (Sinopec) was a joint-venture partner with GPC in Oudeh Petroleum Co. (table 2; Al Furat Petroleum Co., 2011; Royal Dutch Shell p.l.c., 2010).

The Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (MOPMR) and the Ministry of Industry carried out the majority of mining activity in Syria through several state-owned companies. These companies included General Company for Iron and Steel Products (Hadeed Hama), General Company for Marble and Asphalt (GEMA), General Company for Phosphate and Mines (GCOPHAM), General Fertilizers Co., and General Organization for Cement and Building Materials (GOCBM). Some private local and international investors owned and operated cement and iron and steel plants based on Investment Law No. 10 of 1991. Such companies included Al-Badia Cement Co. J.S.C., Al Wahib Group, Arabian Steel Co (ASCO), Hmisho Steel S.A., International Company for Steel Rolling, Joudco Steel Ltd., Lafarge Cement Syria S.A., Royal Steel Co., and Syria Steel and Iron Co. (SALB) (table 2).

Commodity Review

Metals

Iron and Steel.—Hmisho Steel produced low- and medium-carbon-content rebar from its mill in Latakia. The company completed the construction of a new billet plant with an electric arc furnace, a ladle furnace, and a four-strand billet continuous-casting machine at Adra Industrial City. The plant's capacity to produce 500,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of steel was supplied by Daniel Centro Metal Co. of Italy (Arab Steel, 2010; Hmisho Group 2012).

Royal Steel Co. was building a 300,000-t/yr merchant bar mill in Aleppo. The mill was being constructed by SMS Meer of Germany and was expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2012. The mill would use billet imported from countries such as Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine to produce reinforcing bar (Arab Steel, 2011).

Industrial Minerals

Cement.—Cement production capacity in Syria increased to 15 million metric tons per year (Mt/yr) in 2011 because of the startup of two greenfield plants in late 2010. The first one to open was Lafarge Cement Syria's plant at Ayn Al-Arab, which is located 160 kilometers (km) northeast of Aleppo and 25 km south of the border with Turkey. The plant had the capacity to produce 3.0 Mt/yr of cement. The \$682 million project was the largest private investment in the country. The second one to open was Al-Badia Cement Co.'s plant at Abu Ash-Shamat, which is located 80 km northeast of Damascus. The plant began clinker production in October and had the capacity to produce 1.6 Mt/yr of cement. A second production line with the capacity to produce an additional 1.6 Mt/yr of cement was included in the design plan but no decision had been made on when it would be constructed (Al-Badia Cement Co. J.S.C., 2012; Lafarge Cement Syria S.A., 2012).

The GOCBM operated eight state-owned cement plants in Syria that produced more than 5 Mt/yr of cement. GOCBM was in the process of upgrading its old plants and expanding the capacity of the Adra and Tartus plants.

Phosphate Rock.—The volume of phosphate rock production for the years 2007 through 2010 was revised downward according to data published by the Central Bureau of Statistics of Syria (CBSS) in 2012. According to CBSS, phosphate rock production in Syria had been less than 3.0 Mt/yr in the period 2005 through 2009. It exceeded the 3 Mt/yr mark only in 2010. The newly published production figures were significantly lower than those reported by GCOPHAM and MOPMR. An internal report from GCOPHAM, which was published by a local media outlet, analyzed production volume for the past 5 years and concluded that the GCOPHAM and MOPMR had exaggerated production quantities to cover up for inflated extraction costs. The report also alleged that GCOPHAM management was not serious about making phosphate rock from Syria more competitive in the international market by increasing phosphate concentration to 34% P₂O₅ from 30.5% P₂O₅ and the management was not interested in finding new buyers for the company's products despite offers from companies from Belarus, Ukraine, and other countries. The report also mentioned that little work had been done to develop phosphate rock treatment methods, such as flotation technology, or to use 60 million metric tons of waste (which contains up to 26% P₂O₅) that remained after the extraction of higher grade phosphate rock (table 1; Central Bureau of Statistics; 2012, Mohammad, 2012).

Mineral Fuels

Natural Gas and Petroleum.—GPC and international companies working in Syria produced an estimated 330,000 barrels per day (bbl/d) of crude oil in 2011. Syria's crude oil exports, which averaged 148,000 bbl/d in recent years, accounted for more than 25% of the Government revenue. Most of the crude oil exports were received by such European countries as France, Germany, and Italy, and were sold exclusively through the state-owned company Sytrol (Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, 2011; Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, 2012, p. 26, 28).

On August 18, the President of the United States issued Executive Order 13582, which prohibits the import, purchase, financing, insurance, and transport of crude oil and petroleum products into the United States if they originated in Syria or have been exported from Syria. In September, the EU followed suit by issuing its own sanction on petroleum products imports from Syria into the EU and set a deadline of November 15 to terminate existing contracts (Obama, 2011; Council of the European Union, 2012).

Consequently, a number of international oil and gas companies that were active in natural gas and crude oil production in Syria had to suspend their operations in the country in compliance with the economic sanctions that were imposed on the Syrian Government by the United States, the Arab League, the EU, and other countries. These companies

included Gulfsands, Industrija Nafta, IPR Mediterranean Exploration, MENA Hydrocarbons, OAO Tatneft of Russia, Royal Dutch Shell, and Suncor Energy.

CNPC had planned to build and finance a 100,000-bbl/d-capacity oil refinery at a cost of \$2 billion at Abu Khashab in Deir az Zor. The Deir az Zor refinery project was expected to begin in 2011 and to be completed in 2014. The project was aimed at eliminating the shortage of some petroleum products on the domestic market, such as fuel oil. The combined capacity of the country's Baniyas and Homs refineries was about 240,000 bbl/d, which was less than the country's demand for petroleum products of an estimated 252,000 bbl/d (Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, 2011; U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2011).

Outlook

The Syrian economy in general and the mineral industry in particular is expected to shrink in the short-term future as the country was descended into a war between the Government and several opposing factions, which has continued for 2 years. Many international investors have pulled out of the country following the deterioration of the safety and security situation throughout the country because of military clashes between the Government and the opposition groups, as well as the sanctions imposed on Government agencies, private companies, and individuals. Recovery is expected to proceed slowly, and only once military operations cease, political reforms are put in place, the rule of law is upheld, and sanctions are lifted.

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TABLE 1
SYRIA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 ^e
METALS					
Steel:					
Crude	70	63	61	63 ²	63
Manufactured ^{e,3}	800	1,000	1,000	1,000	800
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS					
Asphalt	132	120	132	157 ^{r,2}	150
Cement, hydraulic	5,150	5,646	5,176	6,000	9,000
Gypsum	448	573	403	540	500
Nitrogen:					
N content of ammonia ^e	120	165	180	169	170
N content of urea	103	110	119	116	124
Phosphate:					
Phosphate rock, mine output:					
Gross weight	2,900 ^{r,2}	2,629 ^{r,2}	2,128 ^{r,2}	3,167 ^{r,2}	3,100
P ₂ O ₅ content (30%)	870 ^r	789 ^r	740	950 ^r	930
P ₂ O ₅ equivalent:					
Phosphatic fertilizers	218	164	150	176	170
Phosphoric acid ^e	100	100	100	61	NA
Salt	81	89	78	81	80
Sand and gravel	1,702	1,621	1,382	1,445	1,445
Stone:					
Dolomite, refractory grade ^{e,4}	50,000 ^r	50,000 ^r	50,000 ^r	53,260 ^{r,3}	53,000
Gravel and crushed rock ⁴	1,577 ^{r,3}	340 ^{r,3}	416 ^{r,3}	394 ^{r,3}	400
Marble materials	369	299	270	300	300
Marble blocks thousand square meters	318	283	301	218	200
Volcanic tuff	810	901	958	910	910
Sulfur:					
Byproduct of petroleum and natural gas	28	26	25	26	26
Sulfuric acid:					
Gross weight ^e	360	360	360	166 ^{r,2}	166
S content ^e	117	117	117	76	76
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS					
Gas, natural:					
Gross ^e million cubic meters	7,825	7,574	7,948	8,000	9,000
Dry do.	5,600	5,300	5,600 ^r	7,700 ^r	8,300 ³
Natural gas plant liquids ^e thousand 42-gallon barrels	3,650	3,650	3,650	3,650	3,650
Petroleum:					
Crude do.	151,475 ^r	145,270 ^r	146,365 ^r	140,525 ^r	121,180 ³
Refinery products:					
Liquefied petroleum gas do.	1,680	1,680	1,680	1,715	1,700
Gasoline do.	12,921	11,339	11,589	12,958	13,000
Naphtha do.	7,411	6,409	4,072	7,080	7,000
Kerosene and jet fuel do.	1,655	1,781	1,580	3,248	3,200
Distillate fuel oil do.	28,600	27,863	29,689	29,346	30,000
Residual fuel oil do.	29,798	29,142	27,415	33,653	33,000
Asphalt do.	3,052	3,390	2,898	3,000	3,000
Other do.	1,000	3,500	3,500	688	1,000
Total do.	86,117	85,104	82,423	91,688	91,900

^eEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown. ^rRevised. do. Ditto. NA Not available.

¹Table includes data available through August 30, 2012.

²Reported figure.

³Mostly from imported crude and semimanufactured steel.

⁴Converted to thousand metric tons from thousand cubic meters by multiplying by a factor of 2.7.

TABLE 2
SYRIA: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2011

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Asphalt		General Company for Marble and Asphalt (GEMA) (Government, 100%)	Al Bishri, Dayr az Zawr, and Kafriyah, Latakia	100
Cement		Adra Cement and Building Materials Co. ¹	Adra	1,500
Do.		Al-Badia Cement Co. J.S.C. (Al Muhaidib Holding Co., 29.5%; Syrinvest Holding B.V., 26%; Public stockholders, 15%; Menaf S.A.S., 12%; Ziad Al Zaim, 7.5%; Al Fozan Holding Co., 5%)	Abu As-Shamat	1,600
Do.		Al-Hasakeh Cement L.L.C. (Guris Holdings, 100%)	Clinker mill at Al-Hasakeh	1,000
Do.		Al-Shahaba Cement and Building Materials Co. ¹	Sheikh Said, Aleppo	740
Do.		do.	Maslamieh, Aleppo	220
Do.		Arabian Cement Co. ¹	do.	876
Do.		Guris Raqqa Cement Co. (Guris Holdings, 100%)	Clinker mill at Raqqa	1,500
Do.		Lafarge Cement Syria (Lafarge S.A., 98.67%, and Mas Economic Group S.A., 1.33%)	Ayn Al-Arab, Aleppo	3,000
Do.		Military Housing Cement Group (Government, 100%)	Musselemieh	336
Do.		Rastan Cement and Building Materials Co. ¹	Rastan	130
Do.		Syrian Manufacturing Cement Co. ¹	Hama cement plant 1	1,330
Do.		do.	Hama cement plant 2	328
Do.		do.	Hama cement plant 3	1,200
Do.		Tartous Cement and Building Materials Co. ¹	Tartus	1,825
Gypsum		General Company for Marble and Asphalt (Government, 100%)	Ar Raqqa, Jayrud, and Lattakia	573
Natural gas	million cubic meters	Al Furat Petroleum Co. [Syrian Petroleum Co., 50%, and a consortium of Syria Shell Petroleum Development B.V., Himalaya Energy Services BV, and China National Petroleum Corp. (CNPC), 50%]	Processing plant at Omar	2,400
Do.	do.	Ebla Petroleum Co. [Suncor Energy Inc., 50%, and General Petroleum Corp. (GPC), 50%]	Ash Shaer and Cherrife	2,500
Do.	do.	Syrian Gas Co. (Government, 100%)	Arak	13,770
Do.	do.	do.	Dubayat	14,872
Do.	do.	do.	Processing plant at Deir ez-Zor	4,750
Do.	do.	do.	Processing plant at Palmyra	2,200
Do.	do.	do.	Processing plant at Jebissa	1,060
Do.	do.	do.	Processing plant at Suwaidiyah	240
Do.	do.	do.	Abu Rabah, Al -Fayed north, Qumqum, Bilas, Al-Rasm, and Abu Al Dhuhr	1,825
Nitrogen:				
Ammonia ²		General Fertilizers Co. (Government, 100%)	Homs	237
Fertilizers		do.	do.	200
Urea		do.	do.	280
Marble materials		General Company for Marble and Asphalt (Government, 100%)	Zobar, Lattakia, and Sabboura	90
Petroleum:				
Crude	thousand 42-gallon barrels	Al Bou Kamal Petroleum Co. [General Petroleum Corp. (GPC), 50%, and Tatneft Oil Co., 50%]	Al Kishima oilfield, Abu Kamal	365
Do.	do.	Al-Furat Petroleum Co. [General Petroleum Corp. (GPC), 50%; Syria Shell Petroleum Development B.V., 31.25%; Himalaya Energy Syria BV, 18.75%]	Al Izba, Al Ward, Galban, Jarnof/Saban, Maleh/Azraq, Omar/Omar North, Sijan, Tanak, and Thayyam	43,800
Do.	do.	Deir Ezzor Petroleum Co. [General Petroleum Corp. (GPC), 50%, and Total S.A., 50%]	Al-Mazraa, Attala North Jafra, and Qahar	10,950
Do.	do.	Dijla Petroleum Co. [General Petroleum Corp. (GPC), 50%, and Gulfsands Petroleum, p.l.c., 50%]	Khurbet East	18,250

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 2—Continued
 SYRIA: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2011

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity
Petroleum—Continued:				
Crude— Continued	thousand 42-gallon barrels	Oudeh Petroleum Co. [General Petroleum Corp. (GPC), 50%, and China Petroleum and Chemical Corp. (Sinopec), 50%]	Khurbet East	7,300
Do.	do.	Syria-Sino Al Kawkab Oil Co. [General Petroleum Corp. (GPC), 50%, and China Petroleum and Chemical Corp. (Sinopec), 50%]	Oudeh	3,650
Do.	do.	Syrian Petroleum Co. (Government, 100%)	Jebissa and Swaidiyah-Karatchok	73,000
Refined	do.	Banias Refinery Co. (Government, 100%)	Banias	48,545
Do.	do.	Homs Refinery Co. (Government, 100%)	Homs	39,055
Phosphate rock		General Company for Phosphate and Mines (GCOPHAM) (Government, 100%)	Alsharqiya (A and B Mines)	2,500
Do.	do.	do.	Khunayfis	1,000
Phosphatic fertilizers		General Fertilizers Co. (Government, 100%)	Homs	450
Phosphoric acid		do.	do.	165
Salt		General Company for Phosphate and Mines (GCOPHAM)	Dayr az Zawr	72
Steel:				
Billet		General Company for Iron and Steel Products (Hadeed Hama) (Government, 100%)	Hama	70
Rolled		Al Wahib Group	Tartus	100
Do.		Arabian Steel Co. (ASCO)	Jableh	300
Do.		General Company for Iron and Steel Products (Hadeed Hama)	Hama	78
Do.		Hmisho Steel S.A.	Latakia	500
Do.		International Company for Steel Rolling	Hessya	300
Do.		Joudco Steel Ltd.	do.	150
Do.		Middle East Steel Industries	Yabroud	140
Do.		Orient Co.	Aleppo	300
Do.		Syria Steel and Iron Co. (SALB)	Adra	250
Sulfur	metric tons	Homs Refinery Co.	Homs	40,000
Do.	do.	do.	Processing plant at Suwaidiyah	7,410
Do.	do.	Syrian Petroleum Co. (Government, 100%)	Processing plant at Jebissa	7,300
Sulfuric acid		General Fertilizers Co. (Government, 100%)	Homs	560
Volcanic tuff		General Company for Marble and Asphalt (Government, 100%)	Quarries at Daraa, Assowaida, Al Hasakah, and Arraqah	1,000

Do., do. Ditto.

¹Subsidiary of the General Organization of Cement and Building Materials (GOCBM), which is 100% Government owned.

²Expressed in nitrogen equivalent.