



2012 Minerals Yearbook

DJIBOUTI

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF DJIBOUTI

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In 2012, the small East African country of Djibouti produced salt and such construction materials as basalt (table 1). Djibouti's production and consumption of minerals were not globally significant.

Production

Salt mining started on a semi-industrial scale at Lake Assal in 1998. After declining sharply in 2004, production through 2012 remained at an estimated 12,000 metric tons per year (t/yr).

Structure of the Mineral Industry

Salt production at Lake Assal was carried out by artisanal miners. As of May 2012, Djibouti reportedly had no larger scale salt producers (Fausto DeGuzman, Economics Officer, U.S. Embassy, Djibouti, Djibouti, written commun., May 16, 2012).

Commodity Review

Metals

Gold.—In 2012, Stratex International plc and Thani Ashanti Alliance Ltd. [a joint venture of AngloGold Ashanti Ltd. of South Africa (50%) and Thani Dubai Mining Ltd. of the United Arab Emirates (50%)] explored for gold at the Asal and the Oklila prospects, which are part of the Afar project. Stratex and Thani Ashanti planned to start drilling at Oklila in the second quarter of 2013 (Stratex International plc, 2013, p. 11–12).

Industrial Minerals

Cement.—In October 2012, the Government approved Cimenterie d'Ali Sabieh's plans to develop a new cement plant with a capacity of 200,000 t/yr in Ali Sabieh. In early 2011, the Export-Import Bank of India extended a \$10 million line of credit to the Government of Djibouti to build the plant (International Cement Review, 2011; Guelleh, 2012).

Salt.—Resources of salt in brine at Lake Assal were estimated to be 100 million metric tons. Artisanal miners produced about 12,000 t/yr of salt at Lake Assal. Production was less than 10% of the levels reached in 2002 when 12 companies mined salt (Banque Centrale de Djibouti, undated, p. 21; Ria Novosti, 2010; U.S. Embassy, Djibouti, Djibouti, 2011).

As of May 2012, Salt Investment SAZf's [a joint venture of Emerging Capital Partners LLC of the United States, Hardtechnologies Group of Spain, and Société d'Exploitation du Lac Assal] plans to complete a new mining operation and processing plant at Lake Assal with a capacity of 4 million metric tons per year were on hold. Magnesium and other contaminants rendered salt from Lake Assal unsuitable for the chemicals, glass, and plastic industries without additional processing. Restarting the project was likely to require an investment of \$5 million to resolve quality problems. Additional investment could be necessary for maintenance of equipment and facilities because of Djibouti's harsh climate (Feytis, 2009; U.S. Embassy, Djibouti, Djibouti, 2011; Fausto DeGuzman, Economics Officer, U.S. Embassy, Djibouti, Djibouti, written commun., May 16, 2012).

Mineral Fuels

Petroleum.—In September 2011, Oyster Oil & Gas Ltd. signed a production-sharing agreement with the Government for four exploration blocks, of which three were located onshore and one offshore (Oyster Oil & Gas Ltd., 2011).

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TABLE 1
 DJIBOUTI: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES^{1,2}

(Metric tons)

Commodity ³	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Salt	12,000 ^r	12,000 ^r	12,000 ^r	12,000 ^r	12,000

^rRevised.

¹Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Table includes data available through May 16, 2013.

³In addition to the commodity listed, crude construction materials, including basalt, are produced, but available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

TABLE 2
 DJIBOUTI: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2012

(Metric tons)

Commodity	Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity ^e
Salt	Artisanal miners	Mines at Lake Assal	12,000

^eEstimated.