

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

MALTA

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Malta's mineral industry economy mainly depends on trade and the storage of crude oil and refinery products as well as other nonfuel mineral commodities. The mineral industry, which consisted mainly of limestone and salt production, contributed less than 0.5% to the gross domestic product.

Malta was an important transshipment center in the Mediterranean area. The country's natural ports and its strategic location in the middle of the shipping lanes that connect the two ends of the Mediterranean Sea are its major assets. The transshipment and reexport of goods were significant to the country's economy along with the storage of petroleum and refinery products.

With the help of foreign companies, the Maltese Government was exploring offshore areas for petroleum. Previous seismic work by the Maltese Government in the 1980s and by Texaco Corp. from 1990 to 1992 resulted in the identification of several prospects. The prospects are located along the same geologic trend as several Italian oilfields offshore Sicily.

The Australian company Hardman Resources NL was planning to drill an exploratory well offshore southeast of Malta.

The Government signed an agreement allowing Pancontinental Oil and Gas plc of Australia to search for oil in waters south of Malta. The agreement provides for further geological and geophysical work, which will include the drilling of an exploratory oil well (Alexander's Oil and Gas Connections, 2001§¹).

For more extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Malta, see the 2000 Minerals Yearbook, volume III, International Review of Europe and Central Eurasia,

Internet Reference Cited

Alexander's Gas and Oil Connections, 2001 (August 28), Malta signs deal with Pancontinental Oil and Gas to search for oil, News and Trends—Europe, accessed August 29, 2001, at URL <http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news/nte13560.htm>.

¹A reference that includes a section twist (§) is found in the Internet Reference Cited section.

TABLE 1
MALTA: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/ 2/

Commodity 3/		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Limestone	thousand metric tons	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Salt	metric tons	30	30	30	30	30

1/ Table includes data available through February 2002.

2/ Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

3/ In addition to listed commodities, small amounts of cement, fertilizer, lime, and plaster are produced, but available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.