



2009 Minerals Yearbook

DJIBOUTI

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF DJIBOUTI

By Thomas R. Yager

In 2009, the small East African country of Djibouti was a producer of perlite, salt, and such construction materials as basalt (table 1). Djibouti's production and consumption of minerals were not globally significant.

Production

Salt production started on a semi-industrial scale at Lake Assal in 1998. Production increased from 2004 to 2008 because of the resumption of demand from Ethiopia. Production had nearly ceased in 2004 because of a 53% tariff that Ethiopia imposed in October 2003 on salt imports from Djibouti. Perlite mining started in 2009.

Structure of the Mineral Industry

Salt production at Lake Assal and perlite production were carried out by privately owned companies. Small amounts of salt were also produced at Doraleh by artisanal miners.

Commodity Review

Metals

Gold.—Deccan Gold Mines Ltd. of India and JB Djibouti Mining Ltd. (a subsidiary of JB Group of India) started gold exploration at the Asaleyta and the Hesdaba properties in February 2008. The companies engaged in channel sampling and drilling at Asaleyta and Hesdaba; gold mineralization was epithermal (Deccan Gold Mines Ltd., 2009, p. 10).

Industrial Minerals

Perlite.—In April 2009, the Government granted JB Djibouti Mining a mining license for a perlite deposit near Ageralayta.

JB Djibouti Mining started a pilot mining project; the company planned to start large-scale mining in August 2009 (JB Group, 2009).

Salt.—Djibouti's salt production was limited by reliance on the Ethiopian market, the absence of reliable water and energy supplies, and an inadequate regulatory framework. Other constraints included poor working conditions and a lack of iodization machinery (Geographic Environmental Solutions, 2008, p. 12).

Société d'Exploitation du Lac Assal's salt mining operation on the shore of Lake Assal had a capacity of 86,000 metric tons per year. Salt Investment SAZF [a joint venture of Emerging Capital Partners LLC (ECP) of the United States, Hardtechnologies Group of Spain, and Société d'Exploitation du Lac Assal] planned to complete a new salt mining operation and processing plant at Lake Assal with a capacity of 4 million metric tons per year by June 2010. The company planned to export 85% of its production to Middle Eastern countries for use in the chemical industry and 15% to Europe and North America for use in road deicing (Geographic Environmental Solutions, 2008, p. 12; Feytis, 2009).

References Cited

- Deccan Gold Mines Ltd., 2009, Annual report 2009: Bangalore, India, Deccan Gold Mines Ltd., 64 p.
- Feytis, Alexandra, 2009, Djibouti's salt emergence: *Industrial Minerals*, no. 504, September, p. 15.
- Geographic Environmental Solutions, 2008, Salt Investment SAZF—Lake Assal salt project, Djibouti—Environmental impact statement: Johannesburg, South Africa, Geographic Environmental Solutions, 108 p.
- JB Group, 2009, Djibouti mining project & gold exploration: JB Group. (Accessed May 19, 2010, at http://www.jbgroupworldwide.com/djibouti_mining_project_gold_exploration.html.)

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

(Metric tons)

Commodity ³	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Salt:					
Industrial production	45,000	70,000	90,000	110,000	110,000
Artisanal production	8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400
Total	53,000	78,000	98,000	118,000	118,000

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

²Table includes data available through May 20, 2010.

³In addition to the commodity listed, perlite and 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 2009

(Metric tons)

Commodity	Major operating companies	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity ^{e, 1}
Perlite	JB Djibouti Mining Ltd.	Mine at Ageralayta	NA
Salt	Société d'Exploitation du Lac Assal	Mines at Lake Assal	86,000
do.	Société Sel de Djibouti	do.	52,000
do.	Société Moussa Ali	do.	34,000
do.	Société Saline de Djibouti	do.	21,000
do.	Société Mont Goda	do.	18,000
do.	Société Mahad	do.	13,000
do.	Société Kalou	do.	11,000
do.	Société Mont Garbi	do.	4,000
do.	Artisanal miners	Mines at Doraleh	8,400

^eEstimated. do. Ditto. NA Not available.

¹Capacity estimate based on maximum production in 1 year between 1999 and 2004 for all producers except for Société d'Exploitation du Lac and artisanal miners.