

Rich seams worth mining

Licences are awarded in periodic bidding rounds, with many permits given in partnership

Algeria's subsoil is under-explored, but the government has a significant budget for exploration which also benefits from tax exemptions for investors

Mining is a large and traditional sector in Algeria, but activity is governed by relatively new legislation – the new mining Act 14-05, enacted on the 24th of February 2014, amending the 2001 Mining Law.

Mining activity is regulated by a licensing system, with permits for prospecting and exploring and for the exploitation of mines and quarries. The investment in mining exploitation is governed by the Investment Development Act, with the same fiscal advantages. Exploration activities are exempted from value added tax for capital goods, equipment, and services. These activities are also granted exoneration from custom taxes, duties and royalties for importation of these equipments and capital goods.

At the head of the regulatory administration is the Directorate General of Mines. This body is charged with defining, and implementing, the strategy and the policy for mining research and exploitation, and the development of the geological infrastructures, and the proposition of the legislative modalities for all mining activities. The DGM draws on the scientific work of the Algerian Geological Survey Agency. The AGSA is responsible for the acquisition and preservation of the geological knowledge of the country and related economic activities, and for the preparation of the national geological infrastructure programmes (geological, geophysical and geochemical mappings) and their publications, and the definition of the mineral inventory. Meanwhile, the National Agency for Mining Activities has the job of promoting mining investment, managing the mining domain, granting research and exploitation mining licenses, and monitoring them.

While Algeria has a small private sector of some 450 companies involved in aggregates, salt, gypsum and marble, the main mining operations are all state-owned. They come under the Manal Industrial Mining Group, the holding group which is in charge of the management of the eight public mining companies. These companies are FERPHOS, for exploitation of iron ore and phosphates; ORGM, the national bureau of geological and mining research; ENOF, for exploitation of non ferrous metals and industrial minerals; ENG, for aggregates and dimension stones; ENAMARBRE, for exploitation of marble; ENASEL, for salt exploitation; ENOR, for gold mining; and AGENOR, for gold and precious metals refining.


Algeria has two establishments for training miners – the Algerian Institute of Mining (IAM) and El-Abed School of Mines, established at the zinc and lead mines of El-Abed, which are responsible for the training of specialised mining engineers and workers.

An under-studied underground

The country's territory remains under-explored, and much effort has to be made to develop mining exploration and exploitation. The government has allowed a significant budget for carrying out the national programme of mineral exploration for phosphates, iron ore, gold and precious metals, semi-precious stones, rare earth elements and metals, and diamonds.

Licences are awarded in periodic bidding rounds, with many permits given in partnership for the exploration of gold, base metals and mineral substances for construction products.

The main projects in development concern:

- setting up of an industrial complex for exploitation of phosphates and production of phosphate fertilisers in the eastern part of the country
- the Tirek and Amesmesa gold mines in the Hoggar Shield located in the southern part of the country
- the Gara Djebilet and Mecheri Abdelaziz iron ore deposits located in Tindouf in the south-west of the country
- the Oued Amizour zinc and lead deposit located towards the east of the country
- marble and dimension stone deposits located all over the country
- industrial minerals deposits such as bentonite, diatomite, and kaolin
- development of different types of marble deposits. 

Selected Mineral Output	2012	2013
Iron ore (Tonnes)	1,784,000	1,067,000
Phosphate (Tonnes)	1,250,000	1,150,000
Aggregates (m3)	56,000,000	55,000,000
Gypsum (Tonnes)	1,958,000	2,078,000
Limestone (Tonnes)	19,195,000	21,837,000