



2020–2021 Minerals Yearbook

MALTA [ADVANCE RELEASE]

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF MALTA

By Jaewon Chung

Note: In this chapter, information for 2020 is followed by information for 2021.

The Maltese archipelago consists of three inhabited islands—Malta [which has an area of 245 square kilometers (km²)], Gozo (67 km²), and Comino (2.8 km²). Malta is an important transshipment hub in the Mediterranean area. The country hosts a few mineral resources, such as clay, limestone, and salt, but had no identified mineral fuel resources.

Minerals in the National Economy

In 2020, Malta's real gross domestic product (GDP) decreased by 8.3% compared with an increase of 5.9% in 2019 owing to the economic disruption caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and a decline in exports. The nominal GDP was \$14.92 billion. The mining and quarrying sector constituted a minor component of Malta's economy. The mining and quarrying sector (excluding salt mines) employed 241 people full time (up from 228 people in 2019), which represented about 0.1% of the total 228,900 full-time employees in the country (Malta Resources Authority, 2018; 2021, p. 3; Central Bank of Malta, 2021, p. 59–60; 2022, p. 59, 65; World Bank, The, 2022).

Production

In 2020, Malta's major mineral production was of limestone and salt. Two types of limestone were quarried in the country: coralline limestone (also referred to as hardstone) and globigerina limestone (or softstone). The total output of crushed hardstone and softstone remained at about the same level as in 2019, whereas that of dimension stone increased by 29%. Salt production decreased by 20% to 1,600 metric tons (estimated) likely owing to pandemic-associated restrictions at the workplace. Data on mineral production are in table 1.

Structure of the Mineral Industry

The legislative framework for the mining and quarrying sector is provided by the Malta Resources Authority Act (Chapter

423) and the Regulator for Energy and Water Services Act of 2015. The Malta Resources Authority regulated the country's energy, mineral resources, and water, and it issued petroleum exploration licenses. As of 2020, there were 48 active limestone quarries (out of a total of 69 licensed limestone quarries), which was a decrease from the 49 active quarries in 2019. Salt was produced by individual salt farmers using small-scale coastal salt evaporation pans (Malta Resources Authority, 2021, p. 3, 8). Table 2 is a list of major mineral industry facilities.

MINERAL INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2021

In 2021, Malta's real GDP increased by 9.4% owing to the increase in domestic consumption and net exports; the nominal GDP was \$17.19 billion. The country had 50 active limestone quarries in 2021, which employed 249 full-time people, representing about 0.1% of the total 236,300 full-time employees. The outputs of salt and limestone were estimated to have remained at the same level as in 2020 (table 1; Central Bank of Malta, 2022, p. 57, 65; World Bank, The, 2022).

References Cited

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- Malta Resources Authority, 2018, About us: Malta Resources Authority webpage. (Accessed June 27, 2022, at <http://mra.org.mt/about-us/>.)
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- World Bank, The, 2022, GDP (current US\$)—Malta: Washington DC, The World Bank. (Accessed August 5, 2022, at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=MT>.)

TABLE 1
MALTA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons, gross weight)

Commodity ²	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS					
Salt, solar ^c	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,600	1,600
Stone:					
Crushed:					
Hardstone, coralline limestone	1,291,010	1,548,536	1,900,063 ^r	1,854,448	1,820,000 ^c
Softstone, globigerina limestone	49,395	49,615	53,354 ^r	63,531	62,000 ^c
Total	1,340,000	1,600,000	1,950,000	1,920,000	1,880,000 ^c
Dimension:					
Hardstone, coralline limestone	55,828	68,816	62,751 ^r	90,405	89,000 ^c
Softstone, globigerina limestone	88,512	94,015	75,888 ^r	88,477	87,000 ^c
Total	144,000	163,000	139,000	179,000	176,000 ^c
Grand total	1,480,000	1,760,000	2,090,000	2,100,000	2,060,000 ^c

^cEstimated. ^rRevised.

¹Table includes data available through June 23, 2022. All data are reported unless otherwise noted. Totals and estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²In addition to the commodities listed, lime may have been produced, but available information was inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

TABLE 2
MALTA: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2021

(Metric tons)

Commodity	Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity ^c
Salt	Artisanal miners	Salt pans located mainly on Salina Bay (Malta Island) and Xwejini Bay (Gozo Island)	2,000
Stone, limestone	Various small, locally owned companies	50 quarries located on the islands of Malta and Gozo	2,100,000

^cEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.