

Title:

Strategies for Oil Shale Development in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

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Oil shale deposits in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan could satisfy the Kingdom's demand for liquid fuels and electricity for centuries. Markets also exist for raw and retorted oil shale, for oil shale ash, and for sulfur recovered during the upgrading and refining of crude shale oil. Although the potential benefits of oil shale development are substantial, complex and expensive facilities would be required, and these have serious economic, environmental, and social implications for the Kingdom and its people.

In January 2006, the United States Trade and Development Agency awarded a grant to the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to support the analysis of current oil shale processing technologies and the application of international expertise to the development of a shale oil industry in Jordan. In January 2007, Jordan's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources engaged a professional team led by Behre Dolbear & Company (USA) Inc. to identify and analyze the diverse opportunities and challenges. Behre Dolbear's principal subcontractor was Interdisciplinary Research Consultants, of Amman, Jordan.

The goal of the technical assistance project was to help the Ministry establish short-term and long-term strategies for oil shale development and to facilitate the commercial production of shale oil in Jordan. This paper discusses the results of the project. The Kingdom's current energy situation and its previous work on oil shale are summarized, and the incentives and restraints on oil shale commercialization are described. Impediments to development are identified, and possible governmental responses are assessed.

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