

6.1 **Aspects of Jordan Oil Shale as Investment Opportunity**

Jamal Alali

Natural Resources Authority, Amman, Jordan

Jordan (as a non-oil-producing country) imports about 95% of its energy needs, suffers greatly from the impact of the current rising oil prices. Petroleum consumption is around 100,000 bbl/day, which becomes a significant burden on the Gross National Product and retards the development of Jordan's economy. The need for developing our indigenous energy resources (for example, oil shale) sits as a high priority on the national agenda of the Government of Jordan. More than 65 Billion tons of oil shale have been identified in central Jordan. Jordan is ranked as the 6th among 37 countries in the world holding defined shale oil reserves. Oil shale in central Jordan is characterized by huge reserves relatively close to each other. These reserves are of good quality, offering favorable mining condition, such as shallow depth suitable for surface retorting, and low stripping ratio (1:1 in general). The beds are horizontal and structurally undisturbed, with soft to moderate overburden rocks, and are located in remote or thinly populated areas. These areas have good roads connected with asphalted highways.

Since the 1960s, Natural Resources Authority (NRA) has been carrying out extensive geological studies to determine the oil shale quantity and quality in Jordan. Moreover, NRA in cooperation with many foreign companies, institutes and organizations from many countries in the world, carried out technical and pre-feasibility studies on oil shale for oil extraction and power generation. International and local companies have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Government of Jordan to conduct bankable feasibility studies to produce oil from oil shale. Currently, further acreage and blocks in oil shale deposits have also been proposed for interested foreign and local companies and investors to exploit oil shale to produce oil and to generate electricity.