

STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY, ENERGY EFFICIENT AND FINANCIALLY ATTRACTIVE UTILIZATION OF OIL SHALE IN JORDAN, EGYPT, MOROCCO, AND SYRIA.

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The Euro-Mediterranean Energy Market Integration Project, MEDEMIP, is supporting the development of an environmentally friendly, energy efficient and financially attractive utilization of oil shale. This source of energy is available in larger amounts in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Syria. Oil shale has gained attention as an energy resource as the energy price stabilizer and as some kind of energy security. At the same time, oil shale mining and processing involve a number of environmental issues, such as land use, waste disposal, water use, waste-water management, greenhouse-gas emissions and emissions.

Significant oil shale deposits are located in Jordan. Jordanian oil shale is high quality, although its sulfur content is high. The best-explored deposits are El Lajjun, Sultani, and the Juref ed Darawishare located in west-central Jordan, while the Yarmouk deposit, close to its northern border, extends into Syria.

Major oil shale deposits are also located in Morocco. In Morocco, oil shale deposits have been identified at ten localities with the largest deposits in Tarfaya and Timahdit. Although reserves in Tarfaya and Timahdit are well explored, the commercial exploitation has not started yet and only a limited program of laboratory and pilot-plant research has been undertaken. There are also oil shale reserves in Egypt located in Safaga-Al-Qusair and Abu Tartour areas.

MED-EMIP has been requested to moderate and support a dialog about utilization of oil shale in partner countries of MED-EMIP. It is accepted and realized that oil shale is a coal like fossil fuel with low energy content. However that does not necessarily mean it cannot be used in an environmentally friendly way and contributing to the energy mix of a country, in particular as an energy source for the power industry, wherever the local conditions are conducive to it.

Taking into consideration the fast growing GDP in the region of between 4% and 8% as well as the very slow penetration and utilization of renewable energy as a source for electricity generation it is more prudent to wisely use readily available resources to avoid a further gap between demand and supply of electricity.

The lack of environmental regulations and standards is considered one of the bottlenecks preventing the development of oil shale resources in the region. Within the EU, the oil shale resources are being utilized such as in Estonia and in Germany in line with imposed environmental and emission standards