

USING OF OIL SHALE IN ISRAEL AS ALTERNATIVE SOURCE FOR ENERGY

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The interest in oil shale deposits in Israel has fluctuated along with the oil prices in the last 50 years. Though a small open pit extracting 400,000 t/y has been operating since 1988 thus serving the source for a 12 MW power plant in the Northern Negev.

Oil shale deposits are abundant throughout the country containing a cumulative reserves of hundreds of billion tons. In southern Israel they are 5-70 m thick and relatively close to the surface, while the central and northern deposits are 200-300 m thick with 200-400 m overburden. Recently various rights have been granted for exploration. The deeper deposits are regulated by the Petroleum Law as they are to be exploited by in situ heating and production of oil or gas. The shallower deposits are aimed to be mined under the Mining Ordinance and retorted in order to produce oil.

The Ministry of Infrastructures, which promotes the exploitation of oil shale as an alternative energy resource, provides the investors with the basic information which has been gathered through many years. That includes data about quality and quantity of the deposits, the overburden etc. Also coordination with the Ministry of Environment is maintained in order to fix the various environmental requirements.