

Compañía de Salitre y Yodo de Chile (COSAYACH) - Privately Owned

Compañía Chilena del Salitre y Yodo (Cosayach), owned by the entrepreneur Francisco Javier Errázuriz, has also entered in this business. Cosayach bought, over a 4-year period, the mining claims of 96 abandoned nitrate companies with their respective dump heaps and adjacent pampas to carry out a big expansion project. Also has opened two iodine plants in the II Region. It is planning to invest around US\$ 420 million in the productive development of the abandoned nitrate works in the Atacama desert.

The project intends to use the dump heaps and gravel in the area and to extract important iodine, potassium nitrate and sulfate reserves. Seven years ago the Compañía Minera del Norte, Cominor, initiated a research program of pilot works to exploit this gravel. A result of this study was the pilot plant that contained new technology for Chile, which was inaugurated in February, 1988 at the former Oficina Pinto. Research cost US \$1 million, and start-up of the plant was US\$ 500,000 more.

Two plants are currently operating, located at Peña Chica (I Region) and Salinas (II Region). In 1990 another plant called Cala Cala was inaugurated. It was built at a cost of US\$ 1 million.

Production of all the plants should be about 350 tons of iodine per year. When other plants like Virginia are added, capacity could increase to about 500 tpy. These plants would be the first ones in the project, which includes an initial investment of US\$ 25 million to initiate work in five nitrate works.

Amsterdam Chemical Pharmaceutical Minera - Privately Owned.

ACF Minera is a joint venture between Sociedad Contractual Minera Lagunas and ACF of Holland. The company operates a small iodine plant in the I Region with a design capacity of 300 tpy from the gravel from old nitrate processes. Production started in 1986 at a rate of 100 tpy. The product is exported to Holland for ACF.

The owners of S.C.M Lagunas also own Compañía Minera Iris which operates a small sodium sulfide plant in the same area.

Compañía Minera Chilbras - Privately Owned.

This is a Chilean-Brazilian company which is planning to produce iodine from fresh nitrates in the Bellavista Salt Mine in the I Region. Engineering analyses have already been completed, and a US\$ 2.5 million investment has been projected. The product would be exported to Brazil.

Merck Pharmaceutical Company - Privately Owned.

Merck of Germany has a project to produce iodine from dump heaps abandoned near Huara in the I Region. Like SOQUIMICH, Merck is also involved in a lawsuit with the Errázuriz Group over the rights to these deposits. To date only a few feasibility studies have been carried out.

Cía. Minera Sierras de Tarapacá - Privately Owned

The company's facilities have been built with a US\$ 2.1 million credit from Corfo. The objective is to produce approximately 180 tons of iodine in paste annually.

Yolanda - KAP Resources.

The Yolanda Project near Taltal in the II Region belongs to Atacama Resources Ltd. and, since mid-1989, to KAP Resources Ltd. of Vancouver, Canada, which are associated companies. North Lily Mining Company of California, through its Chilean subsidiary Northern Resources Ltda., has operated the mine since 1988 with a 10% share of the profits. This company exploits gold, silver and copper mines in the U.S.A.

Davy MacKee Corp. recently completed a feasibility study. The investment would amount to US\$ 60 million, including a port in Taltal at a cost of US\$ 17 million, and two leaching plants with sea water. In 14 years the project would produce 18,900 tons of iodine and 3.5 million tons of potassium nitrate. With sales prices of US\$ 15 per kilo of iodine and US\$ 286 per ton of nitrate, operating margins would be US\$ 13 million annually including finance costs. However, iodine prices have been falling during 1990, and the company is analyzing the effects of its future production on the market.