

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2023

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the first quarter of 2023 were 462,000 metric tons (t), 39% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2022, 37% less than those in the first quarter of 2022, and 33% less than that in the first quarter of 2021. Jamaica (96%) was the main source of crude and dried bauxite imports in the first quarter of 2023 (fig. 1, table 1).

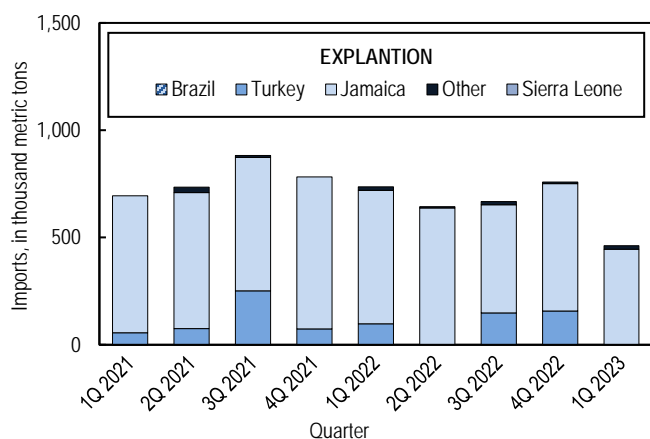


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the first quarter of 2021 through the first quarter of 2023. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the first quarter of 2023 were 323,000 t, 36% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2022, 27% less than those in the first quarter of 2022, and 22% less than those in the first quarter of 2021. The leading sources of imported alumina in the first quarter of 2023 were Brazil (83%) and Canada (7%) (fig. 2, table 3).

Exports of alumina during the first quarter of 2023 were 33,600 t, 30% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2022, 17% less than those in the first quarter of 2022, and 28% less than those in the first quarter of 2021. The leading destinations for alumina exported in the first quarter of 2023 were Mexico (23%); Canada (22%); and China (12%) (fig. 2, table 3).

Updates

On April 25, Century Aluminum Co. announced that it would acquire a 55% stake in the Jamalco alumina refinery from Noble

Group Holdings Ltd. for \$1. The remaining stake is held by Clarendon Alumina Production Ltd., owned by the Government of Jamaica. Located in Clarendon, Jamaica, the Jamalco alumina refinery has a production capacity of 1.4 million tons per year (Mt/yr). As rationale for the acquisition, Century cited increased control of its supply chain for alumina used by its three smelters in the United States which can consume 1.4 Mt/yr of alumina. The Government did not object to the transaction and stated that Century would be responsible for investments to repair damage caused by a fire that shut down production in 2021 (Century Aluminum Co., 2023; Government of Jamaica Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, 2023; Jamaica Observer, 2023).

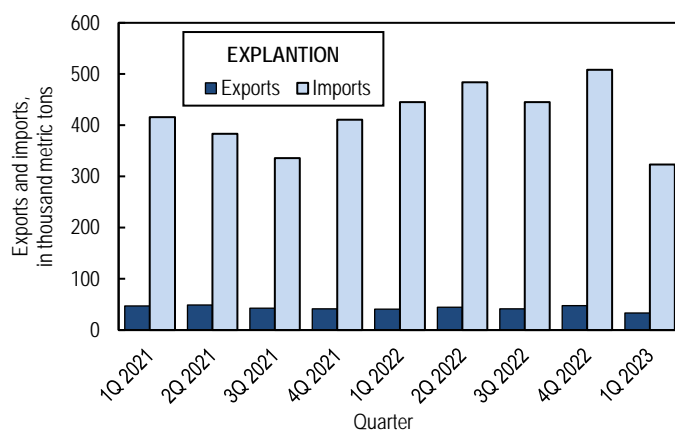


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the first quarter of 2021 through the first quarter of 2023. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

On April 27, Glencore plc (Switzerland) announced the acquisition of a 45% stake in Mineracão Rio do Norte S.A. and a 30% stake in Alunorte S.A. from Norsk Hydro ASA (Norway). The deal is expected to close in the second half of 2023 for approximately \$700 million. Mineracão Rio do Norte produces bauxite from a 12.5-Mt/yr mine in Trombetas, Brazil. Alunorte operates a 6.3-Mt/yr alumina refinery in Barcarena, Brazil. Glencore indicated that the deal would expand material offerings available to its customers (Glencore plc, 2023).

Tianshan Aluminum Group (China) announced the acquisition of PT Inti Tambang Makmur (Indonesia) for about

\$30 million. PT Inti Tambang Makmur owns mining rights to three bauxite mines in the Kalimantan Province of Indonesia. One mine has an estimated 68 Mt bauxite reserve, while reserves for the other 2 mines were unreported. Tianshan Aluminum has a reported alumina capacity of 2.5 Mt/yr and a primary aluminum capacity of 1.2 Mt/yr (S&P Global Platts Metals Daily, 2023).

References Cited

- Century Aluminum Co., 2023, Century Aluminum Company to acquire 55% interest in Jamalco alumina refinery: Chicago, IL, Century Aluminum Co. press release, April 25. (Accessed May 31, 2023, at <https://centuryaluminum.com/investors/press-releases/press-release-details/2023/Century-Aluminum-Company-to-Acquire-55-Interest-in-Jamalco-Alumina-Refinery/default.aspx>.)
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TABLE 1
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CRUDE AND DRIED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2022				1st quarter–	2023
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter
Imports for consumption:						
Brazil	845	--	--	--	845	55
Jamaica ²	622,000	637,000	503,000	593,000	2,360,000	445,000
Turkey	96,900	4	149,000	158,000	403,000	--
Other	15,900	6,150	16,300	6,540	44,900	16,900
Total	736,000	644,000	669,000	757,000	2,800,000	462,000
Exports:						
Canada	272	245	188	477	1,180	151
Other	139	178	624	118	1,060	191
Total	411	423	812	595	2,240	342

--Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CALCINED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2022										2023	
	1st quarter		2d quarter		3d quarter		4th quarter		1st quarter– 4th quarter		1st quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports for consumption:												
Australia	--	49,500	--	--	--	32,000	--	--	--	81,500	--	49,500
Brazil	442	--	--	411	--	2,250	--	40,800	442	43,500	--	56,300
China	21,200	5,080	3,570	6,180	8,460	3,770	5,900	2,500	39,100	17,500	16,800	410
Guyana	4,820	39,400	21,400	34,200	24,400	26,100	16,900	37,000	67,500	137,000	15,700	5,290
Other	964	18,100	5	16,900	156	49,000	127	7,720	1,250	91,700	1,010	56
Total	27,400	112,000	24,900	57,700	33,000	113,000	22,900	88,100	108,000	371,000	33,500	112,000
Exports:												
Canada	53	--	69	--	80	--	345	--	547	--	769	--
China	34	--	--	--	--	34	--	73	34	107	--	36
Mexico	1,460	--	158	--	1,690	14	140	41	3,440	55	1,350	205
Other	122	114	109	--	68	7	68	34	367	155	82	--
Total	1,670	114	336	--	1,830	55	553	148	4,390	317	2,200	241

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF ALUMINA, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons, calcined equivalent)

Country or locality	2022				1st quarter–	2023
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter
Imports for consumption: ²						
Australia	5,000	1	82,700	161,000	248,000	--
Brazil	319,000	367,000	245,000	243,000	1,170,000	269,000
Canada	19,200	21,200	20,500	19,700	80,600	22,300
Jamaica ³	10,100	12,100	10,800	7,960	40,900	13,000
Spain	39,900	25,000	20,800	135	85,800	44
Other	51,600	59,100	65,500	75,700	252,000	18,900
Total	445,000	484,000	445,000	508,000	1,880,000	323,000
Exports: ⁴						
Belgium	965	2,380	854	459	4,660	311
Canada	5,310	6,610	5,820	5,720	23,500	7,270
China ⁵	4,170	3,410	2,360	3,500	13,500	4,010
France	1,690	2,030	2,300	1,670	7,690	1,920
Germany	1,270	1,450	1,530	1,850	6,110	1,220
Korea, Republic of	1,400	1,160	1,580	1,790	5,920	1,460
Mexico	16,300	17,300	18,100	12,700	64,400	7,630
Netherlands	964	1,210	716	949	3,840	255
United Arab Emirates	1,170	996	809	590	3,560	763
Other	7,290	7,730	7,390	18,500	40,900	8,750
Total	40,600	44,300	41,400	47,700	174,000	33,600

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Includes imports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 545,594 metric tons (t) in 2022; 78,644 t in the first quarter of 2023.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 128,677 t in 2022; 19,779 t in the first quarter of 2023.

⁵Includes Hong Kong.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.