

Egypt awards 8 gold and metal mining exploration licences

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Egypt awarded eight gold and metal mining exploration licences in its eastern desert region, the petroleum ministry said on Wednesday, 1 June, a second test of a 2020 legislative overhaul designed to unlock vast untapped mineral resources.



Source: Lynn Bendickson © [123RF.com](#)

Egypt, campaigning to attract \$40bn in private investment in the next four years, last month outlined an array of state assets that it would offer to investors, part of a plan to withdraw from certain economic sectors.

But only eight blocks were awarded to four companies of the 13-15 companies that took part, according to officials in companies that took part in the latest tender, which closed in June 2021.

"It seems odd that you wouldn't take the money and run," said Mark Campbell, chair of Akh Gold Limited, which won licences for two blocks. "All you want is for people to come spend money and explore for minerals. You need to be exploring, exploring, exploring."

Other successful bidders for the six-year licences were Lotus Gold, Marine Logistics Gold Mining and Ankh Resources, the ministry said.



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Best bids won

The companies that won submitted the best bids, an official at the Egyptian Mineral Resources Authority told Reuters.

"The companies that did not win in the concession areas in the last auction can apply again in the new auction," the dates for which will be announced on Thursday, said the official, who asked to remain anonymous.

Egypt in early 2020 unveiled amended mining laws to scrap red tape and a profit-sharing rule unpopular in the industry, and in its initial tender that year awarded 82 exploration blocks to 11 companies.

Egypt has a history of gold mining stretching back to the pharaohs but now has only one commercial gold mine in operation, Centamin's Sukari, in the eastern desert region. Sukari contributes up to \$900m a year to the Egyptian economy.

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