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## **Mining output close to breaking through US\$ 50 billion barrier**

### **Thalium and rare earths**

Brazil is set to join, in the near future, the list of producing countries for materials which up till now it has always had to import. The most feasible projects that have appeared in this field so far are Itaoeste's proposal to exploit a major reserve in Bahia and MbAC's project for producing rare earth oxides.

Itaoeste, having discovered a thalium reserve amounting to at least 60 tons of metal content present in manganese ore, is to set up an initial modular project with a thalium production capacity of 6 tons year, in addition to 25,000 tons of manganese sulphate and 92 tons of cobalt oxide, with a target startup date of late 2013 or early 2014. To ensure its ability to recover the thalium, the company invested in the development of a hydrometallurgical process, mainly comprising leaching with sulphuric acid, separating the sulphides, and extraction with the use of solvents. In addition to the manganese sulphate and cobalt oxide, the company hopes to recover the silica, which has a wide range of industrial applications on account of its high degree of purity. For a substantial expansion of output capacity in the future, on a large scale compatible with the size of the deposit, Itaoeste is open to partnerships with other companies.

[http://www.mla.com.br/2010/br/ler/index.php?cod=\\*928D6B84BF63E65B38BD DD327F7389C234498731](http://www.mla.com.br/2010/br/ler/index.php?cod=*928D6B84BF63E65B38BD DD327F7389C234498731)