

Fossil Heritage Preservation

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OCP is aware of the importance of Morocco's paleontological heritage and has committed itself to studying and preserving that heritage. Geology, which is upstream from the phosphate value chain, is one of the oldest professions valued at OCP. Geology enables deposits to be identified, their potential to be measured and enables an added presence during exploitation activity. One of the areas of Geology that OCP is looking at closely is paleontology, which is studying the various fossils in the Moroccan phosphate series. One of the major discoveries of 2013 was that of a fossil of one of the largest sea turtles, dating from the end of the Cretaceous Period, some 67 million years ago.

The Group has undertaken actions to highlight the significant collection of fossils gathered from phosphate mines, as well as instruments for extraction and processing, by setting up a museum in Khouribga. With its exhibition halls, collection rooms and laboratory for fossil-preparation in the planning stage, the museum will enable the preparation, conservation and showcasing of the rich paleontological collection held by OCP. The collection is original - one of the most unique in the world. It is regularly enriched and placed in a scientific perspective by its R&D teams. The ambition for the collection is to become an international reference point for the evolution of biodiversity from over a 25-million-year period, dating from the Mesozoic Period (Maastrichtian) to the Eocene Period (Basal Lutetian). The collection currently includes over one thousand specimens and skeletons, including ancient mammals, modern birds, as well as more exceptional items, such as giant sea reptiles (turtles and mosasaurs), complete crocodylian skeletons and remains of dinosaurs and pterosaurs. The planned museum at Khouribga is the first of its kind in Morocco. It is already a reference point for the scientific and naturalist community in Morocco, echoing presentations made at the Second Meeting for Developing and Preserving the Paleontological Heritage, held at Meknes in 2008, and to be made at the up-coming 5th International Meeting on Developing and Preserving the Paleontological Heritage, to be held at Oujda in May 2014.

The museum will be of interest to Moroccans and international tourists alike. The project contributes to our country's economic policy aimed at tourism and offers outsiders an inside look into Moroccan culture.

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