



8. The 1985 image shows first mining activities. Data: Landsat 4, 1985-01-25.



9. The areas of the evaporation pans in 2000. Data: Landsat 5, 2000-01-03.



10. The area of the evaporation pans in 2023. Data: Sentinel-2, 2023-01-18.

### Salar de Atacama, Chile

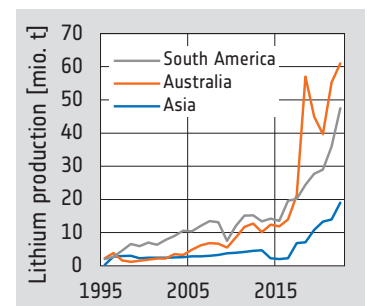
With its area of about 3050 km<sup>2</sup> the Salar de Atacama is the largest salt flat or saltpan of Chile. Located in the Andes at an elevation of 2300 m above sea level, the salar consists of salts mixed with sand.

The region receives extremely small amounts of precipitation. With only 2 mm rain per year it is among the driest regions in the world. Water from the surrounding mountains is enriched with minerals and salts and flows to the lowest point, the

saltpan, where the water evaporates. This process has formed a body of brine reaching down to 1.7 km below the surface. It consists mostly of sodium chloride and is rich in lithium, potassium, magnesium, and boron. The brine is pumped to the surface, where the water evaporates and the salts are further enriched. The Salar de Atacama is one of the most important lithium production sites, with about 36 percent of the global lithium production and about 27 percent of the worldwide known lithium reserves.



11. View of the salt crust forming the surface of the Salar de Atacama.



12. In the course of a few years, the growing demand for battery electric vehicles has led to a significant increase of lithium production.

13. The false colour infrared satellite image shows vegetation in red. In this barren environment only small patches of vegetation along the eastern rim of the salt flat are visible. Data: Sentinel-2, 2023-01-18.

