Bolivia: U.S. Firm Lithco Heads In Bidding Process On Exploitation Of Salar De Uyuni Lithium Deposit

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According to a May 23 statement by Mining Minister Walter Soriano, the US company Lithco has obtained the highest rating among bidders for the opportunity to exploit the Salar de Uyuni lithium deposit, described as one of the largest in the world. The English consulting firm Crown Agents, which handled the bid evaluation, gave Lithco a 73.4% qualification rating. Second in the ranking was Bolivian company Copla. The Chilean firm Soquimich was eliminated from the list of bidders. Bolivian law prohibits companies based in neighboring countries from exploiting natural resources in border areas. The 3,600 sq.km. Salar de Uyuni is located in western Bolivia, 60 km. from the Chilean border. Output potential of the deposit is 8.9 million metric tons. (Basic data from AFP, 05/23/91)