



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Shane Jones	Portfolio	Regional Development
Title of Cabinet paper	Regional Infrastructure Fund: Investing in Critical Minerals Projects	Date to be published	24 August 2026

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
May 2026	Regional Infrastructure Fund: Investing in Critical Minerals Projects	Office of the Minister for Regional Development
May 2026	Critical Minerals Information pack	MBIE
27 May 2026	Regional Infrastructure Fund: Investing in Critical Minerals Projects ECO-26-MIN-008 Minute	Cabinet Office
27 May 2026	Regional Infrastructure Fund: Investing in Critical Minerals Projects ECO-26-SUB-008 Summary	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

YES / **NO** (please select)

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld for the reasons of Commercial Information, Confidential Advice to Government, Legal Professional Privilege and International Relations.



Critical minerals information pack

May 2026



What are critical minerals?



Minerals that New Zealand has assessed as “economically important and are vulnerable to supply risk or essential to unlocking other critical minerals”

- Our Critical Mineral List identifies 37 minerals, some produced in New Zealand, some with the potential to be, and others that we rely on but with low/no known potential to produce.
- Other countries also have critical mineral lists which contain minerals found in New Zealand.
- We have the potential to supply critical minerals that will support resilient and secure supply chains and the global energy transition.
- New Zealand technology and research entities are developing methods of recovering, recycling, and processing critical minerals, with more potential on the horizon.

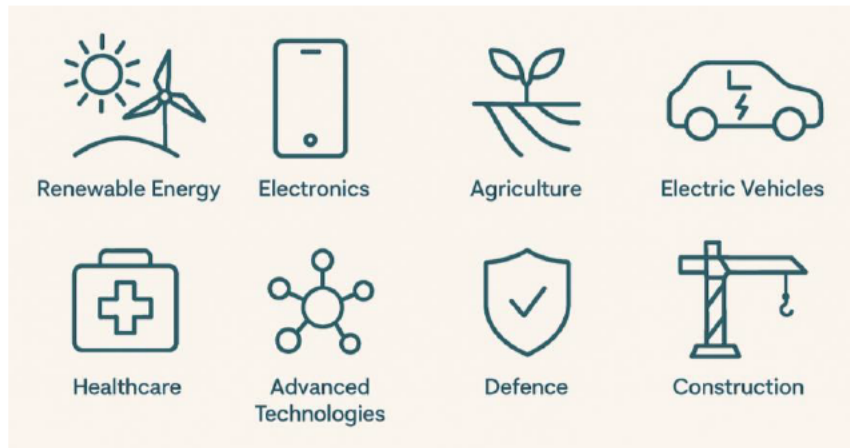
Royalties and wider benefits

- Royalties are payable on Crown-owned minerals, at rates of either 1–2% ad valorem, or 10% of accounting profits, whichever is higher. Permits granted before 2013 pay lower historic rates.
- Under legislation, gold, silver and petroleum are always Crown-owned minerals, and marine minerals are vested in the Crown. Other minerals may be Crown or privately owned depending on title, with ownership on private land requiring case-by-case assessment. Royalties are not paid on privately owned minerals.
- Annual mineral royalties are typically below \$20m, largely from gold and coal. MBIE is reviewing whether 2013 rates continue to balance investment attractiveness with a fair return to the Crown.
- In 2025, the wider mining sector (including oil and gas, minerals and quarrying) contributed:
 - \$2.8b in exports (\$2.2b minerals and \$0.6b petroleum)
 - \$2b to GDP
 - 6,500 jobs with median income of \$95k
 - \$201m corporate tax and \$164m PAYE



Critical minerals underpin modern life

They are used in:



We rely on critical minerals as raw materials such as phosphate for fertilisers, and within products such as clean energy technology, microprocessors and medical products.

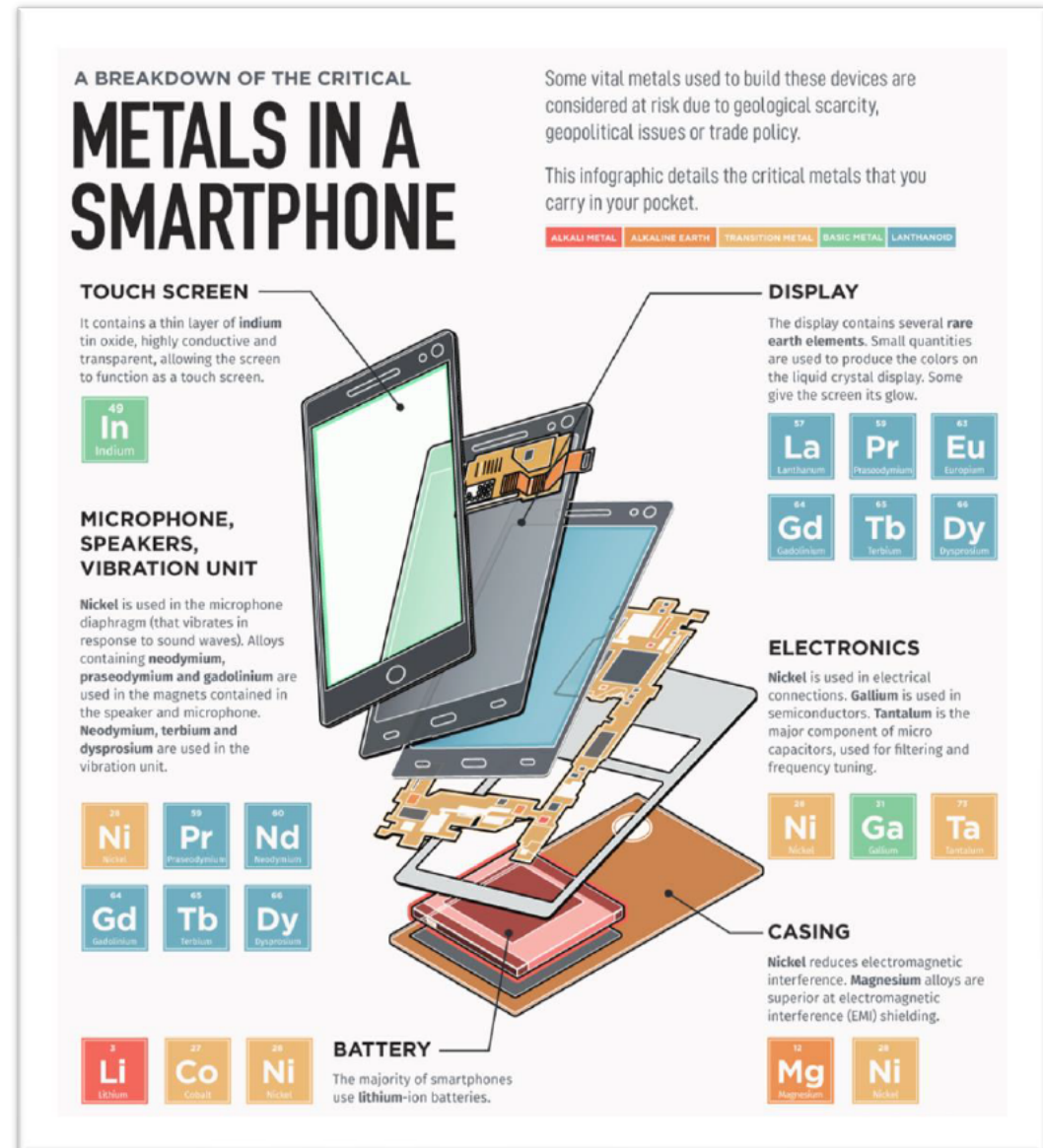
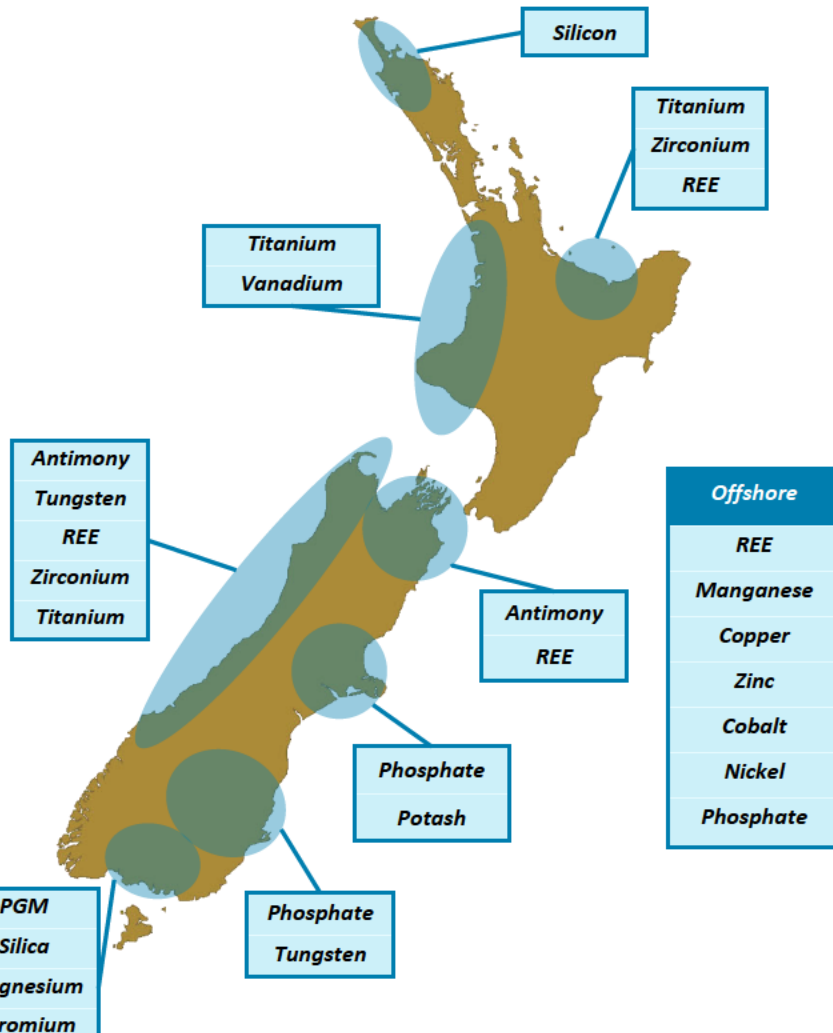


Image credit: Visual Capitalist

Potential locations of critical minerals and notable projects

New Zealand is endowed with critical minerals but domestic activity is at an early stage. Potential resources require significant capital and time to reach production, typically 10-20 years from initial discovery, depending on scale and complexity, or three years from mining permit.

Mineral potential



Notable project details (financial values from applications)

West Coast heavy mineral sands – titanium, REE and zirconium

Westland Mineral Sands

Measured reserves:
Titanium ²
REE ¹
Zirconium ¹

Production paused

9-Mile operation paused
Mananui expansion consented but not operational
Extract from coastal farmland
Intent to process



No metrics available for 9-Mile Mananui expansion:
\$14,000 annual royalties (gold only)
70 jobs
\$71m annual exports
\$38m GDP contribution

Tāiko Critical Minerals

Barrytown consented but not operational
Extract from coastal farmlands
Intent to process

Barrytown (Mineral Separation Plant bracketed):
\$1.5m annual royalties (not provided for MSP)
57 jobs (79 with MSP)
\$63m annual export (\$157m with MSP)
\$34m annual GDP contribution (\$84m with MSP)

North Island West coast iron sands – vanadium and titanium

Taharoa Ironsands

Measured reserves:
Titanium ³
Vanadium ⁴

Producing

Mine active since 1973
Extract from coastal dunes
Export separated concentrate



Central and Southern application:
No royalty (private minerals)
No other information available

Trans-Tasman Resources

Withdrew Fast-track application
Proposing to mine seabed
Current mining permit

Taranaki VTM application:
\$36-54m annual royalties
300 jobs
\$854m annual export revenue
\$265m total contribution to GDP

Northwest South Island antimony

Rua Gold

Seeking Fast-track referral to mine hard rock antimony alongside gold in Reefton

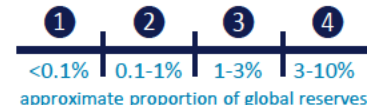
No information available

Siren Gold

Exploring hard rock antimony alongside gold in Tasman and Marlborough

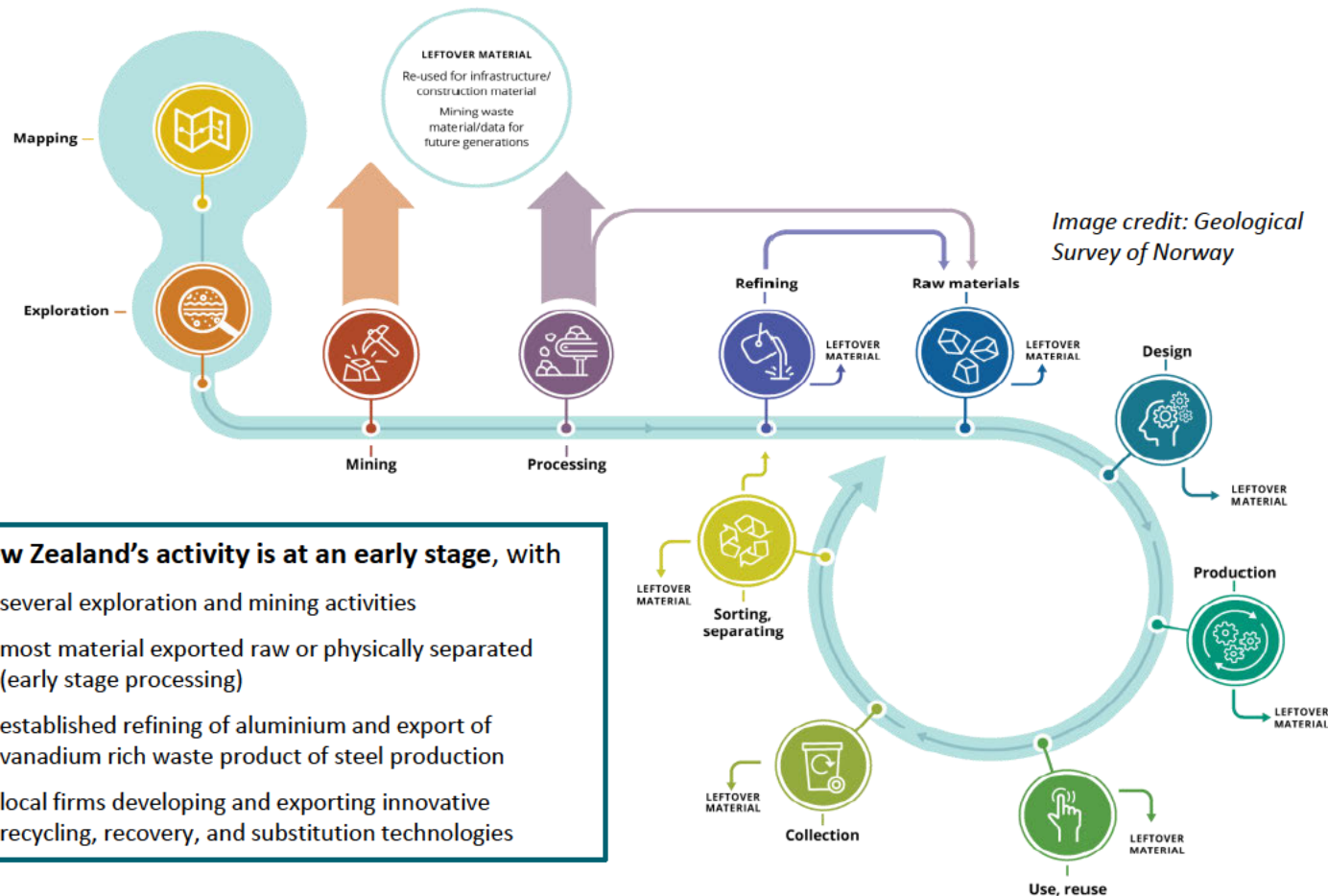
No information available

Note: mineral Resource size refers to total estimated amount of mineral, mineral Reserve size refers to portion of that resource that has been drilled and assessed as feasible to extract.



There is potential to mature the industry and move up the value chain

- **Scaling extraction** where viable, and **deploying appropriate* domestic processing and refining** to increase value
- **Exporting processing, recycling and recovery technologies** that leverage New Zealand's clean energy base and high environmental standards.



New Zealand's activity is at an early stage, with

- several exploration and mining activities
- most material exported raw or physically separated (early stage processing)
- established refining of aluminium and export of vanadium rich waste product of steel production
- local firms developing and exporting innovative recycling, recovery, and substitution technologies

Domestic processing and refining can increase the value of raw minerals, for example, **West Coast heavy mineral sands** [figures below are additive at each stage of production]

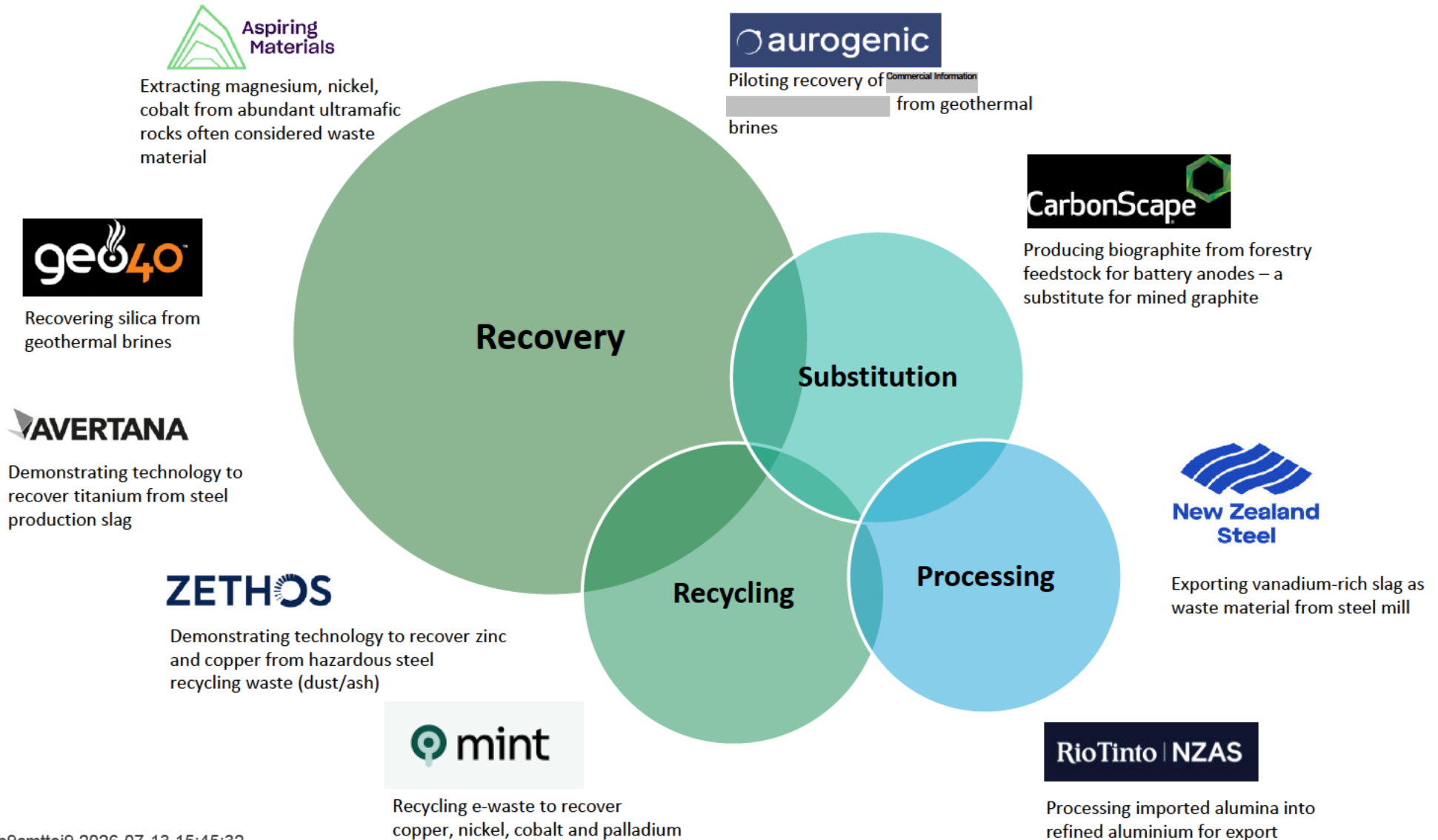
Physical concentration of heavy mineral concentrate	~\$200/tonne
Physical processing into ilmenite	~\$600/tonne
Chemical processing to extract titanium dioxide	~\$2,000/tonne
Further processing to produce titanium metal	~\$10,000/tonne

*Some forms of processing have environmental impacts that are unlikely to be accepted in New Zealand. Domestic research efforts are seeking to develop cleaner alternatives, for domestic and foreign use.



New Zealand's innovation opportunity in minerals clean-tech

Recovery and recycling could reduce the need for new mining supply of critical minerals by 25–40% by 2050 (IEA, 2025) and we already have a growing minerals clean-tech ecosystem



Mineral production methods

Open-pit and underground hard-rock mining:

- Surface pits or underground tunnels extract solid rock ore
- Ore crushed, ground and concentrated, often on site
- Shafts, pits, haulage, power, water, and processing facilities



Recycling and resource recovery:

- Recovery of metals from wastes, tailings, or end-of-life products
- Mechanical and chemical processes separate and refine materials
- Industrial plants, sorting systems, energy, and chemical inputs



Land based mineral sand mining:

- Shallow surface excavation of unconsolidated sand deposits with progressive site rehabilitation
- Wet or dry separation to concentrate heavy minerals, potential for further processing or refining
- Mobile excavators, processing plants, water supply, site access



Seabed mining:

- Remote-operated collectors gather seabed material by mechanically contacting and lifting target sediments or nodules
- Material pumped to surface for separation and dewatering, remaining sediment and water returned to water column
- Specialized vessels, subsea equipment, riser systems, support fleets



Regulatory Environment

Govt-owned	Crown minerals permit	Land access arrangement	Resource, marine consents and other environmental approvals
	Crown minerals permit under the Crown Minerals Act 1991 (prospecting → exploration → mining)	On Crown land, Departments control access On private land, access agreed with owner	- Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 - Resource or coastal permits under the Resource Management Act 1991 (on land and territorial sea) and marine consents under the EEZ (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 - Conservation Act 1987 - Wildlife Act 1953
Privately-owned	No Crown minerals permit required		Other approvals
	On private land, access arrangements agreed between parties		- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 - Maritime Transport Act 1994