UK Government releases critical imports and supply chains strategy

CMA (UK) attends UK-Rwandan business forum in Kigali

New NERC-funded CDT on mineral resources begins recruitment in the UK
Welcome to our January CMA (UK) monthly newsletter featuring updates on the critical minerals space. Read on for:

- UK Government Releases Critical Imports & Supply Chains Strategy
- CMA (UK) Attends UK-Rwanda Business Forum in Kigali
- Partnerships Reign Supreme at 2024 Future Minerals Forum
- Cornwall Mining Designated and Awarded UK Strategic Investment
- EU Investors Earmark €500M for Strategic Battery Materials Fund
- EU Approves State Aid for Northvolt Gigafactory in Sweden
- Author of 2022 Net Zero Review Chris Skidmore MP Resigns
- New NERC-funded CDT on Mineral Resources Begins Recruitment
- CMA (UK) Welcomes Newest Member, Aaron & Partners LLP
- LME Delists Companies in Responsible Sourcing Campaign
- Ionic Technologies Recycling Plant in Continuous Operation
- Circulor Partners with ACC on EU Battery Supply Chain Visibility
- Mkango Resources & UKRI Launch Innovation Exchange Challenge
- Mining Magazine Highlights Mining Talent Pipeline Problem
- Critical Minerals International Alliance Panel at IMARC 2024
- Attend Mining Indaba 2024 Drinks Reception with CMA (UK)
- Register for E-Waste World Conferences & Expos 2024
- Register for Innovation & Infrastructure Zero Conference 2024
- News Round Up
- Events Calendar

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This month’s newsletter has been put together by Eileen Maes, CMA (UK), and Tiffany Sarfo.

Would you like to feature in a future edition? Contact our editor Eileen at eileen@criticalmineral.org
On 17 January 2024, the Minister of State for Business and Trade Nusrat Ghani MP unveiled the UK’s Critical Imports and Supply Chains Strategy at Heathrow Airport, selected due to its significance as the UK’s largest import hub.

The Strategy highlights the Government’s current actions and outlines 5 new priority areas, as well as 18 commitments to improving the UK’s supply chain resilience for current and future critical materials needed to achieve Net Zero.

In the Strategy’s forward, Minister Ghani said: "I am confident that the measures we are setting out ensure that the UK can build on our work to date and mark a critical milestone in building a resilient, open and innovative economy able to provide economic security and prosperity long into the future."

READ THE STRATEGY HERE
The UK-Rwanda Business Forum serves as a high-level platform for Rwandan Government and industry to discuss investment, trade and partnership opportunities with their counterparts in the UK. The Forum focuses on 6 priority sectors: manufacturing, agriculture, financial & professional services, green economy, infrastructure and critical minerals.

The event included high level speakers such as Lord Popat, John Humphrey (His Majesty’s Trade Commissioner for Africa), and Dr Uzziel Ndagijimana, Rwanda’s Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. CMA (UK) co-founder and CEO, Kirsty Benham, also joined a panel discussion on global demand and trends in critical minerals.

Thank you to the British High Commission Kigali for inviting CMA (UK) to participate. We encourage international collaboration on developing responsible critical minerals supply chains, and look forward to supporting bilateral cooperation between the UK and Rwanda.

READ ON HERE
The third annual Future Minerals Forum in Riyadh from 10 - 11 January attracted over 15,000 delegates and some $20 billion in deals, according to event organisers. Mining.com declared ‘partnership’ to be the buzzword of the event.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia alone signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) on mining with 4 other nations: Egypt, Russia, Morocco and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The MOUs centre on cooperation in “the field of mineral wealth”. 

Yasir Al-Rumayyan, Governor of the Public Investment Fund in Saudi Arabia, also announced a plan to create the next generation of mining talent. A new collaboration between the Ministry of Industry & Mineral Resources and King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals aims to establish the first bachelor’s degree in mining science and engineering.

READ ON HERE
On 2 January, the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Good Growth Programme bestowed a £4.7m investment into Cornwall under UK Government’s ambitions to make the region a world-class centre for technology metal mining.

The strategic investment aims to accelerate Cornwall’s goal to be a major and environmentally sustainable producer of critical minerals such as lithium, tin and tungsten.

UK Government identifies Cornwall’s resources as nationally important for the growth of green industry and job creation. Research indicated that Cornwall alone could meet more than half of the UK’s demand for lithium for 2030.

In December 2023, Cornwall was named the Most Improved Mining Jurisdiction of the Year, beating competition from Egypt, Namibia, and Saudi Arabia.
EIT InnoEnergy and Demeter, two of Europe’s leading energy transition investors, have earmarked £500 million for a Strategic Battery Materials Fund to develop the bloc’s battery raw materials supply chains.

Per the ambitions of the European Union’s Critical Raw Materials Act, and as the manager of the European Battery Alliance (EBA), InnoEnergy is seeking to reduce the region’s reliance on foreign supplies by plugging “significant gaps” in the supply chain. Materials of focus for the Fund include critical minerals such as lithium, nickel, cobalt, manganese, and graphite, which are all needed to manufacture clean technologies such as electric vehicles (EVs).

The EBA Fund is set to be managed by private equity firm Demeter, with Societe Generale acting as exclusive financial advisor for the capital raise.

READ ON HERE
On 8 January, the European Commission announced that it had approved German state aid for Northvolt to build a gigafactory to produce battery cells for electric vehicles (EVs) in the town of Heide, Schleswig-Holstein, in an investment worth €2.5 billion.

It is the first time the bloc has made use of 'matching aid', an exceptional measure adopted in March 2023 to allow EU states to offer higher amounts of aid to companies when there is a risk of investment being diverted from Europe.

Without the move, Northvolt would have moved its investment to the US to benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Biden administration's attractive green subsidy plan that offers generous tax breaks and rebates for green technology manufactured in the US.

READ ON HERE
On 5 January, Chris Skidmore MP resigned from the Conservative whip in protest against the new proposed Offshore Petroleum Licensing bill.

Almost a year ago on 13 January 2023, Skidmore published his Independent Review of the Net Zero Strategy, outlining 129 different policy recommendations to UK Government. His review recognised the UK’s vulnerability and over-reliance on foreign nations for its energy needs, and urged UK Government to invest in developing responsible and resilient critical mineral supply chains to combat these risks.

His recommendations included boosting domestic midstream and recycling capabilities, undertaking supply chain and infrastructure analyses to inform Spending Reviews, introducing a more holistic delivery plan for the Critical Minerals Strategy, and replicating similar funds to the Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF) in other sectors.
A new Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in the UK, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), has began recruitment for its first cohort.

The Training and Research Group for Energy Transition Mineral Resources (TARGET) CDT aims to train a new generation of environmental experts in response to the UK’s skills shortage. Led by the University of Leicester and comprised of a consortium of UK universities, industry partners, and research organisations, the training at the TARGET will offer an interdisciplinary approach to the challenges posed by the energy transition.

The CDT is supported by £2.6 million of funding from Innovate UK, and is poised to make significant contributions to critical minerals research in the UK.

READ ON HERE
CMA (UK) is delighted to welcome Aaron & Partners LLP, our newest member, to the Association!

Aaron & Partners is a business law firm boasting 28 recommendations from the 2 main independent legal directories: Legal 500, and Chambers & Partners. They have built a strong reputation for providing high-quality and results-focused advice across all key legal disciplines.

The firm offers business advice to clients on commercial contracts, construction, mergers & acquisitions, corporate restructuring, and dispute resolution, as well as planning, energy, renewables, minerals & mining, and waste management. As a member of the International Advisory Group, Aaron and Partners not only operates at a regional and national level in the UK, but with a network of more than 60 professional advisory firms across the globe.

Aaron & Partners LLP is one of only a small minority of law firms in the UK that have specialist experience in dealing with mineral extraction and mining law, with a team headed by a member of the Institute of Quarrying.

READ ON HERE
On 15 January, the London Metal Exchange (LME) announced its plans in the coming months to suspend or delist 10% of its listed metals brands that have failed to provide responsible sourcing reports.

The move is a step forth in the LME’s campaign to clean up global supply chains with allegations of child labour, corruption or conflict financing.

LME’s responsible resourcing standards are underpinned by guidelines set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Producers of over 50% of LME-listed brands were required to submit their reports by the end of 2023, demonstrating commitment to OECD standards for mineral mining in conflict-affected and high-risk zones.
In 2023, Ionic Technologies constructed a magnetic recycling demonstration plant to produce high-purity separated magnet rare earth oxides (REOs) from end-of-life permanent magnets. The plant is now operating on a continuous basis, producing high quantities of (>99.5%) neodymium and dysprosium at a design production capacity of 10 t/y.

Managing Director Tim Harrison explains that continuous operation de-risks the technology and the flowsheet, as well as evaluating the robustness of the process in taking variable feedstocks of magnets with variable rare earths distribution.

Production will flow immediately into the UK Government-supported CLIMATES collaboration with Ford Technologies and Less Common Metals, contributing to the development of sustainable, traceable and sovereign UK rare earths supply chains.

READ ON HERE
On 17 January, the Automotive Cells Company (ACC), a European EV battery leader that is industrialising the next generation of clean transportation, and Circulor, the leading supply chain traceability solution, announced their partnership to prove the provenance, material journey and embedded carbon emissions of ACC’s battery raw materials.

By gathering granular production data and embedded carbon emissions across ACC’s supply chains, it will accelerate proof of responsible sourcing and compliance with global regulations. The combination of these services amounts to unprecedented supply chain visibility that enables ACC to deliver additional value to its customers as the battery industry collaborates to build battery passports in accordance with the EU Battery Regulation.

Circulor is the technology leader for the German Government’s Battery Pass project that defines the requirements of the EU’s newly enacted Battery Regulation.

READ ON HERE
Innovate UK's Circular Critical Materials Supply Chains programme has partnered with Mkango Resources Ltd. to launch a new Innovation Exchange Challenge.

Mkango Resources produces processes the mixed metal oxide powders produced during the processing of end-of-life permanent magnets into separated rare earth oxides ready to be supplied back into the economy.

A major part of the process, taking around 4 steps, involves the removal of Fe(II) and Fe(III) from the mixed powder stream. Mkango are looking for alternative ways to remove Fe(II) and Fe(III) from either the mixed metal powder, a slurry of the mixed metal powder or a dissolved acidic solution.

READ ON HERE

Innovation Exchange Challenge: Removal of Iron (Fe^{2+} and Fe^{3+}) from mixed metal oxide powders

Closes 24th January 2024
China’s dominance over certain critical mineral supply chains, particularly battery mineral supply chains, is worsened by the ‘mining brain drain’. A lack of public interest and funding into geoscience education in the West is exacerbating a widening knowledge gap that will damage decarbonisation efforts.

Munira Rajkotwalla (Mining Magazine) writes an article about the talent pipeline problem plaguing the mining and critical minerals industry after attending the Geological Society Business Forum and Critical Minerals Association (UK)’s 3rd Annual Conference on 27 November 2023.

“Without action”, says the The Geological Society of London, “the decline in skilled graduates will pose a serious and economically damaging skills shortage in the UK, particularly at a critical time of transition for many industries and businesses that rely on geological expertise.”

READ ON HERE
Founder and CEO of the Critical Minerals International Alliance (CMIA), Jeff Townsend moderated a discussion at the International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC) 2024 in Sydney, Australia.

The panel discussion focused on driving international collaboration on developing alternative, responsible critical mineral supply chains.

Jeff was joined by Darryn Quayle (Worley UK), Conrad Mulherin (Alkemy Capital Investments), Patrick Walta (Future Metals NL), and Grant Donald (Liontown Resources) to discuss topics such as critical mineral innovation, government-industry collaboration, and bridging the gap between strategic and commercial value.

WATCH THE SESSION HERE
Since 1994, African Mining Indaba has been the world's premier event for Africa's mining industry. It has since expanded to serve as a convening platform for international finance and innovation to support end-to-value creation.

This year Indaba will return to Cape Town from 5 - 8 February, and the week will see promotional and networking events taking place all over to the city adjacent to the event. One of them is the Cabo Beach Club Drinks Reception hosted by the Cape Mining Club (CMC) and sponsored by CMA (UK) member Giyani Metals. The reception expects a high turnout of UK industry.

If you are interested in attending the reception, please email Eileen at eileen@criticalmineral.org

READ ABOUT INDABA HERE

2024 MINING INDABA DRINKS EVENT
E-Waste World, Europe's leading conference and exposition dedicated to electronics recycling, is returning to Messe Frankfurt in Germany from 26 - 27 June 2024.

Co-located and composed of three separate events (E-Waste World Conference & Expo, Battery Recycling Conference & Expo, and Metal Recycling Conference & Expo), this series allows for valuable multidisciplinary and cross-sector discussion on supply chain security, the e-waste challenge, and advancing towards sustainability and circularity.

The event will provide access to 200+ Exhibitors from around the world at the free-to-attend Expo, 3,000+ attendees, and a 4-stream Conference hosted by 100+ industry experts.
Innovation Zero is the UK’s largest Net Zero congress, taking place on 30 April - 1 May 2024 at Olympia, London.

Supported by the UK Government, this free-to-attend event connects more than 12,000 innovators, investors, funders, policymakers, and businesses across multiple sectors and 14 specialised forums (on energy, finance, transport, infrastructure, technology and more), to accelerate the transition towards a low carbon economy.

Founder of the Critical Minerals International Alliance (CMIA) Jeff Townsend will be moderating a panel on ‘Delivering Critical Minerals Resilience’ alongside the Rt Hon Baroness Northover, Rt Hon Alexander Stafford MP and Simon Pople.

REGISTER FOR FREE HERE

30 April – 1 May 2024
Olympia London

www.innovationzero.com
The following news articles from Argus Media, Mining Weekly, Mining Magazine, Financial Times, and others, provide an overview of critical mineral mining for:

- Cobalt
- Copper
- Graphite
- Lithium
- Nickel
- Manganese
- Rare Earth Elements
- Tin
- Tungsten
- Vanadium

The Critical Minerals Association (UK) takes no credit for any articles and makes no endorsement of any of the content.
Cobalt

- **Africa**
  - DRC: Sicomines [28.01.24]
    - Sicomines, a Chinese majority joint-venture, signs $7bn infrastructure investment agreement into infrastructure in Congo in exchange for 68% stake in Congo's state mining company Gecamines.
    - [Read the article here.](#)

- **North America**
  - Canada: Nord Precious Metals Mining [29.01.24]
    - Nord to resume permitting process as it prepares to mine bulk sample from its Castle East high-grade silver project near Ontario.
    - [Read the article here.](#)

- **Oceania**
  - Australia: Rimfire Pacific Mining [12.01.24]
    - Rimfire expands Broken Hill Cobalt project in Australia through acquisition of additional exploration licenses.
    - [Read the article here.](#)

- Australia: Cobalt Blue Holdings [25.01.24]
  - Cobalt Blue’s patented CWSP programme which extracts cobalt from mining waste is recognised as pioneering mineral recycling technology.
  - [Read the article here.](#)
Copper

• Africa
  ○ DRC: Ivanhoe Mines, Gécamines [17.01.24]
    ▪ Ivanhoe signs joint venture with state-owned miner to restart production at historic Kipushi zinc-copper-silver mine in Q2 2024, after a century’s hiatus.
    ▪ Read the article here.

  ○ DRC: Ivanhoe Mines [02.01.24]
    ▪ First shipment of copper concentrate from Kamao-Kakula successfully transferred down the new Lobito Atlantic Rail Corridor, slashing average transport time from 25 days to 8 days by rail.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• South America
  ○ Chile: Minera El Encierro [04.01.24]
    ▪ Barrick and Antofagasta form £95m 5-year joint venture to search for copper and other metals in the northern Atamaca, across 35 concessions covering 9400 hectares.
    ▪ Read the article here.

  ○ Chile: Codelco, Chuquicamata [12.01.24]
    ▪ Codelco to invest $720 million in Chuquicamata copper mine to incorporate optimizations to ensure that the operation can reach the authorized production of 140,000 tons per day.
    ▪ Read the article here.
Graphite

• Africa
  ○ Tanzania: Marula Mining [19.01.24]
    ▪ Marula granted 7 new mining licenses running for 7 years to continue exploration activities at existing projects, targeting locations of prospective high-grade graphite mineralisation.
    ▪ Read the article here.

  ○ Madagascar: Tirupati Graphite [17.01.24]
    ▪ Tirupati raises over £1M by pricing shares at £0.11 to raise funds to optimise graphite production.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• North America
  ○ Canada: Metal Australia Ltd. [16.01.24]
    ▪ Metal Australia discovered 64.3% flake graphite at its Lac Rainy Graphite Project in Quebec, Canada, with feasibility study being considered to investigate commercial viability.
    ▪ Read the article here.

  ○ USA: Glencowe Resources [29.01.24]
    ▪ Blencowe receives debt funding Letter of Interest from US International Development Finance Organisation for its Orem-Cross graphite project.
    ▪ Read the article here.

  ○ USA: Graphite One [09.01.24]
    ▪ Graphite one announces results of a feasibility study from summer drilling program in Alaska, with results confirming high grade graphite ore deposits.
    ▪ Read the article here.
Lithium

• Europe
  ○ Norway: Norway Government [09.01.24]
    ▪ Norwegian Government approves bill to pioneer deep-sea mining for lithium in regional waters amid environmental backlash.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• North America
  ○ USA: Harvard University [11.01.24]
    ▪ Researchers at Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering & Applied Sciences develop new lithium battery that can be charged/discharged 6,000 times and recharged in a matter of minutes.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• South America
  ○ Argentina: Khanij Bidesh India Ltd [15.01.24]
    ▪ Indian state-owned KABIL signs $24m lithium exploration pact for 5 blocks in Argentina, federal Ministry of Mines reports.
    ▪ Read the article here.

  ○ Bolivia: Yacimientos de Litio Bolivianos [18.01.24]
    ▪ China’s largest battery producer CATL and largest cobalt miner CMOC finalise $1b deal to conduct DLE in the Salar De Uyuni and Salar de Coipasa salt flats.
    ▪ Read the article here.
Manganese

• Africa
  ○ Botswana: Eramet [05.01.24]
    ▪ Eramet signs 10-year manganese ore supply agreement for Vibrantz’s lithium-ion batteries.
    ▪ Read the article here.
  ○ Botswana: Giyani Metals [05.01.24]
    ▪ Giyani Metals secures environmental authorisation valid for 25 years for its K.Hill battery-grade manganese project.
    ▪ Read the article here.
  ○ South Africa: UMK [03.01.24]
    ▪ United Manganese of Kalahari (UMK) announces in response to worsening market conditions a temporary reduction in production of manganese ore and concomitant until market recovers.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• Asia
  ○ China: Firebird Metals [29.01.24]
    ▪ Research and development centre and manganese sulphate pilot plant now operational, marking major milestones for company’s battery strategy.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• North America
  ○ Canada: Manganese X [10.01.24]
    ▪ Manganese X Energy signs memorandum of understanding (MOU) with US battery firm C4V with the potential for an offtake deal for Manganese X’s Battery Hill project
    ▪ Read the article here.
Nickel

• Asia
  ◦ Indonesia [22.01.24]
    ▪ With nickel prices taking a fall, Indonesia may be able to take advantage of the low price due to the country's dominance in the nickel supply chain.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• Europe
  ◦ Norway: Teako Minerals [18.01.24]
    ▪ Teako Minerals pauses exploration in British Columbia to focus on nickel and REEs in Norway and Finland in response to EU consumption goals.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• North America
  ◦ Canada: Samsung [15.01.24]
    ▪ South Korean battery manufacturer buys 9% stake of Canada Nickel for $18.5m, plus option to purchase 10% of its flagship Crawford nickel sulphide project.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• Oceania
  ◦ Australia: First Quantum Minerals [15.01.24]
    ▪ Canadian mining company suspends mining at its Ravensthorpe nickel operation on Western Australia's south coast, cutting 30% of its 420-strong workforce.
    ▪ Read the article here.
Rare Earth Elements

• Africa
  ○ Uganda: Ionic Rare Earths [18.01.24]
    ▪ Ugandan Government signs and issues large scale mining license for Makuutu Heavy Rare Earths Project, a first for the nation.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• Asia
  ○ China: China University of Geosciences [15.01.24]
    ▪ Chinese researchers discover new heavy rare earth mineral in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• North America
  ○ USA: American Rare Earths Ltd [22.01.24]
    ▪ Company in collaboration with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the University of Kentucky announces successful improvement in ore preconcentration process by approximately 200%.
    ▪ Read the article here.

• Oceania
  ○ Australia: Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [12.01.24]
    ▪ $13.9m received to fund critical minerals research with a focus on rare earth elements.
    ▪ Read the article here
**Tin**

- **Europe**
  - UK: Cornish Metals [18.01.24]
    - Cornish Metal announces 2024 outlook for South Crofty tin mine in Cornwall.
    - [Read the article here.](#)

- **Oceania**
  - Australia: Sky Metals Ltd [22.01.24]
    - Maiden drill programme at mine in New South Wales finds potential for high grade tin ore.
    - [Read the article here.](#)

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**Tungsten**

- **Oceania**
  - Australia: Flynn Gold [21.01.24]
    - Flynn Gold announces first drilling results; high grade tungsten, gold and cobalt from exploration project in Firetower project in Tasmania.
    - [Read the article here.](#)

  - Australia: Dolphin Mine [16.01.24]
    - Dolphin mine receives $14.3 million for R&D funding from tax incentive to improve tungsten production.
    - [Read the article here.](#)
Vanadium

• Africa
  ○ Morocco: Elcora Advanced Materials [22.01.24]
    ▪ Elcora develops extraction process which improves vanadium yields from the industry standard of 0.25% to 8% at Vanadite deposit.
    ▪ Read the article here.
  ○ South Africa: Vanadium Resources [24.01.24]
    ▪ Vanadium Resources (VR8) announces plans for long life mine in South Africa’s Bushveld Complex due to "massive deposit".
    ▪ Read the article here.

• Oceania
  ○ Australia: Velox Energy Materials [23.01.24]
    ▪ Velox Energy Material discovers high-grade vanadium deposit at flagship Cambridge mine in Queensland.
    ▪ Read the article here.
  ○ Australia: Australian Vanadium [17.01.24]
    ▪ Company celebrates official opening of vanadium electrolyte manufacturing facility in Wangara, Western Australia.
    ▪ Read the article here.
    ▪ Following shareholder approval, the Supreme Court of Western Australia approves merging of Technology Metals Australia and Australian Vanadium.
    ▪ Read the article here.
FEBRUARY

- HYVE | **Invest in Mining Indaba 2024** | CTICC, Cape Town, South Africa | 5 - 8 February
  - Register here

- Beacon Events | **Mines and Money Miami 2024** | James L. Knight Centre, Miami, USA | 22 - 23 February
  - Register here

MARCH

- Prospector's & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) | **PDAC 2024** | MTCC, Toronto, Canada | 3 - 6 March
  - Register here

- Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) | **SMMT Connected 2024** | QEII Centre, London | 14 March
  - Register here

- Wood Mackenzie | **Facing Future Commodities Forum 2024** | Virtual | 27 March
  - Register here

**Interested in upcoming events?**
Contact eileen@criticalmineral.org
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