

Digital Transformation and Energy Transition to Fuel ‘Insatiable Demand’ For Critical Minerals, UAE and MENA Region Positioned to Capitalise, Finds New DMCC Report

- *Global demand for lithium, cobalt and nickel could surge by up to 75 times 2020 levels, driven by clean energy, AI and digital transformation, finds new DMCC Future of Trade report on critical minerals*
- *Report titled ‘The Critical Minerals Race: Trade, Supply and Transition’ finds that supply chain fragmentation and regionalised extraction are exposing trade vulnerabilities, with nations and industries racing to secure critical minerals access*
- *The UAE and MENA region to develop competitive trade advantages owing to legacy mining, low-cost and clean energy, and investments in mining extraction and processing*
- *Full report available for download [here](#)*

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The accelerating demand for critical minerals, fuelled by digitalisation, AI and the global energy transition, is reshaping the international trade and investment landscape with projections that ‘insatiable demand’ for certain minerals could surge to 75 times current levels by 2050.

Titled ‘The Critical Minerals Race: Trade, Supply and Transition’, the special edition Future of Trade report by DMCC – the leading international business district that drives the flow of global trade through Dubai – highlights the unprecedented demand for resources such as lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements to meet production needs of electric vehicles, renewable energy and next-generation technologies. The report also outlines the structural vulnerabilities in critical minerals supply chains, including geographic concentration of resources, notably in China, Russia, Australia and Latin America, that is compounding trade regionalisation and risks such as geopolitics, resource nationalism and supply bottlenecks.

Against this increasingly competitive global landscape, the MENA region is emerging as an increasingly important hub in the supply chain. With an expansive trade network and infrastructure, access to low-cost energy and significant investment capital, countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia are making strategic moves to invest in global mining projects, expand refining capacity, and forge new trade partnerships. These efforts place the region at the centre of a rapidly evolving critical minerals market which has significant bearings on the future of energy and global digital transformation.

Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of DMCC, said: *“The demand for critical minerals such as copper, cobalt, lithium, manganese and graphite has reached unprecedented levels, driven by the accelerating need to power key industries – from electric vehicles and semiconductors to energy storage and artificial intelligence. This demand is projected to surge up to 75 times current levels, profoundly reshaping global trade flows, supply chains, and government industrial policies. Within this global race for critical minerals, our latest Future of Trade report highlights the UAE and Dubai’s growing role, underpinned by our world-class infrastructure, strategic trade partnerships and ease of doing business that will drive resilience, innovation and growth for global businesses.”*

Feryal Ahmadi, Chief Operating Officer, DMCC, added: *“Amid intensifying trade tensions and growing industrial competition, our latest Future of Trade report highlights the pivotal role critical minerals play in shaping the global economy. With cutting-edge insights, expert analysis, and strategic policy and business recommendations, this report offers actionable insights to empower all stakeholders involved in*



the critical minerals trade. As DMCC continues to build an environment optimised for business growth, we look forward to working closely with our members to navigate these challenges, unlock growth opportunities and strengthen global trade resilience overall.”

The Future of Trade report outlines several key recommendations for governments and businesses to drive the evolution of the critical minerals industry and secure future growth, including:

- **Leverage Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborate with private sector partners to unlock mineral reserves, enhance technology capabilities and attract investment.
- **Invest in Innovation:** Support research into alternative technologies, such as sodium-ion batteries, to reduce reliance on scarce minerals.
- **Attract Processing Investments:** Capitalise on access to low-cost energy to develop domestic refining capabilities and support industrial growth.
- **Manage Supply Risks:** Use futures markets, long-term contracts and partnerships with suppliers to reduce exposure to price volatility and supply shocks.
- **Develop Downstream Industries:** Invest in battery manufacturing, solar cells and renewable technologies to strengthen demand and build industrial ecosystems.
- **Support Clear Regulations:** Work with policymakers to foster competitive, clear regulations that encourage critical mineral investment.

This special edition of the Future of Trade report builds on the success of previous editions, which have positioned DMCC as a leading voice on global trade trends. The report series has garnered widespread engagement, with over 2.5 million downloads and views, reflecting its value as a key resource for industry leaders and policymakers shaping the future of global trade.

To read the full special edition report by DMCC, please visit www.futureoftrade.com/special-critical-minerals-edition-2025.

About DMCC

Headquartered in Dubai, DMCC is the world’s most interconnected Free Zone, and the leading trade and enterprise hub for commodities. Whether developing vibrant neighbourhoods with world-class property like Jumeirah Lakes Towers and the much-anticipated Uptown Dubai, or delivering high performance business services, DMCC provides everything its dynamic community needs to live, work and thrive. Made for Trade, DMCC is proud to sustain and grow Dubai’s position as the place to be for global trade today and long into the future.

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