



Roundtable summary report: Charting the India–Australia critical minerals partnership

Date: 13 July 2026

Time: 10:30 AM–12:40PM IST

Format: Closed-door virtual roundtable via MS Teams

Organised by: IEEFA, supported by Energiva Ventures

The India–Australia critical minerals partnership is evolving. Recent political developments, including the announcement of a dedicated Critical Minerals Corridor between Australia and India during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia, signal a shared ambition to move beyond securing raw material supplies towards building integrated, resilient value chains spanning mining, processing, refining, manufacturing, recycling and innovation.

With this context, Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), with support from Energiva Ventures, convened a virtual closed-door roundtable discussion on 13 July 2026, titled “Charting the India–Australia critical minerals partnership”. The discussion was centred around the strong complementarities and strategic opportunities that India and Australia could leverage towards strengthening the India–Australia critical minerals partnership and deepening bilateral collaboration across supply chain resilience. Stakeholders from the Indian Ministry of Mines and the Australian High Commission, as well as experts across Indian and Australian industry and academia jointly explored actionable pathways to translate intent into viable partnerships that support both countries’ energy transition and industrial competitiveness goals.

Key discussion highlights

The discussion focused on five key themes identified through IEEFA’s research.

1. **Policy, trade and strategic partnerships:** The partnership should move beyond securing mineral supplies towards developing integrated, commercially viable and diversified critical mineral value chains.
 - **Move beyond an extractive trade relationship:** Australia’s mineral resources and mining expertise complement India’s growing demand, manufacturing ambitions and downstream capabilities. Bilateral cooperation should therefore span exploration, mining, processing, refining, manufacturing and recycling.
 - **Build on existing institutional partnerships:** Platforms such as the KABIL–Critical Minerals Office partnership, Geological Survey of India–Geoscience Australia cooperation and the Australia–India Critical Minerals Research Partnership should be used to identify specific projects and translate institutional cooperation into commercial outcomes.
 - **Develop long-term offtake arrangements:** Indian companies could provide greater clarity on the future volume, timing and specifications of demand for minerals such as

lithium, nickel, cobalt, graphite and rare earths through long-term offtake arrangements.

- **Explore strategic equity participation:** Indian companies could consider taking minority or strategic stakes in existing Australian producing assets, providing greater supply security while bringing capital and long-term demand to Australian projects.
 - **Pursue third-country and trilateral cooperation:** India and Australia could jointly pursue opportunities in mineral-rich regions such as Latin America and Africa, while deepening cooperation with partners such as Japan through initiatives including the [Quad](#) and other regional supply chain partnerships. India could also pursue partnerships with countries in its neighbourhood such as Sri Lanka, which is partnering with Australia on its mineral sands sector.
2. **Technology and R&D collaboration:** Technology cooperation emerged as one of the strongest areas of consensus. India and Australia should shift from technology transfer towards co-developing and commercialising solutions for shared challenges across processing, refining, recycling and advanced materials.
- **Move from technology transfer to technology co-development:** Future cooperation should go beyond the transfer of existing technologies towards jointly developing solutions that address shared commercial and industrial challenges across mineral processing, refining, recycling and manufacturing.
 - **Start with clearly defined industrial problems:** Technology partnerships should be designed around specific operational and commercial challenges rather than technology for its own sake. Pilot projects should reflect real operating conditions and be developed with a clear pathway towards commercialisation.
 - **Link Australian lithium processing with Indian manufacturing:** Australia could scale lithium hydroxide and lithium oxide processing, while India develops complementary capabilities in cathode active materials and battery manufacturing, creating an integrated bilateral value chain.
 - **Strengthen university–industry collaboration:** Universities and research institutions can play a central role in advancing collaboration across mineral exploration, processing, battery materials, recycling and rare earth technologies. Existing Australia–India research partnerships provide a strong foundation for deeper joint research and commercial applications.
 - **Prioritise emerging technology areas:** Potential areas for collaboration include advanced refining technologies, battery recycling, cathode active materials, rare earth processing, recovery of critical minerals from mine tailings and the development of next-generation battery chemistries that reduce dependence on foreign intellectual property.
3. **Investment and financing frameworks:** Unlocking investment will require greater demand certainty, patient capital, stronger risk-sharing mechanisms and a focused pipeline of flagship projects.

- **Develop pooled investment models:** The International Coal Ventures Limited (ICVL) model offers a potential precedent for pooling capital from multiple Indian entities to acquire strategic overseas assets. A similar model could be developed for critical minerals, potentially with KABIL playing a coordinating role.
 - **Build a stronger strategic minerals investment institution:** India could consider developing an institution with functions similar to Japan's Japan Organization for Metals and Energy Security (JOGMEC), combining geological intelligence, exploration support, financial assistance, risk mitigation and overseas asset acquisition.
 - **Link investment to offtake and downstream manufacturing:** Investment in Australian processing projects could be linked to long-term Indian offtake and downstream manufacturing capacity, including cathode and battery production.
 - **Provide patient capital and de-risking support:** Processing and refining projects require significant upfront capital, reliable feedstock and long commissioning periods. Concessional finance, loan guarantees and other risk-sharing mechanisms could help address these barriers.
 - **Focus on a limited number of flagship projects:** Rather than spreading resources across numerous small initiatives, India and Australia could prioritise a limited number of commercially viable flagship projects. Successful projects could demonstrate the viability of bilateral cooperation, build investor confidence and create a template for scaling future investments.
4. **Skills development and capacity building:** Workforce development must be integrated into project planning and strengthened through deeper collaboration between governments, industry, universities and research institutions.
- **Align workforce planning with project development:** Skills development must begin alongside project development rather than after new mines, processing facilities or manufacturing plants are established. This will help ensure that trained workers are available when new projects become operational.
 - **Build bulk engineering capabilities:** Australia's experience in large-scale resource projects could support India in developing expertise in bulk engineering, plant design, equipment manufacturing, project execution and operations.
 - **Strengthen university, industry and government partnerships:** India and Australia could expand collaboration through joint undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, researcher exchanges, vocational training programmes and Centres of Excellence (CoEs) focused on critical minerals and advanced materials.
 - **Improve the attractiveness of minerals-related careers:** Academic representatives noted that attracting talent into mining and minerals disciplines remains difficult despite growing strategic importance. Stakeholders therefore called for stronger collaboration between universities, industry and governments through joint undergraduate programmes, master's degrees, researcher exchanges, vocational training and CoEs. Stakeholders also noted that retaining women in the workforce is a persistent challenge in the sector.



- **Develop future-oriented skills:** The sector will require expertise in automation, digital technologies, data analytics, metallurgy, chemical engineering, advanced processing and information management alongside traditional mining skills. Greater engagement with experienced professionals from the global Indian diaspora could also help address specialised skills gaps.
5. **ESG-based circular supply chains:** Long-term resilience will depend on embedding responsible mining and ESG practices while expanding recycling, resource efficiency and recovery from waste and mine tailings.
- **Treat ESG as a strategic advantage:** ESG should be viewed not simply as a compliance requirement but as a means of building trusted, resilient and long-term supply chains. Australia's experience in responsible mining, environmental governance and Indigenous engagement can provide valuable lessons as India expands its domestic processing capabilities.
 - **Build on existing assurance frameworks:** Stakeholders cautioned against creating additional ESG standards that could unintentionally raise barriers for emerging producers. Existing assurance frameworks should be leveraged wherever possible, while any new standards should demonstrate clear additional value rather than duplicate existing certification systems.
 - **Develop India–Australia circular supply chains:** Recycling featured prominently throughout the discussion as both a sustainability measure and a strategic supply source. Australia's growing volumes of end-of-life batteries could be linked with India's competitive recycling and materials recovery capabilities to develop cross-border circular supply chains.
 - **Reduce demand through efficiency and alternative technologies:** Supply expansion should be complemented by efforts to reduce demand for constrained minerals through energy efficiency, alternative battery chemistries, material substitution, recycling and improved resource recovery. These approaches should be recognised as an equally important component of long-term critical mineral supply chain resilience.

Related IEEFA publications:

1. [India's Critical Mineral Imports in 2025 and a Shift Towards Supply Diversification](#)
2. [Mobilising Capital for India's Critical Minerals Sector](#)
3. [India's Hunt for Critical Minerals](#)

Conclusion

The discussion highlighted broad agreement that the India–Australia partnership has moved beyond securing access to mineral resources towards jointly building resilient, trusted and commercially viable critical mineral value chains. While governments have established a strong strategic framework through recent bilateral initiatives, participants agreed that the next phase will depend on translating policy into investment-ready projects. Delivering long-term demand certainty, accelerating technology co-development, mobilising patient capital,

developing skilled workforces and embedding ESG throughout the value chain will ultimately determine whether the partnership evolves from strategic intent into tangible industrial cooperation.

IEEFA thanks Energiva Ventures for supporting this work and all stakeholders for their valuable contributions to this engaging discussion. We hope this summary serves as a useful reference and look forward to continued engagement and collaboration to advance resilient, sustainable, and commercially viable critical mineral value chains between India and Australia.