

# UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA COMILLAS **ESCUELA TÉCNICA SUPERIOR DE INGENIERÍA (ICAI)**

# OFFICIAL MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE ELECTRIC POWER INDUSTRY

Master's Thesis

# **ASSESSING MINERAL DEMAND AND CONSTRAINTS IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION**

**Author: Alvaro Ruiz del Tiempo Supervisor: Javier Revuelta Co-Supervisor:** 

**Madrid, July 2024**



*ASSESSING MINERAL DEMAND AND CONSTRAINTS IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION*

# **Master's Thesis Presentation Authorization**

THE STUDENT:

Alvaro Ruiz del Tiempo

Hest

Signed: …………………… Date: ……/ ……/ …… 09 07 2024

THE SUPERVISOR:

Javier Revuelta

Signed: …………………… Date: ……/ ……/ ……

15/07/2024

Authorization of the Master's Thesis Coordinator

Dr. Luis Olmos Camacho

Signed: …………………… Date: ……/ ……/ ……



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# <span id="page-3-0"></span>**Abstract**

# **ASSESSING MINERAL DEMAND AND CONSTRAINTS IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION**

**Author:** Alvaro Ruiz del Tiempo

**Director:** Javier Revuelta

**Entity:** AFRY & ICAI – Universidad Pontificia Comillas

This project analyzes the demand for key minerals essential for the Energy Transition, considering various scenarios and public projections related to renewable energy development and electric vehicles. It estimates mineral production capacities to assess whether they can meet future demand, identifying which minerals may pose risks to the progress of decarbonizing the energy and transportation sectors.

**Key words:** Energy Transition, Mineral Demand and Supply, Renewable Energy, Electric Vehicles, Mining Industry

## <span id="page-3-1"></span>**Introduction**

The global shift towards sustainable and renewable technologies is essential to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, this transition also impacts the natural resources required for these technologies. This Master's Thesis examines the increasing demand for key minerals, such as lithium and cobalt, which are vital for renewable technologies and electric vehicle batteries. It explores various scenarios to project mineral requirements up to 2050, highlighting potential supply limitations. The study underscores the challenges posed by the growing need for minerals, including environmental and social impacts of extraction. Conversely, it also identifies opportunities for innovation in developing more mineral-efficient technologies and promoting sustainable extraction practices. This analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mineral needs for the Energy Transition and the associated challenges and opportunities.



## <span id="page-4-0"></span>**Model Description**

To advance the Master's Thesis and meet its objectives, various tasks have been proposed. These include examining official policies and conducting scenario analyses to gauge technology penetration rates, assessing mineral composition and intensity, and estimating base mineral demand using global production and refining data. Mineral demand will be categorized into base, energy, hydrogen, and transportation types, with annual capacity growth and aggregate demand analyzed. Refined mineral data modeling will project base demand to 2050, incorporating historical data and socioeconomic variables. Sector-specific mineral demand will be assessed, including the impact of subtechnologies, energy requirements, and CO2 emissions. Comprehensive statistics on production, refining, and reserves will be compiled, alongside investigations into recycling rates, mineral lifespan, and ore purity. Historical supply data and future investments will be modeled using Holt's, ARIMA, or Hubbert curves, with a user interface developed for recycling efficiency projections and comparative analyses conducted to align future supply with escalating demand.

## <span id="page-4-1"></span>**Results**

Starting with an analysis of mineral intensity by technology and projections for installed capacity in line with international decarbonization policies for 2050, this study has projected significant increases in the demand for key minerals such as cobalt, lithium, nickel, and copper. These minerals are expected to see demand surge by over 15 times in the most extreme net zero emissions scenarios by 2050, underscoring their critical role in renewable energy technologies and electric vehicles. Analyzing current mining production capacity under linear and exponential trends, the study found that a linear increase would quickly decouple supply from demand, creating substantial gaps. In contrast, exponential projections using Hubbert curves indicated potential peak production times but still highlighted the fundamental role of recycling in maintaining supply levels close to demand. The study also linked mineral demand to the energy required for extraction and associated CO2 emissions, revealing a hidden carbon footprint often overlooked in current energy policies. As mines are increasingly exploited, the energy needed for extraction rises, leading to faster energy consumption growth



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compared to mineral demand growth. These findings indicate that under worst-case recycling and net zero emissions scenarios for 2050, mining production would become a bottleneck, hindering decarbonization efforts. Even with high technological progress in recycling, critical minerals like copper, cobalt, nickel, lead, and rare earth elements remain constrained in meeting projected demand.

## <span id="page-5-0"></span>**Conclusions**

In conclusion, energy policies must integrate strategies addressing the entire mineral supply chain, from extraction to recycling, with a focus on advancing extraction technologies and enhancing recycling processes. Policymakers should mitigate mining's environmental impacts and CO2 emissions. Future studies should monitor investment in key mineral deposits, balancing market prices with the costs of exploration and exploitation. Investing in and developing more mineral-efficient technologies is crucial. Economic signals, driven by market dynamics, are essential for guiding development and decision-making, aligning with international sustainability objectives.



# <span id="page-6-0"></span>**Acknowledgements**

Before diving into the details of my final master's project in the Electric Power Industry, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported me throughout my university journey. A special thanks goes to my family, friends, colleagues, and university professors who have played pivotal roles in both my academic and professional growth. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Javier Revuelta and the AFRY team at the Madrid office for their invaluable support and mentorship during my internship and the development of this project. Their guidance has significantly contributed to my professional and personal growth.



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# <span id="page-15-0"></span>**1.Introduction**

The Energy Transition to greater use of sustainable and renewable technologies has become a global priority to meet the challenges of climate change and the pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, the Energy Transition involves not only the deployment of new renewable technologies but also understanding the impact it will have on the planet's existing natural resources required for their implementation. In this context, it is essential to analyze the increase in demand on certain minerals whose intensity in these renewable technologies becomes highly relevant and thus, it is possible to know the associated limitations that could appear in the short/medium term. This Master Thesis seeks to address different scenarios to understand what the mineral requirements will be considering the greater or lesser penetration of different technologies to 2050 in order to understand the importance of minerals in the Energy Transition to the challenges and opportunities facing its extraction and supply.

Today, minerals play a key role in the transition to a more sustainable energy sector. Several cases can be quickly identified, from the lithium used in electric vehicle batteries to the cobalt needed in energy storage systems; these resources are essential for the manufacture of key technologies over the next 5-30 years. Hence, the growing demand for minerals in the context of the Energy Transition presents several challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, the increase in the production of sustainable technologies leads to a greater need for minerals, which may result in additional pressures on natural resources and possible environmental and social impacts associated with their extraction. On the other hand, this demand also creates opportunities for innovation and the development of more mineral-efficient technologies, as well as for the promotion of more sustainable and responsible extraction practices.

Although the relevance of minerals in this Energy Transition is well known, supply and extraction are not without limitations and challenges. Firstly, many of the minerals identified as critical, as their extraction is concentrated in a limited number of countries, can generate dependence and vulnerability in terms of security of supply. In addition, they are extracted from underdeveloped countries where workers' conditions are



inadequate, and whose extraction may be associated with negative environmental impacts, such as soil degradation, water pollution and loss of biodiversity, which poses significant challenges in terms of sustainability and social responsibility.

## <span id="page-16-0"></span>**1.1. Motivation**

This Master's Thesis is fueled by the global imperative to decarbonize the electricity sector and the necessity to proactively address potential shortages of essential metals that could hinder the progress of the Energy Transition. It seeks to delve into the intricate interplay between mineral requirements and the seamless integration of renewable energy sources, all while contributing to broader sustainability objectives on a worldwide scale. Hence, the main motivations driving this Master's Thesis are:

- Global transition towards RES represents a paradigm shift in the energy landscape, driven by concerns over climate change and energy security. By analyzing the drivers behind this transition, such as evolving consumer preferences, and tech advancements, gaining insights into the scale and scope of mineral demand for the Energy Transition.
- Across the globe, governments are formulating comprehensive Energy Transition plans aimed at achieving ambitious renewable energy targets and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These plans, exemplified by initiatives like Spain's PNIEC, outline specific measures and targets to be achieved within defined timeframes.
- By staying abreast of the latest developments in energy technology and conducting thorough assessments of emerging trends, and as consumer demand for EVs, heat electrification & electrolyzers continues to rise, opportunities and challenges can be identified associated with evolving mineral requirements.

## <span id="page-16-1"></span>**1.2. Objectives**

The objectives to be encompassed by this endeavor are outlined as follows:

- Comprehensive analysis to quantify the specific mineral requirements associated with various RE technologies and energy storage systems – Examining the



composition of solar panels, wind turbines, and ESS, as well as their respective market shares and growth trajectories, estimating the magnitude of mineral demand for each technology.

- Critical examination of distinct sets of scenarios governing mineral demand projections within the context of the Energy Transition: official forecasts provided by governmental bodies and independent assessments developed – illuminate disparities, similarities, and implications of divergent perspectives on mineral demand and supply requirements.
- Comprehensive assessment of energy consumption associated with mining activities, with a focus on enhancing sustainability and mitigating environmental impacts.
- Comprehensive assessment of mineral production capacities under various growth trends, and comparison with demand projections.

## <span id="page-17-0"></span>**1.3. Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global targets set by the United Nations in its 2030 Agenda, designed to address the most pressing challenges facing humanity and promote a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future for all. These goals cover a wide range of areas, from eradicating poverty and hunger to climate action. In the context of this MA Master Thesis, the SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing the challenges associated with mineral demand and Energy Transition. Specifically, the analysis of critical mineral demand and supply shortages for the transition to more sustainable energy sources aligns with several SDGs, including:

- SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy: This goal seeks to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. The project contributes to this goal by analyzing how the availability of critical minerals impacts the transition to cleaner and renewable energy sources.
- SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: The Energy Transition propels the advancement of novel technologies, including electric vehicles and hydrogen electrolyzers, aimed at curtailing CO2 emissions, thereby escalating the demand



for minerals. Within this framework, comprehending technological advancements becomes imperative to optimize mineral recycling and devise innovative machinery to diminish energy consumption in their extraction processes.

- SDG 12 Responsible Production and Consumption: By investigating the demand for minerals and their impact on the Energy Transition, the project addresses the need to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns, minimizing the use of natural resources and reducing the environmental impacts associated with their extraction and processing.
- SDG 13 Climate Action: The transition to more sustainable energy sources is crucial to mitigate climate change and its adverse effects. The project contributes to this goal by examining how the availability of critical minerals can affect the speed and effectiveness of this transition.



# <span id="page-19-0"></span>**2. State of Art**

# <span id="page-19-1"></span>**2.1. Preliminary Work**

The literature on mineral demand and supply, especially in the context of the Energy Transition, is extensive and multifaceted. Key areas of focus include projections of mineral requirements for renewable energy technologies, analysis of supply constraints, and the potential for recycling and material substitution. Below is a survey of the relevant literature.

- "Global Critical Minerals Outlook 2024" (IEA) provides a comprehensive overview of projected mineral demand under various scenarios such as the Stated Policies Scenario, the Announced Pledges Scenario, and the Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario. The report highlights the significant increase in demand for minerals like copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements driven by clean energy technologies. It also discusses the potential supply shortfalls for minerals like copper and lithium due to limited new project developments and declining ore quality.
- Alicia Valero's work emphasizes the critical materials required for renewable technologies and identifies potential bottlenecks that could hinder the Energy Transition. This includes the high demand for rare earth elements, lithium, and cobalt. Increasing recycling rates and material efficiency are critical to mitigating supply risks. Valero et al. discuss the potential for recycling to play a significant role in meeting future mineral demand, particularly for materials like lithium from end-of-life batteries. In the supply side, Valero et al. apply Hubbert peak models and dynamic market simulations to non-fuel minerals, indicating that the supply of certain minerals could peak and decline, affecting their long-term availability.
	- o "Global material requirements for the Energy Transition. An exergy flow analysis of decarbonization pathways"
	- o "Límites minerales de la transición energética"
	- o "Material bottlenecks in the future development of green technologies"



- o "Assessing maximum production peak and resource availability of nonfuel mineral resources: Analyzing the influence of extractable global resources"
- Emmanuel Aramendia: "Global energy consumption of the mineral mining industry: Exploring the historical perspective and future pathways to 2060"

## <span id="page-20-0"></span>**2.2. Initial Conclusions & Present Gaps**

The reviewed literature unequivocally indicates that the demand for critical minerals is set to rise substantially as the world transitions towards renewable energy technologies. This surge is driven primarily by the increased production and deployment of technologies such as electric vehicles, wind turbines, and solar panels, which require significant amounts of minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements. For instance, the IEA projects a steep increase in the demand for these minerals under various Energy Transition scenarios. This rising demand underscores the importance of critical minerals in the global effort to combat climate change and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Supply risks associated with critical minerals are multifaceted, encompassing geographical concentration, geopolitical tensions, and environmental sustainability. Many of these minerals are concentrated in a few countries, leading to potential supply disruptions due to geopolitical instability. For example, a significant portion of the world's cobalt supply comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo, a region known for political instability and ethical concerns regarding mining practices. The literature emphasizes the need for diversified supply sources to mitigate these risks. Sustainable mining practices are also critical to ensure that the environmental impact of extracting these minerals is minimized, thereby aligning mineral supply chains with broader sustainability goals.

Recycling emerges as a pivotal strategy in addressing the supply-demand imbalance of critical minerals. By recovering valuable materials from end-of-life products, recycling can significantly reduce the need for primary extraction and alleviate some of the supply constraints. Valero et al. highlight the importance of improving



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recycling rates for materials like lithium and cobalt, particularly from spent batteries. However, current recycling rates are far from adequate. For instance, the United Nations Environment Programme reports that the recycling rates for many essential minerals remain below 1%. Enhancing recycling infrastructure and technologies is therefore crucial to meeting future mineral demand sustainably.

Material substitution is another important avenue explored in the literature to address the supply risks of critical minerals. Research into alternative materials that can replace scarce or geopolitically sensitive minerals is ongoing. For example, advancements in battery technology are exploring the use of manganese and other more abundant elements as substitutes for cobalt. Such innovations not only reduce dependency on critical minerals but also potentially lower the environmental and ethical impacts associated with their extraction. However, the commercialization and market acceptance of these substitutes remain a challenge that needs to be addressed through continued research and development.

On the other hand, some gaps can be identified in the literature analyzed given the high uncertainty that exists with the technological and economic development that the energy sector will experience. One of the most pressing gaps identified in the literature is the inadequacy of current recycling infrastructure for critical minerals. While the potential for recycling to mitigate supply risks is well recognized, the technologies and systems required to achieve high recovery rates are not yet fully developed. There is a clear need for significant investment in recycling facilities and research into more efficient and costeffective recycling processes. For instance, improving the separation and recovery of rare earth elements from electronic waste could drastically reduce the reliance on primary mining. Furthermore, from a more technological perspective, while material substitution offers a promising solution to the supply risks of critical minerals, the research in this area is still in its nascent stages. There is a need for a more concerted effort to identify and develop viable substitutes for critical minerals used in renewable energy technologies.

Regarding geopolitical challenges, the concentration of critical mineral production in a limited number of countries poses significant geopolitical risks. Countries that dominate the supply chain for these minerals can exert considerable influence on



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global markets, potentially leading to supply disruptions. The literature calls for policies that promote supply diversification and the establishment of strategic reserves to buffer against such disruptions. Additionally, the environmental impact of mining activities, particularly in regions with lax environmental regulations, remains a major concern. Future research should focus on developing sustainable mining practices that minimize ecological damage and ensure the well-being of local communities.

Ensuring the sustainability of mineral supply chains is another critical gap highlighted in the literature. Current supply chain practices often fail to account for the full environmental and social impacts of mineral extraction and processing. Future research should focus on developing comprehensive sustainability metrics that can guide the management of mineral supply chains. Moreover, this gap could be overcome through the integration of circular economy principles, this involves designing products for durability, reparability, and recyclability, thereby extending their lifecycle and reducing the need for virgin materials.



# <span id="page-23-0"></span>**3.Problem Setting**

## <span id="page-23-1"></span>**3.1. Problem Description**

The analysis of the demand and expectation or requirement of mineral supply to cope with the penetration of renewable and sustainable technologies is essential to understand whether the world will be able to achieve the targets set for decarbonization of the energy sector and achieve CO2 emission reductions by 2050, even considering a scenario of net zero emissions. To develop a comprehensive analysis it is necessary, on the one hand, the use of models and tools that allow predicting future variables considering the historical development and socio-economic components at global level and on the other hand, databases containing accurate information on the historical development of the mining industry and the different target scenarios to meet the 2030 agenda and 2050 targets (Stated Energy Policies, Announced Policies, Net Zero, Free Scenario).

These historical models and data sets will enable to predict and project future demand for critical minerals. This, in turn, allows to draw insightful conclusions regarding the necessary capacity development and technological advancements required by the mining industry to ensure that the supply can meet the demand, always mindful of the available resources and reserves on the Earth.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) provides projections of global installed capacity by technology in the energy sector through its World Energy Outlook (updated to the 2023 version). These data serve as a starting point, from which mineral intensity by technology and categorize demand can be analyzed into the following segments:

- Base Demand: Reflects historical demand, correlated with socioeconomic variables.
- Energy Demand: Accounts for the penetration of renewable and sustainable energy plants required in the Energy Transition, such as Solar, Wind, Biomass, Geothermal, CSP, new transmission and distribution networks, segmented by technology for precise mineral analysis.



- Transportation Demand: Reflects the penetration of electric vehicles with a standard battery capacity of 65-75 kWh, segmented by battery technology due to their mineral concentration.
- Hydrogen Demand: Addresses the requirements of hydrogen electrolyzers within the energy sector, segmented by technology.
- Nuclear Demand: Given its non-renewable nature and significant influence on the political-energy landscape, nuclear demand plays a crucial role in CO2 emission reduction strategies, allowing for additional scenario planning.

All these predictions will be based on in-depth research to ensure the best fitting of initial data, resulting in reliable estimates. These estimates will serve as a basis for drawing meaningful conclusions about potential limitations within the energy sector's supply chain. Historical consumption data for each mineral can be derived from global refined metal production, representing the final result of mineral production and recycling within the supply chain, considering mineral lifespan and various recycling capacity development projections.



#### *Figure 3.1. Copper Supply Chain. Source: International Copper Association*

<span id="page-24-0"></span>For future estimations, among various projection methods, linear regressions using Excel's Data Analysis tool have been employed to project the base demand for each



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mineral, considering socioeconomic variables such as GDP, world population, year, urbanization level, and economic growth.

The evaluation of 15 models, combining different variables with their natural values or logarithmic transformations, has been conducted using an 80% training batch of known data and a 20% test batch to analyze estimation errors through Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), Mean Absolute Error (MAE), and Mean Error (ME), with subsequent checks to ensure future results stability. This evaluation process will be applied to each mineral within the study. Once the actual demand is known, it will be compared with the projected supply capacity. Initially, future supply will be projected linearly using time series models such as Holt's double exponential and first-order ARIMA models, and ultimately validated through Hubbert curves.

### <span id="page-25-0"></span>**3.2. Work Methodology**

To advance the Master's Thesis and endeavor toward fulfilling the initially established objectives, the following tasks have been proposed for execution:

- Task 1: These include examining official policies that govern the advancement of new technologies and conducting a scenario analysis to gauge the varying penetration rates of specific technologies. Additionally, the mineral composition of each technology will be thoroughly examined, with a focus on quantitatively assessing their intensity, measured in kg/MW or kg/unit. Furthermore, the estimation of the base demand for each mineral will be conducted, leveraging comprehensive global production and refining data as benchmarks.
- Task 2: Firstly, mineral demand will be categorized into four distinct types: base, energy, hydrogen, and transportation demand. Secondly, the annual capacity growth per technology, as per the selected scenario, will be analyzed alongside the aggregate mineral demand, with certain periods extrapolated through linear methods. Additionally, a user-friendly interface control panel will be developed to facilitate the adjustment of penetration levels for sub-technologies within solar, wind, battery, and electrolyzer, ensuring ease of use and accessibility for stakeholders and researchers alike.



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- Task 3: Refined mineral data modelling will be utilized to extrapolate the base demand trajectory up to 2050 on a global scale, providing valuable insights into future mineral requirements. Secondly, a learning batch spanning until 2009-10 will be employed for training purposes, followed by a testing batch extending until 2020, with existing known energy demands factored in, enhancing the accuracy of predictive models. Additionally, a correlation study will be conducted to examine the relationship between base demand and various socioeconomic variables, including GDP, GDP per capita, population, urbanization rates, and time factors, shedding light on the complex interplay between mineral demand and broader socio-economic trends.
- Task 4: In-depth assessment of mineral demand across sectors will be conducted, scrutinizing current requirements and projecting future growth patterns to inform mining requisites, thereby providing valuable insights into evolving resource needs. Secondly, the influence of heightened penetration rates of select subtechnologies, such as evolving trends within various battery types, will be analyzed to understand their impact on overall demand dynamics, facilitating a nuanced understanding of technological shifts. Additionally, energy requirements will be quantified in terms of barrels of oil equivalent, and associated CO2 emissions necessary to meet the escalating mineral demand sustainably will be assessed, contributing to a holistic evaluation of environmental implications and sustainability considerations.
- Task 5: Extensive compilation of annual production, refining, and reserve statistics for each ore type will be conducted, providing a comprehensive overview of resource availability. Secondly, an investigation into the average recycling rates of individual minerals and their projected lifespan within the value chain will be undertaken, exploring opportunities for potential reutilization and sustainability. Additionally, an assessment of the purity grade inherent in existing ore deposits will be conducted, coupled with considerations regarding investments in future deposits to ascertain quality and viability, contributing to informed decision-making in resource allocation and extraction strategies.



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Task 6: Historical supply data alongside future investments will be modeled using Holts double exponential, ARIMA, or Hubbert curves, enabling an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of each mineral to inform strategic planning. Secondly, an intuitive user interface control panel will be developed, facilitating the incorporation of enhanced mineral recycling efficiency projections up to 2050, fostering sustainable resource management. Additionally, a comparative analysis will be conducted to assess whether the anticipated future supply capacity will align with the escalating demand for minerals essential to the Energy Transition, providing critical insights into potential supply-demand imbalances and informing policy and investment decisions in the energy sector.

Project will progress through research stages, followed by forecast modelling, analysis, and comparison of results over a 15-week timeline:



*Figure 3.2. Gantt Chart Master's Thesis progress. Source: Own development*

### <span id="page-27-1"></span><span id="page-27-0"></span>**3.3. Resources to use**

The external resources that will be used for the Master's thesis are:

- R-Studio: ARIMA model suitability analysis
- Microsoft Office:
	- o Excel: Modeling Scenarios
	- o Word: Thesis document
	- o PowerPoint: Presentation



- Databases as:
	- o World Energy Outlook IEA
	- o USGS Mining Database
	- o British Geological Survey Database
	- o S&P Global Mining Activity Database
- Other AFRY resources



# <span id="page-29-0"></span>**4.Proposed Method**

To meet the objectives of this thesis, a predictive model for the demand and supply of minerals over the coming years will be developed. This model will employ a methodology that facilitates the parallel analysis of both aspects using mathematical techniques, supported by existing research on the significance of minerals in the Energy Transition. The projections will inherently contain a degree of uncertainty due to the assumptions integrated into the model and the potential errors in the mathematical approaches used. Rather than aiming for highly accurate predictions, this thesis seeks to qualitatively illustrate the current state of the mining sector and its critical role in the Energy Transition, emphasizing the sector's importance in achieving an emission-free energy future.

Among the numerous minerals for which data has been collected to analyze various technologies, only ten will be comprehensively studied. These minerals are deemed crucial for sustainable energy development, and their scarcity could hinder decarbonization efforts, necessitating the exploration of alternative solutions:

- Aluminum
- Cadmium
- **Cobalt**
- Copper
- Iron
- Lead
- **Lithium**
- Nickle
- REE
- Vanadium
- Zinc

The following sections will detail the methodology employed for analyzing the demand and supply of minerals. Specifically, the coefficients and result tables for the predictive models concerning copper will be developed and presented. This



comprehensive approach ensures that the primary focus remains on copper, while still offering complete data for other minerals to support the overall analysis.

## <span id="page-30-0"></span>**4.1. Demand Forecast**

Before delving into the development of the claim, it is important to note that three different scenarios have been studied:

Stated Policies Scenario: Also known as STEPS, represents a conservative and pragmatic approach to future energy projections, grounded in the current policy landscape. It encompasses all existing policies and measures that have been formally adopted or are in the process of being implemented by governments around the world. This scenario assumes that no significant new policies will be introduced beyond those already in place, thus providing a baseline projection based on the continuation of current trajectories. STEPS includes the expected advancements in technology and market trends that are already underway, such as ongoing improvements in energy efficiency and the gradual deployment of renewable energy technologies. The scenario offers a detailed analysis of how energy demand and supply are anticipated to evolve under these existing policies, considering different energy sources like fossil fuels, renewables, and nuclear energy, and their respective roles in the global energy mix. The implications of STEPS highlight that the Energy Transition towards lower-carbon sources is likely to proceed at a moderate pace. While there will be significant growth in renewable energy and enhancements in energy efficiency, fossil fuels are projected to continue playing a substantial role in the global energy landscape. As a result, global carbon emissions are expected to rise, albeit at a slower rate than in previous decades, indicating a gap between current policies and the more aggressive measures required for substantial emissions reductions. The scenario identifies the investment needed to maintain and expand energy infrastructure under the existing policy frameworks, emphasizing the importance of continued investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and grid modernization, alongside the ongoing development of fossil fuel resources. Energy security remains a critical concern in STEPS, as fossil fuels continue to dominate,



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underscoring the need for sustained investment in supply diversification and resilience to ensure stable and reliable energy access. Moreover, while some improvements in air quality and reductions in pollutants are anticipated, more stringent measures will be necessary to address broader environmental challenges, such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

- Announced Pledges Scenario: Also known as APS, offers a more optimistic and forward-looking projection of the energy sector by considering both the policies currently in place and those that have been announced and are expected to be implemented in the near future. This scenario reflects a higher level of policy ambition, as it anticipates the enactment of additional measures aimed at accelerating the Energy Transition and addressing environmental challenges. APS includes proposed legislation, regulatory changes, and international commitments that governments have publicly declared but may not yet be fully implemented. This scenario accounts for the potential impact of these forthcoming policy measures on the energy landscape. It takes into consideration expected advancements in technology and market innovations driven by the announced policies, such as more rapid deployment of renewable energy technologies, improvements in energy storage, and the development of new low-carbon technologies. APS provides detailed projections of energy demand and supply dynamics under the influence of these announced policies, reflecting potential shifts in energy consumption patterns and the increased penetration of clean energy sources. The implications of APS highlight that the Energy Transition is expected to gain significant momentum, with a more pronounced shift towards renewable energy sources and substantial improvements in energy efficiency. The scenario suggests that the announced policies will drive considerable reductions in the use of fossil fuels and increase the share of clean energy in the global energy mix. Global carbon emissions are projected to peak and begin to decline under APS, indicating progress towards achieving international climate targets, although further measures may still be necessary to reach the most ambitious goals. The scenario identifies the investment required to support the implementation of the announced policies, including investments in renewable



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energy infrastructure, energy efficiency measures, and the development of new low-carbon technologies. APS also emphasizes the importance of enhancing energy security and resilience in the context of a changing energy landscape, highlighting the need for continued diversification of energy sources and the development of robust energy systems to ensure reliable energy access. The scenario indicates that the announced policies will lead to significant environmental and social benefits, including improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and enhanced public health. Additionally, APS underscores the potential for job creation and economic growth in the clean energy sector.

Net Zero Scenario: Also known as NZS, represents an ambitious and transformative pathway in which global efforts are aligned to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by a specific target year, often 2050. This scenario requires comprehensive and aggressive policy measures, rapid technological advancements, and significant shifts in energy production and consumption patterns. NZS envisions a world where strong global commitments to achieving net-zero emissions are in place, necessitating the adoption of stringent policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors of the economy. The scenario assumes rapid advancements in clean energy technologies, including renewable energy, energy storage, carbon capture and storage (CCS), and hydrogen production, with these technologies being deployed at scale to achieve deep decarbonization. NZS also anticipates significant changes in energy consumption patterns and societal behaviors, such as increased energy efficiency, shifts towards sustainable transportation modes, and changes in industrial processes to reduce carbon footprints. The scenario outlines a comprehensive transformation of the energy system, with a substantial increase in the share of renewable energy sources, a phase-out of unabated fossil fuels, and the development of resilient and flexible energy infrastructure. The implications of NZS underscore a rapid and deep decarbonization pathway, characterized by a significant reduction in fossil fuel use and a corresponding increase in renewable energy generation and energy efficiency. Global carbon emissions are projected



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to decline rapidly under NZS, reaching net-zero by the target year. This scenario emphasizes the importance of early and sustained policy action to achieve the necessary emissions reductions. The scenario identifies substantial investment needs to support the transition to a net-zero energy system, including investments in renewable energy infrastructure, energy efficiency measures, and the development of new low-carbon technologies. NZS also highlights the importance of enhancing energy security and resilience through the diversification of energy sources and the development of robust energy infrastructure. The scenario indicates that achieving net-zero emissions will result in significant environmental and social benefits, such as improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and enhanced public health. Additionally, NZS underscores the potential for job creation and economic growth in the clean energy sector, as well as the importance of ensuring a just and equitable transition for all communities.

After describing the scenarios that form the foundation for predicting mineral demand under the accelerated development of renewable technologies and the proliferation of electric vehicles, the step-by-step methodology will be outlined.

#### <span id="page-33-0"></span>**4.1.1. Demand Inputs**

The first step in projecting future mineral demand involves understanding the historical data and the targets set by global institutions to meet the objectives of the different scenarios. As outlined in the previous section, demand has been categorized into five segments related to socioeconomic growth, the development of the electric vehicle fleet, and the new renewable capacity installed in the global energy mix. Data on the current installed capacity and future targets for each energy mix scenario were obtained from the World Electricity Outlook 2023, presented by the International Energy Agency. These values are displayed in the following tables:





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*Table 1. Installed capacity in GW - Stated Policies Scenario. Source: IEA*

<span id="page-34-0"></span>

*Table 2. Installed capacity in GW - Announced Pledges Scenario. Source: IEA*

<span id="page-34-1"></span>



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*Table 3. Installed capacity in GW - Net Zero Scenario. Source: IEA*

<span id="page-35-0"></span>The projections for the global energy mix in intermediate years will be calculated using linear regression between the target years provided as inputs.

Even with the target energy mix for the Energy Transition established, understanding its impact on mineral requirements is essential. This impact is determined by the mineral intensity per technology, derived from various sources. This information will help identify which renewable technologies and electric vehicles demand more minerals or specific types of minerals. Although the data is presented for the year 2023, it will remain constant throughout the historical analysis. However, it is important to note that technological advancements may lead to a reduction in mineral requirements or a shift in the types of minerals used for the same technologies in the coming years.




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*Table 4. Mineral Intensity in kg/MW. Source: IEA.*



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#### *Table 5. EV mineral intensity. Source: IEA.*

To assess the demand for minerals in electric transportation, it is essential to project the number of electric vehicles that will be developed by technology in the coming years according to the different scenarios. As with previous projections, the figures for intermediate years have been calculated using linear regression between target years. The primary sources of information for these projections are the International Energy Agency, along with reports from McKinsey and other reputable automotive consulting firms.





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*Table 6. Historical annual EV sales. Source: IEA & McKinsey.*





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*Table 7. Annual EV sales STEPS projections. Source: IEA & McKinsey.*

<b>Annual EV Sales APS projections</b>				
<b>Technology</b>	2025	2030	2050	
<b>BEV</b> cars	16,000,000	33,000,000	48,639,757	
BEV bus	270,000	480,000	549,159	
<b>BEV</b> trucks	240,000	750,000	658,990	
<b>BEV</b> vans	1,000,000	2,800,000	3,294,951	
<b>Total BEV</b>	17,510,000	37,030,000	53,142,857	
PHEV cars	4,700,000	7,400,000	8,207,499	
PHEV bus	16,000	38,000	37,560	
<b>PHEV</b> trucks	84,000	190,000	333,864	
PHEV vans	84,000	360,000	278,220	
<b>Total PHEV</b>	4,884,000	7,988,000	8,857,143	
<b>Total EV</b>	22,394,000	45,018,000	62,000,000	

*Table 8. Annual EV sales APS projections. Source: IEA & McKinsey.*

The next step involves identifying the inputs necessary to correlate the minerals required for various industries with global socio-economic development. This study will be based on mineral extraction data sourced from historical databases such as the USGS and BGS, including information on mineral production, refining, reserves, and identified resources. To facilitate understanding, brief descriptions of these concepts will be provided, followed by tables presenting historical data for each mineral. It is important to note that there is no official record for all the minerals analyzed, as some are by-products of mines primarily extracting other minerals or originate from mines in regions with low levels of social development and data recording.

Mineral production refers to the process of extracting valuable minerals from the earth. This includes the mining and initial processing of ores to separate the desired minerals from the surrounding material. The quantity of minerals produced is typically measured in terms of weight or volume and reflects the output from mining operations over a specified period.



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- Mineral refining involves further processing of extracted minerals to purify and convert them into usable forms. This process includes chemical, thermal, and physical treatments to remove impurities and produce high-quality mineral products. Refining is essential for transforming raw minerals into forms suitable for industrial applications, such as metal production and manufacturing.
- Mineral reserves are the economically viable portions of identified mineral resources. These reserves are quantities of minerals that are confirmed through exploration and are extractable under current economic and technological conditions. Reserves are classified into proven and probable categories based on the level of confidence in their existence and economic feasibility.
- Identified mineral resources encompass all known quantities of minerals, regardless of their economic viability. These resources include both discovered deposits that are currently uneconomical to extract and those that may become viable with future technological advances or changes in market conditions. Identified resources provide a broader understanding of the potential mineral wealth within a region or globally.





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*Table 9. Copper mineral data. Source: BGS & USGS.*

To model the growth of mineral demand associated with socio-economic development, it is necessary to utilize inputs of socio-economic variables and their future projections. The primary variables employed in this analysis include GDP, population, level of urbanization, and year, as well as combinations of these factors. The following tables present the values used in the correlations for the base demand, with the detailed model to be developed in subsequent sections.





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*Table 10. Socioeconomic variables for modelling 1970-2050. Source: Desk research.*

Another significant aspect analyzed in this thesis is the energy requirements needed to extract the minerals demanded in the future, measured in millions of barrels of oil equivalent. This analysis serves as a reflection of the anticipated increase in energy consumption necessary to support the Energy Transition, as well as the associated CO2 emissions from fossil fuel sources. The initial data, used as inputs, are derived from the article published by Emmanuel Aramendia, with 2015 as the base year. From this starting point, three different scenarios are projected: constant energy consumption, low consumption growth, and high consumption growth. The table below presents the energy consumption for 2015 and the coefficients that determine future consumption under these three scenarios.



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*Table 11. Mineral extraction energy required. Source: Emmanuel Aramendia "Global energy consumption of the mineral mining industry".*





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2019	1.00	1.06	1.18
2020	1.00	1.07	1.21
2021	1.00	1.08	1.25
2022	1.00	1.09	1.28
2023	1.00	1.10	1.32
2024	1.00	1.11	1.36
2025	1.00	1.12	1.39
2026	1.00	1.13	1.43
2027	1.00	1.14	1.47
2028	1.00	1.16	1.51
2029	1.00	1.17	1.55
2030	1.00	1.18	1.58
2031	1.00	1.19	1.62
2032	1.00	1.20	1.66
2033	1.00	1.22	1.70
2034	1.00	1.23	1.74
2035	1.00	1.24	1.78
2036	1.00	1.25	1.82
2037	1.00	1.26	1.85
2038	1.00	1.28	1.89
2039	1.00	1.29	1.93
2040	1.00	1.30	1.97
2041	1.00	1.31	2.01
2042	1.00	1.32	2.05
2043	1.00	1.34	2.09
2044	1.00	1.35	2.13
2045	1.00	1.36	2.16
2046	1.00	1.37	2.20
2047	1.00	1.38	2.24
2048	1.00	1.40	2.28
2049	1.00	1.41	2.32
2050	$1.00\,$	1.42	2.36

*Table 12. Mineral extraction coefficients future scenarios. Source: Emmanuel Aramendia "Global energy consumption of the mineral mining industry".*



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## **4.1.2. Demand Assumptions**

This section outlines the primary assumptions made in the development of the model, all of which are based on comprehensive studies and projection reports. The data introduced in the previous section regarding installed capacity by technology at a global level do not account for sub-technologies. For instance, in the case of wind energy, no distinction is made between offshore and onshore wind farms, despite the former having a higher mineral intensity. Similarly, distinctions are not made for sub-technologies within solar energy, energy storage, or hydrogen production. To address this, each technology has been segmented into its various sub-technologies, with future projections developed based on historical data. Furthermore, a control panel has been introduced to this projection exercise, allowing for ongoing adjustments to enhance accuracy over time. Below is a detailed breakdown of the different sub-technologies for the target years:



*Figure 4.1. Solar energy subtechnologies. Source: Own development*



*Figure 4.2. Wind energy subtechnologies. Source: Own development*



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*Figure 4.3. EV Batteries subtechnologies. Source: Own development*



*Figure 4.4. Hydrogen subtechnologies. Source: Own development*

## **4.1.3. Demand Modeling**

This section outlines the methodology used to model the prediction of mineral demand up to 2050 under various scenarios.

The initial step in modeling mineral demand, driven by the development of new renewable, nuclear, and electricity infrastructure capacity, involves calculating the annual increase in installed capacity for each technology. Additionally, the different technologies are segmented as described in the assumptions to determine the share of each subtechnology. This approach aims to estimate the MW installed for each sub-technology annually according to the different scenarios. As stated in the previous section, the model assumes that the mineral intensity per technology remains constant throughout the study period. Consequently, once the installed capacity is determined, it is multiplied by the



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mineral intensity to calculate the annual mineral requirements needed to develop the respective capacities.

The next step in modeling mineral demand involves understanding the demand associated with other sectors and its correlation with socio-economic variables. First, the historical net base demand is calculated using a formula that considers ore refining and the previously calculated demands:

## Net Base Demand<sub>n</sub> =  $Refined_n - RES_n - Nuclear_n - Transport_n - Hydrogen_n$

Once the net base demand is determined for each year in the historical series and for each mineral, linear regressions are simulated using an internal Excel tool. Different combinations of socio-economic variables and their respective natural logarithms are tested to identify the combination that best correlates with demand and presents the lowest error. The model utilizes 80% of the existing data as training data and 20% as test data to validate its accuracy. Additionally, the possibility of omitting the COVID-19 years has been considered, given the data uncertainties and the unrealistic slowdown in some industries' mineral demand during that period.

Regarding the combinations of variables, an initial simulation tested 15 different models for copper demand. The process was ultimately automated to identify the 10 models with the best results. Subsequently, the base demand for the remaining minerals was calculated using an iterative process, following these steps:

- 1. Preparation of refined mineral data
- 2. Calculation of historical net base demand
- 3. Adjustment of learning and test data batches based on known data
- 4. Simulation of 10 linear regression models and extraction of coefficients
- 5. Error calculation
- 6. Identification of the 3-4 models that best predict demand and analysis of their projections to 2050
- 7. Selection of the model that provides predictions consistent with historical data

The errors used to evaluate the models are described below:



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Root Mean Square Error is a widely used metric for assessing the accuracy of predictive models. It measures the square root of the average of the squared differences between predicted and observed values. Mathematically, it is expressed as:

$$
RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^{n} (y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2}
$$

where  $y_i$  represents the observed values,  $\hat{y}_i$  denotes the predicted values, and n is the number of observations. RMSE provides a comprehensive measure of model accuracy by giving higher weight to larger errors due to the squaring of differences. This makes RMSE particularly useful when significant errors are undesirable and need to be penalized more. It is sensitive to outliers, which can disproportionately affect the score. RMSE is expressed in the same units as the observed values, facilitating interpretation. However, its sensitivity to larger errors can be a drawback in some contexts, especially if outliers are present.

Mean Absolute Error is a straightforward and commonly used metric for evaluating the accuracy of predictive models. It measures the average magnitude of the errors between predicted and observed values, without considering their direction. Mathematically, MAE is defined as:

$$
MAE = \frac{1}{n} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^{n} |y_i - \hat{y}_i|
$$

MAE provides an easy-to-understand measure of model accuracy by calculating the mean of the absolute differences between predicted and actual values. Unlike RMSE, MAE treats all errors equally, giving a linear measure of average error. This makes MAE less sensitive to outliers and extreme values, providing a more balanced view of model performance in datasets with varying error magnitudes. MAE is also expressed in the same units as the observed values, simplifying its interpretation. It is particularly useful in scenarios where the magnitude of prediction errors needs to be minimized uniformly, without disproportionately penalizing larger errors.

Mean Error, also known as bias, is a metric that measures the average difference between predicted and observed values. It is a simple measure that indicates



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whether the model tends to overestimate or underestimate the actual values. Mathematically, ME is defined as:

$$
ME = \frac{1}{n} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^{n} (y_i - \hat{y}_i)
$$

ME provides insight into the systematic bias of a model by averaging the residuals (differences between actual and predicted values). A positive ME indicates that the model, on average, underestimates the observed values, while a negative ME suggests overestimation. Unlike previous errors presented, ME does not provide a measure of the magnitude of errors but rather focuses on the direction and overall tendency of the errors. This makes ME useful for diagnosing systematic errors in the model, helping to identify and correct consistent biases. However, ME can be misleading if positive and negative errors cancel each other out, resulting in a near-zero ME despite significant individual errors. Therefore, ME is often used in conjunction with other error metrics to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of model performance.

The results and coefficients from the base demand modeling for copper are presented in the following section. The results for the base demand modeling of other minerals are provided in Annex II.





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*Table 13. Base demand forecast coefficients Copper. Source: Own development*





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*Table 14. Base demand forecast results - Copper. Source: Own development*





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*Table 15. Base demand forecast errors - Copper. Source: Own development*





*Table 16. Base demand forecast error summary - Copper. Source: Own development*



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*Table 17. Copper base demand vs models testing results. Source: Own development*

Based on the results presented above, it has been determined that the regression model which best fits the potential future demand for copper is Model 7, incorporating the socio-economic variables LN(GDPc), urbanization level, and year.

The final step in the demand model involves calculating the total energy required for mineral extraction once the annual demand for each mineral is determined. This is achieved by multiplying the total annual demand by the energy needed for the extraction of each specific mineral. Additionally, for minerals where an approximate value of CO2 emissions during extraction is available, the associated increase in emissions due to the mining or processing of these minerals can be estimated. This comprehensive approach not only quantifies the energy requirements but also provides insights into the environmental impact, specifically the carbon footprint, associated with the projected increase in mineral demand.

## **4.2. Supply Forecast**

This section does not focus on different development scenarios, as discussed in the section on mineral demand. Instead, it examines the capacity to increase mineral extraction in alignment with various trends. This analysis aims to evaluate the status of each mineral in terms of resource extraction and to determine if strategic shifts to alternative materials are necessary in the event of potential shortages.



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## **4.2.1. Supply Inputs**

In this section on mineral supply, the data previously presented in the demand section covering production, refining, reserves, and identified resources will serve as the foundation. Additionally, mineral recycling is becoming increasingly significant in the supply of minerals. Some minerals analyzed in this thesis exhibit a high degree of recyclability, while others currently lack the technological capacity for economically viable recycling, preventing the closure of the lifecycle once they reach the end of their useful life. The following data, extracted from a study by Emmanuel Aramendia, provide recycling information with a base year of 2015 and projections under three scenarios of future recycling growth. These scenarios consider the impetus of the Energy Transition and the high extraction costs of certain minerals, which are expected to drive the development of new technologies that will enable greater recovery of minerals post-use.





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*Table 18. Mineral recycling rates. Source: Emmanuel Aramendia "Global energy consumption of the mineral mining industry".*





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*Table 19. Mineral recycling rates future coefficients. Source: Emmanuel Aramendia "Global energy consumption of the mineral mining industry".*

## **4.2.2. Supply Assumptions**

The only assumption considered in this section is the useful life of each mineral, which refers to the duration during which the mineral remains in use in a specific application or product before it is no longer viable for that purpose. Although this period can vary significantly depending on the type of mineral and its application, a useful life of 30 years has been assumed for all minerals. This assumption will be reflected in the model as a lag in the recycling of minerals produced during those preceding years.

## **4.2.3. Supply Modelling**

This section models ore supply capacities up to the year 2050 using various mathematical methods. These methods allow for a comparison of the projected increase in demand with historical ore extraction trends and reflect the impetus for new investment in mining operations. Understanding the potential growth of mining capacities is crucial, as it is well-known that as a mine becomes more exploited, extracting new ore becomes increasingly challenging. This results in higher energy requirements to obtain the same quantity of ore due to the reduction in ore grade. By modeling these supply capacities, it becomes possible to better anticipate the constraints and challenges associated with meeting future mineral demands and the corresponding need for technological advancements and increased energy efficiency in mining practices.



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Based on the bibliography analyzed prior to the development of this thesis, several methods have been applied to project future mineral extraction. In consensus with this bibliography, this project will analyze two aspects of the future projection of mineral extraction using the production data presented in Annex I. The first aspect involves modeling the growth of mining extraction with a linear trend, considering the historical rate. This approach reflects the potential restrictions on minerals if the current rate of investment in new mines continues. The two mathematical models employed are described below:

- Holt Double Exponential Smoothing model is an extension of the simple exponential smoothing technique. It is designed to handle data with trends, offering a more sophisticated approach to forecasting compared to its predecessor. This model was introduced by Charles Holt in 1957 and improves upon the basic exponential smoothing by incorporating a mechanism to account for trends in the data. The HDES model operates using two equations: one for the level and one for the trend. The level equation smooths the data, while the trend equation smooths the trend. Mathematically, the model is represented as:

$$
L_t = \alpha \cdot Y_t + (1 - \alpha) \cdot (L_{t-1} - T_{t+1})
$$
  
\n
$$
T_t = \beta \cdot (L_t - L_{t-1}) + (1 - \beta) \cdot T_{t-1}
$$
  
\n
$$
F_{t+m} = L_t + m \cdot T_t
$$

Where  $L_t$  is the level component at time t,  $T_t$  is the trend component at time t,  $Y_t$ is the actual value at time t,  $\alpha$  is the smoothing parameter for the level (0<  $\alpha$ <1),  $\beta$  is the smoothing parameter for the trend (0<  $\beta$ <1), and  $F_{t+m}$  is the forecast for m periods ahead.

The level equation updates the smoothed value of the series at each time period, accounting for both the actual data and the previous level and trend. The trend equation updates the trend component by smoothing the difference between the current and previous levels. The forecast equation uses the most recent estimates of the level and trend to project future values. Holt's method is particularly useful for forecasting time series data that exhibit a linear trend. It adapts to changes in the trend over time, providing more accurate forecasts compared to simple



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exponential smoothing. The choice of smoothing parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  is crucial and are determined through optimization techniques such as minimizing errors.

ARIMA (AutoRegressive Integrated Moving Average) model is a comprehensive and versatile forecasting technique widely used for time series data. Developed by Box and Jenkins in the early 1970s, ARIMA is powerful due to its ability to model various types of time series patterns, including trends, seasonality, and autocorrelations. The ARIMA model combines three components: autoregression (AR), differencing (I), and moving average (MA). The general form of an ARIMA model is denoted as ARIMA(p,d,q), where p represents the number of autoregressive terms, d the number of differences needed to make the series stationary, and q the number of moving average terms. The mathematical model is expressed as:

 $Y_t = c + \emptyset_1 \cdot Y_{t-1} + \cdots + \emptyset_p \cdot Y_{t-p} + \theta_1 \cdot \epsilon_{t-1} + \cdots + \theta_q \cdot \epsilon_{t-q} + \epsilon_t$ where  $Y_t$  is the actual value at time t, c a constant,  $\emptyset_i$  the autoregressive coefficients,  $\theta_i$  moving average coefficients, and  $\epsilon_t$  white noise error term at time t.

The process begins with differencing the series  $d$  times to achieve stationarity, meaning the mean and variance of the series are constant over time. Once the series is stationary, the AR and MA components are identified. The AR component involves regressing the variable on its own lagged (past) values, while the MA component models the error terms as a linear combination of past error terms. Model identification involves determining the appropriate values for  $p$ ,  $d$ , and  $q$ , often using tools like the autocorrelation function (ACF) and partial autocorrelation function (PACF) plots. Parameter estimation follows, typically using methods like maximum likelihood estimation or least squares. Finally, model diagnostics are performed to ensure the residuals (errors) resemble white noise.

Both models utilize a learning and testing methodology similar to that used in the demand model, with 80% of the data allocated for learning and 20% for testing. The Excel tool used for automating these models includes a macro that independently runs all minerals under study, optimizing for either the Mean absolute percentage error (MAPE)



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or the Sum of squared errors (SSE). MAPE measures the accuracy of a forecast by calculating the average absolute percentage error between predicted and actual values. It is particularly useful for understanding the prediction accuracy in percentage terms, making it easy to interpret and compare across different datasets. On the other hand, SSE measures the total deviation of predicted values from actual values by summing the squared differences. This metric emphasizes larger errors due to the squaring of differences, making it sensitive to outliers and providing a comprehensive view of the model's accuracy.

For the copper production time series, an ARIMA model was implemented using RStudio to analyze the ACF and partial autocorrelation function PACF curves. This analysis facilitated the necessary transformations to ensure the data met the stationarity requirements for accurate forecasting. The results of these analyses and subsequent forecasts are presented below:



*Figure 4.5. Copper production time series data since 1970 & ACF and PACF functions. Source: RStudio & Own development*



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*Figure 4.6. Time series CoxBox transformation plot. Source: RStudio & Own development*



*Figure 4.7.Time series 1st differentiation. Source: RStudio & Own development*



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*Figure 4.8. Time series ARIMA(1,1,0) model. Source: RStudio & Own development*



*Figure 4.9. ARIMA forecast & real time series. Source: RStudio & Own development*



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The second aspect of the study examines the total extraction capacity considering the known reserves on the planet, focusing on reserves proven to be economically viable for extraction. This model has been replicated under various assumptions to understand the maximum extraction rate and the timeframe within which this rate would be achieved. This analysis employs Hubbert's Curves model, originally proposed by geophysicist M. King Hubbert in 1956, which is used to predict the production rates of a mineral resource over time. Although it was initially developed to forecast the production of fossil fuels, particularly petroleum, its principles have been adapted to various mineral extraction scenarios. The curve is a bell-shaped graph that illustrates the rise, peak, and eventual decline of resource extraction, assuming a finite resource with a fixed total amount available. The Hubbert Curve is grounded in the idea that production starts at a low rate, increases rapidly as extraction methods improve and demand grows, peaks when approximately half of the resource has been extracted, and then declines as the resource becomes increasingly scarce and harder to extract. This model is particularly useful in highlighting the finite nature of mineral resources and the inevitable peak and decline in production. Some of the key concepts that are included within the model are:

- 1. Exponential growth phase: Initially, the production rate increases exponentially due to technological advancements, increased investment, and rising demand. During this phase, new reserves are discovered, and production ramps up rapidly.
- 2. Peak production: The peak of the curve represents the point at which maximum production rate is achieved. At this point, approximately half of the total resource has been extracted. Hubbert's model assumes that this peak is inevitable due to the physical limitations of resource extraction.
- 3. Decline phase: Following the peak, production rates decline as the remaining resources become harder to extract. The decline is often steeper than the growth phase because of the depletion of easy-to-extract resources, increased extraction costs, and diminishing returns on investment.
- 4. Symmetry sssumption: Hubbert's original model assumes that the production curve is symmetrical around the peak. This implies that the time taken to reach the peak is roughly equal to the time taken for production to decline to zero.



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However, in practice, the symmetry may vary due to technological advancements, changes in economic conditions, new identified resources, and regulatory impacts.

The mathematical model for Hubbert's Curve involves various unknowns and parameters, which are crucial for representing the worst-case scenario in the event of resource depletion. The equations utilized in different models are outlined below, each incorporating distinct inputs and variables to provide a comprehensive analysis.

> $Burn - off$  time  $=$ Known reserves Present production  $URR = 4 \cdot \frac{P_{max}}{l}$  $\boldsymbol{b}$  $m=$ **URR**  $1 + e^{-b \cdot (t - t_{max})}$  $P(t) = \frac{2 \cdot P_{max}}{1 + \left( \frac{1}{2} \right)^2}$  $1 + \cosh (b \cdot (t - t_{max}))$

where URR represents the size of the whole resource identified, m the sum of all resource produce to time t, b an unknown curve shape constant,  $P(t)$  production at time t,  $P_{max}$ maximum production, and  $t_{max}$  peak production year.

When applied to mineral extraction, Hubbert's Curve helps predict the lifecycle of mining operations for finite resources such as copper, gold, and rare earth elements. By analyzing historical production data and estimating total recoverable reserves, the model can forecast when production is likely to peak and how quickly it will decline thereafter. However, while Hubbert's Curve provides a valuable framework for understanding resource extraction dynamics, it has limitations. The assumption of symmetry and a fixed total resource can be overly simplistic. Technological advancements, economic fluctuations, and changes in market demand can all influence the actual production curve.



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The next section will present all mineral supply results under both studied trends, along with the final results of the demand projections.



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# **5. Results**

## **5.1. Demand Results**

The initial section of the results presents the mineral demand projections segmented by subcategory for the primary minerals analyzed. This is followed by a critical analysis of the implications for both the Energy Transition and the mining sector.

First, the section provides graphs illustrating the projected mineral demand until 2050 under the STEPS, APS, and NZE for copper. Additionally, a summary table is included, detailing the total demand projections for the other minerals analyzed.



*Figure 5.1. Annual copper demand (in kt) – STEPS scenario. Source: Own development*



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*Figure 5.2. Annual copper demand (in kt) – APS scenario. Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.3. Annual copper demand (in kt) – NZE scenario. Source: Own development*

The graphs above illustrate the projected annual copper demand, highlighting the increased mining capacity needed to support the Energy Transition. The various scenarios emphasize the rising importance of minerals associated with renewable generation technologies. Notably, the most significant surge in copper demand is expected to stem from the expansion of the electric vehicle fleet, with demand projected to multiply by a factor of 22.5.


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*Table 20. Total annual mineral demand forecast – STEPS. Source: Own development*



*Table 21. Annual mineral demand forecast increase – STEPS. Source: Own development*

The results presented in the table above for the STEPS scenario reveal several important conclusions about the development of mineral demand in the coming years. The analysis distinguishes different groups of minerals based on their projected demand growth. Firstly, minerals that play a crucial role in electrical technologies are expected to see significant increases in demand. Aluminum demand is projected to nearly triple, from 60,950.23 kt in 2021 to 183,513.69 kt in 2050, reflecting strong growth in sectors such as transportation, packaging, and construction. Cobalt demand is forecasted to increase



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dramatically from 216.17 kt in 2021 to 2,019.22 kt in 2050, indicating a significant expansion in battery production, especially for electric vehicles. Copper demand is expected to more than double, growing from 25,862.05 kt in 2021 to 62,864.15 kt in 2050, underscoring the growing need for copper in electrical infrastructures, renewable energy installations, and electric vehicles. Secondly, there are minerals whose demand will grow more moderately, and which are intensively used in other industries. Iron demand is projected to grow steadily from 1,564,380.18 kt in 2021 to 3,159,257.67 kt in 2050, reflecting continued industrial growth. Lead demand is also expected to grow substantially, from 12,557.27 kt in 2021 to 52,440.61 kt in 2050, driven by its use in batteries and other industrial applications. The next group includes emerging minerals for which demand will grow exponentially, posing a high risk of supply not keeping pace with demand. Lithium demand is expected to soar from 161.65 kt in 2021 to 1,124.82 kt in 2050, highlighting the crucial role of lithium in battery technologies for electric vehicles and renewable energy storage. Demand for nickel is projected to rise from 2,690.32 kt in 2021 to 11,025.89 kt in 2050, reflecting its importance in battery production and stainless-steel manufacturing. Demand for rare earth elements will grow significantly, from 79.48 kt in 2021 to 242.00 kt in 2050, underscoring their essential role in advanced technologies, including electronics and renewable energy systems. Finally, cadmium demand will grow more modestly, which may indicate a lower risk of depletion in the future. Overall, the projected increases in demand for minerals highlight the need for significant investments in mining infrastructure and technology to ensure a sustainable supply. The growth in demand, especially for minerals such as lithium, cobalt, and nickel, underscores the importance of developing efficient recycling processes and sustainable mining practices to mitigate environmental impacts. Furthermore, the significant increase in demand for critical minerals underlines the necessity for geopolitical strategies to ensure stable supply chains and manage resource dependence.

The next step in the demand analysis is to determine the total energy required for the extraction of these minerals, highlighting the future energy needs associated with the development of new renewable technologies. For the STEPS scenario, the energy demand is presented under for the copper forecast the three scenarios discussed in the previous chapter concerning the energy intensity of extraction. This analysis focuses solely on the



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energy required for extraction, excluding the subsequent treatment processes necessary for some minerals.



*Figure 5.4. Copper extraction energy demand forecast under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – Constant energy scenario. Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.5. Copper extraction energy demand forecast under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – High growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*





*Figure 5.6. Copper extraction energy demand forecast under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – Low growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*

The above graphs underscore the critical role of mining in the energy landscape, emphasizing the substantial energy required not only to increase future ore extraction but also to maintain current copper production capacity. In the worst-case scenario, there is a projected more than fivefold increase in the energy currently used for extraction, contrasted with an anticipated nearly 2.5–fold increase in copper demand by 2050. This disparity reflects a situation where the energy required for extraction will escalate at twice the rate of the growth in mineral demand. This projection highlights the significant challenges that lie ahead in terms of energy consumption for mineral extraction, underscoring the need for advancements in extraction technologies, efficiency improvements, and sustainable practices to manage the increasing energy demands effectively. Below is a summary table for all the minerals analyzed, detailing the energy required for extraction under the worst-case scenario and the STEPS framework.



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*Table 22. Energy demand forecast under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – High growth energy scenario.* 

*Source: Own development*



*Table 23. Energy demand forecast increase under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – High growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*

The summary tables for energy extraction demand under the STEPS scenario reveal several key insights, particularly highlighting the substantial increase in energy requirements compared to the growth in mineral demand. Notably, the energy demand for cobalt and lithium extraction is projected to rise dramatically. Cobalt's energy extraction demand is anticipated to escalate from 0.97 mBOE in 2021 to 17.13 mBOE in 2050, representing an increase of nearly 18 times. Similarly, lithium's energy extraction



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demand is forecasted to surge from 0.24 mBOE in 2021 to 3.05 mBOE in 2050, a remarkable 13-fold increase. This discrepancy underscores the urgent need for advancements in energy efficiency and extraction technologies to manage the escalating energy demands associated with the increasing need for cobalt and lithium. Both of these minerals are essential for battery production and the broader Energy Transition. These findings highlight the critical importance of investing in sustainable mining practices and energy-efficient technologies to ensure the viability of future mineral supplies. They also stress the need for strategic planning and policy measures to address the energy challenges posed by the anticipated surge in mineral extraction activities essential for supporting the global Energy Transition.

Finally, it is important to note that the rising demand for minerals and the energy required for the exploration and exploitation of new mines will significantly increase CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions. This observation underscores the need to consider the broader climatic consequences associated with the drive towards greater penetration of renewable energy and electric vehicles in the energy and transport sectors. While these technologies are pivotal for reducing reliance on fossil fuels, it is crucial to evaluate the environmental trade-offs and potential hidden costs. The promotion of new technologies must, therefore, be balanced with a comprehensive understanding of their overall impact on climate change.



*Figure 5.7. Annual CO2 emissions (in t) from copper mining – STEPS scenario. Source: Own development*

The graph above indicates that copper mining in 2050 could result in the emission of approximately 300,000 tonnes of CO2 under a conservative scenario, assuming no advancements in cleaner extraction technologies. This projection should serve as a critical reminder of the environmental impact associated with current mining practices. It underscores the urgent need for investment in and development of more sustainable extraction methods. Additionally, it highlights the importance of integrating environmental considerations into the planning and implementation of mining activities to mitigate the adverse effects on climate change, and hidden carbon footprint of Energy Transition.

## **5.2. Supply Results**

Given the projected demand for minerals driven by the Energy Transition and the development of other industries not directly related to energy policies, it is crucial to analyze the evolution of mineral production under various trends. This analysis will help understand potential future limitations and assess whether it will be possible to supply minerals to all industries. In this section, it will be present the results of projections using both a linear trend and an exponential growth approximation based on Hubbert curves.



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This dual approach will provide a comprehensive view of the potential scenarios, highlighting the constraints and opportunities in meeting the increasing demand for minerals across different sectors.

First, the analysis of future production capacity is presented under a linear growth scenario, using the last years of production as a baseline. While projections are generated for the entire list of minerals, focusing on presenting graphs for the two most critical minerals: copper and cobalt. Additionally, a table summarizing the coefficients obtained for all minerals, derived from the optimization macro simulation of both relative and absolute errors, is included. This comprehensive analysis provides insights into the projected growth patterns and potential production capacities, enabling a better understanding of how future demands may be met.



*Figure 5.8. Copper production HDES forecast (in kt). Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.9. Cobalt production HDES forecast (in kt). Source: Own development*





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*Table 24. Mineral production HDES methodology. Source: Own development*

Mining production HDES model (kt)			
<b>Mineral</b>	2010	2020	2030
Aluminum	41,517.86	56,116.14	70,739.93
Cadmium	20.59	25.03	28.38
Chromium	23,394.54	34,305.38	43,436.31
Cobalt	82.03	135.21	166.01
Copper	16,202.10	19,110.40	22,058.59
Gallium	0.04	0.11	0.19
Germanium	0.12	0.10	0.08
Graphite	2,384.00	1,758.91	1,235.94
Indium	0.83	0.76	0.76
Iron	2,533,097.77	1,574,497.42	574,965.06
Lead	4,053.79	2,891.85	1,607.42
Lithium	123.52	739.76	1,350.63
Manganese	40,577.35	35,279.88	28,128.31
Molybdenum	228.75	282.67	330.07
Nickel	1,547.51	2,066.92	2,563.28
Phosphorus Rock	161,189.52	204,888.30	241,015.38
<b>PGM</b>	512.80	497.90	495.67
<b>REE</b>	141.13	401.48	669.87
Silicon	$\overline{a}$	$\overline{a}$	$\overline{a}$
Silver	22,457.47	18,103.51	13,376.06
Tellurium	0.14	0.45	0.77
Tin	338.44	297.69	261.11
Tungsten	70.34	91.06	114.54
Vanadium	63.67	87.46	109.54
Zinc	12,358.16	8,955.74	5,501.07

*Table 25. Mineral production HDES results. Source: Own development*



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The graphs and tables above illustrate the projected supply of various minerals under a linear trend scenario. It is noteworthy that some minerals exhibit a slower rate of mine production in the future, attributed to a downward trend in the historical data used for model training. This trend does not provide a realistic reflection of future production capacities, as evidenced by the high estimation errors in the test data. These significant errors indicate that a linear trend analysis may not be the most appropriate method for projecting mining extraction. Holt's model employs two parameters, alpha and beta, which are crucial for its performance. In the analysis, alpha and beta were set between 0.4 and 0.1. An alpha value of 0.4 means that 40% of the weight is given to the most recent observation when calculating the level component, while the remaining 60% is attributed to the historical data. This value indicates a moderate smoothing effect, balancing between responsiveness to recent changes and stability provided by past observations. A beta value of 0.1 indicates that only 10% of the weight is given to the most recent change in the trend component, while 90% relies on historical trends. This results in a smoother trend line that is less reactive to recent fluctuations, providing a more stable long-term trend projection. The chosen values of alpha and beta provide a balanced approach to smoothing, ensuring that the model does not overreact to recent short-term variations while still capturing long-term trends accurately. Despite this, the high errors observed in the test data suggest that the current linear trend assumptions may not be entirely suitable for all minerals.

The results of the ARIMA model are presented below, followed by a comparative analysis with the results obtained from the HDES model.



*Figure 5.10. Copper production ARIMA forecast (in kt). Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.11. Cobalt production ARIMA forecast (in kt). Source: Own development*





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*Table 26. Mineral production ARIMA methodology. Source: Own development*





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*Table 27. Mineral production ARIMA results. Source: Own development*

The results from the ARIMA model exhibit lower errors for most of the minerals under study compared to the HDES model. This indicates a better fit and higher reliability of the ARIMA model for short-term projections. However, despite these improvements, the projections still fall short of providing realistic conclusions for a linear mineral production growth scenario. This limitation suggests that even with enhanced modeling techniques, capturing the complexities of mineral production dynamics remains challenging. To address this, the ARIMA model will be further tested against mineral demand projections, including scenarios that account for mineral supply from recycling. This will involve assessing a high-development scenario where significant advancements and improvements in recycling techniques are anticipated in the future. By incorporating these additional factors, the aim is to refine the projections and provide a more comprehensive and realistic forecast of mineral supply and demand dynamics.

The constant term represents the intercept of the model, which adjusts the baseline level of the forecast. An appropriate value of c ensures that the model aligns well with the average level of the historical data. The AR(1) term indicates the relationship between an observation and the previous observation. A properly calibrated AR(1) value helps in capturing the persistence or autocorrelation in the time series data, thereby improving the accuracy of the forecast.



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*Table 28. Total annual mineral supply forecast – ARIMA + High recycling scenario. Source: Own development*



*Table 29. Annual mineral supply forecast increase – ARIMA + High recycling scenario. Source: Own development*

The ARIMA model projections, under a high recycling scenario, indicate a significant overall increase in the supply of critical minerals by 2050. Key minerals such as aluminum, cobalt, copper, and lithium are expected to see substantial growth, driven by advancements in extraction technologies and enhanced recycling efforts. However, despite these increases, there remains a substantial risk that the supply may not be able to keep pace with the rapidly growing demand. Cobalt and lithium, in particular, show



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marked increases in supply, yet their critical roles in battery technologies and renewable energy storage suggest that demand will outstrip supply. Other minerals like iron, nickel, and REEs also demonstrate significant growth, but their importance in industrial and technological applications further exacerbates the supply-demand gap. Minerals such as cadmium and lead show more modest increases, highlighting potential supply constraints and underscoring the need for continued innovation in sustainable practices. Hence, these projections underscore the necessity for ongoing investments in mining infrastructure and recycling technologies.

Finally, the results of the Hubbert curves for various minerals are presented in the following graphs. Additionally, summary tables displaying the parameters for the remaining minerals are provided below. Each model incorporates different variables as inputs, and some model curves are not displayed in the graphs below due to their unrealistic results and overestimated maximum output projections.



*Figure 5.12. Copper Hubbert curves mineral production models. Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.13. Cobalt Hubbert curves mineral production models. Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.14. Aluminum Hubbert curves mineral production models. Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.15. Lithium Hubbert curves mineral production models. Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.16. Nickle Hubbert curves mineral production models. Source: Own development*





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*Table 30. Mineral production Hubbert curves coefficients. Source: Own development*





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*Table 31. Mineral production Hubbert curves coefficients. Source: Own development*

The results presented above indicate which models best align with the reality of mining production. They also provide insights into the projected peak extraction points and the rates at which production will increase. This analysis is crucial for understanding whether the estimated peak production can meet the rising annual demand driven by the Energy Transition and for determining the timeframe required to achieve these production rates, based on current reserves and identified resources.

The graphs highlight which models most accurately represent mineral supply. Specifically, model 2 appears to be the most accurate for copper, model 3 for cobalt and aluminum, model 2 for lithium, and model 2 for nickel. By examining the summary tables, one can extract the estimated peak production times to compare with projected demand. Additionally, a summary of ore supply, including future recycling estimates, is provided below. This summary will serve as a foundation for subsequent comparisons with mineral demand projections.





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*Table 32. Total mineral supply projections Hubbert curves – High recycling scenario. Source: Own development*



*Table 33. Total mineral supply projections increase Hubbert curves – High recycling scenario. Source: Own development*

## **5.3. Demand vs Supply**

Comparing supply and demand mineral projections is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it ensures that there is a clear understanding of whether future mineral supply can meet the anticipated demand, particularly in the context of the global Energy Transition and technological advancements. This comparison helps identify potential shortages and bottlenecks in the supply chain, which could hinder the development and deployment of renewable energy technologies, electric vehicles, and other critical industries. Furthermore, it provides valuable insights for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and



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investors, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding resource management, investment in mining infrastructure, and the development of recycling technologies.

Below, graphs and tables comparing the total mineral supply with the demand required for the Energy Transition of the minerals studied in this thesis will be presented. This will be followed by a critical analysis of the results obtained and a comparison under two mineral supply trends, with an initial comparison against a linear trend.



*Figure 5.17. Copper demand vs supply (in kt) – STEPS, ARIMA, High recycling. Source: Own development*



*Figure 5.18. Copper demand vs supply (in kt) – STEPS, Hubbert, High recycling. Source: Own development*

Based on the graphs comparing copper demand versus supply under the STEPS scenario with ARIMA and Hubbert models, along with a high recycling scenario, several qualitative and quantitative conclusions can be drawn. Quantitatively, the ARIMA model projects a significant shortfall in copper supply, with demand exceeding supply by approximately 28,084 kt by 2050. Despite the high recycling scenario, the supply growth is steady but insufficient, failing to match the sharply rising demand curve. In contrast, the Hubbert model forecasts a smaller but still considerable shortfall, with demand exceeding supply by 11,126 kt by 2050. The Hubbert model suggests a more responsive supply growth compared to the ARIMA model, yet it still falls short of meeting the escalating demand. Qualitatively, both models indicate that current and projected supply capacities, even with optimistic recycling improvements, are inadequate to meet future copper demand, highlighting critical supply constraints that need to be addressed to support the Energy Transition and associated technological advancements. The significant gaps between demand and supply emphasize the urgent need for technological innovations in copper extraction and recycling processes. Without such advancements, the industry will struggle to bridge the supply-demand gap. These findings suggest that policymakers must prioritize strategies to enhance mineral supply, including investing in mining infrastructure, supporting recycling technology development, and possibly



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exploring alternative materials to mitigate supply risks. Furthermore, the smaller gap projected by the Hubbert model compared to the ARIMA model indicates that strategic planning and management of existing resources can somewhat alleviate supply shortages. However, comprehensive strategies involving both immediate actions and long-term plans are essential.

It is important to mention that the projected demand in the above comparison refers to the demand under a more conservative scenario, such as the STEPS. Consequently, more ambitious scenarios like the APS and the NZE scenario would likely present even greater challenges in terms of mineral production to meet the heightened demand. These scenarios, aimed at more aggressive decarbonization of the electricity and automotive sectors, would exacerbate the already significant supply-demand gaps identified in the STEPS scenario. This implies that under APS and NZE scenarios, the limitations in mineral production could be more pronounced, necessitating substantial advancements in extraction technologies, increased investment in mining infrastructure, and significant improvements in recycling processes. The urgency to develop and implement innovative solutions becomes even more critical to support the higher demand levels projected in these more ambitious pathways towards achieving global sustainability and decarbonization goals.

Finally, a comparative table is presented, juxtaposing the projected demand for 2030 and 2050 against the mineral supply under the STEPS scenario. This comparison utilizes Hubbert's supply modeling and assumes high breakthrough recycling capacities for all the minerals studied.





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*Table 34. Demand vs Supply summary forecast results. Source: Own development*

The comparative table highlights significant supply risks for several key minerals critical to the Energy Transition. Cobalt, copper, lead, nickel, and rare earth elements show pronounced supply deficits relative to projected demand by both 2030 and 2050. Despite improvements in recycling technologies and increased extraction efforts, the supply of these minerals falls substantially short of meeting the anticipated demand, particularly under the high growth scenarios associated with the Energy Transition. This discrepancy underscores the urgent need for further advancements in extraction and recycling technologies, as well as strategic resource management, to bridge the supplydemand gap and ensure the sustainable development of the energy and transportation sectors.



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# **6. Conclusions**

In a world where global warming and greenhouse gas emissions are escalating, new policies aim to promote the development of renewable technologies and achieve a low carbon footprint, envisioning an emission-free energy and transportation sector by 2050. Despite these efforts, a critical analysis of the mining sector's capacity to meet the mineral demand necessary for these energy policies has been overlooked. This study addresses this gap by projecting the intense mineral requirements of difficult-to-extract resources and identifying potential limitations, emphasizing the need for alternative solutions. By addressing these areas, the global community can better navigate the complexities of mineral supply and demand, ensuring that the Energy Transition is both sustainable and achievable.

Starting with the analysis of mineral intensity by technology and the projections for installed capacity in line with international decarbonization policies for 2050, this study has arrived at demand projections for key minerals such as cobalt, lithium, nickel, and copper, among others. These projections indicate a significant increase compared to current requirements, with demand surging by over 15 times in the most extreme net zero emissions scenarios by 2050. This stark increase underscores the critical role these minerals play in the Energy Transition, particularly in renewable energy technologies and electric vehicles.

Parallelly, an in-depth analysis of current mining production capacity was conducted to understand whether future supply can meet this burgeoning demand under two distinct trends. First, under a linear increase in production, it was found that supply would quickly decouple from demand, creating a substantial gap. This gap would hinder the development of necessary technologies, ultimately failing to achieve a more sustainable world. Second, an exponential trend was modeled using Hubbert curves to project the maximum peak of mineral production and the timing of this peak. This model also considered scenarios of advanced mineral recycling development, highlighting the fundamental role recycling will play in maintaining supply levels close to demand.



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Additionally, the study linked mineral demand to the energy required for extraction and the associated CO2 emissions, revealing the hidden carbon footprint in current energy policies. Authorities often overlook the initial stages of the supply chain, which represent a significant share of global CO2 and greenhouse gas emissions. The analysis shows that as mines become more exploited, the energy required to extract the same amount of ore increases, leading to a faster rate of energy consumption growth compared to mineral demand growth. This relationship highlights the increasing environmental and energy costs associated with maintaining and expanding mineral supply.

The findings indicate that under a worst-case recycling scenario and a Net Zero Emissions international policy scenario for 2050, mining production would become a bottleneck, impeding decarbonization efforts. Even in a conservative scenario with high technological progress in recycling, critical minerals such as copper, cobalt, nickel, lead, and rare earth elements remain limited in meeting projected demand.

In conclusion, energy policies need to integrate comprehensive strategies that address the entire mineral supply chain, from extraction to recycling. These strategies should focus on advancing extraction technologies, enhancing recycling processes, and ensuring sustainable supply chain management. Policymakers must also consider the environmental impact of mining and implement measures to mitigate associated CO2 emissions. Future studies should monitor investment in the exploration and exploitation of key mineral deposits and project market prices against the costs of discovering and exploiting these resources. Balancing investment with the research and development of more mineral-efficient technologies is crucial. Economic signals, driven by market dynamics, play a fundamental role in guiding development and decision-making processes, even when aligned with challenging international sustainability objectives.



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# **8. Annex I – Mining Production Data**





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*Table 35. Mineral historical mining production data (in t). Source: USGS & BGS*



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# **9. Annex II – Base Demand Models Results**







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Table 36. Base demand forecast coefficients Aluminum. Source: Own development







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Table 37. Base demand forecast coefficients Cadmium. Source: Own development







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Table 38. Base demand forecast coefficients Cobalt. Source: Own development







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Table 39. Base demand forecast coefficients Iron. Source: Own development







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Table 40. Base demand forecast coefficients Lead. Source: Own development







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Table 41. Base demand forecast coefficients Nickle. Source: Own development







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Table 42. Base demand forecast coefficients Zinc. Source: Own development



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# **10. Annex III – Mineral Demand Forecast**



*Table 43. Total annual mineral demand forecast – APS. Source: Own development*



*Table 44. Annual mineral demand forecast increase – APS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 45. Total annual mineral demand forecast – NZS. Source: Own development*



*Table 46. Annual mineral demand forecast increase – NZS. Source: Own development*



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# **11. Annex IV – Mineral Demand Segmented**



*Table 47. Aluminum mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*



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*Table 48. Cadmium mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 49. Cobalt mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 50. Copper mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 51. Iron mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 52. Lead mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 53. Lithium mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 54. Nickle mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 55. REE mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*





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*Table 56. Zinc mineral demand forecast segmented - STEPS. Source: Own development*



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# **12. Annex V –Extraction Energy Forecast**



*Table 57. Energy demand forecast under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – Low growth energy scenario.* 

#### *Source: Own development*



*Table 58. Energy demand forecast increase under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – Low growth energy* 

*scenario. Source: Own development*





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*Table 59. Energy demand forecast under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – Constant growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*



*Table 60. Energy demand forecast increase under STEPS scenario (in mBOE) – Constant growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*





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*Table 61. Energy demand forecast under APS scenario (in mBOE) – High growth energy scenario.* 

#### *Source: Own development*



*Table 62. Energy demand forecast increase under APS scenario (in mBOE) – High growth energy* 

#### *scenario. Source: Own development*



*Table 63. Energy demand forecast under APS scenario (in mBOE) – Low growth energy scenario.* 

*Source: Own development*

#### **Energy extraction increase (absolute x times 2020)**



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*Table 64. Energy demand forecast increase under APS scenario (in mBOE) – Low growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*



*Table 65. Energy demand forecast under APS scenario (in mBOE) – Constant growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*





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*Table 66. Energy demand forecast increase under APS scenario (in mBOE) – Constant growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*



*Table 67. Energy demand forecast under NZS scenario (in mBOE) – High growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*





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## *Table 68. Energy demand forecast increase under NZS scenario (in mBOE) – High growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*



*Table 69. Energy demand forecast under NZS scenario (in mBOE) – Low growth energy scenario.* 

#### *Source: Own development*



*Table 70. Energy demand forecast increase under NZS scenario (in mBOE) – Low growth energy* 

*scenario. Source: Own development*





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*Table 71. Energy demand forecast under NZS scenario (in mBOE) – Constant growth energy scenario.* 

#### *Source: Own development*



*Table 72. Energy demand forecast increase under NZS scenario (in mBOE) – Constant growth energy scenario. Source: Own development*



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# **13. Annex VI – Mineral Supply Forecast**



*Table 73. Total mineral supply projections Hubbert curves – Low recycling scenario. Source: Own* 

*development*



*Table 74. Total mineral supply projections increase Hubbert curves – Low recycling scenario. Source:* 

*Own development*



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<b>Total Supply Hubbert model (kt)</b>				
<b>Mineral</b>	2021	2030	2040	2050
<b>Aluminum</b>	95,063.44	162,213.80	286,872.54	486,110.87
Cadmium	27.63	32.89	39.04	45.07
Cobalt	113.92	148.93	199.58	265.62
Copper	30,326.00	38,881.23	45,171.36	45,678.02
<b>Iron</b>	4,813,019.38	7,497,173.69	11,226,235.49	14,756,800.09
Lead	4,969.87	5,854.36	6,969.14	8,217.62
Lithium	493.75	1,174.04	2,414.07	3,069.10
<b>Nickle</b>	6,021.87	9,855.77	10,363.70	7,412.36
<b>REE</b>	89.44	108.10	132.81	162.21
<b>Zinc</b>	14,515.07	17,562.77	20,798.17	23,388.67

*Table 75. Total mineral supply projections Hubbert curves – Constant recycling scenario. Source: Own development*



*Table 76. Total mineral supply projections increase Hubbert curves – Constant recycling scenario.* 

*Source: Own development*