



12TH MINING & EXPLORATION FORUM

Bridging Continents: Building a Resilient Mining Ecosystem Across the Middle Corridor

Ankara 24-25 JUNE 2026

Draft agenda revised on: 22/06/2026

Introduction

The 12th MINEX Asia Mining & Exploration Forum convenes in Ankara on **24–25 June 2026** at a threshold moment for global critical minerals.

As the world accelerates its transition to clean energy, the nations of **Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and the Caspian region** have emerged as Eurasia's most promising yet under-explored mineral frontiers. At the heart of this shift lies **Türkiye**. Positioned at the heart of the "**Middle Corridor**," Türkiye serves as the vital link connecting Eurasia's landlocked mineral wealth to global supply chains, leveraging its own **\$3.5 trillion mineral potential** and strong industrial infrastructure.

Strengthening ties with key industrial centres in the West and the Middle East is a top priority for the Forum. We specifically highlight the growing role of Türkiye and Middle Eastern investors in developing **high-value processing clusters** within Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Caspian region.

Over two action-packed days, the forum covers everything from **strategy and finance to technical innovation and mining technology**. With the help of innovative digital matchmaking and interactive sessions, attendees can easily connect with the right partners and forge lasting business alliances.

Strategic Context:

- **Industrial Evolution:** By the mid-2030s, the region is expected to shift from straightforward ore extraction to advanced, high-value processing.
- **Global Drivers:** This industrial shift is propelled various forces and initiatives including the EU's *Critical Raw Materials Act*, the US-led *C5+1 Critical Minerals Dialogue*, China's *Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)*, alongside a surge in strategic partnerships between the West, the Middle East, and Central Asia.
- **Forum Mission:** The MINEX Asia agenda addresses the profound geopolitical and economic transformations occurring along the "**Middle Corridor**." It highlights **Türkiye's** growing influence as a vital bridge between global industrial demands and the mineral resource potential of Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and the Caspian region.

1 Day - 24 June 2026

Strategic Vision, Country Focus, The Middle Corridor & Capital Flows

Venue: Ankara HiltonSA | Kavaklıdere, Tahran Cd. No:12, 06700 Çankaya/Ankara

08:00 – 09:00 **Registration, Coffee, and Exhibition Opening**

Exhibition Hall

09:00 – 09:15 **OPENING & WELCOME ADDRESSES**

Kavaklıdere
Ballroom

Welcoming remarks by MINEX Forum organisers.

09:15 – 11:00 **PLENARY - SESSION 1**

Kavaklıdere
Ballroom

Türkiye's Mining Vision: Export Growth & Strategic Autonomy

Background

Driven by a state target to scale solar and wind capacity to 120 gigawatts by 2035, Türkiye is pivoting from a traditional exporter of raw minerals into a high-value midstream refining hub. This structural shift moves beyond the historical "dig-and-ship" model, prioritising domestic value-chain integration and technological sovereignty. The cornerstone of this ambition is the world-class Beylikova rare earth elements (REE) project in Eskişehir.

Key Themes

- *Downstream Industrialisation: Mandating local, midstream refining to ensure raw geological wealth is directly converted into high-value manufacturing inputs.*
- *Geopolitical Integration: Positioning Türkiye as a secure, ESG-compliant partner bridging Western supply chains with Eurasian mineral wealth.*
- *Regulatory Streamlining: Centralising ministerial oversight to accelerate strategic permitting while ensuring strict alignment with international standards like the EU Green Deal.*

Moderator

Busra Sofu, Senior Mining Engineer – Advisory, SLR Consulting

09:15

Critical Mineral Needs and Turkey's Mining Perspective in Light of Energy Transition and Digitalisation

İbrahim Halil Kırşan, Chairman of Mining Council, TOBB — Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges

09:30

Why Invest in Türkiye?

Ozkan Ozkardes, Expert, Investment and Finance Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye

09:40

TWF's Vision for Mining Investments and Regional Joint Ventures.

Mutlu Zengin, Director of Mining Investments, Türkiye Wealth Fund

09:50

Türkiye's Mining Vision: Export Growth & Strategic Autonomy

Ahmet Serkan Saritaş, Deputy General Manager, Turk Gold Corp.

- 10:05 What should be the changes in Turkey's mining legislation and the fundamental principles of national mining policy?
Ayhan Yüksel, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Chamber of Mining Engineers of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects
- 10:20 The Role of Geochemical and Metallurgical Laboratories in End-to-End Data Generation Across the Mining Value Chain
Abdullah Buhur, Deputy General Manager, ARGETEST Mineral Processing, R&D and Analysis Services
- 10:30 Türkiye's R&D and Production Vision in the Rare Earth Elements Ecosystem
Hüseyin Çaldırak, Group Manager | Senior Researcher, Turkish Energy, Nuclear and Mineral Research Agency | Rare Earth Elements Research Institute

10:45 Q&As

11:00 – 11:30 **Coffee break**
Exhibition Hall *Business networking and Business Matchmaking Exchange*

11:30 – 13:00 **SESSION 2**
Kavaklıdere **Unlocking the Tethyan Belt: The Strategic Vision for the Middle**
Ballroom **Corridor's Mineral Wealth**

The global race to secure critical raw materials — from lithium and rare earths to cobalt and copper — is redrawing the map of international trade and industrial strategy. At the same time, the Middle Corridor (Trans-Caspian International Transport Route) is evolving from a simple logistics bypass into a potential integrated industrial belt spanning Turkey, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia. This session will explore how the Middle Corridor, supercharged by the TRIPP framework, can successfully evolve into an integrated industrial belt. The session will address the delicate balance between commercial opportunity and regional friction, evaluating how to merge mineral extraction and localised high-value processing with synchronized, multi-modal transport networks to build resilient, de-risked supply chains connecting East and West.

Key Themes

- *Critical minerals and great power competition: what it means for the Tethyan Belt.*
- *Türkiye's vision as the gateway to the Middle Corridor mineral economy.*
- *Kazakhstan's mineral wealth in the new geopolitical landscape: multi-vector strategy in practice.*
- *Uzbekistan's \$2.6B critical minerals programme: progress, partnerships and priorities for 2026.*
- *Kyrgyzstan's Critical Minerals Drive: Polymetals, Rare Earth Elements, and New Exploration Programs.*
- *Tajikistan's Antimony Leadership: Securing Diversified Global Supply Chains for Critical Minerals*
- *The South Caucasus as a mineral bridge: Armenia and Azerbaijan's evolving roles.*

Moderator	Han Ilhan , Co-Founder and Managing Director, Catalis Strategies
11:30	Mehmet Uvez , Head of EBRD's office in Ankara, Deputy Head of Türkiye, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
11:45	Key findings of its latest work on CRM in Central Asia, providing an overview of CRM policy frameworks in Central Asia and their implications for private sector investment decisions. Céleste Laporte Talamon , Policy Analyst, Central Asia, OECD
12:00	Opportunities for Turkish mining businesses in Central Asia Simon Glancy , Managing Partner, Strategic Solutions
12:15	Critical Minerals in Central Asia and the South Caucasus Regions — Challenges and Opportunities. Dr. Elena Safirova , Economist and country specialist, United States Geological Survey
12:30	U.S. policy on critical minerals Marina Yakhnis , Economic Officer, U.S. Embassy Ankara
12:45	Q&As
13:00 - 14:00	Business lunch
14:00 – 15:30 Kavaklıdere Ballroom	SESSION 3 Critical Minerals Geopolitics and Financing — Who is Funding the Future in the Tethyan Mineral Belt? <i>China currently imports approximately 70% of Central Asia's critical raw materials and manages 25 active projects in the region — five times the number operated by European firms. This session examines the competitive dynamics between Chinese, Western and Middle Eastern capital in the region, the impact of US/UK/EU critical minerals diplomacy, and how host governments are navigating multi-vector strategies to extract maximum value from the global mineral race.</i>
Key Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Overview of financing flows into Tethyan Belt mining 2024–2026: who is investing, where, and on what terms.</i>• <i>The Execution Gap: Western Diplomacy vs. China's Ground Game</i>• <i>The Western Counter-Offensive: Strategic Frameworks and New Capital</i>• <i>The Middle Eastern Pivot: A "Third Way" for Project Financing</i>• <i>Mobilising State-Backed Finance.</i>• <i>EBRD's critical minerals strategy for Central Asia and the South Caucasus</i>
Moderator	Han Ilhan , Co-Founder and Managing Director, Catalis Strategies
14:00	Protecting foreign investments in the mining sector from political risks in a rapidly changing geopolitical world

Scott Macpherson, Counsel, Hogan Lovells International

14:15

Panel discussion

Mutlu Zengin, Director of Mining Investments, Türkiye Wealth Fund

Philippe Bernard-Treille, Head of EIB Representation to Türkiye, European Investment Bank

Sebnem Alp, Country Head Türkiye, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UK Export Finance

Çağrı Güven, Vice President, KfW Ipex-Bank Türkiye Rep Office

Claire Alidenes, Principal Investment Specialist, Asian Development Bank

Azamat Kasymbekov, Principal Banker, Natural Resources, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Guillermo Saniger Pare, Investment Officer, International Finance Corporation

Stephanie Casey, Senior Consultant, BORG Capital Insights

15:30 – 16:00

Exhibition Hall

Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00

Kavaklıdere
Ballroom

SESSION 4

Türkiye's investments and Technological partnerships in Central Asia & South Caucasus

16:00 – 17:00

As Central Asia and the South Caucasus accelerate the development of their critical mineral reserves, Türkiye is emerging as a natural partner — geographically anchored to the Middle Corridor, technologically equipped after four decades of mining advancement, and commercially motivated to secure a stake in the supply chains that will define the coming decade. This session examines where Turkish capital, engineering know-how and human capital are flowing across the region, and what it will take to turn early-stage partnerships into durable industrial relationships. The conversation moves from people to plants. It opens with the workforce question that underpins every projection of regional growth: who will build, staff and sustain the operations behind the critical minerals boom, and how serious are the talent risks now surfacing along the Middle Corridor. It then turns to capability —decades of Turkish engineering progress that has carried the sector from exploration through to fully integrated processing — before bringing leading Turkish mining and technology companies into a frank discussion of their ambitions, partnerships and investment priorities across Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Key Themes

- **Türkiye as a Middle Corridor partner** — how geography, four decades of mining capability and commercial ambition position Türkiye to

anchor critical-minerals supply chains across Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

- **The workforce question** — *who will build, staff and sustain the operations behind the critical-minerals boom, and the talent risks now surfacing along the Middle Corridor.*
- **From exploration to processing** — *the engineering advances that have carried Turkish mining from early-stage exploration through to fully integrated processing plants.*
- **Capital and technology flows** — *where Turkish investment, engineering know-how and partnerships are moving across the region.*
- **Building durable industrial relationships** — *what it will take to turn early-stage partnerships into long-term commercial and industrial ties.*
- **Company ambitions in focus** — *leading Turkish mining and technology firms on their investment priorities, partnership models and regional strategy.*

Moderator	Busra Sofu , Senior Mining Engineer – Advisory, SLR Consulting
16:00	From Exploration to Processing Plants: Four Decades of Engineering Advancement in Turkish Mining. Sabri Karahan , General Manager, DAMA Engineering
16:15	MITTO CONSULTANCY Mining, Environmental and Engineering Solutions Şahin Özdemir , Chairman of the Board, Mitto Consultancy Danışmanlık
16:30	Who Will Build the Workforce Behind the Critical Minerals Boom? - Addressing Talent Risks and Workforce Challenges Threatening Mining Growth Across the Middle Corridor. Devrim Aksu , Independent HR & Organisational Transformation Advisor
16:45	Q&Ss
19:00 – 21:00 British Embassy	Networking Drinks Reception hosted by the British Embassy in Ankara sponsored by the Department of Business and Trade
	18:30 Coach departs Hilton AnkaraSA 21:00 Coach departs Embassy for Hilton AnkaraSA

2 DAY - 25 JUNE 2026

Midstream Value Chain, ESG & Technology

Venue: Ankara HiltonSA | Kavaklıdere, Tahran Cd. No:12, 06700 Çankaya/Ankara

08:30 – 09:00 **Registration, Coffee, and Exhibition Opening**
Exhibition Hall *Business networking*

09:00 – 10:30 **SESSION 5**
Kavaklıdere **The Middle Corridor as a Global Strategic Supply Line: Türkiye, UK and**
Ballroom **Europe Close Ranks on Critical Minerals**

Background UK, EU and Türkiye share a common strategic imperative: secure reliable, diversified supply chains for the critical minerals that underpin the energy transition, defence systems and advanced manufacturing. The Middle Corridor — stretching from Central Asian mineral wealth through the Caucasus to Türkiye and onward to global markets — offers one of the most compelling yet underexploited answers. Türkiye is the pivotal variable. Building its own midstream processing capacity in boron, REE and battery precursors while serving as the indispensable gateway for Central Asian minerals flowing west, Türkiye is not a transit corridor — it is a potential industrial anchor for the entire allied supply chain. This session asks what it will actually take to convert diplomatic alignment into commercial reality, and who needs to do what to make the Middle Corridor a functioning global strategic supply line.

Key Themes

- *Türkiye as industrial anchor: How Türkiye's midstream processing ambitions — boron chemicals, REE magnets, battery precursors — position it as an active value-adding partner in the Western supply chain, not just a corridor for transit.*
- *The US commercial offer: What the C5+1 Critical Minerals Dialogue, US trade facilitation tools and American private sector interest mean in practice for Tethyan Belt projects — and how companies can access them.*
- *The EU regulatory framework as a forcing function: How CBAM, Digital Product Passports and the Critical Raw Materials Act create both compliance pressure and competitive advantage for producers who meet the standard early.*
- *The UK dimension: Export finance, FCDO mineral partnerships, and British private sector engagement with the Middle Corridor.*
- *Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan — what Western partnerships actually require: High-value metallurgical clusters and integrated value chains need more than diplomatic frameworks; they need processing investment, technology transfer and bankable offtake terms.*
- *The financing gap: Where Western and allied capital is flowing, where it is not, and what it would take to match Chinese project finance on speed and flexibility.*

Moderator **Céleste Laporte Talamon**, Policy Analyst, Central Asia, OECD

- 09:00 Bridging Reserves and Refinement: Türkiye's Strategic Role in the Global Critical Minerals Race.
Nevzat Baslar, Mining Engineer - Underground Mining Specialist
General Directorate of Mining and Petroleum Affairs (MAPEG) | Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
- 09:15 UKEF presentation
Sebnem Alp, Country Head Türkiye, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UK Export Finance
- 09:30 Unlocking Uzbekistan's Critical Raw Materials
Timur Khikmatullaev, Special Envoy of the Chairman of the Board for Global Integration, Uzbekistan Technological Metals Complex
- 09:45 Unlocking the Tethyan Belt: The Strategic Role of Advanced Mineralogy and Emerging Technologies in Fast-Tracking Projects, De-Risking Development, and Optimising Performance
Dr. Tomas Hrstka, Sr. Manager, Business and Technology Development - NAM & Global, SGS
- 10:00 Armenia at the Crossroads of Critical Minerals, Connectivity and Peace
Artyom Geghamyan, Executive Chairman, International Chamber of Mines of Armenia

10:15 Q&As

10:30 – 11:00 **Coffee break**

Exhibition Hall

11:00 – 12:00 **SESSION 6**

Kavaklıdere
Ballroom

Responsible Mining: Driving Sustainability, Trust, and Global Standards in Eurasia

Background

The global energy transition has brought the mining sector to a critical crossroads. Decarbonising our economies requires a massive influx of critical raw materials, yet this demand cannot come at the expense of environmental integrity or social justice. The central question facing the industry today is no longer if we must mine, but how we can do so responsibly. This session addresses the practical realities, friction points, and breakthroughs in sustainable extraction.

Key Themes

Elevating Social Licence and Public Trust

- **Reputational Shift:** Transitioning the mining sector's image from traditional heavy extraction to an ethical partner in the global green transition.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Securing community alignment and long-term public trust as a core, non-negotiable asset for modern mining operations.

Standardisation and Accountability in Eurasia

- **Implementing TSM:** Adopting the "Towards Sustainable Mining" (TSM) framework in Türkiye to embed strict facility-level environmental and social metrics.
- **Global Alignment:** Navigating the integration of regional operations into the emerging Consolidated Mining Standard Initiative (CMSI) global ecosystem.

Value Chain Transparency and Technology

- **Traceability in Precious Metals:** Utilising advanced technology and tracking systems to future-proof international gold and critical mineral supply chains.
- **Strategic Resilience:** Mitigating systemic supply risks by enforcing verifiable environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards from extraction to market.

The Green Transition Paradox

- **Decarbonisation vs. Impact:** Balancing the skyrocketing global demand for critical raw materials with the absolute necessity for environmental integrity and social justice.

Moderator	Zhanar Faizuldayeva , Principal Environmental & Social Specialist, SLR Consulting
11:00	Mining's Greatest Resource Is No Longer Underground - It Is Public Trust Tunç Berkman , Branding & Growth Partner, TBS Investment & Management
11:45	TUMAD Sustainability Standards. Bilge Küçükaytan , Integrated Management Systems & Sustainability Manager, TUMAD Mining Inc
12:00 – 13:15 Kavaklıdere Ballroom	SESSION 7 Tailings Management, Structural Resilience, and Resource Stewardship
Background	<i>The modern mining sector has arrived at a critical operational crossroads. Ensuring long-term asset integrity and securing water resources requires a massive shift toward advanced geotechnical oversight, yet these structural engineering demands cannot come at the expense of regional ecosystem health or transparent governance. The central question facing the industry today is no longer if we must manage waste and resources, but how we can design and govern them to withstand systemic risk. This session addresses the practical realities, friction points, and breakthroughs in sustainable extraction, structural resilience, and water policy.</i>
Key Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Water stewardship as a competitive advantage: Central Asia's escalating water stress and mining sector obligations.</i>• <i>Tailing management in a GISTM world: active monitoring, insurance implications.</i>• <i>ESG as investment catalyst: how transparency frameworks (EITI, IRMA, Digital Product Passports) attract responsible capital.</i>

- *Decarbonising Central Asian mining: low-carbon processing, green hydrogen readiness, and scope 3 reporting.*
- *Post-mining remediation and circular economy: Central Asia's legacy tailing recovery potential.*

Moderator	Zhanar Faizuldayeva , Principal Environmental & Social Specialist, SLR Consulting
12:00	Enhancing Tailings Dam Sustainability through Risk-Based Safety Reviews – Case Study. Sam (Meysam) Safavian , Technical Director – Geotechnics, Dams and Tailings, SLR Consulting
12:30	Resilience-Based Design in Tailings Engineering Alistair White , Civil Engineer, Knight Piésold
12:45	Tailings Protect - an integrated, real-time tailings monitoring and risk management solution Iain Pickard , Managing Partner, Strategia Worldwide
13:00	Water Stewardship as a Competitive Advantage: How the New Water Codes of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan Are Reshaping Mining Development. Azamat Abdulayev , Consultant (Sustainability), SRK Consulting KZ
13:15 – 14:15 Restaurant	Business lunch
14:15 – 15:00 Kavaklidere Ballroom	SESSION 8 From Ore to Application: Operational Technology and Value-Chain Integration in Central Asian Mining
Background	<i>Technology in mining is not only about exploration algorithms and remote sensing — it is equally about the industrial infrastructure that transforms extracted material into marketable product, and the operational disciplines that keep equipment running efficiently. This session takes a ground-level view: how Uzbekistan’s Future Metals Technopark is shortening the path from REE extraction to end-use manufacturing, and how advanced lubrication technology from ExxonMobil is delivering measurable performance gains at the mine face. The panel examines the broader strategic picture — Uzbekistan Technological Metals Complex’s ambitions for global integration and the role of technology partnerships in realising them.</i>
Key Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>REE value-chain compression: the technopark model as an industrial bridge from raw extraction to downstream application</i>• <i>Lubrication and fluid technology as a strategic performance lever in high-intensity mining environments</i>• <i>Uzbekistan Technological Metals Complex: technology partnerships and global supply-chain integration</i>
Moderator	Ivan Livinskiy , Principal Geotechnical Consultant, SRK Consulting (Kazakhstan)

14:15 How the Technopark helps manufacturers reduce the gap between the extraction and final application of REE.
Umid Salokhutdinov, Deputy Director, TMK's Future Metals Technopark

14:30 Shaping High-Performance Mining: The Strategic Impact of Lubrication and Technology
Ahmet Kantarci, Distributor Business Consultant, Mobil EAME

14:45 **Burak Köse**, Deputy General Manager, Project, Mineral Processing and R&D, ARGETEST Mineral Processing, R&D and Analysis Services

14:55 **Q&As**

15:00 – 15:30 **Coffee break**
Exhibition Hall

15:30 – 16:30 **SESSION 9**
Bridging the Supply Gap: Türkiye and the Middle Corridor as the New Frontier for Critical Mineral Security

Background Türkiye is rapidly emerging as a vital anchor in this diversification effort. Holding the world's second-largest, rare earth element reserve in Eskişehir and dominating the global borates market, the nation is transitioning from a traditional transit route into a high-value critical minerals hub. However, Türkiye does not stand alone. It serves as the western gateway to the Middle Corridor—a vital trade artery linking Europe directly to Central Asia and the Caspian Region. This combined mega-region holds some of the world's largest untapped deposits of lithium, cobalt, copper, and graphite. Geopolitically and logistically, this corridor offers an essential alternative to traditional supply routes. But unlocking its full potential requires overcoming massive hurdles: long-term investment uncertainties, volatile market pricing, rising global export restrictions, and the immense infrastructure needed to cross the Caspian Sea. The discussion will navigate how international financing, export credit mechanisms, and cross-border cooperation can de-risk these projects

Key themes **Geopolitical Supply Chain Realignment**

- **Diversification vs. Concentration:** Breaking the monopoly of single-country dominance (up to 90% in some markets) that distorts prices and threatens the green transition.
- **The Middle Corridor Axis:** Positioning Türkiye, Central Asia, and the Caspian Region as a vital alternative trade route linking Asian supply to Western markets.
- **Resource Value Elevation:** Shifting Türkiye from a traditional transport transit route into a high-value critical mineral extraction and processing hub.

Financial Risk Mitigation

- **Long-Term Capital Security:** Overcoming market price volatility and long project timelines to secure multi-decade investments.
- **International Financing Tools:** Leveraging OECD export credit mechanisms and joint collaboration frameworks to de-risk high-barrier mining projects.

Regulatory and Logistical Hurdles

- **Resource Nationalism:** Countering the fivefold global increase in severe export restrictions and prohibitions that threaten multilateral trade.
- **Caspian Bottlenecks:** Resolving physical infrastructure, customs harmonisation, and heavy transit logistics across maritime and land borders.

Moderator

Han Ilhan, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Catalis Strategies

Céleste Laporte Talamon, Policy Analyst, Central Asia, OECD

Zhanar Faizuldayeva, Principal Environmental & Social Specialist, SLR Consulting

Ivan Livinskiy, Principal Geotechnical Consultant, SRK Consulting (Kazakhstan)

18:30 – 21:00

Göksu

Restaurant

Networking Dinner