

UK deepens major new partnerships at Mining Indaba 2026

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New UK initiatives at Mining Indaba deepen critical-minerals partnerships and back South African SMEs, aiming to drive investment, jobs and inclusive growth.

The UK is taking forward a series of new initiatives advancing UK-Africa collaboration on critical minerals, sustainable economic development, and SME growth during Mining Indaba 2026. The announcements build on the visit of the UK Prime Minister to South Africa in November and underscore the UK's commitment to supporting Africa's economic transformation while strengthening global supply chain resilience essential to the clean energy transition.

As part of this agenda, the UK Government and Anglo American confirmed the launch of a new Impact Finance Facility to expand SME access to finance in South Africa - demonstrating how mining-sector partnerships can drive inclusive growth beyond the extractive economy. UK funding to help businesses grow and attract new investment is expected to support the creation of 5,000 new jobs.

UK deepens partnerships on critical minerals

Opening a discussion focused on regional collaboration in the battery value chain, the British High Commissioner to South Africa, Antony Phillipson, welcomed South Africa's leadership at this pivotal moment to unlock Africa's potential, recognising that shared challenges and opportunities in the sector demand close international cooperation.

He described the UK's approach as pragmatic and partnership-driven, designed to crowd in private investment, and committed to ensuring minerals are produced and traded responsibly, transparently and sustainably.

The UK's Critical Minerals Strategy, launched by the Prime Minister during the Johannesburg G20 Summit, sets out a clear vision for resilient, diversified supply chains - underpinned by long-term collaboration with global partners. This work forms a central pillar of the UK's wider Africa Approach, which prioritises partnerships based on equality, mutual benefit, and responsiveness to African governments' stated priorities.

This support includes deploying UK expertise in mining, engineering, professional services, finance, ESG standards, traceability and community-centred development.

Given the sector's scale and complexity, the UK emphasised the need for regional collaboration and coalitions of like-minded partners to unlock value, combine comparative advantage, and build shared capabilities across borders.

A catalytic, value-for-money model

Alongside this critical-minerals agenda, the UK Government and Anglo American announced the establishment of a £2 million Impact Finance Facility, delivered through the Impact Finance

Network (IFN). This innovative financing mechanism will expand access to capital for South African SMEs - key engines for job creation in an economy facing unemployment rates above 40%.

This new partnership builds on the UK Prime Minister's visit to Johannesburg in November, where the UK-Anglo American programme was first announced. This was a significant partnership backed by over R100 million in UK funding to support South African SMEs and unlock up to R500 million in private investment.

This new facility will use the UK's catalytic capital to mobilise at least three times additional investment from other funders; recycle funding so repayments can be reinvested, multiplying long-term impact; demonstrate the UK's shift from donor to investor, delivering stronger value for money for the UK taxpayer.

The UK-SA Growth Partnership provides the broader framework for this initiative, supporting economic diversification, regional development, and South Africa's Just Energy Transition.

A comprehensive UK offer at Mining Indaba

Across its engagements this week, the UK is advancing a coherent agenda that links responsible, mutually beneficial critical minerals partnerships, inclusive growth beyond mining, SME financing and economic diversification, and the global clean energy transition.

These efforts demonstrate how development partners, investors, and African governments can work together to shape fairer, more resilient supply chains and ensure the economic benefits of Africa's mineral wealth are shared equitably.

Further information

- the Impact Finance Network (IFN) is an Anglo American platform combining finance, technical support, and market access for high-potential SMEs
- the UK-SA Growth Partnership supports trade, investment, innovation, and Just Energy Transition cooperation
- the UK's Critical Minerals Strategy and International Engagement Plan outline the UK's approach to building resilient global supply chains
- announcements were made during Mining Indaba 2026

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