

Spain implements the EU framework for critical raw materials and net-zero industry

Spain has introduced new measures to implement the EU framework for critical raw materials and net-zero industry. The key changes include **single points of contact for project promoters**, **fast-track processing for strategic projects**, **a procedure for recognising national net-zero projects**, and **the inclusion of strategic status as a criterion in competitive procedures for electricity grid access for demand facilities**.

The measures are set out in Royal Decree 845/2026, which entered into force on 24 October 2026.

1. INTRODUCTION

Royal Decree 845/2026 (“**RD 845/2026**”) sets out Spain’s measures to implement Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of 11 April establishing a secure and sustainable supply of **critical raw materials** (“**CRMA**”) and Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 of 13 June on strengthening Europe’s **net-zero technology** manufacturing ecosystem (“**NZIA**”). Both seek to strengthen the EU’s strategic autonomy by securing raw material supplies and developing the industrial capacity needed for the energy transition.

Although both regulations are directly applicable, some provisions require national measures for implementation and enforcement. RD 845/2026 provides these measures, reflecting the division of powers between central government and regional authorities. It focuses on **coordinating permit-granting procedures** and clarifying the **effects of strategic project status** for both critical raw materials and net-zero projects.

2. MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CRMA

2.1 SINGLE POINTS OF CONTACT AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS

RD 845/2026 requires the autonomous communities and the cities of Ceuta and Melilla to designate **single points of contact** to facilitate and coordinate permit-granting procedures for critical raw materials projects.

Where a permit falls within central government jurisdiction or a project affects more than one autonomous community, the point of contact depends on the activity:

- **Extraction:** the Subdirectorate-General for Mines within the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge.
- **Processing or recycling:** the Subdirectorate-General for the Promotion of Industrial Projects within the Ministry of Industry and Tourism.

The Royal Decree also clarifies the effects of recognition as a strategic project under the CRMA. Recognition establishes public interest grounds for all purposes under national legislation, including Article 33 of Law 39/2015 of 1 October on the Common Administrative Procedure of Public Administrations (“**Law 39/2015**”). It therefore triggers **fast-track processing of permit-granting procedures under central government legislation**, halving the standard administrative deadlines except those for submitting applications and appeals.

All public authorities must process permits as swiftly as possible. The relevant autonomous community or city must also automatically grant the project the highest-priority status available under its legislation. These measures do not grant the necessary permits or exempt the project from applicable environmental requirements.

2.2 OTHER PROVISIONS ON MINERAL EXPLORATION, CIRCULARITY AND RAW MATERIAL RECOVERY

Section 2 of Chapter I of RD 845/2026 governs the preparation of the **National Mineral Exploration Programme**¹ and the **National Circularity Programmes**. Both require approval by the Council of Ministers.

The National Mineral Exploration Programme must be drawn up following public consultation and consultation with the autonomous communities. It must include at least the measures listed in Articles 19 and 27 of the CRMA, be reviewed every five years and be updated as necessary.

The National Circularity Programmes must include at least the measures set out in Article 26(1) of the CRMA and may be incorporated into existing planning instruments. They must be reviewed within five years of adoption and updated as necessary.

RD 845/2026 also amends Royal Decree 975/2009 to require waste management plans to include either a **preliminary economic assessment of the potential recovery of critical raw materials or a justification for exemption from that requirement**, in accordance with Article 27(1) of the CRMA.

3. MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NZIA

3.1 NET-ZERO TECHNOLOGIES: PROJECTS COVERED AND COMPETENT AUTHORITIES

Under RD 845/2026, the autonomous communities and the cities of Ceuta and Melilla are responsible for designating single points of contact for net-zero technology manufacturing projects. Where a project affects more than one autonomous community, the **Subdirectorate-General for the Promotion of Industrial Projects** makes the designation in cooperation with the points of contact in the territories concerned.

¹ The National Mineral Exploration Programme was approved by a [resolution of the Council of Ministers](#) dated 10 March 2026. Its content is available via the following link on the website of the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge: [National Mineral Exploration Programme 2026–2030](#).

RD 845/2026 covers not only the components and equipment listed in the Annex to the NZIA but also **certain components and final products not listed in the Annex, specific machinery for their production and decarbonisation projects in energy-intensive industries**. To obtain strategic status for projects involving components or final products not listed in the Annex, or specific machinery, promoters must demonstrate that the components, final products or machinery concerned are primarily used to produce net-zero technologies.

Recognition as a strategic project establishes **public interest grounds** for all purposes under central government legislation. As under the CRMA framework, it triggers **fast-track processing** of permit-granting procedures under that legislation, pursuant to Article 33 of Law 39/2015. Recognition does not, however, replace the required environmental assessments, licences or permits. Licences and permits may still be refused in subsequent procedures.

The autonomous communities generally decide whether to recognise a project as strategic. Central government takes that decision where a project affects more than one autonomous community or concerns the transport or storage of carbon dioxide.

For projects within central government jurisdiction, the Directorate-General for Industrial Programmes conducts the strategic recognition procedure, and the Secretariat of State for Industry issues the decision. Applications must be submitted electronically using the form available on the European Commission's website². Projects are assessed against the criteria in Article 13 of the NZIA and Implementing Decision (EU) 2025/1100. The assessment includes verifying whether the development of production or technological capacity is justified on public, social or economic interest grounds. Reports from the territories concerned will be obtained for this purpose.

For projects within central government jurisdiction, **strategic status may be withdrawn** if substantial changes or subsequent circumstances mean that the project no longer meets the criteria, or if recognition was based on incorrect information. RD 845/2026 gives the promoter 15 days to make representations. The withdrawal decision must be issued and notified within three months of the start of the procedure. If no decision is notified within that period, the withdrawal procedure lapses.

3.2 ACCELERATION VALLEYS, REGULATORY SANDBOXES AND ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

Net-zero acceleration valleys are defined geographical areas designed to bring together businesses and industrial activities involved in manufacturing specific net-zero technologies, supported by assistance measures and simpler administrative procedures. The **autonomous communities** establish them within their territories in accordance with their own legislation and the NZIA.

² Promoters of net-zero technology manufacturing projects may apply for this status through a dedicated application procedure available since late July 2024 on the European Commission's website: [Strategic projects under the NZIA - European Commission](#).

The decision establishing a valley must be accompanied by a plan setting out **specific administrative and financial support measures** to make it a more attractive location for manufacturing. The decision must also designate the valley's single point of contact. Where a valley spans more than one autonomous community, central government will coordinate and may support joint initiatives.

The autonomous communities are also responsible for establishing **net-zero regulatory sandboxes within their territories**. For matters within central government jurisdiction, the Ministry of Industry and Tourism may approve, by ministerial order, the rules and calls for applications to establish these sandboxes. The sandboxes must have a single point of contact and take account of the NZIA provisions on access and participation by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups.

4. PROVISIONS COMMON TO BOTH REGULATIONS

4.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF COORDINATION COMMITTEES

RD 845/2026 establishes **two coordination committees**. The Coordination Committee for the **Promotion of Critical Raw Materials Projects**, under the CRMA, is attached to the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge. The Coordination Committee for the **Promotion of Net-Zero Technology Projects**, under the NZIA, is attached to the Secretariat of State for Industry. Both include central government, regional and local representatives.

Both committees are responsible for **monitoring compliance with the regulations, sharing best practice in permit processing and coordinating cooperation between public authorities**.

4.2 COMPETITIVE PROCEDURES FOR ELECTRICITY GRID ACCESS FOR DEMAND FACILITIES

The rules governing competitive procedures for electricity grid access for demand facilities must now include **recognition of strategic status under EU or central government legislation** as a criterion. The second final provision of RD 845/2026 introduces this requirement by amending Article 20 ter(2) of Royal Decree 1183/2020 of 29 December on access and connection to electricity transmission and distribution networks.

This criterion sits alongside others such as investment volume, technical and financial standing, energy efficiency and commitments to flexible electricity consumption. Strategic status does not, however, automatically secure capacity or carry a specific score in these procedures.

5. CONCLUSIONS

RD 845/2026 provides Spain's framework for implementing the CRMA and the NZIA, clarifying public authorities' responsibilities and establishing coordination mechanisms.

Single points of contact, clearer rules on the effects of strategic status and a central government procedure for recognising net-zero strategic projects help give promoters greater certainty and streamline the processing of their projects.

The autonomous communities must supplement this framework with measures within their areas of responsibility. The framework's effectiveness will depend largely on whether public authorities deliver swift, coordinated and predictable procedures.

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