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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné
on behalf of the European Commission
(1.7.2026)

The second selection round of Strategic Projects under the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA)¹ is ongoing. The assessment is conducted with the help of external experts and in consultation with the Critical Raw Materials Board. The Commission cannot comment on whether projects have applied and cannot prejudge possible outcomes of the assessment.

With regard to the sustainability selection criterion, the Commission conducts an overall assessment of a project's compliance with relevant EU or national law, including the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive² and the Water Framework Directive (WFD)³. Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, Member States are primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with EU law and for appointing the competent authorities for the required permitting procedures. The competent authorities are in charge of the environmental impact assessment process for raw material projects where required, and of determining the scope of such environmental impact assessments⁴. In the case of a risk of deterioration of water bodies under the WFD, the authorisation can only be granted subject to strict conditions⁵.

The Strategic Project assessment focuses on the project's fulfilment of the selection criteria defined in Article 6 of the CRMA on the basis of the project development status at the time of submission. In accordance with Article 7(8) of the CRMA, the Member State whose territory is concerned can raise its objection to a proposed project, following which a project shall not be recognised as a Strategic Project. Through this process, permitting developments at national level as well as possible project evolution can be taken into account as part of the Strategic Project assessment.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02024R1252-20240503>.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02011L0092-20140515>.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02000L0060-20141120>.

⁴ In accordance with Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds and/or Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

⁵ These include overriding public interest, lack of better environmental alternatives and that all practicable mitigation measures are taken.