

The majority of cobalt production achieved through recovery as a by-product of copper and nickel mining is in three principal geological settings: hydrothermal, magmatic and lateritic, with major producing deposits found in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia. About 36 per cent of refined cobalt production is based on imported material and processed by countries that have no indigenous cobalt mining production. Cobalt is most commonly used as an alloy constituent or chemical compound, where its various properties are used in a diverse range of materials with commercial and military applications. Politically, recycling cobalt has become more important in order to become less dependent on a few primary suppliers. Substitutes for cobalt are constantly being sought mainly due to metal price volatility. The average concentration of cobalt in soils throughout the world is about 8 ppm, whereas it is 6450 ppm in mine sites in Ontario, Canada.