
Preliminary Metallogenic Map of New Caledonia: First Part—Mineral Deposits Associated with Overthrust Ophiolite

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The economic development of New Caledonia is almost entirely dependent on the exploitation of orebodies emplaced within an overthrust ophiolite complex which covers about one-third of the island. The overthrust was an Eocene event and the ores are associated with its ultramafic rocks, including peridotites which have been exposed and weathering since that time. One of the world's three largest nickel deposits (with accessory cobalt) occurs in the weathering peridotite and the ultramafics have yielded 3.5 million tons of chromite.

A research project financed by the Delegation for Scientific Research of the French Ministry of Industry (DGRST) has provided an understanding of the geology of the ophiolite complex and the phenomena conducive to chromite

mineralization. Economic and geologic data are being synthesized to produce a metallogenic map of the island. This

will be a contribution to the metallogenic map of the ophiolite belt of the world (part of the IGPC project: ophiolites).
