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## Vale Inco opens new port in New Caledonian waters

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It is reported that the opening of new port by the Brazilian Vale Inco nickel company is the impetus for an international operation to clear New Caledonian waters of hundreds of wartime mines.

Naval experts from France, the United States, Australia and New Zealand have joined the operation, dubbed Lagoon Minex, which is targeting the sea lanes to Noumea and Prony Bay.

The estimated 1,600 mines remaining from almost 1,900 thought to have been planted in the lagoon during the Second World War to ward off a possible Japanese invasion, each contains up to 300 kilograms of explosives or enough to sink a ship.

Mr Claudine Wery special correspondent of Radio New Zealand International said that Lagoon Minex will work around Noumea. He added that "On the surface there is no risk but in case of handling or in case of collision it could be, and in the Prony Bay where Brazilian giant Vale Inco is building the big nickel plant in there, there is a port and they will have a lot of maritime traffic and that's why this area was a priority for this operation."

(Source from [www.rnzi.com](http://www.rnzi.com))

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