WESTERN HEMISPHERE READINESS SERIES

HRS Resilience Foundation

COUNTRY READINESS ASSESSMENT 10

Argentina: Institutional Readiness, Financial Alignment and Strategic Minerals Competition

A 50-year readiness architecture for a hemispheric partner navigating simultaneous financial alignment with Washington and economic dependence on Beijing

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About this series. The Western Hemisphere Readiness Series applies the HRS Readiness Cycle and Strategic Dependency Test to country, sector and regional systems. CRA 10 integrates SRA 01–10 into an Argentina-level system-of-systems assessment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Argentina: Institutional Readiness, Financial Alignment and Strategic Minerals Competition

Argentina enters the final quarter of 2026 as the series' most direct applied case of financially supported hemispheric alignment coexisting with deepening economic dependence on the very power that alignment is meant to counter. Facing a critical October 2025 midterm election widely read as a referendum on his presidency, President Javier Milei received an unprecedented package of U.S. support: a US$20 billion currency swap with the U.S. Treasury, personally managed by Secretary Scott Bessent, direct U.S. purchases of pesos to halt the currency's slide, and continued IMF backing on top of an existing US$20 billion program — support explicitly described by U.S. officials as an effort to "get China out" of Argentina. [1][2] Milei's La Libertad Avanza party rebounded from a severe defeat in September 2025 Buenos Aires provincial elections to win the October midterm with 40.7% of the vote, a result President Trump publicly credited to American assistance. [3][4]

Yet China became Argentina's largest trading partner by December 2025, overtaking Brazil, with Argentine exports to China surging 125% year-on-year; Chinese firms including Ganfeng Lithium, Tsingshan Holding and Zijin Mining hold major stakes in Argentina's lithium sector, and a Chinese space-tracking facility operating in Neuquén province since 2012 — China's first such facility outside its own territory — has drawn continued U.S. scrutiny over possible dual military use. [5] [6] Argentina also holds one of the world's largest identified lithium-resource bases, positioning it as a central node in the same critical-minerals competition already documented in this series for Bolivia and Chile. [7]

> CENTRAL HRS PROPOSITION
>
> *Argentina's readiness challenge is not resolving a single contested asset, but building institutional capacity — transparent investment screening, diversified export markets, and durable fiscal management — that survives the reality that emergency financial alignment with one power does not, on its own, reduce structural economic dependence on another.*

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Purpose and Scope

Country Readiness Assessment 10 extends the Western Hemisphere Readiness Series from Brazil (CRA 01), Venezuela (CRA 02), Cuba (CRA 03), Colombia (CRA 04), Bolivia (CRA 05), Peru (CRA 06), Ecuador (CRA 07), Paraguay (CRA 08) and Chile (CRA 09) to Argentina. It applies the HRS Readiness Cycle to Argentina and integrates the ten Sector Readiness Assessments into a single system-of-systems framework, consistent with the methodology used throughout the series.

The assessment uses public information available through 28 September 2026. Statements about U.S., Argentine and Chinese government positions are identified as government positions; characterizations of the Neuquén facility's purpose reflect the positions of the respective governments, not an independent HRS determination. The assessment does not endorse a political party, candidate, or electoral outcome, and takes no position on Argentina's internal political disputes.

The intended audience includes U.S. institutions, international organizations, private-sector actors evaluating Argentina entry, and Argentine public and private institutions. The document is a strategic research reference for critical-minerals investment, investment-screening capacity building, sovereign-to-sovereign engagement, and long-horizon institutional capacity building; project-level decisions require current technical, legal, environmental, financial and security diligence.

CURRENT GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Current Governance and Political Context

Javier Milei, a self-described anarcho-capitalist economist, has governed since December 2023 on a platform of aggressive fiscal austerity, deregulation and a declared rejection of "socialism," reducing annual inflation from a peak of roughly 288% to below 37% by mid-2026. [8][9] His government faced its most serious political crisis in September 2025, when a corruption scandal involving his sister and chief of staff, Karina Milei, contributed to a 13-point defeat in Buenos Aires provincial elections — Argentina's largest province, representing roughly 40% of the national electorate. [10] Weeks later, in the 26 October 2025 national midterm elections, La Libertad Avanza rebounded decisively, winning 40.7% of the congressional vote against a divided opposition, a result that strengthened Milei's position in Congress for the remainder of his term. [3][4]

Despite his campaign pledge not to "do business with China or any other communist," Milei's government has pursued a pragmatic economic relationship with Beijing, including renewing an activated tranche of a currency swap worth approximately US$5 billion and approving tax incentives for Chinese lithium investment, even as he maintains close alignment with the Trump administration. [11][6]

> **Material to readiness planning:** This assessment treats Milei's political affiliation, the September 2025 provincial election result, the corruption allegations involving Karina Milei, and characterizations of the Neuquén space facility's purpose as documented facts and government positions, not as HRS political judgments. The report does not take a position on the merits of any corruption allegation or on Argentina's internal party politics.

01 · ARGENTINA 2026 BASELINE

Financially Supported Alignment Amid Deepening China Ties

Argentina's baseline combines an aggressive fiscal-stabilization program, a US$20 billion bilateral financial-support package from the United States, and a trading relationship with China that has grown even as diplomatic and security alignment with Washington deepened. Argentina remains one of the most heavily indebted nations to the International Monetary Fund in the world, with obligations exceeding US$56 billion under its existing program even before the 2025 rescue package. [2][12] China surpassed Brazil to become Argentina's largest trading partner by December 2025, with Argentine exports to China rising 125% year-on-year and imports rising 26%; China has financed hydroelectric dams, solar parks, and holds major stakes in Argentina's lithium sector through firms including Ganfeng Lithium, Tsingshan Holding Group and Zijin Mining. [5][6]

Milei attended the founding Shield of the Americas summit at Trump National Doral in March 2026 and has made frequent trips to Washington — his fourteenth as of early 2026 — while also stating his intention to visit Beijing during the year, a trip that had not yet been confirmed as of the reporting cutoff. [13][11]

> BASELINE CONCLUSION
>
> *Argentina's readiness priority is converting an emergency financial-alignment relationship with the United States into durable institutional capacity — transparent investment screening and export diversification — that reduces structural dependence on any single partner, rather than simply substituting one form of economic reliance for another.*

02 · THE OCTOBER 2025 FINANCIAL RESCUE

The October 2025 Financial Rescue as a National Readiness Test

Facing a currency collapse, a liquidity squeeze, and a critical midterm election widely framed as a referendum on his presidency, President Milei received an extraordinary package of U.S. financial support in 2025: a US$20 billion currency swap line with the U.S. Treasury, personally negotiated and managed by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent; direct U.S. purchases of Argentine pesos to stabilize the exchange rate; and continued backing for Argentina's existing IMF program. [1][2] U.S. officials and analysts described the intervention explicitly as an effort to prevent a Peronist return to power and to "get China out" of Argentina's economy. [6] President Trump publicly credited the assistance for Milei's decisive 26 October 2025 election victory, stating Milei had "a lot of help from us." [4]

System	Primary Dependency	Cascading Effect	Readiness Response
Currency stability	U.S. Treasury swap line and direct peso purchases, activated ahead of a pivotal domestic election	Electoral and economic stability become directly linked to a single foreign government's financial support	Durable fiscal-management institutions that reduce dependence on any single external rescue
Sovereign debt	Existing IMF program (over US$56 billion in obligations) alongside new U.S. Treasury exposure	Compounding external-financing dependence across multiple institutions simultaneously	Transparent, sustainable fiscal trajectory independent of emergency interventions
Strategic messaging	U.S. support explicitly framed as countering Chinese influence	Financial alignment does not, on its own, reduce underlying trade and investment ties to China	Consistent, documented investment-screening standards applied regardless of which partner benefits

> READINESS PRINCIPLE
>
> *An emergency financial rescue tied to an electoral outcome demonstrates short-term alignment, not structural readiness; the durable test is whether the underlying fiscal and trade dependencies that made the rescue necessary are addressed once the immediate crisis passes.*

03 · HRS METHOD

Argentina as a System of Systems

The HRS Readiness Cycle — Detect, Assess, Decide, Coordinate, Deploy, Sustain, Learn — is applied to Argentina across fiscal management, trade-partner diversification, and critical-minerals governance simultaneously, given that Argentina's readiness gaps span financial, diplomatic and resource domains at once.

HRS Function	Argentina Application
Detect	Identify fiscal-dependency and trade-concentration risks before they require emergency intervention.
Assess	Fuse fiscal, trade and critical-minerals information into a common operating picture across administrations.
Decide	Apply consistent, nationality-neutral screening criteria to strategic-sector investment regardless of which foreign partner is involved.
Coordinate	Connect Argentine fiscal, trade and regulatory institutions with U.S. and relevant international financial and institutional partners.
Deploy	Move screening, diversification and fiscal-management capacity to priority sectors.
Sustain	Maintain institutional capacity through Argentina's documented pattern of electoral and fiscal volatility.
Learn	Convert the 2025 financial-rescue experience into durable fiscal-institution design.

The HRS Strategic Dependency Test asks whether Argentina's economic stability depends on the political alignment and generosity of any single foreign government, or on durable, transparent institutions that would function consistently regardless of which government is in office in Buenos Aires or Washington.

04 · THE CHINA PARADOX

The China Paradox and the Dependency Test

Argentina presents this series' clearest case of a government pursuing simultaneous, partially contradictory relationships with both great powers. President Milei campaigned explicitly against "doing business with China or any other communist," yet his government has renewed an activated currency-swap tranche with China worth approximately US$5 billion, approved tax incentives for Chinese lithium-sector expansion, and presided over China's rise to become Argentina's largest trading partner. [11][6] A Chinese space-tracking station has operated in Neuquén province since 2012 under a bilateral agreement — China's first such facility outside its own territory — which the United States has identified as a potential dual-use asset with possible military applications, a characterization China's government disputes. [6]

Test Dimension	Argentina Application	Readiness Question
Concentration	China is now Argentina's largest single trading partner, having overtaken Brazil	What diversification reduces dependence on any single trading relationship?
Substitutability	U.S. financial rescue addresses currency and fiscal crisis but does not itself displace Chinese trade and investment	What structural reforms, beyond emergency financing, reduce underlying dependency?
Control	A Chinese-operated space facility in Neuquén has operated for over a decade under limited Argentine oversight of its specific activities	What transparency mechanisms would clarify the facility's actual function to both governments' satisfaction?
Recovery	Sudden withdrawal of either U.S. financial support or Chinese trade access would create significant economic disruption	What contingency capacity exists for either scenario?
Cascading impact	Lithium-sector investment, trade balances and fiscal stability are all connected to the same underlying great-power competition	How does Argentina sequence screening and diversification across all affected sectors simultaneously?

HRS PROPOSITION

Financially supported short-term alignment and structurally deepening trade dependency can coexist within the same government at the same time; readiness is not measured by which power a government rhetorically favors, but by whether transparent, durable institutions govern its economic relationships with both.

05 · STRATEGIC DEPENDENCY MAP

Argentina's Critical Capability Network

Capability	Critical Inputs	Failure Consequence	Readiness Response
Currency and fiscal stability	U.S. Treasury swap line, ongoing IMF program, direct peso-market interventions	Economic stability tied to continued goodwill of external financial backers	Durable domestic fiscal institutions reducing reliance on emergency external support
Trade relationships	China as largest trading partner; United States as principal financial and security partner	Structural dependence on China persists despite financial alignment with Washington	Diversified export markets and transparent investment screening
Critical minerals	One of the world's largest identified lithium-resource bases; major Chinese equity stakes in extraction	Strategic resource development concentrated with a single foreign investor base	Diversified investment partnerships; domestic processing capacity
Strategic infrastructure oversight	Chinese-operated space facility in Neuquén; scrutiny over Paraná River infrastructure	Limited transparency into foreign-operated strategic assets	Transparent bilateral oversight mechanisms for foreign-operated facilities
Political-fiscal continuity	Electoral outcomes directly tied to availability of external financial rescue	Policy discontinuity risk across electoral cycles	Institutionalize fiscal management independent of any single administration

06 · SRA 01

Telecommunications & Digital Infrastructure

Argentina implementation objective: build transparent, nationality-neutral screening standards for digital infrastructure investment, applying the same discipline this series recommends for comparable cases in Chile and Peru.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Map current telecommunications infrastructure ownership and investment sources.
- Apply transparent, nationality-neutral trusted-supplier standards to new digital infrastructure investment.
- Build domestic technical capacity for network operations and cybersecurity.
- Protect network infrastructure with resilient, diversified power supply.
- Sequence digital-infrastructure investment alongside broader fiscal-stabilization priorities.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Ownership mapping → trusted-supplier standards → domestic technical capacity → protected infrastructure → resilient digital backbone.*

07 · SRA 02

Data Centers, Cloud & AI Infrastructure

Argentina implementation objective: build data-fusion capacity connecting fiscal, trade and critical-minerals information into the common operating picture the HRS Method calls for.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Apply transparent, nationality-neutral standards to data-center and cloud-infrastructure investment.
- Build backup and disaster-recovery capacity for critical government and financial data.
- Develop domestic technical capacity for data governance and cybersecurity.
- Use data-fusion capacity to connect fiscal, trade and minerals-sector readiness information.
- Coordinate digital-infrastructure investment with the broader critical-minerals development strategy.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Trusted-supplier standards → distributed backup → domestic technical capacity → cross-domain data fusion → resilient digital infrastructure.*

08 · SRA 03

Critical Minerals & Strategic Materials

Argentina implementation objective: this is the central readiness domain of the assessment. Argentina holds one of the world's largest identified lithium-resource bases, with major Chinese equity positions already established across key extraction projects. The February 2026 U.S.-Argentina trade agreement's critical-minerals chapter and the September 2026 EXIM financing framework, both discussed in Section 19, provide the emerging policy architecture this section's priority actions build upon. [26][27]

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Apply consistent, nationality-neutral investment screening to lithium and other critical-mineral transactions, regardless of investor origin.
- Build domestic lithium-processing capacity to capture greater downstream value.
- Diversify offtake agreements and investment partnerships beyond current concentration.
- Coordinate critical-minerals policy with Bolivia and Chile given shared Lithium Triangle geology.
- Maintain Argentine decision rights over long-term mineral policy independent of any single foreign relationship.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Transparent screening → domestic processing investment → diversified offtake → regional coordination → sovereign long-term mineral policy.*

09 · SRA 04

Rare Earths & Western Hemisphere Mineral Security

Argentina implementation objective: validate broader strategic-mineral potential beyond lithium, applying the same transparency standard used throughout this series.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Validate rare-earth and other critical-mineral geological data through independent survey.
- Avoid single-buyer or single-financier dependency for any strategic minerals identified.
- Maintain Argentine decision rights over long-term mineral policy.
- Apply national-security review to strategic-mineral asset transactions.
- Coordinate rare-earth policy with the broader critical-minerals and Lithium Triangle strategy.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Data validation → diversified offtake → transparent screening → sovereign long-term policy.*

10 · SRA 05

Energy Security & Strategic Power Infrastructure

Argentina implementation objective: apply transparent oversight to Chinese-financed hydroelectric and solar-energy infrastructure while diversifying the broader energy investment base.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Map foreign ownership and financing concentration across hydroelectric, solar and broader energy infrastructure.
- Apply transparent, nationality-neutral regulatory oversight to future energy-sector investment.
- Diversify energy-sector financing sources beyond current concentration.
- Build grid-security and cybersecurity capacity commensurate with strategic energy assets.
- Coordinate energy-sector screening with the broader critical-minerals processing strategy.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Ownership mapping → transparent regulatory oversight → diversified financing → cybersecurity capacity → long-horizon energy resilience.*

11 · SRA 06

Ports, Logistics & Maritime Infrastructure

Argentina implementation objective: apply transparent screening to Paraná River and export-logistics infrastructure, given documented U.S. scrutiny over foreign influence in this strategic waterway.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Apply transparent, nationality-neutral standards to Paraná River and port-concession decisions.
- Build cargo-screening and customs-digitization capacity across major export terminals.
- Diversify logistics partnerships supporting agricultural and mineral exports.
- Protect port and waterway infrastructure with resilient, redundant systems.
- Coordinate logistics-security screening with regional partners.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Transparent concession standards → cargo-screening deployment → logistics diversification → protected infrastructure → resilient maritime logistics.*

12 · SRA 07

Food Security & Strategic Agricultural Resilience

Argentina implementation objective: protect and diversify the agricultural export sector — soy, grains and beef — central to Argentina's economy and heavily linked to Chinese demand.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Diversify agricultural export markets beyond current concentration in Chinese demand.
- Invest in storage, processing and cold-chain capacity linking producers to export logistics.
- Apply transparent screening to foreign agricultural-sector investment.
- Build rural economic resilience independent of any single trading partner's demand fluctuations.
- Coordinate food-security investment with the broader trade-diversification strategy.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Market diversification → processing-capacity investment → transparent screening → rural resilience → diversified agricultural economy.*

13 · SRA 08

Pharmaceutical & Medical Supply Chains

Argentina implementation objective: build health-logistics resilience independent of the fiscal volatility that has affected public-sector spending, including health budgets, during the current austerity program.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Maintain diversified medical-device and medicine supplier relationships.
- Protect essential health-logistics funding independent of broader fiscal-consolidation cycles.
- Strengthen local repair and maintenance capacity for medical equipment.
- Build regional medical-logistics coordination with neighboring countries.
- Coordinate health-system resilience planning with fiscal-institution design.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Supplier diversification → protected essential funding → local repair capacity → regional coordination → resilient health system.*

14 · SRA 09

Advanced Manufacturing & Industrial Capacity

Argentina implementation objective: build domestic industrial capacity for lithium processing and battery-supply-chain manufacturing, capturing more value from Argentina's mineral endowment.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Invest in domestic lithium-processing and battery-component manufacturing capacity.
- Develop technical training linked to mineral-processing and export-logistics technology.
- Prioritize repair and maintenance capacity for agricultural and mining equipment, given tariff-driven strain on local manufacturers.
- Evaluate domestic manufacturing opportunities tied to the critical-minerals value chain.
- Measure industrial resilience by domestic value capture, not raw-export volume alone.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *Processing-capacity investment → technical training → maintenance capacity → domestic manufacturing evaluation → diversified industrial base.*

15 · SRA 10

Western Hemisphere Strategic Infrastructure & Resilience

SRA 10 is the integration layer, converting the ten sector assessments into an Argentina-level dependency architecture, with the October 2025 financial rescue and the China trade paradox as the defining test cases for the series' Strategic Dependency Test methodology applied to a financially-stressed, resource-rich economy.

Argentina implementation — priority actions

- Maintain a national Fiscal and Strategic-Minerals Dependency Register spanning all ten SRA domains.
- Run Scenario Stress Tests for compound fiscal-crisis and trade-disruption scenarios.
- Use Readiness-to-Investment Assessments applied consistently regardless of investor nationality.
- Specify decision rights, recovery time and alternate capacity for every critical financial and resource system.
- Coordinate with Shield of the Americas and regional partners, including Bolivia and Chile, on shared critical-minerals readiness standards.

> HRS TEST
>
> *For every major project, identify concentration, substitutability, control, recovery time and cascading impact. A second supplier or facility is effective redundancy only when both are not dependent on the same upstream failure point.*

Implementation sequence: *National dependency register → scenario stress testing → nationality-neutral readiness assessments → regional coordination → integrated long-horizon resilience.*

16 · FINANCIAL-TO-INSTITUTIONAL-CAPACITY

A National Conversion Architecture

The conversion model treats the October 2025 financial rescue as a necessary but insufficient stabilization event, requiring durable institutional capacity to prevent recurring dependence on emergency external support.

Stage	Core Action	Readiness Result
1. Measure	National fiscal and trade-dependency register; transparent minerals-investment review	Public baseline and auditability
2. Stabilize	Durable fiscal-management institutions; standing investment-screening authority	Reduced reliance on emergency financial interventions
3. Rebuild	Diversified export markets; transparent minerals-sector screening	Reduced single-partner trade concentration
4. Industrialize	Domestic lithium-processing and battery-supply-chain capacity	Greater value capture from mineral endowment
5. Diversify	Diversified investment partnerships, applied nationality-neutrally	Reduced concentration risk with any single foreign partner
6. Institutionalize	Administration-independent fiscal and screening institutions	Continuity across changes of government
7. Adapt	Fiscal-policy renewal, mineral-market evolution, shifting great-power competition	2076 resilience

> HRS ALLOCATION PRINCIPLE
>
> *Fiscal and screening investment should be structured to build institutional capacity that persists independent of any single election cycle or emergency foreign intervention, given Argentina's documented pattern of financial volatility.*

17 · HUMAN CAPITAL AND PROVINCIAL DISPARITIES

Human Capital & Provincial Disparities

Buenos Aires Province, representing roughly 40% of Argentina's electorate and over 30% of national GDP, has emerged as the central political and economic bellwether of the Milei era, with sharply divergent voting patterns from national trends documented in the September and October 2025 election cycle. [10][3]

Priority	Readiness Action	Expected Capability
Provincial fiscal balance	Address disparities between Buenos Aires Province and national fiscal priorities	Reduced political volatility tied to provincial-national tension
Manufacturing workforce	Support for manufacturers affected by tariff liberalization and reduced public-works spending	Reduced job displacement from rapid trade liberalization
Institutional continuity	Fiscal and screening institutions that function independent of electoral cycles	Reduced dependence on any single election outcome for economic stability
Regional coordination	Critical-minerals and trade coordination with Bolivia and Chile	Shared readiness standards across the Lithium Triangle

> HRS INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY METRIC
>
> *Whether fiscal and economic-management institutions demonstrate continuity and predictability independent of which party controls Buenos Aires Province or the national government in any given cycle.*

18 · TRADE DIVERSIFICATION

Trade Diversification and External Economic Partners

Argentina's trade posture is defined by a documented paradox: China is now Argentina's largest trading partner, having overtaken Brazil by December 2025, even as Argentina received unprecedented U.S. financial support explicitly intended to reduce Chinese influence. [5][6] This assessment did not identify evidence of a significant Russian or Iranian strategic footprint in Argentina comparable to cases elsewhere in this series.

Partner	Relationship	Readiness Consideration
China	Largest trading partner; major lithium-sector equity positions; Neuquén space facility; currency-swap relationship	Continued engagement alongside transparent, nationality-neutral screening
United States	US$20 billion currency swap; continued IMF backing; principal security and diplomatic partner	Deepening financial and security alignment; underlying trade dependency on China unresolved
Bolivia and Chile	Shared Lithium Triangle geology and critical-minerals competition dynamics	Potential regional coordination on minerals-sector readiness standards

HRS PROPOSITION

Financial alignment with one power and structural trade dependence on another are not mutually exclusive conditions; Argentina's readiness priority is transparent, consistent institutions that manage both relationships according to the same standard, rather than treating financial rescue as a substitute for trade diversification.

19 · U.S.–ARGENTINA COOPERATION

A Readiness-Based Cooperation Framework

The Milei and Trump administrations have built an unusually close relationship, anchored in the October 2025 financial-rescue package and reinforced through Milei's frequent visits to Washington and participation in the March 2026 Shield of the Americas founding summit at Trump National Doral. [13] The relationship has since produced concrete steps toward structural economic cooperation: on 5 February 2026, the two governments signed a Reciprocal Trade and Investment Agreement (ARTI) with a dedicated critical-minerals chapter directing Argentina to prioritize the United States over "market-manipulating economies" — a clear reference to China — in copper, lithium and other strategic minerals, though the agreement remained unratified by Argentina's Congress as of the reporting cutoff. [26] On 23 September 2026, the U.S. Export-Import Bank signed a separate US$7 billion Build the Future Framework with Argentina, covering critical-minerals development and processing, energy security and grid modernization, digital connectivity, and commercial space and advanced technologies — a concrete, near-term illustration of the transition from emergency financial support toward structural economic cooperation this assessment identifies as Argentina's central readiness priority. [27]

Domain	Illustrative Readiness Objective	Authority / Accountability
Fiscal stability	Transition from emergency swap-line support to durable fiscal institutions	Argentine fiscal authorities; U.S. Treasury and IMF as continued partners
Critical minerals	Transparent, nationality-neutral screening applied to lithium-sector investment	Argentine minerals-regulatory authorities
Trade	Diversification reducing structural dependence on Chinese demand	Argentine and U.S. trade authorities
Strategic infrastructure	Transparent oversight mechanisms for foreign-operated facilities, including Neuquén	Argentine and U.S. security and diplomatic authorities

> COOPERATION PRINCIPLE
>
> *Build systems that remain useful if an administration changes on either side, an emergency financial package expires, or a trading relationship evolves — the same principle applied throughout this series.*

20 · 2027–2030

Fiscal Consolidation and Screening

Objective: convert the 2025 emergency financial rescue into durable fiscal institutions while establishing transparent minerals-investment screening.

Priority portfolio

- Durable fiscal-management institutions reducing reliance on emergency external support
- Standing, transparent critical-minerals investment-screening authority
- Initial diversification of agricultural and mineral export markets
- Regional coordination agreements with Bolivia and Chile on Lithium Triangle standards
- Domestic lithium-processing investment pilot programs

> HRS LONG-HORIZON TEST
>
> *Fiscal and screening investment should be traceable to measurable institutional outcomes — not only to the political priorities of the current government or the availability of emergency foreign support.*

21 · 2031–2035

Institutional Consolidation

Objective: move from emergency-driven fiscal management to durable, administration-independent institutions.

Priority portfolio

- Administration-independent fiscal and minerals-screening institutions
- Expanded domestic lithium-processing and battery-manufacturing capacity
- Diversified export markets reducing single-partner concentration
- Sustained regional Lithium Triangle coordination outcomes
- Reduced dependence on emergency IMF or bilateral financial support

> HRS LONG-HORIZON TEST
>
> *The central transition is from crisis-driven financial management to institutional capacity that outlasts any single election cycle or foreign rescue package.*

22 · 2036–2050

Diversification

Objective: reduce structural dependence on any single trading partner, financial backer, or mineral-export destination.

Priority portfolio

- Diversified trade and investment partnerships, applied on nationality-neutral terms
- Mature domestic battery-supply-chain manufacturing capacity
- Institutionalized regional critical-minerals coordination mechanisms
- Sustained, screened engagement with both the United States and China
- Durable fiscal buffers reducing crisis-driven policy volatility

> HRS LONG-HORIZON TEST
>
> *A resilient Argentine system should continue functioning if one trading partner's priorities shift, one financial backer's generosity ends, or one bilateral relationship evolves.*

23 · 2051–2065

Renewal

Objective: replace first-generation post-2027 fiscal and screening infrastructure before systemic failure, applying updated technology and institutional standards.

Priority portfolio

- Renewed fiscal-management and minerals-processing infrastructure
- Updated screening technology and institutional protocols
- Continued institution professionalization
- Renewed regional Lithium Triangle coordination frameworks
- Sustained diversified trade relationships

> HRS LONG-HORIZON TEST
>
> *Long-horizon readiness means avoiding a second generation of fiscal fragility that reproduces the crisis-dependency pattern of the first.*

24 · 2066–2076

Intergenerational Resilience

Objective: establish a continuously renewing portfolio of Argentine fiscal, trade and minerals-sector institutional capabilities.

Priority portfolio

- Effective redundancy across fiscal, trade and critical-minerals systems
- Diversified international partnerships, applied consistently and transparently
- Recurring national fiscal and minerals-dependency stress tests
- Sustained regional Lithium Triangle coordination investment
- Durable, administration-independent governance institutions

> HRS LONG-HORIZON TEST
>
> *Build systems that remain useful when governments change, trade patterns evolve, or great-power financial and mineral competition intensifies.*

25 · READINESS METRICS

Readiness Metrics and Governance

Country readiness should not be reduced to a single score. Metrics should be tracked by sector, geography and critical function.

Domain	Illustrative Metric
Fiscal stability	Reliance on emergency external financing versus durable domestic fiscal capacity
Trade diversification	Export-market concentration versus regional and global average
Critical minerals	Domestic processing share of lithium value chain; investment-source diversification
Strategic infrastructure	Transparency of foreign-operated facility oversight mechanisms
Institutional continuity	Fiscal and screening-institution continuity across administrations

26 · GOVERNANCE & IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

HRS Argentina Readiness Improvement Framework

Cycle	Argentina Implementation
Detect	Maintain national fiscal and strategic-minerals dependency registers.
Assess	Stress-test compound fiscal-crisis and trade-disruption scenarios.
Decide	Apply consistent, documented screening criteria regardless of investor or financier nationality.
Coordinate	Align national, regional (Bolivia, Chile) and international (U.S., IMF, Shield of the Americas) counterparts.
Deploy	Execute fiscal, screening and minerals-diversification packages with measurable outcomes.
Sustain	Fund fiscal and screening institutions through Argentina's political and economic cycles.
Learn	Conduct annual continuity exercises and update assumptions through 2076.

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE

The HRS improvement framework should be used as a management system rather than a one-time report — particularly important given Argentina's demonstrated pattern of rapid fiscal and political volatility.

27 · CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Argentina's September 2026 position is defined by a documented paradox: an unprecedented U.S. financial-rescue package explicitly framed as countering Chinese influence, delivered alongside China's rise to become Argentina's largest trading partner and a major stakeholder in its lithium sector. The October 2025 election, the currency-swap arrangements with both Washington and Beijing, and the continued operation of a Chinese space facility in Neuquén together demonstrate that financially supported alignment and structural economic dependency can coexist within the same government at the same time.

The HRS opportunity is not to resolve this paradox in favor of one partner, but to help Argentina build the institutional screening, fiscal-management and minerals-processing capacity that lets it manage both relationships transparently and consistently — reducing the recurring cycle of crisis and emergency rescue that has defined its recent economic history, regardless of which government is in office or which foreign partner currently holds commercial advantage.

> **FINAL HRS PROPOSITION**
>
> *Argentina's resilience should be measured not by which foreign government it rhetorically or financially aligns with in a given election cycle, but by whether its fiscal, trade-screening and minerals-sector institutions can function consistently and transparently — capable of enduring when governments change, emergency rescue packages expire, or great-power competition over critical minerals intensifies.*

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND LIMITATIONS

Methodology, Research Integrity and Limitations

This assessment is an original HRS Resilience Foundation synthesis based on public-source evidence and the Foundation's Western Hemisphere Readiness Series. It integrates the HRS Readiness Cycle, Strategic Dependency Test, effective-versus-nominal redundancy distinction, sector readiness logic and 50-year planning principles.

The assessment does not claim access to classified intelligence, confidential commercial information or privileged government information. Conditions in Argentina, U.S. policy, and Argentina-China relations can change rapidly.

Statements attributed to the U.S., Argentine, or Chinese governments are presented as their respective positions. Characterizations of the Neuquén facility's purpose reflect the positions of the respective governments and independent analysts, not an independent HRS determination. This report references corruption allegations involving a named Argentine official as documented political context and takes no position on their merits. Scenario propositions are analytical pathways, not forecasts.

The report is not a political judgment, electoral recommendation, intelligence product, procurement recommendation, legal opinion, engineering certification or investment solicitation. Country conditions are analytical categories, not rankings.

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About the HRS Resilience Foundation: The HRS Resilience Foundation is an independent research organization advancing institutional readiness and health security across the Western Hemisphere.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE READINESS SERIES

HRS Resilience Foundation

Independent research for institutional readiness, continuity, and 50-year resilience planning across the Western Hemisphere. Research Outputs span Strategic Reports, Policy Briefs, Technical Papers, Sector Readiness Assessments and Country Assessments, translating public-source evidence into practical frameworks built to remain valid for governments, infrastructure operators, investors, and institutional decision-makers across changes in technology, suppliers, and political leadership.

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Strategic Report 02 — Resilient Infrastructure Investment in the Western Hemisphere

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Policy Brief 01 — Strengthening Regional Health Emergency Readiness in the Americas

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COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS

Country Readiness Assessment 01 — Brazil

Country Readiness Assessment 02 — Venezuela

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Country Readiness Assessment 08 — Paraguay

Country Readiness Assessment 09 — Chile

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SECTOR ASSESSMENTS

SRA 01 — Telecommunications & Digital Infrastructure

SRA 02 — Data Centers, Cloud & AI Infrastructure

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