

BETTERCOAL COLOMBIA WORKING GROUP Work Plan 2021

Bettercoal is working towards a global responsible coal supply chain. We were established by a group of major coal buyers to promote the continuous improvement of sustainability performance in their coal supply chain. We do this by independently assessing the performance of coal mining operations against the ten principles of the Bettercoal Code through the Supplier Assessment Process. The independent assessments results in a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) on any possible findings. Bettercoal and Bettercoal Members expect the suppliers to improve their performance through addressing the findings going forward.

Bettercoal has been working with Colombian coal companies since the inception of the organization and we are very proud to now be working with three of the four large coal exporters in the country. One of the aims of this group is to foster better relationships with all stakeholders involved in this complex environment, from business to government, to local and international organisations, NGOs and local communities. The Colombia Working Group is formed of Bettercoal Members Enel, ESB, RWE, Vattenfall, Fortum and chaired by Uniper.

The Colombia Working Group (CWG) has detailed its purposes in the [Terms of Reference](#), including addressing the following: develop a coordinated approach to the monitoring of Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs), grow country and context expertise, communication and the identification of complex/systemic issues related to mining in Colombia that go beyond the individual CIPs and require specific action.

Key objectives for 2021

Despite the challenges experienced in 2020, the CWG nevertheless delivered on a number of activities and actively engaged with many relevant stakeholders virtually. These calls provided the group with insights on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the respective stakeholders' position and work being done on the prioritised issues and other relevant information regarding Colombian contextual matters that developed throughout the year. A report on the progress made in 2020 can be found [here](#).

Based on the CWG develop a set of objectives to pursue in 2021:

1. Monitoring of the Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) of Bettercoal Colombian Suppliers (Drummond Ltd, Prodeco and Cerrejón).
2. Develop and implement actions on prioritised contextual issues.

3. Virtual engagement with Colombian stakeholders.

1. Monitoring of the Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP)

As in the previous years the CWG will follow up at least two bi-annual calls with Bettercoal Colombian Suppliers -Drummond Ltd, Prodeco and Cerrejón- to discuss their progress on their respective CIP as well as addressing other relevant contextual topics. This is also an opportunity for Suppliers to comment on roadblocks they might be facing and seeking advice from Bettercoal and its Members to implement the proposed actions with the objective of continuously improving their operations.

2. Develop and implement actions on prioritised contextual issues

In 2020, the CWG prioritised a number of broad context issues related to the Colombian mining industry to contribute to. These prioritised issues have been developed based on the main risks identified through the Bettercoal Assessment Process and captured in the individual Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) of Bettercoal Suppliers as well as from other relevant sources of information. A detailed report on the prioritised issues can be found [here](#). In 2021, the CWG will continue to focus on its work on them:

a) Fostering increased dialogue in the peace building process

To support the peace building process in the mining regions the Colombia Working Group has defined the following objectives:

- Contribute to build trust amongst relevant stakeholders (as a precondition for dialogue) in mining regions.
- Contribute to truth finding by encouraging mining companies to engage with the Truth Commission.
- Support mining companies and victims to create a shared vision of how to reconstruct the social fabric and contribute to peacebuilding in the Cesar mining region.

b) Access to clean water

Some mining areas in Colombia, as La Guajira, have a semi-arid and arid weather where for many centuries water always has been a scarce resource. On top of this natural context, mining operations and developments have been made accountable for making the problem more acute. This has been an ongoing issue between communities and mining companies in the area.

Given the relevance that water has not only as a basic human need, but also for economic activities and its cultural and religious relevance, the CWG believes

that in such a context a holistic approach to water management would be beneficial. This Water Stewardship approach would bring together the main stakeholders affected, as communities, pertinent authorities, other main water users and other stakeholders, to address the issue of future water security in this region. To enhance the sustainability of water as a shared resource, the CWG has started to explore how such a project would be developed in the region of La Guajira in Colombia.

c) Mine closure

The decline in the price of coal together with the implications the Covid-19 pandemic had for the Colombian mining operations and the changes in operations of Bettercoal Colombian Suppliers highlighted the relevance of the issue of mine closure.

Apart from addressing this topic in discussions with the coal mining companies, the CWG has identified the “just transition” project which has recently formally applied for subsidy under the Dutch FVO Partnerships program as an opportunity for Bettercoal to further address and contribute to the long-term regional development as overarching goal. This project aims to support the transition in Colombian mining regions from coal mining dominance towards a more diversified local economy and to reduce the negative impact of a declined coal demand. It perfectly fits with the outcomes of the Bettercoal Code review process, which is one of the reasons why the CWG is engaging with the consortium of Dutch energy companies and other members to explore how the group can contribute to the project and to transfer it into specific actions.

3. Virtual engagement with Colombian stakeholders

Given the travel restrictions still in place related to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the CWG will organise a virtual engagement with Colombian stakeholders in April 2021. The group is planning to engage in individual calls not only with Bettercoal Colombian Suppliers but also with Governmental organisations, dialogue institutions, international organisations and labour organisations. During these meetings the group will cover specific agenda topics tailored to each stakeholder around the prioritised issues defined, identifying opportunities for developing specific actions where Bettercoal could add value and have an impact on the ground. We also expected to be addressing other contextual topics relevant to the Colombian mining context.