

Why a responsible coal mining supply chain matters in a decarbonizing world

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ABSTRACT

The world is rightfully focused on decarbonisation and coal for power generation has become the low hanging fruit to attempt to reduce carbon emissions. Yet coal remains an essential part of the power generation mix in most parts of the world and projected to remain so for a significant amount of time. It is also a key part of industrial processes such as steel and cement manufacturing.

New technologies such as CCS and HELE have a significant role to play in ensuring that the use of coal is responsible and does not contribute so greatly to the increase in global carbon emissions. But the challenge remains that public attention is so focused on ending coal for power that it is losing track of how coal is being mined, processed and transported to the detriment of communities directly impacted by coal mining.

We need to remain pragmatic: the burning of coal in any process is a significant contributor to Co2 emissions. However, this does not mean that we need to stop paying attention to the coal supply chain, no matter what the end use. And to truly change the face of coal, to ensure that coal is produced responsibly, buyers of coal need to face up to the challenge: they need to publicly acknowledge that coal is a vital component of their processes. At the same time, civil society must understand that it can call for an end to unabated coal, but it cannot absolve itself of its responsibility to coal mining communities.

Bettercoal and the Bettercoal Code is the only existing and recognised international standard which can support the end users of coal to ensure that their supply chains are becoming more responsible. It can also ensure through its Member reporting obligations that they increasingly use coal coming from responsible mines

(Specific case study on Indonesia will be included closer to the date)

Key words: coal, value chain, sustainable mining, critical raw materials