



Improving Occupational Health and Safety in Andean Mines

An IRBC covenant collective project for the metals sector to address health and safety risks in the mines of Bolivia and Peru.

Participating parties

Project lead CNV Internationaal, Tata Steel Netherlands, Wupperman Steel Netherlands, Nyrstar and Trafigura started this collaborative project in order to improve occupational health and safety conditions in their supply chains. More parties are welcome to join!

Time span

The project will take place over the course of 2 years, from April 2023 until December 2025, possibly with extension into 2026.

Goals

1. Prevent risks in supply chains

The project Improving Occupational Health and Safety in Andean Mines was initiated in order to identify and address the specific risks associated with mining in the area. These include:



Accidents



Injuries



Work-related illness



(Permanent) disability



Handicaps



Exposure to toxic chemicals



Death rates among workers

2. Increase transparency in the chain

The current state and practices of the metal supply chain lack transparency. It is often unclear where metals come from and where they are headed. This project engages with all stakeholders in the supply chain, from upstream to downstream, from mines to refineries and smelters, which helps to address the information gap on the origins of materials and the conditions in which they are extracted and processed.

3. Learn from experience

Although the focus of this project is on Peru and Bolivia, we expect to be able to apply our findings and experiences to other parts of the metals supply chain. We will take our newly learned lessons to other partners, projects, and parties and to combine efforts and create fair work, in a safe and healthy environments.

Results

We have successfully gained insight into the supply chain by investigating the link between the participating companies and mines in Peru and Bolivia. Suppliers of participating companies have been contacted, mines and smelters have been approached and local stakeholders have been identified. By use of the Fair Work Monitor, the mine workers filled out a survey regarding the health and safety conditions in their workplaces. With the data collected in this survey, explorative conversations have been initiated with the local mining companies and the first drafts of a concrete action plan are taking shape.

The Fair Work Monitor results have shown us that common health and safety risks include:

- Exposure to high levels of particulate matter, gases, fumes and extreme temperatures
- Problems with personal protection equipment (PPE's) and/or maintenance of machinery
- Safety incidents related to a company culture that insufficiently prioritizes health and safety
- Unawareness among staff of established health and safety procedures
- Higher OHS risks for outsourced and indirect workers

"What we're doing isn't only going to benefit our suppliers. The methods we develop, the insights we gain, will benefit other companies in the covenant as well."

Karsten Pronk, Managing Director for Wupperman Steel Netherlands

Where we are now



What to expect for companies joining the project

The project consists of 2 phases: a research phase and an action phase.

Phase 1: Research

When joining the project Improving Occupational Health and Safety in Andean mines, we will start by making an assessment of the supply chain. In this assessment, companies will contact their suppliers in the Andean region and contact will be made with local trade unions. Then, miners will be given a survey on OHS to fill out. The data will be processed, combined with secondary sources and presented to all stakeholders. Based on this report, we will create a joint action plan in multistakeholder conversations to improve health and safety conditions in the mines.

Start up activities

- Maturity Assessment (MAT)/ heatmap and stakeholder analysis



Project steps

- Stakeholder mapping and risk assessment
- Presentation of the report demonstrating the most important findings of the assessment to all relevant stakeholders during a visit to Peru and Bolivia
- Start development of a joint action plan with local stakeholders in Peru and Bolivia
- Present and further communicate research results

Phase 2: Implementing the OHS Action Plan

In the second phase of the project, we will implement the joint action plan for improved OHS. This plan consists of training programmes (for companies and employees), motivational campaigns to prioritize OHS as company culture, expert meetings (for companies and employees) and Fair Work Monitor cycles to monitor the progress of implementation. As we work and learn together, we will construct our "best practices", establish a new standard for OHS and prepare for the future.

"We hope to reach a significant amount of workers in the metal supply chain with this project. Our union partners and country representatives in Latin America are helping us as they collaborate closely with our local teams."

*Maurice van Beers, Strategic Policy Lead
and Regional Coordinator for Latin America at CNV Internationaal*



Join us!

The more stakeholders involved, the better we can create an effective plan for improvement. Together we can achieve the most. Join us now!

Contact us at latinoamerica@cnv.nl.

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More information can be found at www.imvoconvenanten.nl/en/metalsector