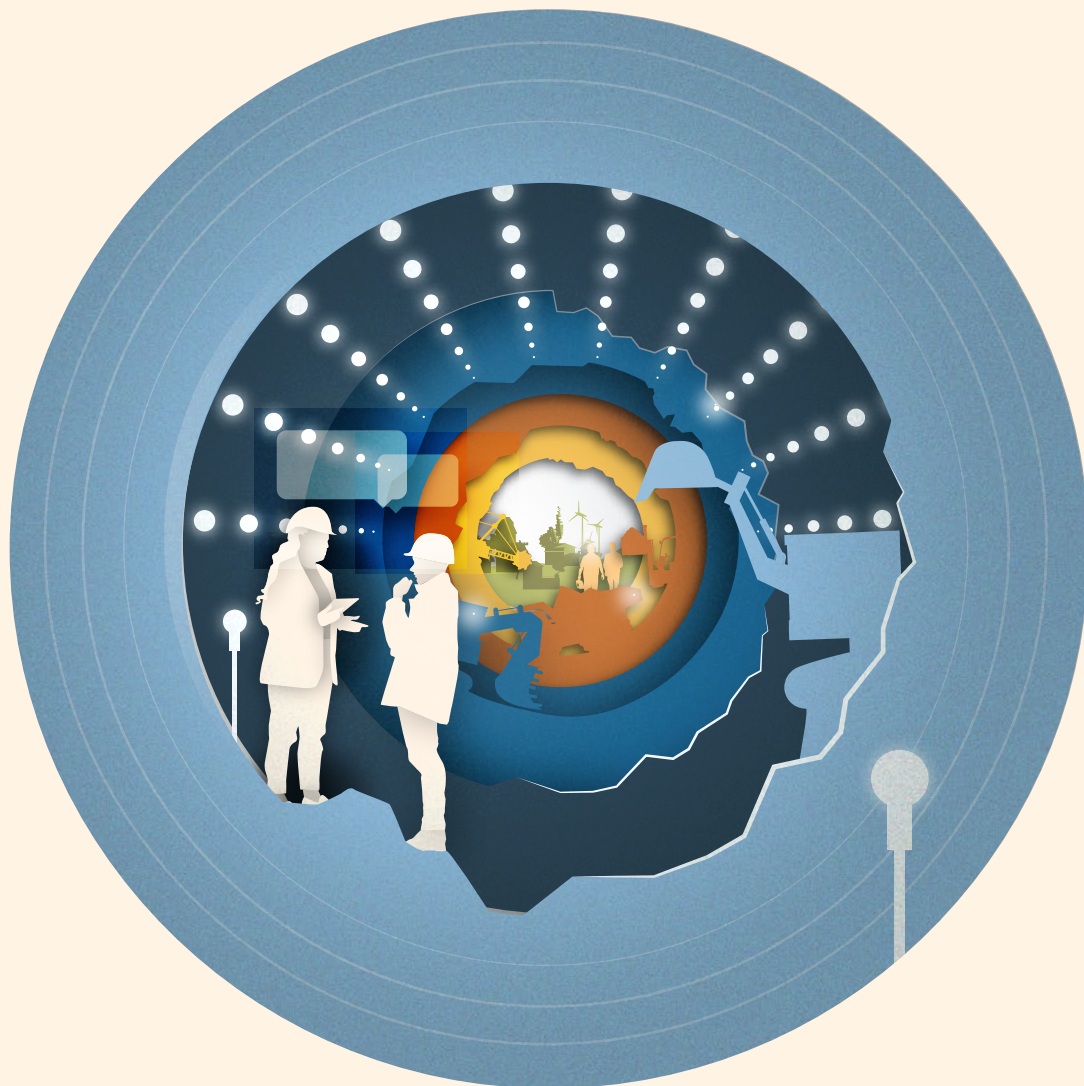


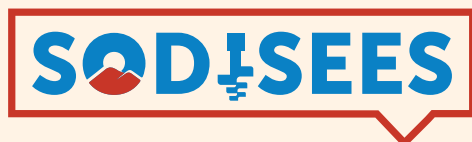
STRENGTHEN SOCIAL DIALOGUE TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN THE EUROPEAN EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Summary report



May 2025





**STRENGTHEN SOCIAL DIALOGUE
TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABLE
PRACTICES IN THE EUROPEAN
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Summary report

INTRODUCTION

Europe stands at a critical juncture. The pursuit of strategic autonomy and the transition to a clean economy require access to minerals and raw materials, yet this imperative cannot come at the expense of workers, communities, or environmental sustainability. The extractive industries sector is essential to Europe's future but under urgent pressure to transform.

At the end of 2023, the social partners Euromines and IndustriAll Europe launched an EU-funded project in the framework of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue to foster social dialogue and improve sustainable practices in European extractive industries. Through desk research, workshops in Sevilla, Stockholm and Katowice, interviews, and surveys conducted by Syndex in collaboration with the social partners, this project identified how social dialogue effectively addresses the sector's sustainability challenges.

Minerals are essential to the transition toward a green economy, yet the extractive sector faces interconnected challenges—from decarbonisation and water conservation to ensuring quality jobs and community engagement. European social partners recognise that environmental and economic goals cannot be achieved in isolation. True sustainability requires addressing the social dimension head-on: making the sector good for workers, advancing inclusion, fostering innovation, developing skills, managing the transition, and establishing robust social dialogue to guarantee decent working conditions and a just transition for all.

This document presents 18 concrete examples showing how social dialogue—at transnational, national, local or company level—supports and accompanies the transformation of the extractive industries.

Social dialogue is a vital but often overlooked tool for making Europe's extractive industries more sustainable and socially fair, as well as safer for workers. Too often, debates about the sector's future focus narrowly on production targets, technology, or environmental compliance, while overlooking the social infrastructure that makes transformation possible. Yet the evidence is clear: responsibly sourced raw materials for Europe's autonomy require social as well as environmental and economic solutions. Through meaningful dialogue between employers and workers, and with

policymakers and communities, it is possible to improve working conditions, strengthen outcomes, and build trust and long-term resilience in the sector.

These examples prove a fundamental political truth: social dialogue is not a constraint or a procedural formality—it is a strategic asset for the future of European mining and a necessity for Europe’s future. The practices documented here show that sustainability, competitiveness, and social justice are not competing priorities but mutually reinforcing. Where social dialogue is genuinely implemented, it contributes to fairer, more inclusive and sustainable practices, enabling smoother transitions, reducing conflict, attracting talent, and strengthening the sector’s license to operate.

The choice before Europe is clear: pursue a transformation that leaves workers and communities behind—risking conflict, skills shortages, public opposition, and environmental harm—or recognise social dialogue as the foundation for a socially just sector. The 18 examples that follow highlight successful cases where dialogue has proven key to transforming European mining into a sector that supports both sustainability and fairness for the future

Note: This document is a condensed version of the full report titled “**Strengthen social dialogue to improve sustainable practices in the European extractive industries**”. It highlights selected examples and key findings.

The complete report is available online at: [\[https://news.industrial-europe.eu/p/sodisees-responsible-and-sustainable-mining-in-europe-through-social-dialogue\]](https://news.industrial-europe.eu/p/sodisees-responsible-and-sustainable-mining-in-europe-through-social-dialogue)

ERAMET GLOBAL FORUM: TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Location: **France / Global**
Stakeholders: **Employers**
and **unions**



The Eramet Global Forum extends the concept of **European Works Councils (EWC)** to a global scale, responding to the growing internationalisation of the economy and the need for social dialogue beyond national borders.

Eramet

the first mining group globally to set up a transnational social dialogue body (2023)

Employee representatives from **France (including New Caledonia), Gabon, Norway, Senegal, and Argentina**

EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Location: **EU**

Stakeholders: **Workers' representatives (industriAll Europe) and various employers' associations (Euromines, Euracoal, IMA-Europe, Aggregates Europe – UEPG, APEP)**

Formalised in 1998 - One of 44 existing committees at the European sectoral level.

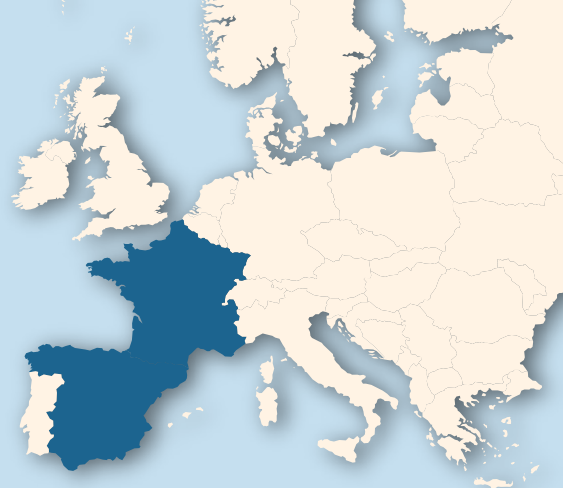


Through consensus, **24 joint opinions were delivered to the European Commission**, uniting workers and employers on climate, training, health, and Just Transition

Sectoral Social Dialogue driving progress in Europe through a unique EU platform where trade unions and employers join forces to:

- Strengthen health & safety at work
- Bridge skills gaps for the green & digital transitions
- Track and influence major EU strategies linked to the Green Deal and future of raw materials industries

THE PROCEDURE OF "PUBLIC DEBATE" AND ITS ASSOCIATED INSTITUTION, CNDP



Location: **France & Spain**
Stakeholders: **CNDP**
(**Commission Nationale du Débat Public**), **CFDT**
trade union (various
federations and regional
unions), **Syndex** and
local stakeholders in
France, social partners
and civil society
organisations in Spain

France: Public debate is a participatory and deliberative democratic mechanism, governed by the French Environment Code. It ensures citizens and stakeholders play an active role in shaping decisions on major industrial projects.

Spain:

in Puertollano,
restoration work on an
olive grove area
increased **olive trees**
from:

7,000

27,000

providing a
livelihood for
nearly:

from:
40

100
families



A concrete example of how public debate leads to tangible social and environmental benefits.

In France and Spain, public debate which includes trade unions and civil society ensures transparency and inclusiveness. By giving stakeholders full access to information and real influence, industrial projects address social, environmental, and economic concerns more responsibly.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF SOCIAL PARTNERS IN THE STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE MINING IN ANDALUSIA 2030

Location: **Spain (Andalusia)**
Stakeholders: **Andalusia regional government, employers' organisations, and trade unions.**



Strategy for **Sustainable Mining in Andalusia 2030** (SSMA 2030) was approved on **1 June 2021**



Social partners directly represented in the working group

SSMA 2030 is a **governance model that puts people at the centre of mining policy**. It ensures environmental, economic, and social sustainability by actively including employers and trade unions in shaping, implementing, and monitoring the regional strategy. The direct involvement of social partners guarantees that the strategy is **socially inclusive, environmentally responsible, and territorially integrated**.

INITIATIVE FOR RESPONSIBLE MINING ASSURANCE (IRMA STANDARD)

Location: **Global**

Stakeholders: **Mining companies, NGOs, trade unions and affected communities.**



Created in 2006

Published a draft version of its standards for responsible mining.

2014

Developed through a **public consultation** process with over **2,000 comments from over 100 individuals/organisations.**



October 2023

94 sites were engaged in the IRMA process globally, with **10 sites** having an independent Assessment Completed status.



IRMA'S 4 PRINCIPLES:

- 1. BUSINESS INTEGRITY**
- 2. PLANNING FOR POSITIVE LEGACIES**
- 3. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- 4. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

IRMA is a globally recognised standard for responsible mining, defining best practices for social and environmental responsibility. It includes workers' perspective and emphasises working conditions and respect for community rights.

EMILI PROJECT: IMERY'S LITHIUM MINING PROJECT

Location: **France (Beauvoir)**
Stakeholders: **Project promoter (Imerys), CNDP (Commission Nationale du Débat Public), civil society organisations, trade unions, local and regional authorities, and IRMA auditors**

The EMILI project aims to be the **1st European mining project to reach IRMA's standard**, with a projected operational **lifespan of 25 years**

First mining project in Metropolitan France, aiming to reduce dependence on external raw material sources



The **EMILI project** sets a benchmark for **social dialogue** by adopting the rigorous IRMA standard from the very beginning. Covering all phases (study, consultation, exploitation, and post-mining), this approach ensures **high transparency** and **continuous stakeholder engagement** throughout the mine's lifecycle.

ERAMET GLOBAL CARE

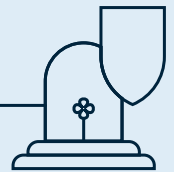
Location: **France**
Stakeholders: **Social partners**
Main Objective: **Align social
dialogue and concrete
outputs in social protection.**

Applies to Eramet employees across
13 countries where the Group has
subsidiaries



Common set of guarantees in 3
main areas:

- **death cover**



- **health and
prevention**



- **maternity and
women's
conditions**



In June 2024, Eramet and its Global Forum composed of workers' and employers' representatives launched Eramet Global Care, a worldwide social protection programme covering health, death, prevention, maternity, and women's conditions, demonstrating a commitment to raising living standards for all workers.

NEPSI SOCIAL DIALOGUE AGREEMENT ON CRYSTALLINE SILICA

Location: **Europe**

Stakeholders: **European Social Partners and European Institutions**

Main Objective: **Protect workers' health and minimise exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS).**

Key points of the agreement: **protect employees' health, minimise and prevent exposure to respirable crystalline silica, raise awareness and knowledge of potential health effects of RCS.**

This European multi-sectoral agreement puts social dialogue at its core, bringing together workers and employers to protect employees from respirable crystalline silica. Through shared best practices, a Good Practice Guide, and KPIs to monitor progress, it shows how structured dialogue can set and achieve high health and safety standards across Europe.



THE SWEDISH MODEL

Location: **Sweden**

Stakeholders: **Sectoral social partners**

Main Objective: **Demonstrate that a system founded on regular collective bargaining, without legal regulation, can provide strong outcomes.**

Sweden 3rd place in Europe for employee well-being (Eurofound's ECS study, 2019)

85% of organisations conduct occupational risk assessments, compared to 75% EU-27 average (EU-OSHA ESENER survey 2019)

1931
Adalen riots

1997
Manufacturing Industry Agreement

2015
AFS 2015: 4 introduced provision on the organisational and social work environment, with legal force. Collective agreements are negotiated periodically.

The Swedish model shows how voluntary collective agreements and strong social dialogue, built on trust and cooperation, lead to good working conditions, high worker involvement in risk assessment, and influence on emerging legal standards.



BELGIUM: EWC DRIVING OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



Two major Belgian lime groups (Lhoist and Carmeuse), each with **100+ sites** and **between 5,300 and 6,650 employees**

Lhoist : **5-day English language and specialised training** for representatives over 2 years to improve dialogue between countries' representatives

Lhoist's Green Lime project involves **4 select committee meetings** with OHS focus

Carmeuse: **annual site visits and PPE benchmarking exercises**

Location: **Belgium**
Stakeholders: **Management and trade unions**
Main Objective: **Share best practices in the European Works Council, with a focus on Occupational Health and Safety.**

The EWCs showcase effective **social dialogue**, with health and safety issues central to discussions. Investments in language and specialised training (Lhoist) and practices like focus on OSH meetings and PPE benchmarking (Carmeuse) demonstrate a collaborative commitment to health and safety and cross-country knowledge sharing, going beyond formal agreements.

MINING SAFETY COMMISSION

Location: **Spain**

Stakeholders: **Trade unions, employers' organisations, mining authorities, technical experts**

Main Objective: **Establish a permanent technical commission to improve occupational health and safety in the mining sector, with direct trade union involvement.**



Commission members include **six technicians appointed by trade unions.**



Responsibilities cover studying **safe mine operation, accident prevention, promoting safety campaigns, advising mining authorities, drawing up regulations, and approving mining equipment.**



This institutional mechanism stands out as a best practice by embedding trade union-appointed technicians directly into the regulatory process. Their involvement ensures that workers' perspectives shape safety standards, leading to more effective policies and stronger implementation.

SECTORAL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT ON WORKING TIME

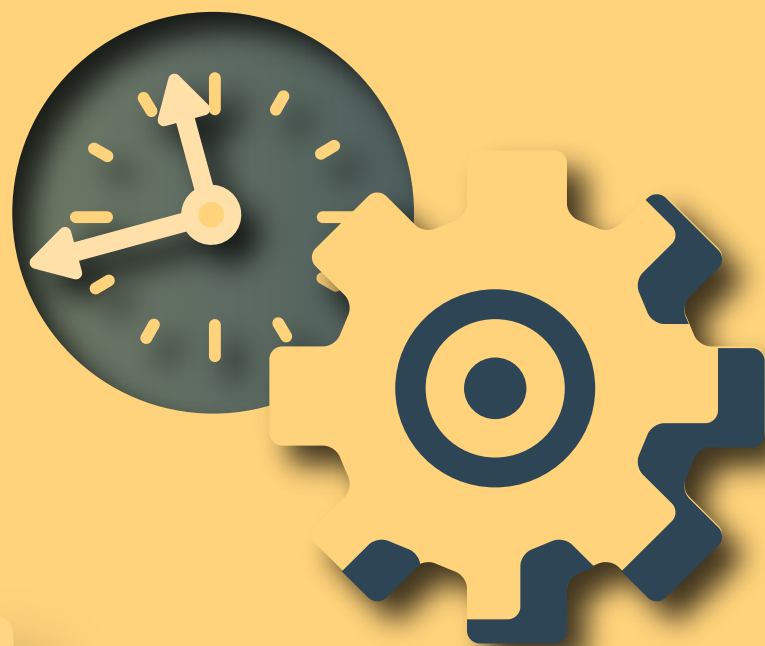
Location: **Belgium**

Stakeholders: **Employers' organisations and trade unions**

Main Objective: **Improve working time arrangements and introduce additional paid leave.**



- Average working time set at 36 hours/week across the sector.
- At Lhoist and Carmeuse: 35 hours/week officially, 40 hours in practice with 30 days of compensatory leave + 20 days of annual leave + 2 extra paid days off.
- Significant improvement in work-life balance.



This sectoral agreement shows how social dialogue can go beyond legal standards to deliver tangible benefits for workers. By negotiating reduced working hours and generous leave, it enhances well-being and sets a benchmark for responsible employment practices in the extractive sector.

STRENGTHENING SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN MINING THROUGH THE EU MINIMUM WAGE DIRECTIVE

Location: **Hungary**

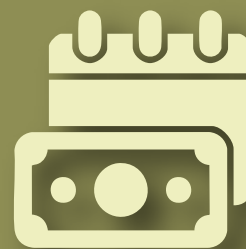
Stakeholders: **Employers' and workers' organisations and the government**

Main Objective: **Boost collective bargaining in the mining sector by aligning with the EU Minimum Wage Directive.**



A joint committee of **10 members (5 per social partner)** was created to lead negotiations.

Hungary's collective bargaining coverage is **below 80%**, triggering an action plan under the EU directive.



Tripartite agreement signed:

- Minimum wage to increase by **9% in 2025, 13% in 2026, and 14% in 2027.**
- Guaranteed minimum wage to rise by **7% in 2025.**

This example shows how EU-level initiatives can catalyse national action. Through structured dialogue and joint commitment, Hungary is strengthening wage policies and promoting fair working conditions in the mining sector.

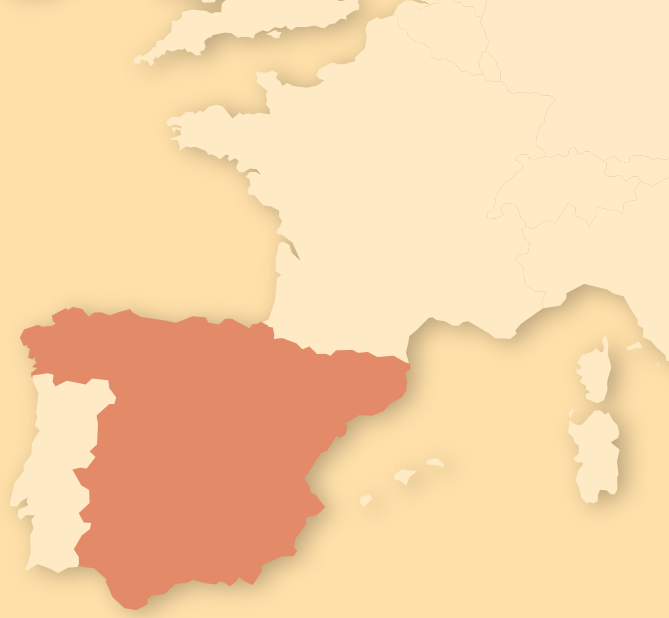


EQUALITY PLANS

Location: **Spain**

Stakeholders: **Social partners, companies and government**

Main Objective: **Require companies to promote gender equality through a regulatory framework.**



Phase 1. Launch of the process of drawing up the equality plan: Communication and opening of negotiations and constitution of the negotiating committee.

Phase 2. Diagnosis: compilation and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to determine the degree of integration of equality between women and men in the company.

Phase 3. Design, approval and registration of the equality plan: definition of objectives, design of measures, establishment of monitoring and evaluation indicators, implementation schedule, approval and registration of the plan.

Phase 4. Implementation and monitoring of the equality plan: verification of the degree of development and fulfilment of the measures and evaluation of results.

Phase 5. Evaluation of the equality plan: assessment of the degree to which the objectives have been achieved, the results and the impact the plan has had on the company.

Required for companies with **50 or more employees**, or when established by collective agreement or labour authority.

Process involves **five phases** from launch to evaluation: workers' representatives and/or trade unions participate **in all phases**.

Phase 1. Launch of the process of drawing up the equality plan: Communication and opening of negotiations and constitution of the negotiating committee.

Phase 3. Design, approval and registration of the equality plan: During the design of the equality plan, the trade unions participate in the definition of objectives, specific measures and implementation schedules.

Phase 4. Implementation and monitoring of the equality plan: in this phase, the unions work together with the company to ensure that the established measures are carried out as planned. They also act as intermediaries to resolve any conflicts or difficulties that may arise.

Phase 5. Evaluation of the equality plan: The trade unions participate in the periodic evaluation of the equality plan, analysing the results obtained and proposing improvements to address new needs or challenges.

Spanish Equality Plans are a best practice in inclusive policymaking. They require continuous involvement of trade unions across all five phases – design, implementation, and evaluation – ensuring gender equality measures are co-created, effectively applied, and constantly improved. This approach goes beyond compliance to foster real inclusion and diverse workplaces.

TERRITORIAL JUST TRANSITION PLANS

Location: **Poland**

Stakeholders: **Trade unions, government and European Commission**

Main Objective: **Ensure a just and socially responsible transition in coal and energy-intensive regions.**



5 Territorial Just Transition Plans were fully approved by the European Commission in **December 2022**



Several social agreements have been signed **since 2020** (e.g., on hard coal mining, electricity sector, and lignite mining)

Social Agreement for energy workers and lignite miners and solutions in the form of social protections

holiday for energy workers -
for up to 4 years = 80% of the employee's monthly remuneration for holiday leave

holiday for miners - for up to 4 years = 80% of the employee's monthly remuneration calculated as remuneration for holiday leave

one-off cash severance pay = 12
times the employee's monthly remuneration calculated as remuneration for holiday leave (min. 5 years of work experience required)

The condition for receiving subsidies for holidays and one-off severance pay will be the shutdown of a conventional generating unit (power unit) or a systemic reduction in brown coal extraction.

The process depends on the development of new energy sources and is extended until 2049.

Poland's Territorial Just Transition Plans show how strong social dialogue between trade unions, government, and the EU can drive transitions. Through multiple social agreements, the plans prioritise worker protection and long-term planning for a fair energy transition.

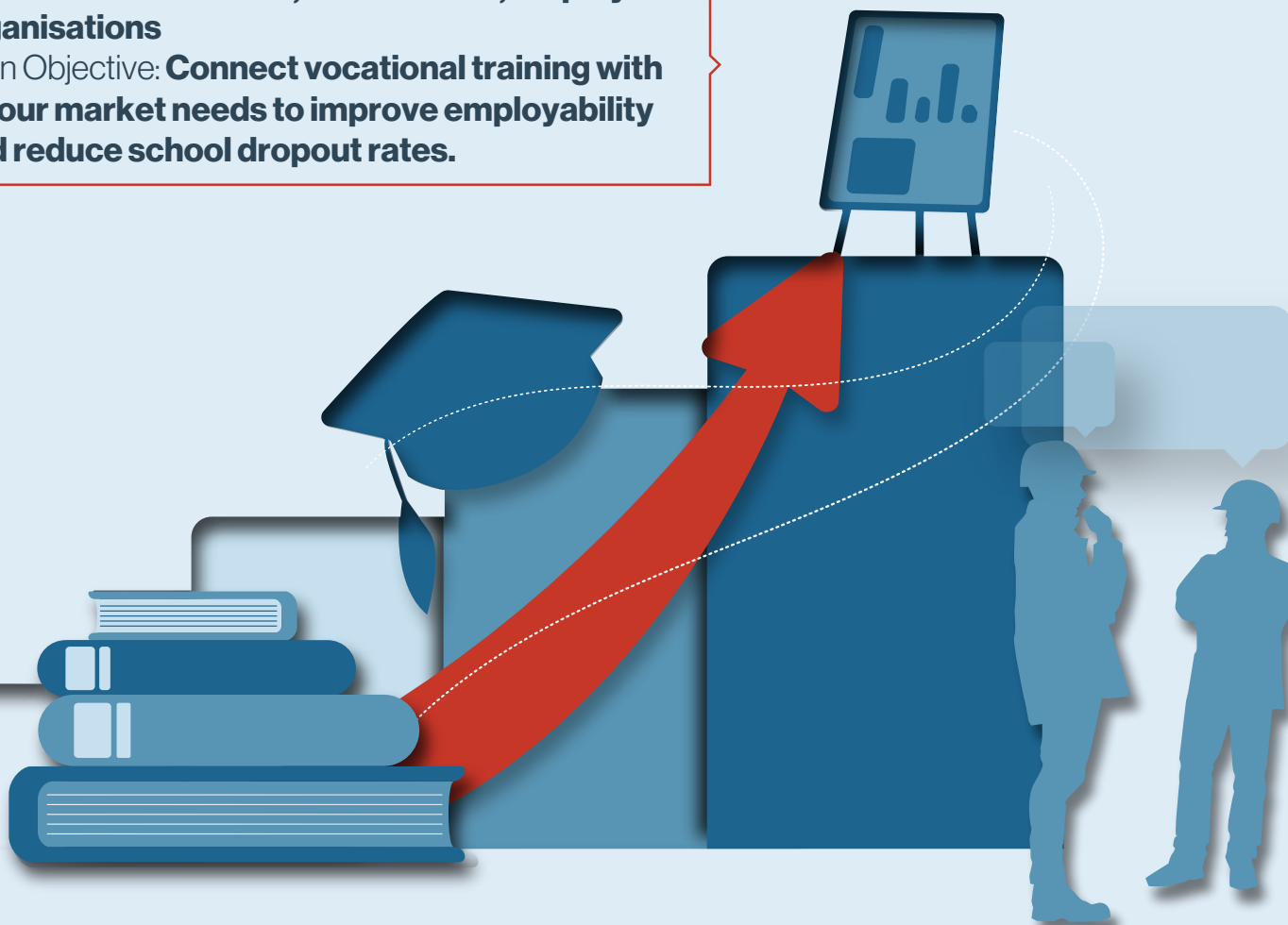
DUAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING



Location: **Spain**

Stakeholders: **Educational institutions, companies, public administrations, trade unions, employers' organisations**

Main Objective: **Connect vocational training with labour market needs to improve employability and reduce school dropout rates.**



Dual Vocational Training model developed **since 2012.**



Offers specialised qualifications in mining and geology (e.g. Mineral Resource Exploitation, Rock Drilling and Blasting).



Internships with major companies like Acciona, Ferrovial, Minera Los Frailes, and Roca across multiple regions.

Spain's Dual Vocational Training model is a best practice in multi-stakeholder collaboration. By involving schools, companies, public authorities, trade unions, and employers' organisations, it aligns training with labour market needs—boosting employability, reducing dropout rates, and preparing skilled professionals for the evolving extractive industries.

JUST TRANSITION AGREEMENT

COAL MINING SECTOR

Location: **Spain**

Stakeholders: **Spanish government, trade unions (CCOO, UGT, USO), coal industry (Carbuni3n), European Commission**

Main Objective: **Regenerate mining regions and promote sustainable development following the coal phase-out.**



Just Transition Strategy adopted in **2019**.



Framework Agreement for a Just Transition of Coal Mining and the sustainable development of the Mining Regions, **2019-2027**.



Includes aid for affected workers, creation of a labour pool, government support for area conversion, and a Restoration Plan.

This tripartite agreement shows how structured social dialogue can deliver a fair and sustainable transition. It combines economic regeneration, worker protection, and environmental responsibility—ensuring no one is left behind in the shift to a greener economy.

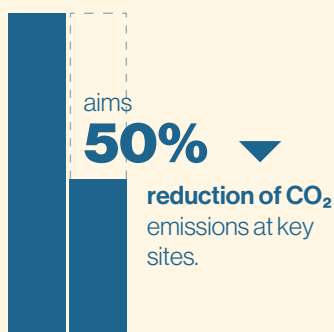


WERRA 2060 PROJECT TO MODERNISE THE MINE AND ITS INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES

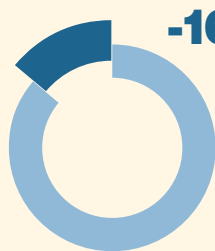
Location: **Germany**

Stakeholders: **Management, trade unions, local authorities**

Main Objective: **Modernise mining operations while reducing environmental footprint, ensuring job security, and supporting long-term regional value creation through active social dialogue.**



from **1.2** million m³/year.



Plans to reduce
saline wastewater

to **1.0** million m³/year.

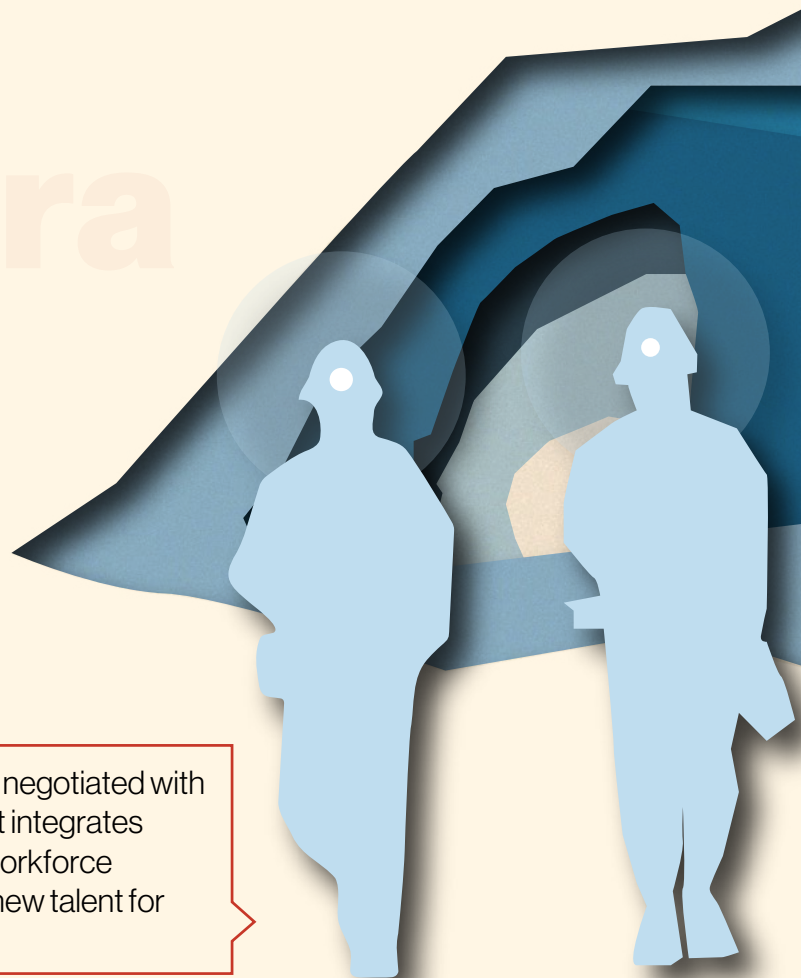


Involves an investment of
€600 million, expected
to be amortised in less
than 10 years.

Projected to generate
**over €500 million in
net present added
value.**

The Werra 2060 project

Werra 2060 is a best practice in mine modernisation, negotiated with trade unions to ensure a just and inclusive transition. It integrates environmental goals, technological innovation, and workforce planning — upskilling current workers and attracting new talent for long-term regional development.



SODISEES

SODISEES

