

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR SEMINAR ON

JUST TRANSITION: FUTURE OF COAL & PATHWAYS TO LOW CARBON FOOTPRINT

Date and Time: 31st January, 2024; 10:00 a.m. - 06:00 p.m
Venue: Novotel Hotel, New Town, Kolkata

Amid global climate change challenges, India is at the forefront of the transition to a sustainable future. With vast coal reserves and reliance on coal, India faces unique opportunities and challenges in reducing emissions and ensuring socio-economic well-being in coal-dependent communities. The heavy reliance of the national economy on the coal sector prompts one to reflect on associated risks to livelihoods, infrastructure, the environment, state revenues, and overall quality of life in coal dependent regions. Advocating for a transition in the energy sector which is just (with an emphasis on equity and inclusivity) considering the diverse impacts on workers, vulnerable communities, the environment, and associated industries, is essential. Given this context, it is worth highlighting that TERI has drafted a Just Transition Framework with the aim to guide future policies and action basis an in-depth research on coal and coal dependent ecosystem. Through this framework TERI aims to offer sustainable pathways for building resilience.

In collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad, TERI is organizing a one-day seminar on Just Transition. The goal of the seminar is to facilitate multistakeholder engagements on repurposing of coal mining infrastructure, coal-consuming MSMEs, energy transition issues, and strategies for diversifying the fossil fuel-based economy, encouraging cross-learning, mutual deliberation, and the development of a roadmap for an equitable future.

The seminar will include the following segments to enable a productive deliberation:

Thematic session I: Repurposing of closed mines, and diversification of the local economy

Regions bearing coal are characterised by socio-economic dependence on the coal sector, leading to monoculture societies that impact livelihoods, infrastructure, the environment, state revenues, and overall quality of life. Repurposing of coal mine assets would enable local communities to benefit from a broader choice of income earning potential and break out of the cycle of dependence on the coal mono-economy.



Thematic session II: Balancing economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability: Green Transition for Coal-Dependent MSMEs

Five MSME sectors are crucial for mitigation of GHG emissions from coal viz. direct reduction of iron (DRI) /sponge iron, brick, textile processing, steel re-rolling mills (SRRM) and foundry. Since most MSMEs have limited experience in energy transition, there is a greater need for greater consultation with all the stakeholders (governments, industry, education & training institutes, NGOs) to enhance the understanding of the barriers and possible remedial measures.

Thematic session III: Reskilling & upskilling for Green Jobs – Opportunities & Challenges as the Coal Sector Transitions to a low-carbon economy

Efficiently transitioning from traditional to clean fuel-based energy generation requires prioritizing the welfare of coal mine workers, particularly informal contractual labor and those employed in jobs induced by the coal economy. This involves implementing a comprehensive strategy, including the creation of a skill development action plan to tackle economic vulnerabilities and the establishment of a reskilling framework for the successful rehabilitation of local communities dependent on coal.

Plenary session: Charting a Sustainable Path: Co-creating Action for a Low-Carbon, Resilient Future in the coal sector

The final part of the seminar aims to synthesize shared perspectives and reach a unified understanding on the theme, fostering collective action and collaboration. A presentation by TERI on its Just Transition Framework would spearhead the discussion on how a sustainable, low-carbon future can be charted out. Anticipated outcomes include a commitment to sustained engagement and a phased action agenda, shaping the trajectory towards an inclusive pathway for a sustainable future.

