



International
Labour
Office

A just transition towards a resilient and sustainable rural economy

**DECENT WORK IN THE RURAL ECONOMY
POLICY GUIDANCE NOTES**

A just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all will enhance the ability of societies to manage natural resources sustainably, adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, face environmental challenges, foster climate resilience, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Inclusive mitigation and adaptation measures are crucial for building sustainable and resilient societies and economies. Promoting green jobs has been identified as one of the pathways to the success of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Greening the rural economy is central to the promotion of decent and sustainable employment opportunities, enhancing resource and labour productivity, and fostering poverty eradication and social inclusion. The ILO provides policy advice, implements projects, and supports the capacities of its constituents in their efforts to turn the environmental challenges facing rural economies into opportunities for sustainable development. Yet there are still knowledge, policy, and implementation gaps in moving towards a more systematic and comprehensive strategy for a just transition that links environmental sustainability and gender equality with all dimensions of the Decent Work Agenda.



1. Rationale and justification

Addressing climate change and the environmental dimension of sustainable development is imperative for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A just transition towards environmentally and socially sustainable economies and societies in the rural economy is central to enhancing resource and labour productivity, boosting poverty eradication, increasing income-generation opportunities and the creation of green jobs, and improving social inclusion and human well-being. The report of the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, *Work for a Brighter Future*, stresses that rural economies are particularly vulnerable to climate change and are among the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. The report underscores the urgent need to promote access to clean, affordable and renewable energy in rural areas.¹

Some 1.2 billion workers worldwide, many of whom live and work in rural areas, depend on ecosystem services in sectors that are key to the transition to a green economy, such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, tourism, renewable energy, and water.² These sectors are all vital for achieving decent work in the rural economy. In some regions over 60 per cent of working women are employed in agriculture; an estimated 350 million people, many of them indigenous and tribal peoples, depend on forests for their livelihoods; and more than 180 million people rely on fisheries, many in rural coastal communities.³

Ecosystems and the services and benefits they provide are increasingly threatened by climate change and the excessive use of and degradation of land, water, and other natural resources.⁴ For example, the rise in the global average temperature is associated with widespread climatic changes and will affect the production of many crops, such as maize, wheat, rice, cocoa, coffee, and tea. Deforestation is reducing biodiversity and the carbon sequestration capacity of forests, while overfishing is disturbing marine life balance. Exposure to extreme heat and drought is making some localities unviable and dangerous for workers.

These and other environmental challenges have a negative impact on the productivity, employment, working conditions and incomes of workers, employers, and producers in rural areas, and are further accentuated by unsustainable production practices.⁵ Such impacts are particularly severe for women, young people, and groups vulnerable to discrimination such as indigenous and tribal peoples, migrants, and workers in the informal economy, as well as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Those in rural areas who live in poverty and depend highly on natural resources and ecosystems such as soil, forests, water, fish stocks and ecosystem services for their livelihoods, are in many cases more exposed to natural hazards and disasters and lack access to adequate social protection to mitigate losses associated to natural disasters.⁶ Environmental degradation increases inequalities and can lead to migration and increase vulnerabilities to discrimination. The report of the Global Commission recognizes the importance of investing more in the green economy in order to make the future of work more inclusive.

Many environmental challenges and opportunities have strong gender dimensions, which need to be taken into account in the development of policies and programmes for a just transition.⁷ As women in rural areas often work in sectors that depend on natural resources, they are disproportionately affected by the adverse impact of environmental degradation and climate change.⁸ This may further widen the gender gap in terms of sectoral and occupational segregation.⁹ As acknowledged in the Paris Agreement, a just transition towards sustainability can only be achieved if the action taken to address climate change respects and promotes gender equality, the empowerment of women, and intergenerational equity.¹⁰ In addition, involving women in decision making related to policies and measures promoting sustainability can enhance gender equality in the world of work and promote effective mitigation and adaptation.

¹ ILO: *Work for a brighter future – Global Commission on the Future of Work*, Geneva, 2019.

² ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, Geneva, 2018, p. 19.

³ ILO/IOE/ITUC/UNEP: *Women at Work: Trends 2016*, ILO, Geneva, 2016; *Sustaining Forests – A development strategy*, World Bank, Washington, 2004; *Working towards sustainable development opportunities for decent work and social inclusion in a green economy*, ILO, Geneva, 2012.

⁴ Ecosystem services refer to provisioning services (e.g. food, water and timber); regulating services (e.g. controlling climate and disease; supporting services such as nutrient cycling and crop pollination); and cultural services (e.g. spiritual, cultural and recreational benefits). See Chapter 1 of *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, ILO, Geneva, 2018.

⁵ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, ILO, Geneva, 2018, p.24.

⁶ ILO: *The future of work in a changing natural environment: Climate change, degradation and sustainability*, Geneva, 2018, Chapters 3 and 4.

⁷ ILO: *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, Geneva, 2015.

⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Council. 2018. *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls*. ECOSOC, Commission on the Status of Women, 2018, agreed conclusions. E/CN.6/2018/L.8

⁹ ILO: *Gender, labour and just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, ILO, Geneva, 2017.

¹⁰ UNFCCC. Paris Agreement, Paris, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015.

A just transition towards a resilient and sustainable rural economy

A just transition and the greening of the rural economy can act as new engines for growth and strong drivers for decent work creation if the right policies and measures are adopted. The Paris Agreement recognizes the need to address the impact on the world of work of the move to sustainable low carbon levels by “taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”.¹¹

Policies promoting a just transition will need to be environmentally sensitive while advancing decent work: they need to take into account climate risks and must include climate-smart strategies to prevent, mitigate, and adapt to the impact of climate change; initiatives are also needed to preserve, restore, and enhance the quality of the environment across rural areas. One such measure would be to support the creation of green jobs – decent jobs that generate sufficient returns and income, and which decrease the consumption of energy, raw materials and natural resources, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, minimize the production of waste and pollution, protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity, and help adapt to climate change.

Box 1: Green and decent jobs

Green jobs are decent jobs that help preserve and restore the environment, in both traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, and in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency. Green jobs help:

- improve energy and raw materials efficiency
- limit greenhouse gas emissions
- minimize waste and pollution
- protect and restore ecosystems
- support adaptation to the effects of climate change.

For further information, see www.ilo.org/greenjobs.

2. Scope and definitions

Some policy areas that are central to rural economies and which can become engines for resilient and sustainable economic transformation are outlined below. These are areas in which the ILO has accumulated solid policy and project experience, building comparative advantage to promote sustainable socio-economic development. The policy measures outlined below would require the participation of a wide range of actors and stakeholders in rural communities who would benefit from them, including agricultural producers and their organizations; workers and their organizations; employers and their organizations; service providers; central, regional and local authorities; indigenous and tribal peoples; youth; and women.

(a) Powering the rural economy through access to clean energy

Lack of access to modern sources of energy is widespread in rural areas of developing countries and hampers economic growth, jobs, and livelihoods. It is estimated that 1.1 billion people still live without access to electricity. This represents 14 per cent of the world’s population, and 84 per cent of these people live in rural areas.¹² The job creation potential represented by the production and supply of clean energy systems is significant for rural economies. Sources of renewable energy, such as solar, wind, biomass and geothermal sources, are easily tapped in many rural areas.¹³ Since it is more affordable and offers an economically

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² United Nations, Economic and Social Council. 2018: *The role of science, technology and innovation in increasing substantially the share of renewable energy by 2030*. Commission on Science and Technology for Development: Report of the Secretary-General, E/CN.16/2018/2.

¹³ IEA: *Energy Access Outlook: From Poverty to Prosperity*, Paris, 2017, p. 50.

A just transition towards a resilient and sustainable rural economy

effective solution for rural populations, energy using such sources can be produced both on a large or small scale using locally available resources, and is well adapted for production and use in rural areas.¹⁴ It can create good revenues for producers, land rents for installations, and jobs in the construction, operation, maintenance and distribution of the systems. Importantly, access to affordable energy makes possible a range of other productive activities, in particular food processing, storage, and the transport of agricultural products. Many of those jobs can be attractive to youth, as they require advanced skills and may offer better income earning opportunities. Early experience suggests that young women and men can benefit from opportunities to set up or engage in new energy service companies serving rural communities, provided they have access to such opportunities, for example by establishing cooperatives whose democratic governance structure and potential to create local employment can help promote access to clean energy in rural areas.¹⁵

(b) Revitalizing sustainable agriculture

Agriculture is the second greatest source of employment worldwide after services.¹⁶ In least developed and lower middle-income countries in 2017 the sector employed some 70 and 40 per cent of the working population respectively, and accounted for 16 per cent of employment in upper middle-income countries and 3 per cent in developed countries.¹⁷ Agriculture has the highest concentration of working poor in least developed countries, further exacerbating the challenges involved in ensuring sustainable agricultural growth.¹⁸ Agricultural activities are adversely affected by climate change, but they also contribute to it and to environmental degradation, including soil degradation and deforestation. Farming can be highly resource-intensive, using over 70 per cent of available freshwater globally.¹⁹ Together with forestry and land use change, it is estimated to contribute up to 31 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.²⁰ Conventional farming practices that depend on the intensive use of pesticides and fertilizers are a major health hazard for workers, causing an estimated 200,000

acute poisoning deaths each year and various occupational illnesses such as cancer.²¹

A major challenge is to produce food in more efficient and sustainable ways, reducing resource use, food waste and food loss, and ensuring fair incomes and decent working conditions for those employed in agriculture, while improving productivity to guarantee future food security. It is estimated that approximately 49 per cent more food will be required by 2050 to feed an anticipated world population of 9.7 billion,²² and it is important to ensure that this increase in production is both environmentally sustainable and takes into account the principles of decent work. The expansion of agricultural extension services, for example, can facilitate the adoption of new seeds and technologies, and combined with improved farming practices it can result in increased productivity and the greening of agriculture among smallholder farmers. Yields in rain-fed agriculture in some regions are dependent on seasonal precipitation patterns and are highly variable, or they are delayed as a result of climate change. These problems can severely affect productivity.²³ To achieve sustainable rural development, it is vital to address the relation between agriculture and climate change, and, inter alia, to promote sustainable agricultural approaches, in addition to ensuring respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, an enabling business environment, adequate rural infrastructure, and access to productive assets, markets, and financial services. Sustainable agricultural practices include climate-smart agriculture, the promotion of zero-waste food production systems, and encouraging a circular economy. For example, supporting alternative crop cultivation, ensuring access to crop insurance and the promotion of rural non-farm economic activities will aid the shift towards sustainable, climate-resilient and economically diversified rural economies.²⁴

(c) Fostering sustainable tourism

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors. Rural destinations, including protected areas, are gaining popularity due to their slower pace of life, locally grown foods, and natural environment. Tourism has significant economic, social and employment potential for rural areas, both directly through jobs in the sector, and indirectly through supportive sourcing industries such as construction, agriculture, fishing, food

¹⁴ OECD: *Linking Renewable Energy to Rural Development: Executive Summary Brief for Policy Makers*, Paris, 2011.

¹⁵ ILO: *Working towards sustainable development Opportunities for decent work and social inclusion in a green economy*, Geneva, 2012, Chapter 5; ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, Geneva, 2018, p. 61; and ILO: *Providing clean energy and energy access through cooperatives*, Geneva, 2013.

¹⁶ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Transforming jobs to end poverty*, Geneva, 2016.

¹⁷ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2018*, Geneva, 2018, p. 30.

¹⁸ FAO: *The future of food and agriculture – Trends and challenges*, Rome, 2017.

¹⁹ Ibid; and FAO (2014) statistics based on global emissions from 2010. Available at <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

²⁰ IPCC: *Climate Change 2014. Synthesis Report*.

²¹ United Nations Human Rights Council, 2017: *Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food (Effects of pesticides on the right to food)*, 27 February–24 March 2017. <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/7session/A-HRC-7-5.doc>; and World Health Organization: *The public health impact of chemicals: knowns and unknowns*, 2016.

²² FAO: *The future of food and agriculture – Trends and challenges*, Rome, 2017, p. 46.

²³ Ibid, p. 5.

²⁴ FAO: *Sourcebook on Climate-Smart Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries*, 2013.

A just transition towards a resilient and sustainable rural economy

processing, furniture, handicrafts, transport, utilities, and other services, including payments for environmental services. However, the tourism sector is vulnerable to environmental challenges and the effects of climate change. For example, the ongoing rise in sea-level and sea temperature is already having an impact on tourism products and infrastructure, including biodiversity loss and damage to natural resources in destinations. Changing climate and weather patterns can reduce the attractiveness of a destination and affect tourists' travel decisions, which will negatively impact tourism businesses and employment opportunities for local communities.

In order for tourism to be sustainable, it needs to ensure that local natural resources are not excessively exploited and that tourism provides economic benefits to local communities.²⁵ Adaptation and mitigation strategies must be implemented to cope with climate change and ensure sustainability in the sector, including investments in more resilient infrastructure and the diversification of services and products to become less climate-dependent. Targeted categories of tourism such as ecotourism, agrotourism, and cultural tourism in nature-based destinations can diversify rural economies and offer positive perspectives for new sources of employment promoting the achievement of a just transition.²⁶

(d) Restoring ecosystems and developing assets for improved productivity, income and resilience

Green works (i.e. infrastructure and related work that have direct environmental benefits or respond to specific environmental contexts such as changes in climate and extreme weather events) in rural areas can be an effective strategy for job creation, the protection of vulnerable livelihoods, productive assets, and restoration of natural capital.²⁷ Green works are helping build more climate-resilient infrastructure in response to climate change risks. As stated in the ILO *Guidelines for a Just Transition*, public employment programmes should help “enhance resilience to climate change, rehabilitate natural resources, and create new productive and sustainable assets”.²⁸ The local resource-based approach to infrastructure-related work (water and soil conservation, flood protection infrastructure, and rural transport improvement and maintenance) promotes local

job creation, and by employing local people it encourages the responsible use of local resources.

A useful approach is to combine market-based instruments that have immediate impact on land and resource use decisions and improved productivity with broader environmental policy instruments. For example, tax incentives, emission trading schemes, and payments for ecosystems (PES) schemes – in areas such as carbon sequestration and storage, biodiversity protection and watershed protection – can embody social objectives and create and sustain green employment opportunities. On the other hand, practices such as the over-exploitation of fish stocks can destroy millions of jobs: promoting the restoration of fisheries through a reduction in fishing can increase fish stocks and harvesting volumes, increasing overall benefits in the sector.²⁹

(e) Diversifying the rural economy and developing sustainable green enterprises

The adoption of economic diversification strategies is an essential element in greening the rural economy, as it can help the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and environmental degradation.³⁰ More diverse, resilient and sustainable production systems and non-farm diversification offers economic and social opportunities for rural communities while preserving natural resources. Green practices, such as organic farming and local value addition through processing, sustainable rural tourism, and non-farm enterprises, offer green job opportunities, some of them requiring a workforce with higher skills and generating greater revenues in the local economy.³¹ Jobs related to food production might include, inter alia, green input production or the construction of storage facilities, processing and packaging. Economic diversification can be promoted through other sectors, such as the creative and cultural industries.³²

MSMEs, including small farms, play an important role in advancing environmental sustainability and promoting formal employment in the rural economy. MSMEs can be key drivers of eco-innovation, which can facilitate transformation across a broad range of industries and create green jobs opportunities, especially for youth. They can provide innovative solutions

²⁵ ILO: *Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 2017, https://www.ilo.org/sector/activities/sectoral-meetings/WCMS_546337/lang-en/index.htm.

²⁶ UNWTO and UNEP: *Climate Change and Tourism – Responding to Global Challenges*, Madrid, 2008.

²⁷ ILO: *Local investments for climate change adaptation: Green jobs through green works*, Bangkok, 2011.

²⁸ ILO: *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, Geneva, 2015, https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_432859/lang-en/index.htm.

²⁹ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, Geneva, 2018.

³⁰ ILO: *Policy guidance note: Economic diversification of the rural economy*, Geneva, 2017.

³¹ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, Geneva, 2018, p. 48. According to the *Guidelines concerning a statistical definition of employment in the environmental sector* (para. 10), adopted by the 19th International Conference of Labour statisticians in 2013, “Activities in agriculture, fisheries and forestry can be considered as environmental if environmentally sustainable technologies and practices are used.”

³² UNCTAD & UNDP 2010: *Creative Economy Report 2010*.

A just transition towards a resilient and sustainable rural economy

in technology adaptation, farming, and renewable energy production. However, MSMEs face specific challenges in embracing sustainability due to the additional costs, including the cost of new technologies, and lower awareness of the impact of their activities on climate change and environmental degradation. Informality and limited access to training and finance are among the problems faced by MSMEs.³³

(f) Skills for the green transition

Skills are key to making the transition to a green economy that advances decent work, but the skills mismatch remains a major obstacle.³⁴ A major challenge for a green transition and job creation is to ensure that workers, especially young people, have relevant skills to meet the changing demands of the rural economy. This requires both the availability of quality training providers and access to training, especially for young women and indigenous and tribal peoples. Skills development and upgrading will improve workers' employability, productivity and incomes, thereby increasing their resilience to job displacement and income losses resulting from the transition to a greener economy.

Regulations and policies related to environmental sustainability and skills development, as well as targeted training programmes and customized education systems within the general education system and specialized vocational training systems, in addition to the enterprise level, can help anticipate and address the skill needs and avoid skills mismatches. In the environmental goods and services sectors there might be workforce shortages in highly skilled occupations.³⁵

(g) Implementing social protection to offset negative effects of climate change

Protection measures, policies and programmes provide income security, create income replacement opportunities, and help build rural productive capacity. The negative

impact of climate change is likely to increase the need for comprehensive and integrated social protection systems, which have the capacity to contribute to a just transition and a more sustainable rural economy.³⁶ Because of the high levels of informality in the rural economy – especially in agricultural activities – the transition from the informal to the formal economy is critical to ensure the economic, social and legal inclusion of workers. Cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy organizations can play a key role in formalizing the informal economy by transforming what are often marginal survival activities into legally protected work that is fully integrated into the mainstream economy.³⁷ Extending social protection to rural workers will aid adaptation to, and the mitigation of environmental degradation and climate change in rural areas.

(h) Stimulating social dialogue for effective, inclusive and productive transitions

Social dialogue can play a major role in promoting a just transition in the rural economy. It requires the active involvement of government, workers and employers in established formal sectors and in the informal economy and emerging green sectors, where workers may not be unionized and employers' organizations may not yet have formed at all levels. Effective tripartite engagement through consultation and negotiation and the participation of all relevant stakeholders help identify the best means of achieving social, economic and environmental goals and can trigger consensus building and common ownership among the social partners. In addition, social dialogue can help to identify new green business and employment opportunities, as well as solutions to address the challenges resulting from the transition process, while ensuring the inclusion of environmental clauses in collective agreements.³⁸ More inclusive social dialogue is often conducive to the successful implementation of policies and the institutionalization of environmental action at the workplace.³⁹

³³ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, Geneva, 2018, p. 61.

³⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 129-130.

³⁵ *Ibid*, Chapter 5.

³⁶ *Ibid*, Chapter 4.

³⁷ See ILO COOP website, https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/areas-of-work/WCMS_546476/lang-en/index.htm.

³⁸ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, Geneva, 2018, p. 93.

³⁹ Guidelines adopted by the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs (Geneva, 5-9 October 2015), ILO, GB.325/POL/3.

3. The ILO's approach

By engaging governments, workers and employers as active agents of change, the ILO promotes the greening of enterprises, good workplace practices, and the labour market as a whole, including in rural areas. These efforts create decent and sustainable rural employment opportunities, enhance resource efficiency, and promote low-carbon sustainable rural development. Ensuring a just transition to environmental sustainability is one of the four cross-cutting policy drivers of the ILO, meaning that all ILO's work must address this aim.⁴⁰ Endorsed by its constituents, the ILO has adopted a set of *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, which include recommendations relevant to the rural economy to ensure climate justice, equity, and a fair transition for all.

The ILO's approach contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and promotes climate action by creating employment opportunities and protecting the most vulnerable and their livelihoods, including women, youth, and indigenous and tribal peoples. The comparative advantage of the ILO lies in its experience of combining employment promotion, social protection and inclusion, environmental protection and restoration, social dialogue, and economic development, all of which are vital for the sustainable development of rural economies. Through its unique tripartite structure, the ILO brings together governments and workers' and employers' organizations, all of them key stakeholders in addressing the challenge of climate change and shaping and implementing climate action through social dialogue.

The ILO Green Jobs Programme, established in 2008, demonstrates the ILO's commitment to act on climate change and to promote resource efficient and low-carbon societies. Through technical advisory support for the creation of green jobs, it helps preserve and restore the environment, promoting socially inclusive development and boosting economies by creating employment, including in the rural economy.

Box 2: The Green Initiative

The Green Initiative is an ILO 2019 Centenary Initiative and focuses on three areas of critical importance:

- advancing research on and understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the world of work arising from a green transition
- forging policy responses from the world of work in all sectors to ensure decent work and social justice for all
- building strategic partnerships at national, regional and international levels.

It aims to scale up the ILO's knowledge, policy response, and capacity to manage a just transition to a low-carbon, sustainable future. The objective of the Green Initiative is to better equip actors worldwide to understand the challenges and opportunities of the coming transition, and help them take an active role in the change involved. It will further build the case that decent work approaches and social dialogue are indispensable for transformative change.⁴¹

⁴⁰ ILO: *Programme and Budget proposals for 2018-19*, Governing Body, 329th Session, Geneva, March 2017.

⁴¹ For more information see ILO: The Green Initiative, https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/history/centenary/WCMS_467270/lang--en/index.htm.

4. The ILO's experience to date

The ILO has experience in a vast array of policy areas and sectors of importance to the greening of rural economies. Since 2008, over 30 countries have been provided with capacity-building and advisory services on green jobs, as well as pilot projects, including development cooperation projects in several countries. The ILO has supported rural clean energy in Bangladesh, the promotion of green jobs through ecotourism in Indonesia, migration and environmental sustainability in the Sahel, rural and cooperative banks in the Philippines, and promoting zero-waste organic banana production in the Dominican Republic.

(a) Green jobs promotion for youth in Egypt (2011-2016)

The ILO project on *Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People (DJEP)*, funded by the Government of Canada, aimed to create job opportunities for youth in environmentally sustainable activities and to promote green jobs at both national and local levels in three governorates. The project helped raise awareness of and develop dialogue on the potential benefits of green jobs across several sectors, including agriculture, tourism, waste recycling, and renewable energy. The project helped create clean renewable energy and green jobs by establishing two biogas units, which have been fully operational since 2014. In agriculture, several measures supported sustainable agricultural development by implementing innovative ways to improve agriculture practices. The project facilitated the creation of more than 3,000 jobs.⁴²

(b) Green livelihoods for rural populations for climate resilience in Pakistan (2013-2016)

In collaboration with FAO and UN Women, the ILO implemented a UN joint programme on livelihood restoration in response to the July 2010 monsoon rains, which flooded a significant area of Pakistan. The programme aimed to restore and protect the livelihoods of the vulnerable rural population and increase their resilience to climate disasters by improving their on-farm productive capacities and off-farm income generating activities. The main activities focused on promoting good agricultural practices, post-harvest management, on-farm water management, and vocational skills development for green entrepreneurship in various trades. Some 12,000 rural families in 120 villages, approximately 86,000 on-farm and off-farm labourers, benefited from the project.⁴³

⁴² For further information, see ILO, *Egypt: Green jobs promotion for youth*, https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/projects/africa/WCMS_250675/lang-en/index.htm.

⁴³ For further information, see https://www.ilo.org/islamabad/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_371565/lang-en/index.htm.

(c) Green jobs in the construction sector in Zambia (2013-2018)

In partnership with the government and construction sector stakeholders, the ILO-led Green Jobs Programme aimed to enhance competitiveness and sustainable enterprise development among MSMEs in the Zambian building construction sector. It increased incomes and livelihoods for households and helped create sustainable and green jobs, particularly for young men and women, including in rural areas where poverty is widespread, reaching 76.6 per cent.⁴⁴ By using a value-chain development approach, the programme undertook coordinated measures at various system levels, pursuing three main outcomes: to create awareness of the benefits of green construction to stimulate the market demand of green building products and services; to promote a refined industry-specific regulatory framework that stimulates demand among private and public housing developers for environmentally friendly building materials, products and methods; and to build the capacity of local MSMEs to effectively participate in green product and service markets in sectors such as construction, agriculture and tourism. In 2016 the programme supported the creation of 2,889 decent and green jobs, and led to improvements in the quality of 2,910 existing jobs in MSMEs through the extension of social protection; improvements in occupational safety and health; access to health insurance schemes; and the enjoyment of freedom of association, rights at work, and social dialogue, which are of particular relevance for those living in rural areas, particularly women.⁴⁵

(d) Green jobs in the sugar sector in El Salvador (2016)

Sugar is a strategic sector for rural production and employment in El Salvador, and production has increased over the past few decades. The harvest of sugar cane is largely based on manual work. In partnership with the Fundazucar Foundation, the ILO developed a *Manual of Good Agricultural Practices for Sugar Cane Cultivation in El Salvador*, produced within the wider framework of improving working conditions in the rural economy and progressively achieving sustainable development in sugar production. The manual is intended for use by sugar producers and their workers, and includes a series of recommendations for the sustainability of sugar cane production based on international and national law.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Central Statistical Office of Zambia, 2015: *Living conditions monitoring survey (LCMS) report*, Lusaka, 2016.

⁴⁵ For further information, see <http://www.zambiagreenjobs.org/index.php/2014-10-07-10-16-31/current-affairs/131-semi-annual-results-at-a-glance>.

⁴⁶ https://www.ilo.org/sanjose/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_445530/lang-es/index.htm.

5. Practical guidance and resources

The ILO has developed a steadily growing portfolio of measures through policy advice and development cooperation projects to promote decent and sustainable jobs in the rural economy. The ILO helps governments explore the implementation of the *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, which contains recommendations for a greener rural economy.⁴⁷ In addition, several ILO instruments promote the concept of a just transition to a green economy supporting sustainable development. These include standards on occupational safety and health, labour inspection, social protection, indigenous and tribal peoples, and employment policies and skills. With the adoption of its environmental sustainability policy in 2016, the ILO restated its responsibility to protect the environment by progressively mainstreaming environmental sustainability into its results-based management framework. The ILO promotes a just transition and green jobs at various levels, including research and advocacy; national level policy and technical advisory services; the capacity development of constituents through training and knowledge sharing; and strategic partnerships.

(a) Research and advocacy

The ILO's flagship publication of 2018, the *World Employment and Social Outlook: Greening with Jobs*, examines environmental sustainability in the world of work. It focuses on how climate change and environmental degradation will affect labour markets, the number of jobs, and their quality, and attempts to quantify the shifts expected to take place within and between sectors.

The ILO has developed and is applying several quantitative and analytical tools to assess the employment, income and skills needed to promote greener economies at the enterprise, sectoral, and national levels. In 2013 it established a Green Jobs Assessment Institutions Network (GAIN) as a research platform to develop and improve knowledge of the application of models for quantitative measurements and for policy analysis of green jobs. GAIN also serves as a vehicle to share knowledge and build the capacity of institutions in developing countries.⁴⁸

(b) Support to constituents at national level

Building on research, the ILO supports the development of action plans on employment and labour market-related policies and measures, covering decent and productive work, sustainable enterprises, a just transition and social protection, and helping constituents target labour market instruments on young people and on groups vulnerable to discrimination. The ILO further supports the implementation of development cooperation projects in a range of areas promoting decent and sustainable work.

(c) Capacity development and knowledge sharing

The ILO has produced several knowledge products and tools to support its constituents, including global, regional, and national reports, tools for green jobs assessments, policy papers and strategy notes, guidelines, case studies, training and awareness-raising materials, as well as background information. Training programmes offered at international, regional and national level aim to provide stakeholders with the knowledge necessary to engage efficiently in labour and environmental policy discussions.

(d) Strategic partnerships: The Green Jobs Initiative and beyond

Key strategic partnerships for the ILO include the UN Climate Secretariat (UNFCCC) and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE). Between 2009 and 2014 the ILO, UNEP, ITUC, and IOE developed the Green Jobs Initiative. The ILO is also a partner in the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) jointly supported by the World Bank Group, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UNEP, and the Global Green Growth Institute. The ILO also participates actively in the UN Inter-agency Coordinating Group for the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP).

⁴⁷ ILO: *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*. Geneva: ILO, 2015.

⁴⁸ For more information see https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/areas-of-work/WCMS_565193/lang-en/index.htm.

Tools

Harsdorff, M; Phillips, D., 2013: *Methodologies for assessing green jobs*, (ILO, Geneva)

Jarvis, A; Varma, A; Ram, J. 2011. *Assessing green jobs potential in developing countries: A practitioner's guide*, (Geneva, ILO)

ILO. 2007. *Start Your Waste Recycling Business*, (Geneva)

—. 2013. *Draft guidelines for the statistical definition and measurement of employment in the environmental sector, General report, International Conference of Labour Statisticians*, (Geneva)

—. 2013. *Providing clean energy access through cooperatives, Cooperative Branch & Green Jobs Programme*, (Geneva)

—. 2014. *Start and Improve Your Green Construction Business Training*, (Turin)

—. 2015. *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, (Geneva)

Publications

Harsdorff, M.; Lieuw-Kie-Song, M.; Tsukamoto, M. 2011. *Towards an ILO Approach to Climate Change Adaptation, Employment Working Paper No. 104* (Geneva, ILO)

Harsdorff, M. 2014. *The economics of biogas. Creating green jobs in the dairy sector in India*, (Geneva, ILO)

ILO. 2018. *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs*, (Geneva)

—. 2018. *The future of work in a changing natural environment: Climate change, degradation and sustainability*, (Geneva)

—. 2017. *Indigenous people and climate change: from victims to change agents through decent work*, (Geneva)

—. 2017. *Gender, labour and a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*, (Geneva)

—. 2014. *Greening the Economies of Least Developed Countries: The Role of Skills and Training*, (Geneva)

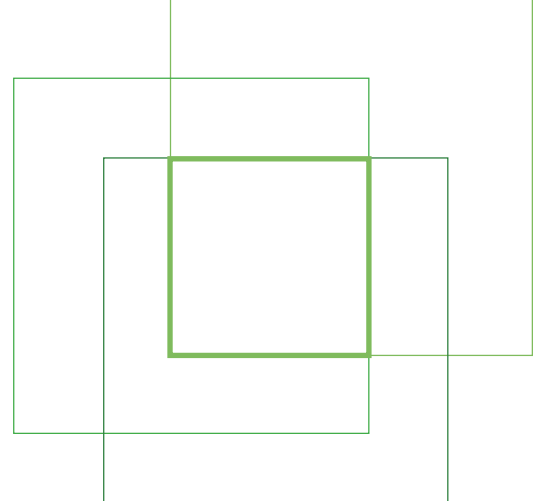
—. 2013. *Sustainable development, decent work and green jobs, Report V, International Labour Conference, 102nd Session (2013)*, (Geneva)

—. 2012. *Social Dialogue for Sustainable Development: a review of national and regional experiences*, (Geneva)

ILO/IOE/ITUC/UNEP, 2012: *Working towards Sustainable Development: Opportunities for Decent Work and Social Inclusion in a Green Economy*, (Geneva)

—. 2008. *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low- Carbon World*, (Geneva)

Overview of Policy Guidance Notes on the Promotion of Decent Work in the Rural Economy



Supporting inclusive agricultural growth for improved livelihoods and food security

- Decent Work for Food Security and Resilient Rural Livelihoods
- Decent and Productive Work in Agriculture

Promoting economic diversification and triggering productive transformation for rural employment

- Economic Diversification of the Rural Economy
- Promoting Decent Work for Rural Workers at the Base of the Supply Chain
- The Role of Multinational Enterprises in the Promotion of Decent Work in Rural Areas
- Transitioning to Formality in the Rural Informal Economy
- Sustainable Tourism – A Catalyst for Inclusive Socio-economic Development and Poverty Reduction in Rural Areas

Promoting access to services, protection and employment-intensive investment

- Providing Access to Quality Services in the Rural Economy to Promote Growth and Social Development
- Extending Social Protection to the Rural Economy
- Developing the Rural Economy through Financial Inclusion: The Role of Access to Finance
- Employment-Intensive Investment in Rural Infrastructure for Economic Development, Social and Environmental Protection and Inclusive Growth

Ensuring sustainability and harnessing the benefits of natural resources

- A Just Transition towards a Resilient and Sustainable Rural Economy
- Decent Work in Forestry
- Harnessing the Potential of Extractive Industries
- Water for Improved Rural Livelihoods

Increasing the voice of rural people through organization and the promotion of rights, standards and social dialogue

- Rights at Work in the Rural Economy
- Promoting Social Dialogue in the Rural Economy
- Building Local Development in Rural Areas through Cooperatives and other Social and Solidarity Economy Enterprises and Organizations
- Decent Work for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in the Rural Economy
- Empowering Women in the Rural Economy
- Decent Work for Rural Youth
- Promoting Fair and Effective Labour Migration Policies in Agriculture and Rural Areas

Improving the knowledge base on decent work in the rural economy

- Enhancing the Knowledge Base to Support the Promotion of Decent Work in Rural Areas

For more information please visit www.ilo.org/rural or contact rural@ilo.org

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2019 – First published (2019)

This document is part of the Portfolio of Policy Guidance Notes https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/economic-and-social-development/rural-development/WCMS_436223/lang--en/index.htm