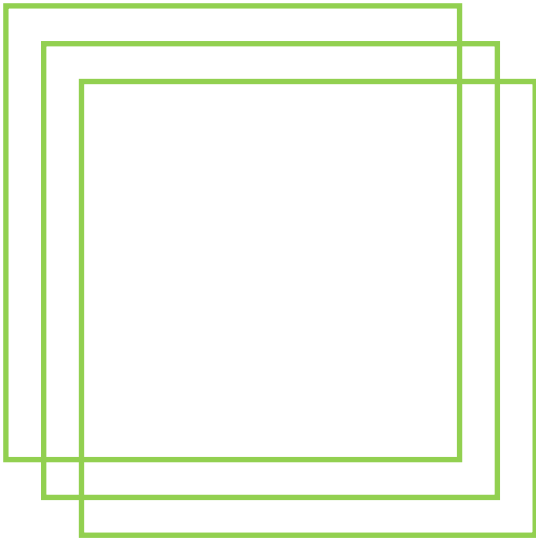




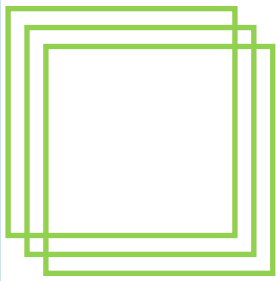
International  
Labour  
Organization



# Green Initiative policy brief

# Green Works





# Green Initiative Policy brief

## Green Works



International  
Labour  
Organization

Climate change and environmental degradation pose an increasing threat to the prosperity of people, economy and the ecosystem. Millions of people are already experiencing higher temperatures and extreme weather events such as heat waves, droughts, intense storms and increased floods. Food security and water supply are at risk. Increasingly higher temperatures tend to impact labour-intensive industries, such as agriculture, construction and infrastructure development, where most of the poor are employed.

### Key messages

**1** Poor and vulnerable people in developing countries are more exposed to climate-related impacts and have less access to resources and social and financial support, including income security, for their survival.

**2** Innovations in public employment programmes to create green water management, forestry and other infrastructure-related works have proven to be efficient in promoting climate resilient and sustainable development. These innovations have yielded employment and additional income opportunities to those most affected by and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

**3** The ILO EIIP Green Works link climate change adaptation and just transition with employment, income security and asset creation for the groups most vulnerable to natural hazards or to those most affected by damage due to climate disasters.

### What is the ILO's Employment-intensive investment programme (EIIP) approach to climate change adaptation?

Economic sectors most impacted by climate change include agriculture, forestry, energy, transport, manufacturing and building and construction. Limiting the impacts of climate change is a prerequisite to achieving economic growth, sustainable development and poverty eradication. Climate change adaptation should not be just about disaster relief. Adaptation involves reducing risk and vulnerability to climate change while seeking opportunities and building the capacity of affected communities and people to cope with climate effects. Climate change adaptation is an approach which not only provides immediate relief and employment for the affected communities, but also improves their access to fu-

ture employment and livelihood. Within this context, the ILO has long promoted a sustainable employment-intensive approach that helps communities and local governments to adapt to changes in local weather patterns and also generates income and other direct and indirect benefits for the poor and vulnerable.



Bio compost waste management, Sri Lanka  
Garbage sorters at the bio waste management centre.  
©ILO/Alan Dow

The ILO's EIIP approach and strategies have direct environmental benefits in response to climate change. It links climate change adaptation and just transition with employment, income security and asset creation for the benefits of local communities who are the most vulnerable in the face of natural hazards or the recipients of most damage.

The EIIP is dealing with poverty reduction through employment generation mainly through infrastructure investments in developing countries not only in a developmental context but also in (pre and post-) disaster environments. It offers support and guidance in the identification, design and implementation of interventions in support of climate change adaptation at the local level. Its role provides opportunity for change and innovation in reducing future impacts on people, the economy and environment by promoting local resource-based methods for constructing and maintaining assets, while creating employment opportunities and enhancing the productive capacity of ecosystems. Key areas of EIIP's adaptation measures include:

- ◆ Irrigation and water and land resource management in rural areas to address the variability and intensity of water supply and improve the quality of existing land;



- ◆ Flood control, drainage and water conservation structures both in rural and urban areas to deal with the variability and frequency of water availability; and
- ◆ Rural transport improvement and maintenance to ensure that transport networks can withstand the increased level of rainfall and flooding.

## What are the policy options?

### Box 1: Multilateral legal framework on climate change:

The Paris Agreement on climate change entered into force on 4 November 2016, committing countries to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C. Climate change is relevant to all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. Uncontrolled climate change would compromise the achievement of this goal, while reversing gains in economic prosperity, social progress and poverty reduction. An important element of the Paris Agreement is the recognition of “the imperative of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”.

### Building local capacities

The EIP works with national government agencies, local governments, the private sector, NGOs, and community-based organisations to orient infrastructure development and maintenance towards the creation of immediate employment for affected communities for the improvement of living conditions with better access to basic goods, services and facilities.

### Restoring and protecting productive capacity of ecosystems

While most disaster recovery efforts focus on rebuilding damaged infrastructure, another key approach is to design and support balanced development initiatives that would spur local economic growth while protecting the environment. This approach entails a number of soil and water conservation measures including vegetative measures (such as mulching, planting of vegetation), soil management measures (such as soil improvement) and physical measures (such as contour banks).

A combination of these measures are used to prevent land degradation (soil erosion and landslides) and reduce and guide runoff flow. Soil and water conservation measures will not only bring agricultural benefits to local farmers but also reduce the risk of future disasters such as flooding, ensuring the preparedness of local governments and communities for quick livelihood recovery when disasters strike.

## Building climate resilient infrastructure

Investments in physical, financial, natural, human and social capital have significant potential to contribute to building climate resilience and disaster risk management. These employment intensive programmes can restore and protect the productive capacity of lands, build resilient infrastructure capable of addressing climate change and natural disasters and at the same time, create livelihood and income security for the most vulnerable.

Appropriate climate resilient infrastructure can also contribute to environmental preservation and land conservation and productivity, as well as mitigate the impacts of future disasters – disaster risk reduction -- and provide much-needed jobs to affected communities. Improving rural infrastructure through the development of irrigation schemes, flood prevention measures, soil stabilization, reforestation works, rural transport maintenance and improved land tenure may enhance agricultural productivity and contribute to the world’s food supply and local energy production.

Local resource-based multi-sectoral public employment schemes can support the creation of decent work opportunities and support workers to adapt to the structural changes brought about by climate change and induced transformation.

Moreover, climate smart investments in different sectors have the potential to not only create jobs and sustain livelihoods for many of those who will be the most affected in the informal sector (such as women and youth), but in countries where informality is the largest economy, public works have been key to the extension of social protection, thus supporting local economic, social and environmental development in both rural and urban areas.



Environmental Assessment - Nigeria 2010 © UNEP

## Public employment programmes for the most vulnerable

The long term human costs of unemployment stemming from a disaster and crisis are visible in the persistent loss of income, reduced life expectancy and lower educational attainment for children. Public employment programmes (PEPs) are considered not only crisis response tools, but their role in contributing to creating an employment floor, realizing a social protection floor and reducing poverty are well recognized. PEPs can provide employment and some income security to those whom the private sector cannot absorb, whether in times of growth or recession. Such programmes can be scaled up (or down) seasonally and in times of need as economic conditions change.

While these programmes require a long-term perspective, the capacity of PEPs to respond quickly to climate shocks is greatly enhanced when they are institutionalized as ongoing national programmes. Building a basic level of capacity at national level is significantly beneficial, as governments can align PEPs with other national programmes such as social security and protection so that they complement each other, rather than being donor reliant stand-alone projects without much integration with national schemes.

## What is the next climate action?

### Helping the most vulnerable adapt to climate change: A just transition for all

Vulnerability to climate change is socially differentiated and those identified as most vulnerable to climate risk are those already economically and socially vulnerable. A just transition is not only about the transition of the workforce from fossil fuels to energy efficiency, it is equally about supporting developing countries and the most vulnerable (the rural poor, indigenous populations, and others) to help them adapt and to support the application of the Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).

It is also about using local traditional or indigenous knowledge and appropriate labour-based technologies and introducing the right policies to ensure that communities and their priorities are voiced and heard. This will ensure that the transition to greener economies can yield positive economic, social and environmental outcomes, acting as a strong driver for job creation, social justice and poverty eradication. The success of climate policies depends on enabling policies to ensure a transition towards inclusive green economies is just and fair, maximizes opportunities for economic prosperity, social justice, rights and social protection for all --

and leaves no one behind.

## A balancing act: new green technologies and employment opportunities

Investments in solar and wind energy are in general still too expensive for communities, and considered “foreign” until the technology is localized so that the benefits can also be felt at the local level. Finding a good balance between producing capital intensive renewable energy and offering alternative employment opportunities, especially where supply exceeds the demand of unskilled labour, as in some coun-

### Box 2: Key ILO resources

- ◆ 2011. *Local investments for climate change adaptation – Green jobs through green works. A guide for identifying, designing and implementing interventions in support of climate change adaptation at the local level.*  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/--ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_172716.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/--ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_172716.pdf)
- ◆ 2011. *Towards an ILO approach to climate change adaptation: Employment Sector*, Employment working paper, No.104.  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_169569.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_169569.pdf)
- ◆ 2015. *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.*  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_432859.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf)
- ◆ 2010. *Towards the right to work: Innovations in Public Employment Programmes (IPEP): Employment Sector*, Employment working paper, No. 69.  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_strat/---emp\\_invest/documents/publication/wcms\\_158483.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_strat/---emp_invest/documents/publication/wcms_158483.pdf)
- ◆ 2016. *Employment and labour market policies for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economy and societies for all.*  
[http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-intensive-investment/publications/WCMS\\_534528/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-intensive-investment/publications/WCMS_534528/lang--en/index.htm)

tries, would be essential.

A study carried out by the ILO on the employment impact of investments in renewable energy by the European Investment Bank reconfirmed that the job creation potential of



renewable energy was low. However, a combination of green investments in renewables supported by labour-based green works can solve the high energy deficit in a more equitable way. Access roads and infrastructure necessary for renewables can be carried out through community contracting, and would be able to absorb excess community labour and increase employment promotion and overall productivity.

A balanced approach is required to carefully assess the opportunity costs of introducing new technologies or changes in existing income generating activities, against the costs of the displacement of workers who were employed in “brown” jobs. However, it is also vital to continue to consider balanced schemes that can support existing new green “foreign” technologies, and at the same time offer labour-based schemes that can complement and support a just transition of all workers, especially the most vulnerable who live in poor rural households and who forced to adapt to climate change.

**Copyright © International Labour Organization 2017**

**Contact: Employment Policy Department Employment-Intensive Investment Programme International Labour Office 4, route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland**

**For more information regarding EIIP’s work on Green Works, contact: [tsukamoto@ilo.org](mailto:tsukamoto@ilo.org)**

**Visit our website: [www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-intensive-investment](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-intensive-investment)**

