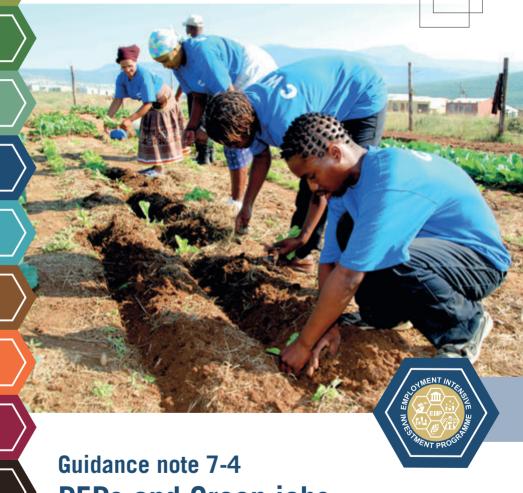




Towards the right to work

A GUIDEBOOK FOR DESIGNING INNOVATIVE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES



PEPs and Green jobs through green works

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Towards the right to work

A GUIDEBOOK FOR DESIGNING INNOVATIVE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES



Guidance note 7-4

PEPs and Green jobs through green works

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Guidance note 7-4

PEPs and Green jobs through green works



Objective

The objective of this note is to expose policy-makers and practitioners to possible opportunities for public employment programmes¹ (PEPs) to create green jobs which comprise work in activities that improve natural resources productivity and are linked to climate change adaptation, environmental conservation and rehabilitation. Some of the challenges and opportunities for promoting these activities are also discussed and examples of projects provided. A number of potentially high impact opportunities are also identified.

Introduction

Many public employment programmes already include projects that are related to conserving or rehabilitating the environment. They can have a large multiplier effect on vulnerable communities by combining the multiple social, environmental and economic objectives of employment generation, income support, and asset creation through the restoration of the natural resource base to reduce the local impacts of climate change, while promoting a rights-based approach to the decent work agenda. This is an area of significant innovation at present, which is able to combine these multiple objectives forming part of an equitable and inclusive growth policy, providing dignity through the right to work. Given increasing global environmental concerns, it is likely that in future more and more programmes will include such a focus, which will fall within a broad definition of green jobs.

What are green jobs?

The term covers a wide spectrum of employment. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2008), green jobs reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors to levels that are sustainable or involve jobs that conserve or rehabilitate the environment, in addition to providing decent work. Specifically, but not exclusively, this includes jobs that: protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies; de-carbonize economies; and minimize or avoid the generation of all forms of waste and pollution. Such jobs may be in the public or private sectors,

M. Lieuw-Kie-Song; K. Philip; M. Tsukamoto; M. Van Imschoot: Towards the right to work: Innovations in public employment programmes (IPEP), ILO Employment Working Paper No. 69 (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2011).



and contribute to the creation of public and private goods. In the context of PEPs, the focus is primarily on the scope for green jobs that create public goods and services.

While in recent years the discussion on green jobs has tended to focus on the scope for employment related to climate change and disaster risk mitigation, and to the adaptation of livelihoods, PEPs are able to contribute to a much wider range of environment-related projects and activities. This is demonstrated by the many existing PEPs around the world and, in particular, crisis response programmes that go beyond short-term disaster relief and investments in infrastructure. There is also increasing recognition of the extent to which environmental degradation exacerbates poverty, and of the scope for improvements in the base of natural resources to enhance livelihood opportunities and improve quality of life – highlighting the constructive links between climate change, employment, incomes and poverty reduction (ILO, 2007).

Although the promotion of green jobs contributes to broad-based growth while reducing emissions, many projects with an environmental impact involve the construction of infrastructure. Some of the issues discussed in the guidance notes on infrastructure PEPs, and the use of labour-intensive construction methods, are also relevant to infrastructure that contribute to environmental preservation and improvement, soil and water conservation, and land productivity. Examples include: structures to reduce soil erosion; dykes to protect coastal areas from the violent storms associated with global warming; reforestation; watershed management; and agriculture land improvement. While the objectives of these projects are environmental, their execution is generally very similar to other PEP infrastructure projects.

As pressure on natural capital rises, the need for public investment in the maintenance of the ecosystems that produce such natural capital has risen also. For example, in water-scarce areas, action taken to ensure appropriate groundcover, limit over-grazing, reduce soil erosion and remove invasive alien species can make a measurable difference in the availability of surface water run-off as well as to groundwater. Water availability has implications for economic development, for urban water consumption, as well as for agriculture. Environmental management is emerging as a crucial area for public investment and the activities required as part of such management are often labour intensive, thus lending themselves to PEP solutions.

The scale and scope of environmental 'work'

Table 1 provides a list of possible interventions that fit within the scope of green jobs, their main benefits and the labour-intensive work activities.

Many of these activities are already part of existing PEPs, and make important contributions to improving the environment and providing employment. The feasibility of including such activities in a local

programme needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Consideration should be given not only to the local environmental circumstances, but also to the degree to which these activities are already being carried out through other existing mechanisms. In many urban areas, poor people may already be active in local (informal) markets for waste collection- and recycling-related activities. In such circumstances, PEP managers should take care to complement such activities, rather than replace them and thus potentially destroy or negatively impact on existing livelihoods.



Table 1. Possible environment-related activities for PEP

Projects that contribute to environmental preservation and improvement, soil and water conservation, and land productivity

Intervention	Main benefit	Labour-intensive work activities	
Combating soil erosion (EPWP¹ Land Care, MGNREGA², PSNP³)	Maintains productivity of the land	Construction of earth structures, planting of (native) vegetation	
Water harvesting (MGNREGA, PSNP, KKV ⁴)	Increases availability of (ground) water	Construction of weirs and other structures, such as underground tanks, ponds and cisterns in urban areas ⁵ , renovation of traditional water bodies, de-silting of tanks	
Drought proofing, greening/tree planting (Greening the Nation, watershed development MGNREGA, PSNP)	Provides drought proofing, increases the production of fruits/shade and carbon sequestration, reduces soil erosion, increases value of land	Planting of trees and other vegetation, watering and maintenance of saplings, micro- watershed development	
Rehabilitation of degraded land (Working for Wetlands, Working for Woodlands, MGNREGA, PSNP)	Restores the ability of the land to provide ecosystem services, such as water harvesting, purification, carbon sequestration, and provides habitat to endangered species	Planting native vegetation, removal of invasive alien species, restoring streams and wetlands	
Fire prevention and fire fighting (Working on Fire)	Reduces the impact and frequency of fires, in particular forest fires	Cutting and maintenance of firebreaks, removal of flammable material	

¹ Extended Public Works Programme, South Africa.

² Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, India.

³ Poverty Safety Net Project, Ethiopia.



Intervention	Main benefit	Labour-intensive work activities
Guarding of reserves and protected areas (People & Parks)	Conserves biodiversity, in particular endangered species, promotes tourism	Patrolling of parks and park perimeters
Removal of invasive alien species (Working for Water)	Increases availability of water, increases land productivity	Physical removal of invasive aliens, applications of chemicals where appropriate

Projects as part of urban slum development strategies to improve working and living conditions in low-income settlements

Intervention	Main benefit	Labour-intensive work activities
Removal of waste and litter (Working for the Coast, KKV)	Reduces pressure on storm and waste-water infrastructure, improves aesthetics, and public health	Collection and transportation of waste and litter
Recycling	Provides income through the sale of recycled products, reduces landfill requirements	Collection, separation and transportation of recyclable material
Composting	Provides income through the sale of compost, inputs for agricultural and horticultural activities, reduces landfill requirements	Collection and separation of organic materials, construction and maintenance of composting facilities, packaging and sale of composted material
Installation of solar water heaters for poor households and public buildings	Reduces CO ₂ emissions, reduces energy costs for the poor and for government	Production and installation of solar water heaters
Weathering homes and public buildings	Reduced CO ₂ emissions, reduces energy costs for the poor and for governments	Insulation of ceilings, doors and windows

Projects that contribute to a local resource-based strategy that optimizes the use of local resources, minimizes the use of machines and uses environmentally friendly construction technologies in road development

Intervention	Main benefit	Labour-intensive work activities
Slope protection works	Reduces likelihood of landslides and transport disruptions	Grass and tree planting, placement of gabions.
Road embankments	Reduces flooding of roads and disruptions in transport	Various labour-intensive road works
Alternative road pavements	Reduces dust and lowers the cost of rehabilitation and maintenance	Various labour-intensive road works



Projects that contribute to local climate change adaptation at the community level

Intervention	Main benefit	Labour-intensive work activities
Irrigation	Increases water availability during the dry season and provides more controlled water supply during wet season	Various labour-intensive irrigation works
Flood Protection and Control	Reduces flooding of communities during heavy rains	Various drainage works
(Re)forestation	Increases storm protection and water-holding capacity	Planting of trees and maintenance of woodlots

⁴ Kazi Kwa Vijana (Youth Employment Programme), Kenya.

⁵ Capturing rain water and directing it to replenish the groundwater in urban areas is important as groundwater is often the main source of urban water supply, and the impermeability of most urban environments dominated by asphalt and concrete, results in most water running off.

Environmental investments and agricultural productivity



The central role that environmental rehabilitation and conservation plays in MGNREGA, PSNP and EPWP may be surprising to some. However, when the long-term nature of these programmes is recognized, the environmental focus becomes more obvious. In all three countries, the current state of the environment has important negative impacts on the poor. In Ethiopia and India, it is recognized that environmental investment in rural areas is a precondition for increasing agricultural viability. The focus in MGNREGA and PSNP on various aspects of environmental rehabilitation and conservation is therefore part of the strategy to increase agricultural productivity particularly among small-scale and subsistence farmers. The wisdom of investing in the environment is no longer questioned in this regard; the link between environmental investment, agriculture and wider rural development strategies is clear, and the focus has shifted to how best to make these investments in the context of MGNREGA and PSNP.

In South Africa, the EPWP's environmental programmes include a strong focus on interventions that increase the availability of water, as this is the critical factor limiting agriculture expansion.

Environmental services and PEPs

In South Africa, the focus is, however, more directly on environmental services that rehabilitate or strengthen vulnerable eco-systems and the natural capital they provide – described in more detail below.



Box 1. The Working for Water Programme in South Africa's EPWP

The first public works programme in South Africa specifically focusing on environmental rehabilitation and conservation was the Working for Water Programme that commenced in 1995 as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) initiated by the newly democratically elected Government.

The name of the programme is somewhat deceptive, and it surprises many to find that its main activity is to remove invasive alien vegetation. This vegetation consumes considerably more water than native vegetation and, as a result, its rapid spread significantly reduces stream flow in countries with already scarce water supplies. As such the programme is really an investment in damage limitation – in this case, the preservation of available fresh water. Furthermore, as the removal of these plants is a very labour-intensive activity, the naming of the programme is not only technically correct, but also manages to convey how a programme that addresses a relatively obscure and poorly understood environmental problem also addresses two key existing political priorities: employment creation and water scarcity.

The ability of the programme to communicate and demonstrate the synergy between environmental rehabilitation, employment creation for the poor and the increased availability of water is one of the keys to its success to date.

By March 2009, the programme had cleared 856,000 hectares of invasive alien vegetation resulting in an increase in stream flows and the availability of water in these areas (DWAF, 2008). However, the benefits have extended well beyond increased water availability and include: increased land productivity, in particular in areas where livestock is kept; maintenance of bio-diversity, in particular in ecologically sensitive areas where invasive plants can overtake native species; increased land values; improved resilience to fires. The programme has also assisted in the conservation of many protected areas and reserves, which are critical to the growing tourism industry in South Africa.²

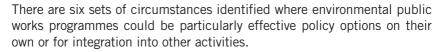
Over the years, the Working for Water Programme has spawned a range of other environmental public employment programmes sometimes referred to as the "Working for" programmes: Working for Wetlands, Working on Fire, Working for the Coast, Working for Tourism and Working on Waste. Proposals have been prepared to establish three additional programmes in the short term: Working for Woodlands, Working for Forests and Working for Energy, which contain many activities focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, such as by installing solar water heaters, improving the energy efficiency of government buildings and generating energy from biomass waste. In addition, similar programmes that have not adopted the "Working for" name include People and Parks and Land Care.

Sources: M. Lieuw-Kie-Song: *Green jobs for the poor: A public employment approach*, Poverty Reduction Discussion Paper 2009-02 (UNDP, New York, 2009).



² Common Ground. 2003. *Working for Waterm External Evaluation, Synthesis Report* (South Africa). Available at: http://www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw/docs/CommonGround,2003.pdf

High impact opportunities³





Circumstances of acute environmental distress

In many parts of the world, the natural capital of the environment has already been so severely depleted that, without significant investments to reverse the degradation, its productivity will continue to be extremely low. Where poor people in these areas are dependent on the productivity of the environment, they are essentially trapped in a situation where their own productivity also remains extremely low. Typically, these people are too poor to make the required investments in natural capital themselves. Probably the clearest example of such conditions is in Haiti, where, in many areas, severe deforestation, soil erosion and flash floods have reduced the productivity of the land to such an extent that it is not able to sustain the people living on it. Durable investments to restore natural capital are required to create long-term employment opportunities for the poor living in those areas. While Haiti may be one of the most extreme examples, such natural capital erosion exists in many other countries, although it may not be as clearly identifiable.

While the example of Haiti shows a case where the poor are directly impacted by acute environmental distress, there may be cases of acute environmental distress that do not impact as directly on the poor, but where public employment programmes may still be an effective policy option, given the labour-intensive nature of activities required to address this environmental distress. Examples of such environmental distress include the serious threats certain invasive plants present to some protected parts of the unique fynbos biome in South Africa and the disappearance of 93 per cent of the Atlantic rainforest in south-eastern Brazil. In South Africa, this threat is partially being addressed by the Working for Water programme. In Brazil, a part of the activities required to conserve and rehabilitate the last remaining parts of the Atlantic rainforest could also be implemented through environmental public employment programmes. However, environmental public employment programmes are rarely considered an option in Brazil and the focus is mostly on creating opportunities for self-employment and increasing income for poor people dependent on or living close to protected areas. While these approaches have their merits, they also have their limitations and provide limited involvement for the State.

The section below is drawn from M. Lieuw-Kie-Song: Green jobs for the poor: A public employment approach, Poverty Reduction Discussion Paper 2009-02 (UNDP, New York, 2009).

Complementing other rural development strategies and schemes

The proposed programmes offer good potential for complementing other rural development strategies. The reason for this is that a critical element missing in many rural development programmes are activities where the poor can sell their surplus labour and receive cash income to complement other livelihoods. Public employment programmes that provide such income, but are designed to limit the opportunity cost of participation by not competing with other livelihoods, can be particularly effective in reducing poverty.



Examples of such designs are the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme in South Africa that provides regular and predictable part-time employment to poor women. Women are employed for 60 hours a month, but have considerable flexibility in scheduling their work programmes to fit around their other livelihood activities and domestic responsibilities. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in India also allows the poor to decide when they want to work for the programme, allowing them to take up paid agricultural employment in peak seasons, or to continue working on their own land.

At the same time, many rural areas offer substantial opportunities for investments in natural capital. These may be as diverse as water harvesting to increase local agricultural activities, increasing an area's attractiveness as a tourist destination, or maintaining catchment areas to improve water supplies for local communities as well as for downstream communities or cities. The environmental focus areas of MGNREGA in India are an example of this strategy where public employment programmes are used to complement rural development strategies, especially those focusing on increasing agricultural productivity and livelihood creation.

Poor are actively engaged in destruction/over harvesting

There are many areas where poor people are involved, or actually employed by third parties to destroy natural capital. An example of this is the deforestation of land in the Amazon region in Brazil. While reliable figures are hard to obtain because of the illegal nature of these activities, it is well known that many people are employed under very poor conditions to (illegally) clear the forest. In many cases, they do this because there are no other employment options available to them. Environmental public works programmes could offer employment with better working conditions to these people and at the same time employ them to undertake environmentally sound activities such as reforestation or other agro-forestry activities.



On their own, these programmes would not be effective in combating deforestation or over harvesting, as the factors driving this type or environmental destruction are numerous and complex. However, these programmes would provide alternative employment and income to the poor and, at the same time, redirect their labour towards rehabilitation and conservation.

Urban areas with high concentrations of poverty and unemployment

Urban areas with high concentrations of poor people are the fourth opportunity for such programmes. Such areas are generally also characterized by deteriorating environmental conditions and high surplus labour caused by un- or underemployment. In such circumstances, public works programmes focusing on infrastructure may already be in place, but the addition of environmental activities creates the opportunity to significantly increase the impact. Furthermore, investments in infrastructure with specific environmental benefits – improved sanitation, the capturing of rainwater, homes insulation and solar water heaters – are positive from various perspectives. Depending on the area, other opportunities may also be desirable, such as greening and tree planting, waste management and recycling.

Responses to natural disasters

Another high impact opportunity for these programmes lies in structuring the responses to natural disasters as PEPs. In this context, both short- and long-term opportunities exist. The short-term responses would comprise a direct response to natural disasters and would focus on reversing the damage of these disasters, in particular in areas where the environment was already fragile because of over utilization and over harvesting, as in the case of Haiti mentioned earlier.

But beyond that, long-term opportunities would also arise in some areas, where restoration of the environment may result in limiting the impact of similar disasters in the future.

Another example of a long-term opportunity is in the management of coastal mangrove forests, which are recognized as helping to reduce the impact of floods and tsunamis as well as playing a critical role as breeding grounds for many species of fish. The Green Coast Project was initiated in Indonesia after the 2004 tsunami to rehabilitate coastal mangrove forests. Local fishermen were engaged in the rehabilitation of the forests but, rather than being paid wages, they were provided with grants to replace lost fishing gear. Also in Thailand, as part of the post-tsunami livelihood recovery in the tourism sector in Phuket and Phang Nga, a community-based tourism programme was developed, providing training to develop and design culturally and environmentally appropriate tour programmes. This programme, which included many employees who had lost their jobs in the hotel sector, focused on the conservation of wetlands and wildlife, within some of their tourist activities (ILO, 2005). Investment in training on environmental protection can increase awareness and support conservation of biodiversity and, at the same time, generate income by promoting responsible tourism.



Box 2. Gonaives in Haiti: Preparing for the next big storm

Gonaives, Haiti (ILO Online). When Hurricane Jeanne landed in Haiti in September 2004, it found in the northern coastal city of Gonaives the perfect setting for a catastrophe. Lying below sea level and with its barren hillsides offering no natural protection against heavy rains and mudslides, the city was quickly turned into a swamp. More than 3,000 people died; thousands of others were left homeless.

Following Hurricane Jeanne, every major storm has been a cause for concern for the people of Gonaives. However, they have not remained idle. Since 2006, local residents have been restoring and improving the watershed around the city in a project managed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and in cooperation with the Haitian Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation. The project is co-funded by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food Programme. In exchange for food and wages, workers carry out a number of tasks, from digging horizontal ditches and reinforcing them with rocks, to assembling stone weirs, small dams and upgrading draining ditches in the flatlands.

But the project goes beyond disaster prevention and mitigation.

"It's also about rehabilitating the environment, promoting local employment, capacity building and social organization, as well as preserving the livelihoods of future generations by restoring a natural resource base", said Emmanuel Rubayiza, from the ILO's Employment Investment Programme.

Environmental degradation has long been a problem in and around Gonaives. While restoring the slopes around the city, workers have also been busy fighting back deforestation through tree nursing and planting, water and soil conservation, and by correcting the slopes and banks of the "Quinte River", all of which form part of the longer term objective to create jobs.

"Gonaives has become a true example of how green jobs can contribute to restoring environmental quality while providing decent employment", said Emmanuel Rubayiza. "The project has also helped to increase awareness of environmental issues, which is a key element for sustainable development and the preservation of future livelihoods".

Source: ILO, 26 Aug. 2009. Available at:

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/insight/WCMS_113173/lang en/index.htm

Climate change adaptation



Adaptation to climate change has been identified as another potential opportunity for such programmes. Predictions of climate change and its effects pose massive challenges to governments both in developed and developing countries. Some of these challenges relate to the sustainable provision and maintenance of infrastructure. The development of appropriate climate resilient infrastructure can also contribute to environmental preservation and land conservation and productivity as well as prevent or reduce the impacts of future disasters, while at the same time provide jobs to the communities that need them the most.

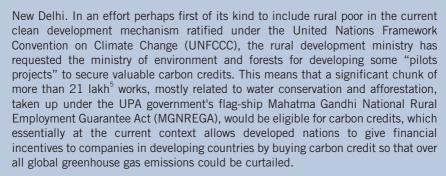
When properly targeted and designed, public employment programmes help to reduce the vulnerability of the poor strata of the population and through the right design of the types of works provided, can also greatly contribute to helping vulnerable households and communities to adapt to climate change. Although effective measures to adapt to climate change are still being developed, this field is developing rapidly and the ILO has identified the following key areas for possible PEP activities:

- 1. irrigation
- 2. soil and water conservation
- 3. flood protection
- 4. sustaining rural transport
- 5. (re-)forestation.



The approaches and opportunities are highlighted in an ILO publication⁴ on PEPs and climate change adaptation. It is important that these interventions be considered where they also result in direct benefits for the poor and increase their resilience in the face of climate change.

Box 3. Rural job scheme can get poor man's share in carbon trading



'At present all the works under MGNREGA are scattered all over the country and we have requested the environment ministry to develop few pilot projects so that it could be presented to CDM authorities," Rita Sharma, secretary, ministry of rural development told the Financial Express. However, she said under the current CDM norm, such projects are yet to be considered. If such pilot projects conceived by the rural development ministry materialise, it would certainly give encouragement to other countries to emulate. "There is a need to consolidate and document massive afforestation or other related works taken up under the MGNREGA which results in substantial reduction in carbon emission," Sharma said. She added if such works under the MGNREGA essentially gets into CDM framework, it would for the first time ensure that poor people who have mostly been "defending the environmental sustainability" get their due share in the carbon credit trading market and financial resources would eventually flow from polluters to protectors of environment.

The rural development ministry is expecting that at least some pilot projects are developed and presented in the next mega global meet on climate change scheduled for December 2009 in Copenhagen. Since its launch in February 2006, the government has spend more than Rs 40,000 crore⁶ under the MGNREGA, out of more than Rs 26,000 crore is towards payment of wages. As many as 21 lakh jobs, mostly relating to water conservation & tree plantation, have been taken up under the scheme. India and China lead the global carbon trading business. According to government data, India holds more than 25% of \$64-billion of global carbon trade, mostly cornered by the industrial houses.

Source: Financial Express, 22 Jan. 2009. Available at: http://www.isidelhi.org.in/hrnews/isidownload/Labour/Labour-2009.pdf [6 Dec. 2011].



M. Harsdorff; M. Lieuw-Kie-Song; M. Tsukamoto: Towards an ILO approach to climate change adaptation, ILO Employment Working Paper No. 104 (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2011).

A lakh is a unit in the South Asian numbering system equal to one hundred thousand (100.000)

A crore is a unit in the South Asian numbering system equal to 10 million.

Further reading



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Checklist

GREEN JOBS THROUGH GREEN WORKS	
Respond to the following questions	$\overline{\mathbf{A}}$
Assess the global environment	
National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPA)	
New developments around the IPCC, UNFCCC, UNEP and ILO on environmental impact	
Assess the domestic environment – climate change impact in your region / country	
Policies from government agencies (e.g. labour, public works and transport, environment, health, education and social services, local governance, national treasury, finance and planning, trade and industry, youth and sports)	
Change in temperatures will increase need to diversify livelihood (e.g. types of crops, salination)	
Changes in water levels will increase need to develop flood control mechanisms, watersheds, irrigation mechanisms	
Increase in extreme weather and natural disasters will increase need to think about disaster risk reduction mechanisms	
Increase in rainfall will require better water and soil erosion control mechanisms	
Assess employment impact of climate change	
Find synergies between types of works proposed and climate change impacts	
Will the PEP focus on public or private assets, or both? Consider the impact of all three	
Useful work	
Work that contributes to the public good, community goods or social services?	
Work that ensures freedom, equity, security and dignity?	





GREEN JOBS THROUGH GREEN WORKS Respond to the following questions V Absorption capacity of the works Without sacrificing quality of works Using available capacity and technical expertise Is additional training required? Local resource-based approaches Community participation Resources, local material, technology and capacity available Geographical approaches (e.g. from a certain region, municipality, community, households) Demographical approaches (e.g. by age, gender) Level of poverty Time availability Work should not displace existing jobs Work should not include work undertaken by public sector employees

Notes	





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