

## Green jobs on the labour market

'Greening' of jobs and creating 'green jobs' are considered to have significant potential to boost the labour market, as this can help achieve sustainable development and economic goals, and create decent work. They are thus among the priorities of the EU's Agenda for new skills and jobs, within the Europe 2020 strategy.

### Creation of green jobs

'Green jobs' can be [defined](#) as employment in the agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative and services sectors that contributes to preserving or restoring environmental quality. This includes jobs that help to: protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce the consumption of energy, materials, and water through high efficiency strategies; de-carbonise the economy; and avoid generation of waste and pollution. This means the **creation** of additional jobs (e.g. in pollution control), **substitution** of employment (e.g. in the shift from fossil fuels to renewables), **elimination** of jobs (e.g. in the manufacturing of packaging materials) and **transformation** of existing jobs (e.g. through the greening of profiles and working methods). Although the job creation potential of the green economy is difficult to quantify, [studies](#) conclude that implementing legislation on waste prevention and management, as well as measures on energy efficiency and renewable energy have strong job-creation potential. In the transition towards a green economy, competitiveness, innovative capacity and productivity will depend greatly on the availability of skilled workers. Despite the existence of a skills gap, [skills](#) related to the green economy are not always new or 'exclusive' and combine cross-cutting competences with 'specific' skill sets. The main [types](#) of green skills are in the domains of engineering, technology, science, operations management (e.g. cooperation with regulators and customers) and monitoring (observance of technical criteria, compliance with environmental laws and standards). Green jobs need to be [decent](#), i.e. they should offer adequate wages, safe working conditions, job security, reasonable career prospects, and worker rights.

### The Green Employment Initiative

As integrated policy frameworks linking green growth and employment exist in only a few Member States (the rest having a disjointed and fragmented approach), the European Commission has proposed in a 2014 [communication](#) to launch a Green Employment Initiative, with a focus on the following actions:

- forecasting and bridging 'green' skills gaps in consultation with stakeholders, and by promoting and exchanging best practices;
- anticipating change, securing transitions to greener jobs and promoting mobility (including by competence-based matching through the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations ([ESCO](#)) initiative and the European Job Mobility Portal ([EURES](#)));
- supporting job creation by efficient use of EU funding instruments (mainly the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ([EAFRD](#)) but also [Horizon 2020](#) and [LIFE](#)), as well as by shifting from labour- to environmental taxation, enhancing administrative capacity and promoting green procurement and entrepreneurship;
- increasing data quality through regular data collection and harmonised statistics (e.g. the [FIDELIO](#) model).

The [report](#) on 'The Green Employment Initiative: Tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy', drafted by the EP's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (rapporteur: Jean Lambert, Greens/EFA, UK), underlines the importance of a fair transition roadmap, combining environmental goals and decent working conditions, green skills development strategies, well-targeted investments – based on clear policies – leading to job creation, and support for green SMEs. The resolution is scheduled for a vote in plenary in July 2015.