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HOW TO... PROMOTE GREEN JOBS IN THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

A Paper Series for Rural Youth Employment

As the agri-food sector is an important source of income in Africa, green jobs not only have a high employment potential, but also focus on sustainable practices to minimise negative environmental and social impacts. This paper gives insights into how to define and measure green jobs in the agri-food sector, along with examples of how to promote them at project level.

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THE CHALLENGE

In many low- and middle-income countries, the agri-food sector employs half- or even two-thirds of the population. With around 25 million young people entering the labour market every year in Africa, there is a high demand for more and better jobs in the agri-food sector (BMZ).

At the same time, many smallholder producers are highly affected by climate change. Agri-food systems account for roughly one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, 70% of freshwater use and contribute to deforestation, land degradation and a loss of biodiversity of various ecosystems. Thus, to help facilitate a global just transition, the sector needs a profound transformation to provide enough nutritious food as well as jobs and income, all while staying within the planetary boundaries.

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GREEN JOBS?

While there is no universal definition of green jobs, there exists a good common understanding of what a "green job" and its fundamental elements are. According to this general understanding, supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), green jobs are decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment, both in traditional sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and construction, as well as emerging sectors such as renewable energies (ILO). These jobs must always meet the requirements for decent employment, as green jobs are expected to provide an adequate income and safe working conditions (Green jobs, green economy, just transition and related concepts: A review of definitions developed through intergovernmental processes and international organizations (ILO)). In the agri-food sector, green jobs are jobs that include (more) sustainable (green) practices. These can, for example be in soil fertility management, agroecology, climate-smart agriculture, organic production, resource-efficient production, reduction of food losses, productive use of (renewable) energy (e.g. solar irrigation / cooling systems, use of biomass) and many more. This also comprises the "greening" of existing jobs and processes by making processes more resource efficient and environmentally sustainable (ILO).

Under these preconditions, projects must be precise in what green jobs mean within their context, which is closely linked to designing specific interventions and measuring the project's outcomes. When measuring green jobs, it is important to establish the right balance between socio-economic impacts and ecological benefits. It is not always easy to draw a clear line on what is sustainable/ green and what is an "acceptable" use of resources – especially considering possible trade-offs between ecological and socio-economic benefits. To escape this dilemma, one pragmatic approach is to have a set of transparent "minimum criteria" which need to be fulfilled to count a job or practice as being green (see example of the WE4D project below).

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A PRAGMATIC APPROACH

Measuring green jobs from "Employment promotion for women for the green transformation in Africa (WE4D)"

A good example for a pragmatic monitoring system is the approach of the WE4D project. WE4D developed a "green jobs guideline" which provides orientation to design project interventions as well as a monitoring approach for green jobs in the agricultural sector based on a set of criteria. According to the WE4D-wide standard for the sustainable agriculture and agro-processing sector, green jobs can be counted, if at least three of the following criteria apply:

Significant reduction of post-harvest loss.

Reducing the use of synthetic inputs (e.g. use of natural inputs such as: compost and cover crops, responsible and target-aimed use of organic fertilisers and pesticides, nutrition management by micro-dosing, adjusted application rate).

Improved water management systems (irrigation and drainage).

Protection of biodiversity and natural habitats.

Maintaining and building soil organic matter/ soil protection (e.g. conservation and minimum tillage, soil cover, vegetated filterstrips).

Crop/livestock diversification (e.g. crop rotation, intercropping, crop soil coverage).

Reduction or further processing of by-products.

Reduction of food packaging/ introduction of biodegradable packaging.

Wastewater reduction/ water conservation.

Emission management (e.g. through machinery operation based on renewable energy sources).

For more info on how this is operationalised, please contact the colleagues from the WE4D project.

WE4D project

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HOW TO DO IT

Sustainable agri-food systems provide enough food and nutrition for the community, while leaving the economic, social and environmental foundations intact to ensure food security for future generations (FAO). Sustainable agri-food systems thus need to be at the centre of any mid- and long-term economic and inclusive development strategy.

The topic of green jobs has the potential to build bridges between issues of youth employment and a green climate transition, which are often dealt with in isolation. Along agricultural value chains there is a big potential for green jobs in sustainable agricultural production (e.g. organic production, crop diversification, climate-smart practices or biodiversity restauration) as well as in fostering green solutions for agro-processing that focuses more on resource efficiency in value addition rather than primary production (e.g. water conservation, sustainable packaging, use of biomass or circular economy). Besides agriculture, rural areas also hold a potential for green jobs in areas such as ecotourism, forest conservation, processing of non-timber forest products, renewable energy and resource-saving technologies.

Being more labour intensive than conventional production and in light of a growing demad for food, sustainable agriculture and green processing sectors have a huge employment potential and should be promoted.

It is recommended to start the promotion of green jobs with a value chain analysis and selection of business models based on sustainable/ green criteria. Based on this analysis and considering the needs of the private sector, ATVET training and skills development can be improved by developing new (or adapted) curricula for green products and professions.

Further, new elements relating to green skills are incorporated into existing education and training programmes. With limited wage employment opportunities, it is important to include skills and services that create (green) jobs through fostering self-employment. Such services may include entrepreneurial skills and the facilitation of linkages with specific funding programmes, competitions, incubation programmes and financing/ credit lines for (green) business ideas.

In order to create an enabling environment, it is recommended to strengthen a green business ecosystem by connecting actors from the public and the private sector who already prioritise or are interested in prioritising green technologies and approaches. The promotion of green jobs in the agri-food sector requires appropriate framework conditions, specific policies and incentives to promote a green economy and green jobs, as well as the integration of a "greening focus" in existing policies and programmes of the agri-food sector.

In general, awareness-raising activities and the promotion of a demand for green agricultural products/ sustainable consumption are needed to create viable and attractive green job opportunities. Furthermore, a specific focus on women and youth is necessary in all activities to allow for a fair participation of these often vulnerable groups.

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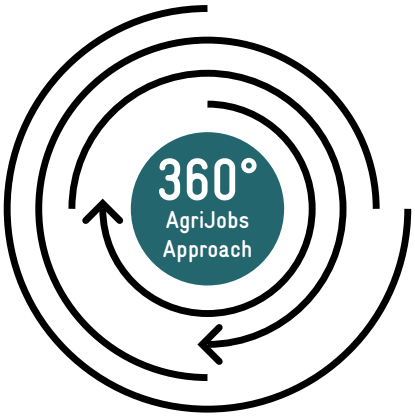
360°

The global project implements an adapted integrated approach to employment promotion – the so called **360° AgriJobs Approach**. The approach allows to analyse and address labour market constraints in rural areas in a holistic way. It combines the **three main pillars of demand for labour** (job creation), **supply of labour** (improving employability through qualification and skills) and **matching** (of demand and supply) with interventions to create favourable **framework conditions** and strengthening systemic **foundations**. Promoting Green Jobs can help solve problems in all spheres of the 360° AgriJobs Approach (see the graph below).



Green Jobs measures in the 360° AgriJobs Approach

FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

- Promotion of policies for green economy, green jobs and of dialogues within green sectors.
- Value Chain analysis and selection based on sustainable/ green criteria.
- Improve framework conditions for adaptation in agriculture, e.g. research funding.

DEMAND FOR LABOUR

- Competition/ Incubation with special focus on green entrepreneurship.
- Facilitation of access to finance/ credits/ programmes for green businesses.
- Promotion of organic and sustainable production.
- Green solutions for agriculture/ sustainable agroprocessing.
- Sensitisation of MSMEs on climate smart practices.

MATCHING

- Matching of green skills with green businesses.
- Inclusion of green job opportunities in career orientation programmes.
- Inclusion of green jobs in rural opportunity fairs and/ or fairs with a special focus on green sectors.
- Transfer of workers from traditional agricultural sectors to green sectors through active labor market policy.

SUPPLY OF LABOUR

- Promotion of new green training courses/ programmes.
- Greening of existing trainings/ curricula.
- Green entrepreneurship training.
- Promotion of capacity development services e.g. advisory services and agricultural research.

FOUNDATIONS

- Strengthening green entrepreneurial ecosystems.
- Green awareness raising: Increasing visibility and strengthening the evidence base by showcasing best practices.
- Advocacy with policymakers and the private sector.
- Highlighting the business case of green jobs.

Get to know youth in green jobs, access more tools to support them and experience the 360° AgriJobs Approach on our website:

Look for 360° AgriJobs (agrijobs.snrd-africa.net)

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CONCRETE ACTIVITIES

The following list of examples gives an insight into concrete project activities implemented by the global project, as well as other GIZ-implemented projects.

Supporting Businesses that Reduce Food Losses

Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique

Once harvested, perishable products, especially fruits and vegetables, are at risk of going bad, if not transported correctly and in due time to end consumers. Processing food can prevent this, while providing new income and employment opportunities among different value chains. In all three countries, the global project supports processing start-ups and MSMEs to improve their businesses, generate higher revenues and create additional employment opportunities. In Burkina Faso juice is produced from mango fruit and the waste is used as material for organic compost production.

Jobs and Income Through Organic Fertilisers

Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique
(GP Rural Youth Employment)

Unavoidable food waste can be composted and used as organic fertilisers to reduce the use of chemical inputs. This not only generates income, but also reduces the reliance on external input markets. In Malawi and Burkina Faso, start-ups and existing businesses were supported to transform post-harvest/ processing food waste into organic fertiliser and compost, as well as to offer transport and distribution services of the material to the farms. In Kenya, compost and organic manure start-ups and businesses were supported, e.g. through the Gigatonne approach. Further, the project works with youth groups on soil health business and services. This contributes to reduced chemical fertiliser use, promoting integrated farming and soil conservation, while providing more and better jobs and income.

Gigatonne

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Agro-Biodiversity and Organic Production as a Key to Sustainability.

Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique
(GP Rural Youth Employment)

Biodiversity is essential for healthy ecosystems and for productive agriculture: It enhances ecosystem resilience, promotes natural pest control, and contributes to sustainable crop production by maintaining genetic diversity and ensuring adaptability to changing environmental conditions. A variety of activities contribute to maintain or improve biodiversity in the agri-food sector:

- With bees being crucial for pollination in any ecological system, apiculture plays an important role in improving and maintaining biodiversity, while also having a high potential for income generation through the processing and sale of honey and wax products.
- In Burkina Faso, alternative, traditional local grains are promoted that often require little water for the production and are very robust and nutritious. Special measures are taken to grow the market and develop business models for women. The cultivation of these local grains saves costs and resources and directly helps to maintain biodiversity.
- Organic farming is promoted on different levels: Activities range from providing training in organic agricultural practices for farmers (e.g. in the local production of organic pesticides), as well as extension service providers, to establishing market linkages and advocating for organic production.

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Increasing Resource Efficiency Through Better Farming Techniques

Malawi
(GP Rural Youth Employment)

Solar irrigation technology uses a renewable energy source to irrigate fields through water-efficient systems (e.g. drip irrigation). In collaboration with the GIZ project Sun4Water in Malawi, youth groups have been trained in farming methods using solar irrigation systems. At the same time, rural engineers were trained in the installation, repair and maintenance of solar irrigation systems, and business models were developed and supported.

Sun4Water – Promoting climate friendly, water- and energy efficient solar-powered irrigation systems

Green Skills Development in Green Colleges

India
(Welthungerhilfe)

Green colleges train rural youth in green trades, combining traditional and modern techniques to help them become ‚ecopreneurs' with better access to technology, finance and markets. This is done through a variety of training approaches, including short- and medium-term courses and farmer field schools. Courses cover topics such as sustainable agriculture, animal husbandry, integrated fisheries, sustainable harvesting and processing of forest products, agro-food processing and solar technology. Trainings include a mix of theoretical, practical and experiential learning, as well as the development of business skills such as marketing, communication and business development.

Green Colleges – welthungerhilfe india.org

Green Skills for Jobs: Greening TVET

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Green Jobs Promotion and Entrepreneurship

Colombia
(GIZ PRODES)

The project "Promoting sustainable rural economic development" (PRODES) in Colombia aims at boosting income and employment for disadvantaged population groups, while ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably. This includes promoting alternative production methods in buffer zones of natural parks, local ecotourism initiatives, sustainable livestock and fish farming and using regional 'farmers markets' as an opportunity for direct marketing. Specific examples are the introduction of basic solar cooling facilities for dairy farmers to improve the storage duration and quality of their milk. In fruit and vegetable production, certification that confirms producers 'good agricultural practice' not only enables farmers to achieve higher prices but also fosters long-term supplier relationships with regional buyers. The Ministry of Environment is setting up 'green contact points' (incubation centres) that support local businesses in implementing their green business ideas in cooperation with the environmental authorities.

PRODES

Green Policy Advice

India
(GIZ SuATI)

The objective of the project "Support to Agroecological Transformation Processes" (SuATI) is to strengthen agroecological transformation processes of agricultural and food systems at national and state level in India. This is done through a range of activities in five interlinked output areas:

- Improve knowledge on agroecological and similar sustainable agricultural practices.
- Support implementation of agroecological programmes with focus on market development, crop and income diversification at state level.
- Anchor agroecological principles and approaches in national programmes.
- Demonstrate landscape-based planning, implementation and monitoring of agroecological approaches.
- Strengthen Indo-German dialogue and cooperation on agroecology.

Specific activities comprise training and capacity building on sustainable agroecological practices, the facilitation of research partnerships on evidence of agroecological approaches and support for the upscaling of successful agroecological business models through farmer organisations. Project activities on the policy level include working with ministries to anchor agroecological principles in national programmes and support their operationalisation by facilitating cross-sectoral and cross-policy exchanges.

SuATI

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LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS...

The holistic 360° AgriJobs Approach ("Adapted Integrated Approach") developed by the global project is an innovative option for promoting green jobs, as it makes it possible to tackle the issue from various angles at different levels, by including green skills in training programmes, while promoting green businesses through start-up measures or improving framework conditions, to name a few examples.

With a long-term vision and commitment as well as in the spirit of the young generation, the promotion of green jobs for young people in agri-food systems can play a crucial role as a connecting element – benefitting people and planet.

It is important that a project defines what green jobs mean in their context at the very beginning and develops a pragmatic monitoring system to not only measure jobs and new income opportunities, but also, to the extent possible, positive environmental and social impacts, such as amount of water saved or reduced carbon emissions.

To achieve the best results, the commitment of everyone involved is crucial. It is therefore important that all actors, including project teams, partners and beneficiaries, understand the importance of a green transition/green jobs. This may require advocacy and awareness raising through media, workshops or the inclusion of modules on climate change, biodiversity and other related issues in existing training offers.

Young people are key actors for the future and need to be change agents for innovation, climate action and building more sustainable food systems, thus investing in youth is a triple win strategy. But as youth are not a homogenous group, an "extra mile" is needed to benefit young women and youth in a fair and inclusive manner.

To better connect the climate, employment and food agendas, there is a need to bridge the silos. At the latest COP28, the Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action, was a milestone moment in climate action to recognize the importance of food systems transformation. For its implementation, specific strategies and tools like e.g. the "NDC Guidance Tool for Agriculture and Food Systems" are crucial, which presents available policy options for transitioning to nature-positive and resilient food systems through Nationally Determined Contributions.

Despite the growing need for a rapid transformation of agri-food systems, challenges persist in scaling up low-emission solutions for resilient agriculture due to limited incentives and investments for farmers. Benefits from eco-social fiscal reforms and other forms of compensation for "environmental services" can drive transformative change, especially for smallholders and for women and youth as vulnerable groups. Investments are needed to develop sound solutions based on sustainable practices which benefit the producers and the environment, through viable business models and/or incentives or payments for ecosystem services.

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This **series of How to Papers** has been developed by the **Global Project Rural Employment with a Focus on Youth** and aims to process and systematise the project's practical experiences. Each **How to Paper** has a thematic focus and provides a brief overview of innovative approaches and inspiration for practical implementation. The series targets implementing organisations and donor agencies working in the field of youth employment.

FURTHER RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Green Jobs and Income Potential:Agroecology's Role in Rural Employment

Green jobs, green economy, just transition and related concepts: A review of definitions developed through intergovernmental processes and international organizations | ILO

Green Jobs for Youth in Africa: Jobs Perspectives in Agroecology: More Employment, Better Income | INCLUDE

CFS Policy Recommendations: Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition | CFS

Food systems transformation toolkit launched to support countries in taking ambitious and impactful climate action | WWF

Primer Food Forward NDCs: Guidance to enhance NDC ambition and implementation for agriculture and food systems transformation | WWF

Green Jobs in the 360° AgriJobs approach

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