

Achieving the climate goals set by countries in international agreements such as the Paris Agreement will require significant restructuring of labour markets throughout society. IOM refers to this restructuring to reach a net-zero society as the green transition. In addition, demographic changes occurring globally are resulting in a mismatch between the availability and demand of workers geographically, while technological developments in, for example, the field of artificial intelligence also fundamentally change labour market demands. The development and expansion of regular labour migration pathways can address this imbalance while also providing benefits to all involved stakeholders, including migrants themselves, the private sector, communities and societies. By matching migrant workers to labour market needs and enabling regular and safe migration pathways – both internally and internationally – labour markets can adequately respond and adapt to the changing circumstances

and requirements of emerging occupations, and the green transition can be propelled forward in both the origin and destination country.

[According to the ILO](#), the green transition is projected to create 25 million jobs globally and the loss of 7 million, 5 million of which are re-allocatable. [An analysis by LinkedIn](#) showed that the share of green talent grew by 12.3% from 2022 to 2023, while the share of jobs requiring green skills grew by 22.4%, further illustrating the need for green skills. The net creation of jobs can often not be covered by the national workforce alone, especially for many developed countries that are experiencing an ageing population which adds pressure to the labour markets. Migrant workers of all skill levels are therefore crucial to respond to the emerging labour demands to meet global climate goals for societies and communities.

GREENING SECTORS THROUGH LABOUR MIGRATION

Changes in the labour market as a consequence of the green transition will differ per region and sector. Four sectors will need to adjust the most include energy, agriculture, construction and mining. According to the [International Energy Agency](#), net-zero by 2050 will require a complete transformation of the global energy system with a massive shift away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, requiring a large number of workers with all skill levels. Similarly, agricultural practices must be made sustainable to support the increasing demand for food, while the construction and mining sectors will be forced to change practices and reduce emissions. The exact impacts on the labour market will depend on the country context, and specifically its labour market, which is why flexible regular labour migration models that can be adapted to the needs of countries and migrants themselves will be essential in achieving an efficient movement of workers to where they are needed.

In the design and implementation of regular labour migration pathways, IOM aims to centralize youth to create sustainable opportunities for them, address challenges related to youth unemployment, and directly support the green transition in both the origin and destination countries. Training facilities in origin countries are one approach to directly increase the benefits for local communities while also meeting needs of labour markets in destination countries.



A class is in session lead by IOM ©
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SKILLS MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS

Addressing the mismatch between the available workforce and the labour market demands requires efforts in up- and reskilling. Skill Mobility Partnerships (SMPs) form a model where the development of skills for migrant workers is central with an emphasis on multi-stakeholder collaboration. While the concept of using SMPs in the context of green skills required for the transition is a recent development, there have been ongoing IOM projects to stimulate green skills

development for several years. [An example](#) can be found from 2021 in South Sudan, where youth participated in a two-month long skill training focusing on solar panel installation, repair and maintenance for their local community. These skill trainings in the origin country do not only increase the opportunity for migration in the future, but also positively impact local communities

SKILLS

Skills form the cornerstone of the approach to addressing labour market needs for a green transition through migration and can be divided into five components: anticipation, development, matching, transfer and recognition. Anticipating the need of changing labour markets through data and information will be essential to calibrate trainings for the development of skills and maximize the contribution of migrant workers as well as their integration in the labour market and society. Recognizing qualifications, skills and experiences is a fundamental principle to not only enlarge the pool of available talented migrant workers, but also encourage skills transfer that benefits sustainable development in the country of origin.

TRAINING MIGRANT WORKERS FOR SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION

As a response to major labour shortages in the Brazilian renewable energy sector, IOM is training Venezuelans workers to address the shortage. An extensive training course is set together that aims to provide migrant workers with the

required green skills. The pilot project also includes a human development aspect to support workers in building confidence for job interviews and establishing themselves as autonomous workers, with an overall focus on women.



Youth in South Sudan working on solar panel installation supported by IOM © IOM/Muse Mohammed

A GREEN AND JUST TRANSITION

The attraction of migrant workers by developed countries raises the challenge of preventing a brain drain in the origin country. Through remittances, green investments, and skills development, recognition and transfer, the community of origin can not only increase their resilience but also stimulate the green transition, while diasporas can further support the green transition through their [economic](#), [human](#), [social](#) and [cultural](#) capital.

In a just transition where no one is left behind, it is critical to consider the implications of the green transition on existing

workers, including migrant workers. In the context of livelihoods, some analyses note that the industries which are impacted by decarbonisation the most – such as the services industry and agriculture sectors – are also among those with the highest concentration of migrant workers. This could present several challenges to migrant workers, including implications for ongoing access to livelihoods, visa status, and the need for the reskilling or upskilling. There may also be several important protection-related issues that must be considered, in the context of exploitative working conditions. It is therefore essential to follow a human rights-based approach for the implementation of regular labour pathways by including ethical recruitment practices, strong regulatory protection of migrant workers, and the integration of migrant workers in the labour market and society, while also making regular pathways more accessible to address humanitarian needs. This way, migrant workers can maximize their contribution to the green transition – both in the origin and destination countries – while minimizing the associated risks.