

WHAT ARE GREEN FOREST JOBS?



The Expert Level Meeting of FOREST EUROPE held on 31 August 2022 in Bonn adopted the definition of Green Forest Jobs proposed by the Expert Group on Green Jobs. It reads:

“Green Forest Jobs provide forest-related goods and services while meeting the requirements of sustainable forest management and decent work.”

This does not mean, that all jobs in forest sector are necessarily green. The present note provides some background and explanation of this definition origin, scope and intended uses. The Expert Group’s work is part of the work program of FOREST EUROPE, established for the implementation of the Ministerial Resolution “The Future We Want: The Forests We Need” adopted in Bratislava in 2021.

Rationale

The term Green Job was defined by UNEP (UNEP et al., 2008) and ILO (ILO, 2013). However, there were diverging views about how this definition can be applied in the forest sector. Therefore, FOREST EUROPE decided to present a definition of Green Jobs specific to the forest sector. It aims to create a common understanding among FOREST EUROPE signatories and observers about what Green Forest Jobs are. The notion of Green Forest Jobs is intended primarily for communication purposes. The desirability and feasibility of its use as an indicator is being explored.

Terminology and definitions

A Green Job provides work that contributes to **preserving or restoring environmental quality** or is aimed to **reduce environmental impact of**

existing production processes. These jobs improve the sustainability of economic activities. **Green Jobs must be decent work**, therefore they must be “productive, provide adequate incomes and social protection, respect the rights of workers and give them a say in decisions that will affect their lives” (ILO, 2013). Decent work was the subject of conclusions adopted at international level.

Explanatory notes

Many Green Jobs are emerging beyond the traditional forest sector (ECE/FAO, 2018). While forest sector employment overall has been decreasing in most countries, Green Jobs are potentially growing in non-traditional forest-related activities. The new forest-based sector encompasses economic activities related to new wood-based products, urban and social forestry, human health and recreation, ecotourism, green chemistry, education, research & development and more. A shared understanding of the term Green Forest Jobs across countries should thus encompass jobs in the traditional and new forest-based sector, including their whole value chains. The new definition integrates the wording “provide forest-related goods and services” to include all forest-related work that meets Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) (Forest Europe, 1993) requirements and is thus an environmentally sustainable activity. The reference to “decent work” points out that this condition is a prerequisite for any green job. Other conceptual terms such as “green economy” or “bio economy” were avoided because they are ambiguous.



References

- ECE/FAO. 2018 Green jobs in the Forest Sector. United Nations, 75 p.
- Forest Europe. 1993 Sustainable forest management. https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/raw-materials/related-industries/forest-based-industries/sustainable-forest-management_hr.
- ILO. 2013 Sustainable development, decent work and green jobs. Fifth item on the agenda.
- UNEP, ILO, IOE and ITUC. 2008 Green jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World. UNEP, 352 p.