Project Description

The Green Jobs in Asia project directly contributes to the national programs and initiatives relating to climate change, environment and disaster management and recovery from the economic crisis. Through enhanced capacity of ILO constituents, sound policy guidance, the undertaking of gender-responsive field activities on green employment in specific economic sectors, the project aims to assist five Asian countries in shifting to a low-carbon, environmentally friendly and climate resilient economy that helps accelerate the jobs recovery, reduce social gaps, support development goals and realize decent work.

It is envisaged that upon completion of the project, ILO constituents and national partners will be knowledgeable about the impacts of climate policies on the labour market and the potential for gender responsive green jobs creation/maintenance. They will have acquired the capacity and the elements to take part in the national discussions on climate change and to respond to these changes, including in the context of the development and implementation of the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). They will also contribute to developing specific policies and programs for the promotion of green jobs employment opportunities in critical sectors.

The immediate objectives of the project are:

i. Promote the capacity of ILO constituents to engage in dialogue on green jobs through increased access to reliable sources of data and information on green jobs and training, including on the employment impacts of environment-related policies and good practices on green jobs;

ii. Green jobs mainstreamed in national labour and social policy of participating countries;

iii. Green Jobs demonstration programs which respond to the different needs of women and men, implemented in key sectors selected based on the basis of research and consultations.

ILO constituents are a key project target group with a view to creating the long-term capacity and the conditions of social dialogue to mainstream green jobs into social and employment policy, integrate Green Jobs policies into the DWCP, contribute actively to climate and environment related policies at the national level, and facilitate a just transition for enterprises and workers towards a low-carbon, environmentally friendly economy.
Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, project objectives were focused on three main areas; namely, developing constituents’ capacity on green jobs, support for mainstreaming green jobs into national plans, policies and programmes, and the implementation of a pilot project aimed at demonstrating the potential for green jobs at the sectoral level.

Project accomplishments

Capacity Building

A National Conference on Green Jobs co-convened with the Ministry of Labour was held in January 2011 and attended by 70 participants, including tripartite constituents, development partners, private sector actors, academia and civil society. In addition, 45 constituents participated in a tripartite foundation training on Green Jobs held in Colombo in October 2011.

In June 2011, the Employers’ Federation of Ceylon (EFC) formed a ‘Green Team’ to steer environmental initiatives and conducted a training on green jobs for 60 of its members. EFC also conducted a green jobs survey which identified good practices of its members in terms of sustainable management and cleaner production practices. Seven case studies were selected and the results, compiled in a report, were disseminated through a EFC validation workshop held on 7 June. The report also informed the development of a position paper on green jobs and green enterprises.

A capacity building programme on green jobs, climate change policies and decent work was held in Bangkok in February 2011: involving participants from 4 trade unions in Sri Lanka, namely Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya, National Trade Union Federation, National Association for Trade Union Research & Education and the National Workers’ Congress.

In addition, the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), the Sri Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU) and the Upcountry Workers Front (UWF) have developed a Training of Trainer’s programme on green jobs. The programme was designed to develop the capacity of lead trainers responsible for educating workers at the field level about the concept of green jobs and the linkages between labor standards and environmental management in the world of work. Fifty members of CWC, twenty-five members of LJEWU, and thirty members of UWF took part in these trainings between May and June 2012.

Policy

As a result of advocacy and support provided by the project, green jobs are cited in the recently formulated National Human Resource and Employment Policy currently being reviewed by the government for endorsement. The policy recommends that vocational training and education should integrate environmental concepts into course curricula, including adaptation to climate
Sri Lanka

change, energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as focus on priority sectors such as sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture, forestry and waste management. The policy also calls for new programmes to be initiated aimed at undertaking research on the labour market potential for green jobs. In addition, the policy makes mention of providing financial support to entrepreneurs and enterprises to explore green business opportunities. A policy paper on opportunities for mainstreaming green jobs into national social and economic development policies, as well as a review of Sri Lanka’s legal framework aimed at helping to identify entry points for integrating green jobs into national legislation has also been completed.

**Demonstration project**

Demonstration project activities focus on promoting good occupational safety and environmental health practices for workers in the solid waste management sector. 300 peer educators in the Western province were trained on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), green jobs and decent work. Accordingly, project partnered with the Overseas Development Institute and two local research firms to conduct a value chain analysis with the aim of identifying decent work deficits and appropriate interventions associated with plastics recycling and composting activities.

Secondly, as part of a larger strategy to improve working conditions and the formalization of jobs among the most vulnerable categories of informal workers involved in waste collection and processing in Sri Lanka, awareness raising and training of 300 trainers on OSH and decent work were co-organized between the Waste Management Authority (WMA) the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). A total of 4,000 workers across seven zones in the Western Province benefitted from the trainings.

In addition, OSH standards been integrated into the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) certification courses for waste management operations, endorsed by the national Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) in May 2012. Under this process, the ILO’s *Work Adjustment for Recycling and Managing Waste* (WARM+) manual was developed and endorsed as a training tool for NVQ Levels 1 and 2 and mainstreamed as a mandatory learning material for certified courses. The manual has been translated and published in English, Sinhala and Tamil languages to encourage its wide dissemination.

Fifteen master trainers from the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Association of Sri Lanka were certified as instructors for the ILO’s ‘Start and Improve Your Waste Recycling Business’ training course. The training manual has been adapted for Sri Lanka and translated into Sinhala by the SIYB Association of Sri Lanka. Master trainers have reached out to 40 existing and 40 potential plastic recycling entrepreneurs involved in both the formal and informal economy to help them improve the sustainability of their business practices.
Sri Lanka

A new partnership has also been forged between WMA and a Regional Plantation Company for the regular purchase of compost from plantations located in adjoining provinces, demonstrating the impact project interventions have had in terms of supporting environmental sustainable practices across locations and sectors.

Challenges and opportunities

The concept of green jobs is in its nascent stages in Sri Lanka with an unequal level of understanding among constituents. In this regard locating resource persons, especially those who spoke Tamil, proved to be a challenge given the thematic scope of the project. This situation requires that continuous efforts are made in sharing good practices and highlighting opportunities for employment creation based on principles of decent work and sustainable enterprise development. More needs to be done to reinforce the importance of a just transition into a green economy which necessarily relies on the involvement of the traditional ILO partners as well as new ones. Trade union members and other stakeholders’ capacities can vary and hence time needs to be spent on adapting tools to suit a larger target audience.

Lessons Learned

The project has made progress in terms of institutionalizing national standard curricula for green jobs, ensuring that future waste workers will be trained on techniques to promote solid waste minimization and reuse, waste segregation, collection and transport of waste, maintaining the general environment and OSH, among others. This work provides key entry points for greening the solid waste management sector at the national level. Social dialogue and tripartism will be essential for ensuring the sustainability of this approach, especially with regard to further mainstreaming green jobs into policy areas where they can have a lasting impact, such as skills development and youth employment. In this regard, the policy and legislative review papers developed by the project offers a platform from which strategic discussions can take place on advancing the green jobs agenda in Sri Lanka.