



 **CLUSTER**



POLICY REPORT

SPROUTING IN THE ECONOMY OF TOMORROW

**How the Transition to a Green Economy Can Reverse
the Spirals of Youth Marginalisation and Ecological
Degradation in the Mediterranean**



PARTNERS



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How the Transition to a Green Economy Can Reverse the Spirals of Youth Marginalisation and Ecological Degradation in the Mediterranean

CLUSTER POLICY REPORT ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE GREEN ECONOMY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN: state and near-future prospects

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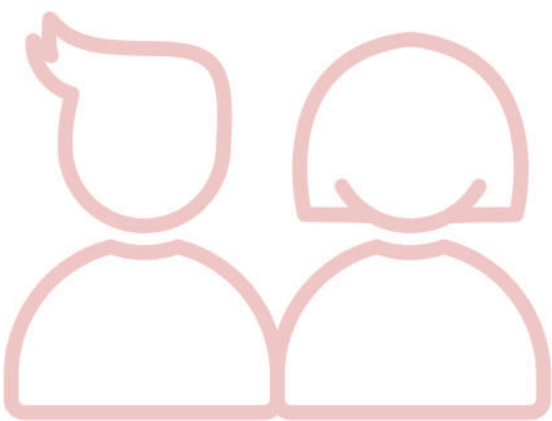
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ecological crisis and youth unemployment are two of the most pressing challenges that Mediterranean countries are facing. These nations are very diverse but share a number of commonalities, especially in this regard: high rates of youth unemployment, high rates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), considerable gender gaps in occupation and education, limited success of education and training systems satisfying the labour market's demand, and often stagnant national economies that are unable to absorb the increasing supply of an educated and highly skilled workforce. The Green Economy (GE) has emerged as an operable tool to drive transition energy and advance towards a more sustainable development that meets Agenda 2030 targets. This profound reorganisation is expected to create new jobs and restructure many existing ones. International organisations focused on economic and labour development provide multiple tools for governments and policy-makers to measure the potential growth of green jobs. However, there are several previous measures to build up to boost the process. First, there is the need to make the necessary investments to support the private sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which comprise most of the entrepreneurial fabric of the Mediterranean economies. Second, employment policies must prepare robust training schemes to guide, and ready workers to fulfil the skills required. Third, although all the region's governments are committed to enabling far-reaching employment schemes with substantial budgets, their effectiveness is being evaluated as insufficient thus far. Improvements in this area should be addressed towards greater inclusivity of the different profiles of unemployed young people, and seeking equal opportunities. Fourth, most of the green jobs are associated with high technologies and digitalisation and require high-skill profiles. The great potential for green jobs in the region is expected to be concentrated in the fields of renewable energies, sustainable buildings and constructions, water and waste management, and agriculture. Tourism is predicted to be another pool of jobs progressively based on environmental conservation and education, and nature-based activities. Fifth and finally, it is to be expected that after the first phases of GE deployment, many other jobs will be necessarily related to the application and use of the new processes, such as maintenance, trade, publicity, marketing, education, exhibition and testing, among many others. Social rights are the necessary framework for founding a just transition and avoiding new social divisions that can arise in this new setting. Therefore, economies of care should be valued as much as the technological ones to achieve empowered and resilient communities with decent jobs.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACEN: African Circular Economy Network

ALMPs: Active Labour Market Policies

CBC: Cross-Border Cooperation

CEDEFOP: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

CNR-NANOTECH: Institute of Nanotechnologies at the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (Italian National Research Council)

EC: European Commission

EGSs: environmental goods and services

EU: European Union

EIOPA: European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority

ENI: European Neighbourhood Instrument

ETF: European Training Foundation

FTE: full-time equivalent

GE: Green Economy

Gha: Global hectare

ILO: International Labour Organization

INJUVE: Instituto de la Juventud de España

IOE: International Organization of Employers

ITUC: International Trade Union Confederation

MAP: Mediterranean Action Plan

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

MFPE: Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi

MPICMLJ: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and Ministry of Labor in Jordan

MTMSS: Ministerio de Trabajo, Migraciones y Seguridad Social

NEETs: not in education, employment or training

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAGE: Partnerships for Action on Green Economy

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics



SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

SME: small and medium-sized enterprises

SSE: Social and Solidarity Economy

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UfM: Union for the Mediterranean

UNITAR: United Nations Institute for Training and Research

INTRODUCTION

Although high biodiversity in the Mediterranean region can still be found, multiple forms of pollution are harming the environment since, for decades, the area has been suffering intensive uses in the land, coast and sea, causing high pressure on the natural resources. For example, the Mediterranean Ecological Footprint is higher than the global average (2.8 gha per capita), while the biocapacity per capita to support this footprint is lower than the global average in most Mediterranean countries. Besides, climate warming is also higher than the global average, with 1.54°C above pre-industrial levels in the region, while the global average temperature was about 1.1°C (UNEP/MAP & Plan Bleu, 2020).

Provided with a common framework for region-specific climate action through environmental conservation and protection – the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Barcelona Convention¹ –, notable progress has been observed in some common pollution problems. However, other environmental areas remain of concern, including urban sprawl and fragmented ecosystems, air pollution, waste management, marine litter, and so on, with significant impacts on human health and key economic sectors of the region. In this way, considering climate factors (increase in temperature, decrease in precipitation, acidification, increase in extreme events), and the particular intensity of non-climate factors (population growth and density, increment in tourist arrivals), the Mediterranean Basin is considered a climate change hotspot. Climate change is projected to continue to threaten food and water security, as well as human livelihoods and health, for decades to come. Just in 2020, 15% of the region's deaths were attributed to modifiable environmental factors, compared to 23% worldwide (UNEP/MAP & Plan Bleu, 2020). Water scarcity is one of the region's most serious hazards, with about 30% of the Mediterranean population living in water-stressed countries and another 13% in absolutely water-stressed countries. The quality and quantity of freshwater resources are declining, while localised warming and reduced rainfall go with the risk of erosion and fire (UNEP/MAP & Plan Bleu, 2020).

In this frame, a Green Economy (GE) is seen as an operable tool to address the crises that have emerged worldwide, including climate, nature, pollution, food, and financial, social and economic instability (ILO, 2013a). If guided well, the transition to a GE can provide opportunities for job creation and sustainable economic growth through targeted policies and investments and serve as a model for sustainable development (ILO, 2013b).

Since 2009 the International Labour Organization (ILO) Green Jobs Programme has established that green jobs are decent jobs – decent wages, safe working conditions and workers' rights, and the right

¹ The Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), known as the Barcelona Convention started to take shape in 1976 and entered into action in 2004. <https://www.unep.org/uneppmap/>

to form trade unions – that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency (ILO, 2016; ILO & UNEP, 2008).

This report will focus on how governments and policy-makers can tackle the environmental crisis and the youth employment crisis through the transition towards a sustainable economy and the creation of “green jobs”. Its chapters will:

- briefly depict the state of the GE in the region;
- point out some of the existing policies that link youth and GE;
- delineate the employment opportunities that the GE can create between now and 2030;
- propose policy measures to foster inclusive youth employment in the GE
deliver a best practices list.

Greater analytical focus was put on six countries in the CLUSTER project (France, Italy, Jordan, Palestine, Spain and Tunisia), but there are also references to other Mediterranean countries.

OVERVIEW OF THE GREEN ECONOMY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

The UNEP/MAP Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development has identified three territorial goals:

- Ensuring sustainable development in marine and coastal areas;
- Promoting resource management, food production and food security through sustainable forms of rural development;
- Planning and managing sustainable Mediterranean cities;

and another three cross-cutting goals related to the following key policy areas:

- addressing climate change as a priority issue for the Mediterranean;
- transition towards a green and blue economy;
- and improving governance in support of sustainable development (UNEP/MAP, 2016).

No available database yet corresponds to states' performances on the GE following a unique definition with a universal green jobs scheme. According to interviewed experts from the African Circular Economy Network (ACEN), such a lack of coherent monitoring and measuring mechanisms is one of the main obstacles to GE development in the Mediterranean and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. Still, in the face of a lack of comparable data, multiple reports can be found of different scopes in terms of area, number of states considered, and the definitions of GE and green jobs. Several approaches that tackle the GE can be found. Among the most widespread, there is the UNEP approach, which is mainly based on capacity-building with the Partnerships for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)² initiative, which, together with other United Nations (UN) bodies (United Nations Industrial Development Organization [UNIDO], United Nations Institute for Training and Research [UNITAR], ILO, United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]), offers training services to policy- and decision-makers and the private sector too, through its Financial Initiative and its inquiry to design a sustainable financial system³ (Fosse et al., 2016). On the other hand, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) approach prioritises green economic growth while ensuring the conservation of the natural assets on which our sociotechnical system relies (Fosse et al., 2016). Its services also offer tools and guidelines to governments for appropriate policies design and to

² <https://www.un-page.org/>

³ <http://www.unepinquiry.org/>

adequately monitor their implementation (OECD, 2011). The OECD has remarked that green growth involves:

- Enhancing productivity;
- Boosting investor confidence;
- Opening up new markets by stimulating demand for green goods, services and technologies;
- Contributing to fiscal consolidation by mobilising revenues through green taxes;
- and Reducing risks of adverse shocks to growth (OECD, 2011).

Along the same line, the European Union (EU) supports⁴ job creation by increasing taxes on pollution, reducing gas emissions, improving energy efficiency, and innovating in the value chain of green products (CEDEFOP, 2021).

In addition to the aforementioned GE approaches, there are many other developed methodologies still relatively unknown, such as the Green Economy Coalition⁵ (GEC) strategy, which proposes to form the basis for bottom-up processes to build national visions on the GE (Fosse et al., 2016). Fosse's report explains that, although some countries in the Mediterranean Basin have clearly defined GE and sustainable development strategies (such as France, Italy, Morocco, Portugal and Tunisia), specific implementation mechanisms, stakeholder engagement, and systematic follow-up and evaluation are still lacking. Some countries have not developed and/or published relevant national policies that fully consider the GE, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or other sustainable development elements and commitments (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, Palestine, Slovenia, Spain) (Fosse et al., 2016). The situation is likely to be improved. Such is the case of Spain with the Circular Economy Spanish Strategy approved in 2020, although it is still too much of a generalist document to be an applicable instrument. Nevertheless, despite the lack of sufficient consistency in the policies, regulations and plans, much progress has been made during the last years, particularly after the pandemic crisis: even though since then most of the situations have worsened, it has been an undeniable wakeup call on the need to develop more resilient communities.

⁴ <http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/economy/intro>

⁵ <http://www.greeneconomycoalition.org/updates/sign-9-principles-green-economy>

MAPPING OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN THE GREEN ECONOMY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Youth employment policies are one of the primary priorities in the governments' agendas, especially after the 2008 crisis when young unemployment rates reached the highest levels of the last decades all over the region. The structural nature of youth unemployment shows that greater efforts must be assigned to the design and implementation of these employment policies. Gaining greater effectiveness in policy implementation is one of the main challenges for all people-oriented policies. Often the diagnoses are accurate. However, it is more difficult to find measures that respond to the needs of both unemployed young people and of the labour market in the current context of profound transformation.

Governments are allocating significant amounts of resources, such as Jordan's National Employment Plan included in the country's 2021-2023 Economic Action Plan. It is addressed to empower Jordanians aged 18-40 with a budget of €102 million, and its goal is to encourage the private sector to hire unemployed Jordanians in all economic sectors and in all provinces. Under the scheme, employers sign up workers with one-year contracts that include one to three months of on-the-job training. The programme subsidises training with €60 or €100 per participant, depending on job requirements. In addition, during the six months, the programme provides the company with €160 for employees' salaries, €13 for transport subsidies and €13 for social security (ILO et al., 2023). Jordan's National Employment Plan Strategy 2011-2020 also suggests a better Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy in terms of control and monitoring, better access to information on job opportunities, targeted Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs), securing maternity benefits, affordable childcare, fixing the mismatch between people's places of residence and where jobs are being created, fixing the formal/informal divide related to both legal status of the enterprise and legal status of workers in the enterprise, installing evaluation mechanisms (labour market information systems are in a fair state but need to be better tailored for the evaluation management of the policies and programmes and for the end users). Finally, the Strategy mentions a more effective social dialogue between government, labour sector, and business sector (Tripartite Committee).

Another example of great fund investment for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) is the Youth Guarantee programme 2014-2020, now Youth Guarantee Plus 2021-2027. The

second evaluation⁶ for the Spanish application admits that the beginnings were slow although the implementation has been improving over time. Key issues in the evaluation are the need for higher-quality, longer-lasting and more versatile actions for greater adjustment to market needs, for more support for groups with greater difficulties, for actions to prevent early leavers, and for better management of transitions from school to work.

Ultimately, implementation performance is one of the most significant issues in gaining effectiveness in young employment measures across the countries (ILO, 2017). Interviewed ACEN experts agree that GE policies are mostly in place in most Mediterranean countries, but implementation is their governments' true Achilles' heel. More transparency, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are demanded for Tunisia's improvement in the administrative processes in the context of a National Employment Strategy (Bass et al., 2017: 16). More consistency in following through on plans and creating the proper institutional environment was included in the main objectives of Jordan's National Employment Strategy 2011-2020 (MPICMLJ, 2011).

The preferences of young people have evolved much more than the design of policies and the administrative and civil service dynamics. However, better packages of employment services are to be found with greater allocation of resources and, above all, prioritisation in the decision-making.

It is noteworthy that youth employment policies in France are cross-ministerial, cross-cutting, territorial and multi-partnered – with five union confederations with the right to negotiate and conclude agreements in all professional sectors. As in the case of youth policies, employment policies are based on inter-ministerial and intersectorial work that mobilises public operators, local authorities, associations and enterprises in the development of employment policies and at the time of their implementation. These policies include:

- Skills forecasting regularly updated (key skills, basic skills, special skills)
- Massive open-line courses;
- Career guidance and counselling;
- Traineeships and apprenticeships through contracts;
- Recognition of learning outcomes;
- and Development of entrepreneurship competence (at all territorial levels) together with the promotion of entrepreneurship culture and start-up funding for young entrepreneurs.

Two other aspects of particular relevance are the “flexicurity” of their nature, and the measures to support the reconciliation of private and work life for young people giving support for housing and child-minding facilities. Flexicurity schemes facilitate professional transition – for all ages – with a personal

⁶ Ministerio de Trabajo, Migraciones y Seguridad Social (2018). II Evaluation of the Youth employment initiative. Evaluation Report 2018. Gobierno de España.

training account for free advice and economic support to complement low professional incomes (EC, 2019).

The “Green Jobs Report” series⁷ issued by the UNEP-ILO-International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)-International Organisation of Employers (IOE) emphasised that green jobs must also reflect “decent work”, which is understood as being efficient and safe; ensuring respect for labour rights; providing a decent income, offering social protection and including social dialogue, freedom of association, collective bargaining and participation (UNEP, 2012: 22).

From the social rights and inclusion perspective, much progress has been made towards an open-minded society such as Spain, in particular considering the country’s historical background. Currently, the state has a wide range of laws and strategies that protect human diversity and fight against sexism to make gender equality effective. Measures against male violence, in favour of the equality of LGBTI+ people, the inclusion and insertion of people with disabilities, among others, have been in the centre of the political agenda. The First Youth Action Spanish Plan 2022-2024 aims to build a “social shield” to guarantee the quality of life and the purchasing power of youth, which have been severely diminished by the present crisis and previous ones (INJUVE, 2023).

The European Commission (EC) underlines job quality as a critical element at the intersection of two recent socioeconomic initiatives: the European Green New Deal and the European Social Rights Pillar. The EC takes Eurofound domains concerning the quality of jobs: socioeconomic security, education and training, working conditions and representation, work-life balance, and gender equality (EC, 2021).

⁷ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/assessments/lang-en/index.htm>

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS FOR THE GREEN ECONOMY IN THE NEAR FUTURE

The report “Bridging the Great Green Divide⁸ indicates that the shortage of green skills in OECD countries is holding back sustainable development job growth and risks jeopardising the race to become emissions neutral by 2050. The report examines the geographic distribution of green and polluting jobs. It mainly investigates the impact of the green transition on gender and socioeconomic inequalities by identifying the characteristics of workers in these jobs. In addition, the report tracks the progress made by each region in greening the labour market over the past decade (OECD, 2023).

The sectors with more potential to create green jobs are renewables, waste/recycling, public transport, green buildings, sustainable farming, and forestry (see Illustration 1). However, tourism and services (such as education and training, health care, green finance, etc.) are also essential to promote a GE and sustainable development in Mediterranean countries (UNEP, 2008 in Fosse et al., 2016).

Studies aimed at estimating the bulk of jobs that the GE can create are based on prospective models. For example, the ILO (2023a) estimates that 24 million jobs globally could be created by 2030 if measures for a sustainable transition are properly implemented. 18 million jobs alone could be launched by achieving sustainability in the energy sector, including construction, electrical machinery manufacturing, copper mining, renewable energy production and biomass generation (ILO, 2023b). It must be considered that the transition will lead to a decrease in employment in other sectors that could amount to up to 6 million jobs (+0.28%), affecting some regions of the world more than others. For instance, Europe could experience a net job gain of 3 million (+0.27%), while the Middle East and Africa could lose 0.48% and 0.04% of their total jobs, respectively. In the EU, employment in the environmental goods and services (EGSs) sector alone increased from 2.8 million in 2000 to 4.1 million in 2015.

Also in most Mediterranean countries, we see clearly upwards trends in green jobs. Between 2019 and 2025, Italy is projected to create 130,000 jobs in reducing energy costs in houses, schools and other public offices, 312,000 in increasing the share of renewable energy used, 149,000 in fostering a Circular Economy (CE), 96,000 in urban regeneration, and 11,000 in sustainable urban mobility and transport (FSS, 2019).

⁸ <https://www.oecd.org/publications/job-creation-and-local-economic-development-26174979.htm>

For Tunisia, the ILO (2018) projects as many as 115,000 more jobs created by 2030 in various green sectors (80,000 in organic agriculture, waste sector, energy efficiency and renewable energy, and 35,000 in water desalination, treatment and infrastructure maintenance) but only if the government and sector stakeholders combine efforts to devise a solid transition strategy. This scenario would see a total of 272,000 green jobs in 2030, corresponding to more than 5% of the total jobs in the country.

According to the French National Observatory of Jobs and Professions in the Green Economy,⁹ in 2018, jobs in the GE directly concerned nearly 4 million people in France, 140,000 of them have a so-called “green job”, that is to say, one that directly aims to protect the environment, and 3.8 million occupy a greening profession (ONEMEV, 2021). In 2019, GE activities¹⁰ mobilised nearly 1.1 million full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, i.e., 3.9% of employment national total. “Eco-activities”, the primary purpose of which is the protection of the environment or the sustainable management of natural resources, make up just over half of these jobs: 610,100 FTEs, or 2.3% of total employment. The so-called “peripheral” activities, contributing to better environmental quality without this being their first purpose, mobilised 442,000 FTEs in 2019, i.e., 1.6% of total national employment (ONEMEV, 2021).

These examples illustrate how employment prospects depend on a wide range of previous measures related to national and international private investments, financial conditions, investments in technology and R&D, export-import balances and countries' specialisations among other factors that differ across states and regions, besides the stability of markets as a necessary condition. Nevertheless, the essential policies to grow trained young labour are quality services in education, life-long training, and specific programmes for different groups (apart from a universal health system) (EC, 2021). Social policies are at the basis of an employment strategy.

According to the ILO, green jobs are those helping to:

- Improve energy and raw materials efficiency;
- Limit greenhouse gas emissions;
- Minimise waste and pollution;
- Protect and restore ecosystems;
- Support adaptation to the effects of climate change (Castillo, 2023).

Exploring the quality of forthcoming green jobs is as relevant as predicting their number. In this respect, a study published by the EC does not offer good news. The results show hardly any difference between the quality of green and brown¹¹ jobs with few changes since 2005. The same applies to different types of

⁹ <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/observatoire-nationales-jobs-and-trades-the-green-economy>

¹⁰ <https://www.statistiques.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/metiers-verts-et-verdissants-pres-de-4-millions-de-professionnels-en-2018> Published date: 20/12/2021. Accessed 18/07/2023.

¹¹ “Brown’ jobs are those occupations that have not seen any significant change in their tasks in the direction of decarbonisation and sustainability, while ‘green’ jobs are those that have witnessed such a shift” (EC, 2021: 8).

green jobs distinguishing between jobs with increased demand for green tasks, jobs where green tasks require increased skills, and new green jobs (EC, 2021). Other findings are that high-skilled jobs are also more secure occupationally, giving workers more choices. Moreover, the highest quality jobs have been identified in areas where the protection and enforcement of employment policies are more institutionalised, particularly in wages, health and safety. Furthermore, of all the indicators, work-life balance and gender balance show the most significant variation across EU member states, reflecting the large differences in current regulations (EC, 2021).

Although gender equality policies are introduced in the governance of most of the countries (UfM, 2022), labour markets produce and reproduce gender inequalities that intersect with other inequalities (ILO, 2023a). This is particularly evident at two levels of the labour market structure: the sectors in which women work, which largely determine women's working conditions, and unpaid care work, which is predominantly performed by women, limiting their access to employment and quality of work (ILO, 2023a; Antczak et al., 2021). Therefore, in the absence of corrective measures, women will possibly participate much less in the energy transition in terms of occupation and for this reason STEM studies are strongly recommended to female students.

Green jobs as they are now projected dramatically exclude women considering the gender segregation of jobs following the traditional stereotypes, as can be seen in Illustration 1.

Illustration 1. Occupation and task examples of green jobs according to sectors and skill qualification (OECD, 2023)

		Proportion of green tasks		
		Green	Partially green	Non-green
Level of education	High-skilled	Solar Energy Systems Engineers	Civil Engineers	Accountants
		Engineering analysis or evaluation of energy efficiency and solar projects Design solar domestic heating systems	Designing construction and maintenance of building structures Overseeing facilities such as roads, railroads or airports	Determine or maintain record of assets, liabilities, profit and loss, tax liability or financial services of an organisation Analyse financial information and prepare financial reports
	Medium-skilled	Wind Energy Project Managers	Transportation Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Inspectors	Sales Mangers
		Manage construction of projects Lead or manage the development and evaluation of potential wind energy business opportunities	Inspect and monitor transportation equipment, vehicles, or systems to ensure compliance with regulations and safety standards	Plan, direct, or coordinate the distribution or movement of a product or service to the consumer Analyse sales statistics gathered by staff to determine sales potential and inventory

Original note: The greenness of occupations is based on their task content and whether those tasks are green or not. The classification of high-

Level of education	Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors	Plumbers	Helpers-Extraction Workers
	Low-skilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and dump refuse or recycle material into truck Drive truck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assemble, install, or repair pipes, fittings, or fixtures of heating, water or drainage systems Follow plumbing codes and other specifications

, medium-, and low-skilled occupations follows ISCO. Bowen & Hancké (2019) using ISCO_88 and ISCO-08 job categories (derived from O*NET) in OECD, 2023.
 Authors' adaptation from the original source: compiled by the OECD based on O*NET's Green Tasks Data (OECD, 2023).

Young women have a significantly higher proportion of NEET situations than young men in most countries; globally, two thirds of young NEETs are women. NEET rates tend to decrease as national income and individual education levels increase; rural areas tend to have higher NEET rates and a larger gender gap than urban areas. There is also strong evidence that scarring – being a NEET today means you are more likely to be a NEET tomorrow – is especially true for young women. These findings highlight the need for early intervention and underscore the high cost of inaction. Furthermore, the expanded policy focus resulting from the adoption of the NEET ratio as an SDG indicator to measure youth labour market progress highlights the need to tailor interventions in obstacles that women face to gain employment (ILO, 2023a; Antczak et al., 2021). Therefore, although gender equality is a human right fairly integrated in most laws and policies of the Mediterranean countries (Albinyana & Martinez, 2022), achieving effective equality requires major changes. A useful, though complex, measure is to identify the coverage gaps in care services and estimate the required magnitude of public expenditures to close these gaps, assessing the economic returns to an equivalent allocation from public budgets (ILO, 2021).

Gender inequality has much to do with gendered roles commonly experienced as part of the culture and therefore it is not easy to move towards equality. In this respect, nothing is more educational than encountering equal gender and safe contexts. Often broadminded contexts can be found in international cooperation initiatives, which generally are based on cross-cultural, cross-sectorial and multi-actor governance, and apply transversal methods. Although they are temporal, these initiatives have the power to exemplify models of development that are generally human development oriented. Among the projects organised under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) 'Mediterranean Sea Basin' Programme, two must be mentioned: the MYSEA and the INTERNISA (see Annex 1). Both focus on providing skills to NEET youngsters, particularly women, to gain qualifications for GE and the digital sector (ENI CBCMED Programme, 2021).

ACTION PLAN FOR REGIONAL POLICY-MAKERS TO IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES IN THE GREEN ECONOMY

A GE in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction requires targeting country-specific macroeconomic, industrial, sectorial and labour policy mixes to create an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises to flourish and create decent jobs. Mobilisation and guidance of both public/political action and private investment in ecologically sustainable activities will be needed. Interviewed experts from both the Italian National Research Council (CNR-NANOTEC) institute and the ACEN agree that the coordinated triangulation between policy, investment, and innovation is the true key driver behind a feasible green transition. This challenge is multifaceted and therefore needs a holistic approach to sustainable development and requires collaboration between labour authorities and their counterparts in different fields such as finance, planning, environment, energy, transport, health, and economics to coordinate social development (ILO, 2015).

From the policy perspective, to make labour and economic policies more effective in integrating young workforce into the GE in Mediterranean countries the next strategies should be included in the national and regional plans:

- **Approach:** Prior measures demand a cross-sectorial and cross-vertical approach which applies to brave policy decisions to transform certain bureaucratic routines.
- **Assessment:** Governments should expand career guidance – introduced at an early age, at all levels and across all types of education, including TVET – to help youth identify the most suitable careers while reinforcing the long-life learning services available for all types of institutions. School dropout rates should be reduced and institutions should provide second chance education programmes.
- **Coordination** among public agencies serving youth is another basic measure accompanied by the involvement of all sectors of society that must be represented in the different incumbent national sectorial plans. More robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms should be developed to identify course corrections and provide evidence of success before planned scale-up. When the course cannot be corrected, funding other efforts is far better than pouring resources into a failed project (ILO et al., 2023).

- **Education and training** by revising high-school curricula, fostering STEM studies, developing reskilling and upskilling schemes for new and old workers, and facilitating lifelong learning opportunities. TVET should be part of more appealing pathways from school to work.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Apart from training, facilitate access to finance, provide mentorship support with gender-conscious approaches. Entrepreneurial literacy and skills must be fostered through self-employment programmes, integrating entrepreneurship modules in university curricula, expanding innovation hubs and Living Labs, and supporting start-ups and young entrepreneurs.
- **Implement gendered approaches to unemployment, education and training** by promoting women's access to university, TVET and other learning and employment programmes, ensuring equal rights in the work environment through legislation, facilitating a balance between personal and working life, and recognising the need for a more equal share of care responsibilities between men and women (e.g., paternity leaves).
- **Make employment schemes and initiatives more effective** by clarifying eligibility, coordinating stakeholders at all levels, reducing the administrative burden, simplifying and clarifying procedures, justification and certification, speeding up registration, and through a more individualised follow-up of participants and exchange of experiences and network working groups as well as manuals, guides and collection of good practices.
- **Management:** In terms of governance quality and management, there is much room for improving the capacities of the employment agencies and leaving them some space to innovate and adapt policies to local needs.
- **Participation:** Young people should be part of decision-making, and policies should be more people-centred so that they do not leave behind the most vulnerable young citizens, such as refugees, people with disabilities, LGTBI+ and rural youngsters (ILO et al., 2023).
- **Promote youth protagonism** at all levels in private and public organisations through youth quotas in executive positions.
- **Raise awareness of the benefits and the existing instruments and programmes of the GE,** since top-down transition approaches will hardly be successful in the absence of a broad popular base agreeing with and demanding such a shift.
- **Shift labour demand towards green models** through circular and green tax regimes, green industrial policies and benefits for green businesses that employ young people.

- **Tracking:** Design and targeting of youth transition from school to work, with internships, apprenticeships grants, job placement, subsidies for transportation and day care.
- From the investment perspective, investing in labour-supply policies (e.g., offering consistent education, providing skilling and reskilling services, mobilising resources for new formulas of housing provision and public transport to reduce social inequalities, etc.) continues to be essential for social inclusion and for enabling the labour force to take action in the transition process. Moreover, creating new jobs in the transition should be accompanied by care and social economies to prevent further social divisions. Green jobs are heavily based on new technology and have two potential types of labour: unskilled in manual tasks and highly skilled in design and innovation tasks. Both groups are, for now, very male-oriented. It is still being determined how much women will be able to reconcile work with personal and family life, how much they will aspire to enter the male sectors, and how much these male sectors will fully integrate women and men accept them. Therefore, active measures should be implemented to enhance gender equality, such as quotas and reverse discrimination acts. These measures should be connected with the testing experiences, such as the cooperation projects mentioned in the previous chapter.
- Thus, from the innovation point of view, cooperation projects, although with a limited scope, create valuable experiences that integrate several objectives in practice and push to coordinate among different bodies, territories and cultures. Some best practice examples in the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) to be mentioned are the GREENLAND, MEDTOWN and RESMYLE projects, mainly focused on tackling NEET situations and fighting against poverty, inequality and social exclusion. Other projects offering training services are centred on specific skills concerning sustainable transport, such as YEP MED, or the sports sector like SKILLS4SPORTS. ESMES, GREENBUILDING and SOLE were based on energy efficiency and renewable energies. MED4EBM was based on coastal natural resources management, and CROSSDEV addressed sustainable cultural tourism destinations, as do the other two projects of reference (see Annex1).
- A GE in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction requires targeting of country-specific macroeconomic, industrial, sectorial and labour policy mixes to create an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises to flourish and create decent jobs. Mobilisation and guidance of public/political action and private investment in ecologically sustainable activities will be needed. This challenge is multifaceted and therefore requires a holistic approach to sustainable development. Social development involves collaboration between labour authorities and their counterparts in different fields, such as finance, planning, environment, energy, transport, health, and economics (ILO, 2015).
- However, investing in labour-supply policies (e.g., offering consistent education, providing skilling and reskilling services, mobilising resources for new formulas of housing provision and public transport to reduce social inequalities, etc.) continues to be essential for social inclusion and for making the labour force able to take action in the transition process.

There are three final ideas to introduce:

- the need to finish with greenwashing practices (EIOPA, 2023) to avoid the loss of prestige and credibility of the sustainable approach;
- the importance to cultivated social capital in young people's networks through workshops and cooperation projects (Bolívar et al., 2019);
- and introducing the fourth pillar of Sustainable Development (Sabatini, 2019) to fulfil GE with the legacy and values inherent in every culture.

ANNEX I. BEST PRACTICES LIST

Domain of employability of young people (NEETs) and women and the social solidarity economy

GREENLAND. GREEN-skills for a sustainable development. The project promotes social inclusion by providing unskilled and underprivileged young people with marketable skills in Green and Circular Economy in Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Portugal. It is focused on tailored-made training for women and NEETs, including mentoring and coaching. It fosters cooperation between TVET organisations and SMEs to better fit the labour market needs. It also works with decision-making institutions to improve employment policies (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2021: 40).

INTERNISA. Developing the INTERNISA network of synergies to increase the number of digitally skilled women employed in the ENI CBC Med territories via matching demand and supply in the labour market. It combines training in the digital sector with professional development in the agri-food, textile, tourism and financial sectors in Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Spain and Tunisia. The project will develop online and offline services for women employers, and organises interventions related to match-making of labour demand and supply through an online platform and job fairs (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2021: 42).

MEDTOWN. Co-producing social policies with SSE actors to fight poverty, inequality and social exclusion. The initiative is focused on the combined potential of agents of the SSE, citizens and local authorities to co-produce the social policies providing tools and connections to build local resilience and foster the transition towards more resilient, sustainable and fairer societies in Greece, Jordan, Palestine, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2019: 56).

MYSEA. Mediterranean Youth, NEETs and women advancing Skills, Employment and Awareness in the blue and green economy. It is aimed at identifying existing and emerging skills through oriented training, coaching and mentoring, and at involving TVET institutions and enterprises in encouraging sector-skills alliances through apprenticeship, traineeship and on-the-job training. The project will also offer a platform to exchange experiences, and implement national support schemes in favour of youth employment in Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2021: 44).

RESMYLE. Rethinking employment and social integration of Mediterranean youth through sustainable development mobilised nine Mediterranean operators (cooperatives, associations, universities) in five

countries (France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia). The project offered training on sustainable development for NEETs and their trainers through mobility and intercultural exchanges and a network of eco-incubators (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2019: 54).

SKILLS4SPORTS. It is aimed at increasing the employability of NEETs by tackling the skills gap in the sports sector (new curricula in sports-related professions, coaches, physicians, etc.) and business-oriented ones (merchandising, marketing, administration, and event management). The outcomes will consist of electronic tools (e-learning platform, mobile app and social media app) addressed to youth and in a “Strategic Alliance for Skills4Sports” network dedicated to key sport stakeholders in Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine and Spain (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2021: 48).

Domain of environmental conservation and education, heritage and nature-based activities

MED4EBM. Mediterranean Forum for Applied Ecosystem-Based Management. The MED4EBM project will tackle Ecosystems-Based Management (EBM) by assisting Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) actors in four coastal areas of Jordan, Italy, Lebanon and Tunisia. A software tool will help institutional actors to better handle the complex multi-stakeholders’ analytical processes that characterise EBM applications and assess the relationships between ecosystem components, functions and services, as well as the associated human activities (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2019: 96).

CROSSDEV. Cultural Routes for Sustainable Social and Economic Development in the Mediterranean. The project expects to increase tourism competitiveness and attractiveness of less-known destinations and rural areas, enhancing the Cultural Routes experiences such as those of the Council of Europe (e.g., Phoenicians Route and IterVitis), Palestine (Abraham Path) and Jordan (Jordan Trail) and other cultural routes in Italy and Lebanon (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2019: 28).

Domain of energy efficiency and renewable energy

ESMES. Energy Smart Mediterranean Schools Network. ESMES intends to increase awareness and improve energy habits in schools through practical training in renewable energy and energy efficiency (REEE) delivered to 8,000 students from Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia. On the economic level, it is expected to save €30,000/year through the return of REEE investments. The project should save 240 CO₂ tonnes/year, 270,000 kWh/year from RE and 30,000 kWh/year through energy efficiency (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2019: 86).

SOLE. High energy efficiency for the public stock buildings in the Mediterranean. Through knowledge

sharing on energy rehabilitation, the partners will define local plans to Egypt, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Spain and Tunisia. Pilot actions will reduce building energy consumption. The project will encourage behavioural change inspired by an Interreg experience (REBUS project) (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2021: 54).

Domain of sustainable buildings/constructions

GREENBUILDING. Minimising energy consumption for green buildings respecting present uses and public needs. The project will support three cost-effective public buildings energy refurbishment in Greece, Tunisia and Jordan. It will strengthen the capacities of public institutions to effectively plan and implement sustainable energy policies (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2019: 88).

Domain of sustainable transport and sharing

YEP MED. Youth employment in ports of the Mediterranean. The project proposes to enrich the TVET offer by developing three main areas with skills shortages: foreign trade, environment and sustainability, digitisation and port logistic operations. It will set up partnerships between key stakeholders, introduce personalised monitoring to students, and create training courses that address environmental issues in Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Spain and Tunisia (ENI CBC Med Programme, 2021: 50).

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