

Green jobs

Green jobs: good for you, for the environment for the economy

[Economy](#) [Social transformation](#) [Employment](#)

The transition to a decarbonised economy is not only essential to halting climate change, but is also a driver of economic growth with the potential to create millions of green jobs. We are talking about jobs aimed directly at protecting the environment or which seek to minimise impact on the health of the planet.



The renewable energy sector reached 12 million jobs by 2021, up from 11.5 million in 2019.

The decarbonisation of the economy is the future of the planet.






According to the *Emissions Gap Report 2021*, published by the United Nations (UN), **the current insufficient commitments put the world on track for a global temperature increase of at least 2.7°C by the end of the century, well above the 1.5°C estimated in the [Paris Agreement](#).** As the report explains, **the world needs to halve annual greenhouse gas emissions over the next eight years to succeed in limiting the effects of global warming.** Net zero emissions, if met, could make progress in reducing the projected global temperature increase to 2.2°C, closer to the 1.5°C target. Otherwise, there is a risk that the frequency and intensity of the disastrous climate impacts on the planet in recent years will increase.

In light of the situation, humankind needs to speed up the transition toward a [decarbonised economy](#) which protects the environment. **Such a transition not only has the potential to halt climate change, but also to become a real driver of economic growth, creating numerous **green jobs** in a great number of sectors, something that has been happening in the last few years in developed and emerging economies alike.**

The [circular economy](#), which involves reusing, repairing or recycling, increasing sustainable manufacturing and reducing waste, will also create green jobs. As well as reducing waste, the circular economy will save energy and contribute to reducing the irreversible damage in terms of the climate, biodiversity and air, ground and water pollution caused by our activities at a rate faster than the planet can replace them.

What are green jobs and what is their impact on the economy

In the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) green jobs are defined as "**positions in agriculture, industry, construction, administrative, and service activities aimed at substantially preserving or restoring environmental quality**". **Green jobs** are those aimed at protecting and promoting the environment, or those which consider the health of the planet at all times and endeavour to minimise it. According to the International Labour Organisation, there are three types of green jobs:

-  Increases **efficient consumption** of energy and raw materials.
-  Limits **greenhouse gas emissions**.
-  Minimises **waste and contamination**.
-  Protects and restores **ecosystems**.
-  Contributes to [adaptation to climate change](#).

Another benefit of these **green jobs** is their effect on the global economy. The ILO has warned that, if nothing in future employment will be insufficient to satisfy the growth in the workforce in emerging and developing "changes in production and use of energy to achieve the 2 °C target **may lead to the creation of around 18 million jobs in the world economy**", explains this organisation in its report *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018*. These changes, complying with the Paris Agreement and generating green jobs, will include **more extensive use of energy sources**, the growth of **electric vehicles** and carrying out construction works to achieve **energy efficiency**.

Booming sectors with green jobs

As a consequence of the decarbonisation of the economy and the development of the circular economy, **new jobs** will be created, with existing jobs adapting to the new *green* reality. According to the experts, these are the sectors with the most potential to create green jobs:

Energy

The **COVID-19 pandemic** had a major impact on the global economy for most of 2020 and 2021, affecting the structure of energy demand. Employment, including in this sector, has been profoundly affected by the different restrictions applied, which put pressure on supply chains and resulted in considerable limitation of economic activity. **However, this, the renewable energy sector will reach 12 million jobs in 2021, compared to 11.5 million in 2019**, according to the edition of the *"Renewable Energy and Employment Report: Annual Review 2021"*.

Agriculture

According to the report published in 2022 by the *Organic Farming Research Institute (FiBL)*, **sales of organic beverages increased by 15% globally**. Revenues surpassed the \$100 billion annual mark in 2018 and in just 10 years the market expanded to \$129 billion. The historic growth seen in 2020 was a result of both the impact of the pandemic and increased consumer interest in organic food.

North America and Europe comprise the majority of sales, with a combined share of 90%. However, most organic food is coming from other regions, especially Asia as organic food markets have gained importance in countries such as China and South Korea.

Design

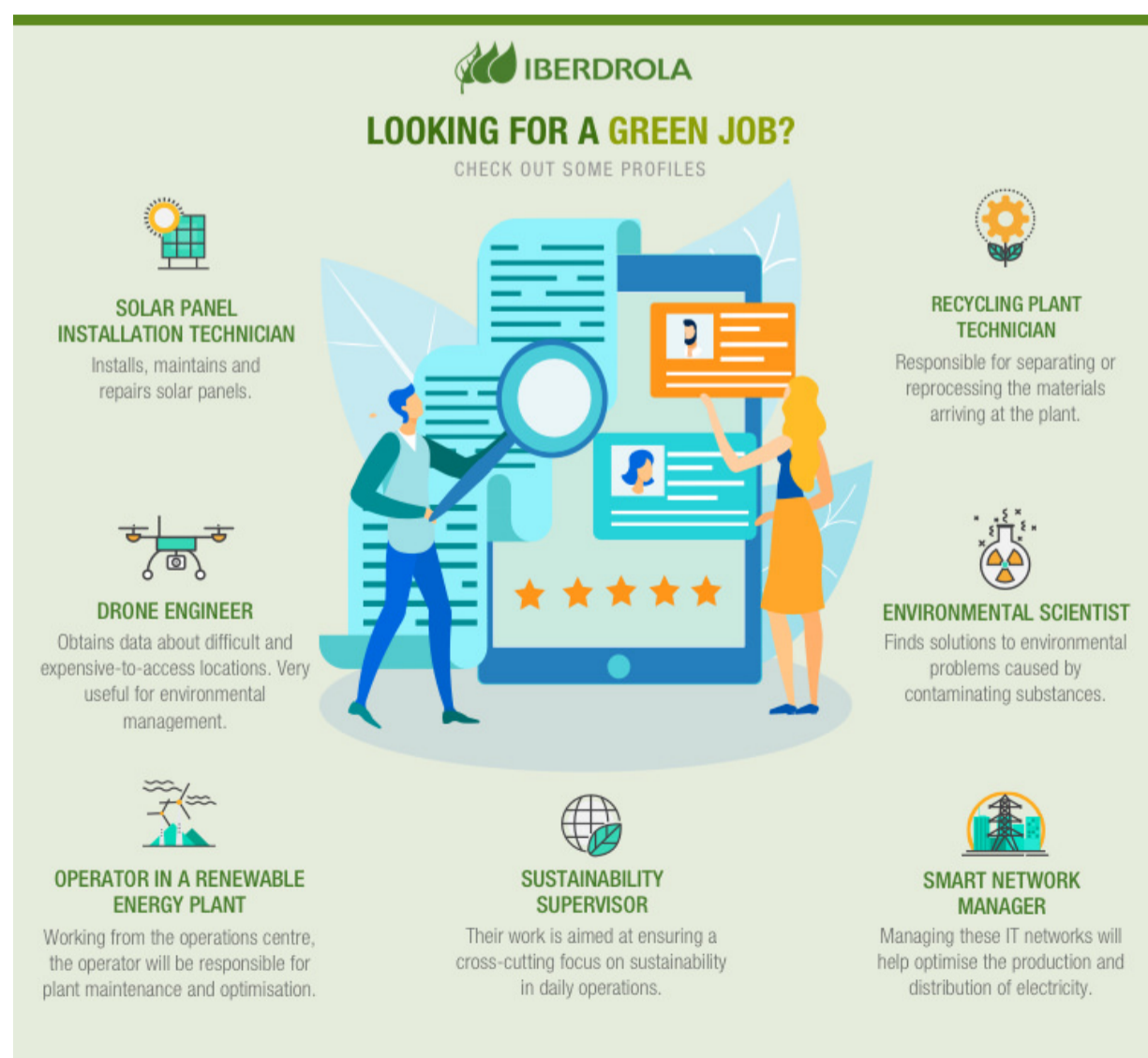
European policies require increasingly high recycling rates and establish ever-stricter ecodesign criteria. **The 'many consumer' environmental awareness**, have made **ecodesign** — from packaging to building roofs and interiors — a booming source of jobs.

Tourism

In a society increasingly concerned with the health of the planet, **ecological tourism** — or ecotourism — is a sector that creates jobs related to activities such as design of adventure experiences, the creation of high mountain trails, the discovery of protected areas, as well as the **renewal of rural areas**, such as **ecovillages**, at risk of disappearing.

Transport

This sector is **responsible for more than 30% of CO₂ emissions in the European Union (EU)**, 72% of which correspond to transport. Many countries have already adopted measures to drastically reduce transport emissions. The EU aims to reduce them by 60% compared to 1990 levels for 2050, creating job opportunities in the electric vehicles sector, public transport and electrified railway good haulage.



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CHECK OUT SOME PROFILES

- SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION TECHNICIAN**
Installs, maintains and repairs solar panels.
- DRONE ENGINEER**
Obtains data about difficult and expensive-to-access locations. Very useful for environmental management.
- OPERATOR IN A RENEWABLE ENERGY PLANT**
Working from the operations centre, the operator will be responsible for plant maintenance and optimisation.
- SUSTAINABILITY SUPERVISOR**
Their work is aimed at ensuring a cross-cutting focus on sustainability in daily operations.
- SMART NETWORK MANAGER**
Managing these IT networks will help optimise the production and distribution of electricity.
- RECYCLING PLANT TECHNICIAN**
Responsible for separating or reprocessing the materials arriving at the plant.
- ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST**
Finds solutions to environmental problems caused by contaminating substances.

Looking for a green job?

 [SEE INFOGRAPHIC: Looking for a green job? \[PDF\]](#)

[See more information](#)

What type of training is required?

Due to the wide range of **green jobs** available today, there is no single training profile for those known as green jobs. Other than degrees, courses and postgraduate courses specialising in ecology, **green training for a specific environmental specialisation within a sector.**

People who work designing packaging, for example, must have a command of environmentally friendly materials. A lawyer interested in protecting nature must specialise in **environmental law** and an engineer wanting to work in the renewable energy sector will have to specialise in everything to do with renewable energy, energy efficiency and decarbonising the economy.

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