

Annex 6. In-Depth Interviews with 27 stakeholders

1. PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION OF THE SURVEY

The primary objective of the interviews was to collect **qualitative insights** on personnel needs, experiences related to veteran employment, challenges faced by Ukrainian defenders in adapting to the labor market, and to assess employers' potential and readiness to create **green jobs** as part of Ukraine's sustainable recovery.

The interviews were conducted during the **Career Festival**¹, which took place on **22–25 May 2025** at the **National Exhibition Complex “ExpoCenter of Ukraine”** in Kyiv. This venue was selected to ensure **maximum outreach to the target audience**. The event brought together more than **130 registered private employers and government agencies** acting as employers in Ukraine. As in previous years, the co-organizers and partners of the Career Festival included **leading Ukrainian companies** from various sectors of the economy.

Training and career guidance programs were presented by representatives of over **40 Ukrainian educational institutions** of different forms of ownership.

As part of the event, project experts conducted **120 in-person meetings** with company representatives at the **Work.ua platform booth**. During the festival, **five employers agreed to participate in in-depth interviews** using a structured questionnaire coordinated with the project team. The interviews focused on the **practical organization of work processes**, available **human resource capacity**, **openness to hiring demobilized veterans**, and the **internal capacity for introducing elements of ecological modernization** into production and service operations. Holding these interviews within such a large-scale event allowed for engagement with **respondents from diverse sectors**, including both well-established companies and newly formed enterprises actively seeking **innovative approaches** to workforce development.

In addition to interviews with employers, the event also hosted **20 individual meetings with representatives of the security and defence sector** (including the Armed Forces of Ukraine, National Guard, Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Border Guard Service, and State Emergency Service). As a result, **seven respondents agreed to participate in in-depth interviews**. The purpose of this research was to explore **labor market needs, barriers to veteran employment, and prospects for green job creation**. The conversations focused on respondents' **plans for reintegration into civilian life** after demobilization, their **expectations, challenges**, and **awareness of the environmental dimension** in the labor market.

As part of the event preparations, an awareness-raising campaign targeting the key audience was carried out.²

2. STRUCTURE OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The in-depth interviews were structured around four thematic blocks:

2.1. In-depth interviews with employers

Block 1. General information

- Please introduce yourself. What is your role in the company?
- What is the nature of your company's business?
- How many employees do you currently have?

¹ Photo gallery in Annex

² Banners https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1RxIRUGQBRvp5Ae48996DstS2gjnHR6eb?usp=drive_link ; banners of Ministry of Veterans https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1P4iAAEuoPk32fvpIGXHXpJPB9xrFURzc?usp=drive_link

Block 2. Staffing needs

- Which professions are currently most in demand at your company?
- Do you have vacancies that could be filled by veterans?
- What are the main requirements you set for candidates?
- Does your company offer opportunities for training or internships?

Block 3. Perception of veterans in the labor market

- Do you have any experience employing veterans?
- What challenges have you encountered in their integration?
- Does your company have any veteran support programs?

Block 4. Prospects for green jobs

- Are you interested in creating green jobs?
- Would you be open to considering project recommendations for adapting workplaces?
- Does your company have the capacity to provide housing for internally displaced persons?

2.2. In-depth interviews with veterans

Block 1. General information

- Please introduce yourself (name, age, region of residence).
- What is your educational background and civilian work experience?
- What is your military background (years of service, specialization, participation in operations)?
- Do you have a disability or require rehabilitation?
- Do you have a family? Is your partner employed?

Block 2. Employment experience after service

- Have you worked since being discharged? If yes, where and in what role?
- What were the main challenges you faced when looking for a job?
- Have you taken any retraining or reskilling courses? If so, which ones?
- Have you considered employment in the green economy?

Block 3. Expectations and opportunities

- What is your desired salary?
- Are you willing to relocate for work? If yes, to which regions?
- Which professions from the list of green jobs would interest you for training and employment?
- What working conditions are most important to you (schedule, team, career prospects)?

Block 4. Psychosocial support

- Do you feel the need for psychological support?
- Have you received any assistance in adapting to civilian life after service?

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. Analytical summary of employer responses collected through in-depth interviews

Block 1. General information

In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of **five companies** operating in the fields of **transportation, logistics, technical maintenance, waste management, and electronics**. Respondents included both **HR managers and company directors**. The companies ranged in size from **small to medium enterprises** and were geographically based in **Kyiv and central Ukraine**. All participants had prior experience with employment-related events and expressed an interest in collaborating with the project.

Block 2. Staffing needs and candidate requirements

The most in-demand occupations across the surveyed companies included:

- **Driver-expeditor** (mentioned by 2 respondents)

- **Logistics manager (1)**
- **Electronics repair and maintenance engineer (1)**
- **Waste management specialist (1)**

All respondents confirmed their **willingness to hire veterans**, both for the positions listed and for other current vacancies.

Key requirements for candidates included:

- Specialized education or verifiable professional qualifications
- At least one year of work experience in the relevant field
- Willingness to travel and work in shifts

At the time of the interviews, **none of the companies offered internships or internal training programs**, citing limited resources and the high workload of their key personnel.

Block 3. Experience with veteran employment

Three out of the five companies had **previous experience hiring veterans**. All of them acknowledged both positive aspects and challenges associated with this experience. Key issues raised by respondents included:

- A **mismatch between veterans' salary expectations** and what companies could realistically offer
- **Difficulties in adapting veterans** to civilian work environments and peacetime operations
- **Tensions or interpersonal conflicts** within teams arising from perceived divides between “frontline” and “rear” experiences

Two companies reported having **informal support initiatives** for veterans, such as mentoring and adaptation counseling, though these were implemented through **individual leadership efforts** rather than formalized programs.

Block 4. Attitudes toward green jobs and future prospects

All five companies expressed **interest in creating green jobs**, but emphasized that this would only be feasible with **support from the government, international organizations, or investors**. Respondents noted that green modernization of their operations would require not only **investment in equipment**, but also **qualified personnel** trained in resource efficiency, safe waste handling, and energy-saving practices.

Employers also indicated their **willingness to review the final analytical report and consider recommendations for adapting their vacancies to green job standards**. All companies saw this as an opportunity to **develop their businesses, enhance partner trust, and access the EU market**.

Overall conclusion:

The interviews revealed a **pragmatic willingness among employers to hire veterans and support the transition to green practices**, provided that adequate resources are available. At the same time, **staffing constraints, limited internal capacity**, and an **underdeveloped vocational training infrastructure** remain key obstacles limiting access to green jobs—for both veterans and the broader workforce.

3.2. Analytical summary of veteran responses collected through in-depth interviews

Block 1. General information

The seven respondents represented various regions of Ukraine and ranged in age from **30 to 52 years**. Their educational backgrounds varied from **vocational training to complete higher education**. Several participants had prior civilian work experience in fields such as **law, food services, technical maintenance, and small business entrepreneurship**.

Their military experience ranged from **2 to 10 years of service** in the Armed Forces of Ukraine or other security agencies, including active combat or deployment to high-risk zones. One respondent was a **combat veteran with a disability** who had undergone rehabilitation. All interviewees had families, and in most cases, their partners were either **employed** or **actively seeking work**.

Block 2. Employment experience after military service

At the time of the interview, **four respondents were still serving** in the Armed Forces, while **three had been demobilized** and reintegrated into civilian life:

- One worked as a **legal specialist** in the **State Environmental Inspectorate**.
- Another had **started a crayfish farming business**, with the intention of creating job opportunities for fellow veterans.
- The third continued his **pre-war career as a head chef**, though he was considering a career change due to economic instability in the HoReCa sector.

A **major barrier to employment**, according to respondents, was **age discrimination**. Veterans aged **40+** were often overlooked by employers, even when they had relevant experience and qualifications.

None of the demobilized respondents had participated in **reskilling or retraining programs**, although all three expressed **willingness to undergo training** if it would guarantee **employment with a net salary of at least 50,000 UAH/month**.

Block 3. Expectations and opportunities

All seven respondents stated that they **expected fair financial compensation**, with a **minimum desired salary of 50,000 UAH/month (net)**. More than half (**4 out of 7**) were **willing to relocate** for attractive employment offers.

When asked about interest in green economy jobs, respondents identified the following areas as appealing:

- **Water transport and logistics**
- **Waste management**
- **Agroecology**
- **Environmental protection**

In addition to salary, the most important employment conditions included **career advancement**, a **supportive team environment**, and **flexible scheduling**.

Among the seven respondents:

- **3** named an **income** as their top motivator
- **2** emphasized **career growth**
- **1** valued the **workplace atmosphere**
- **1** prioritized **autonomy in work scheduling**

Block 4. Psychosocial support

None of the demobilized respondents had received **systematic support** in adapting to civilian life. All three emphasized the need for **psychological assistance**, **rehabilitation programs**, and **guided support** during their transition. According to them, the **primary sources of support** thus far have been **volunteers**, **civil society organizations**, and **informal initiatives**—rather than government institutions.

Overall conclusion:

The interviews with veterans demonstrated a **high level of readiness for professional reintegration**, provided that an **enabling environment** is in place—one that removes discriminatory barriers, expands access to training, and actively includes veterans in **employment**.

policy development.

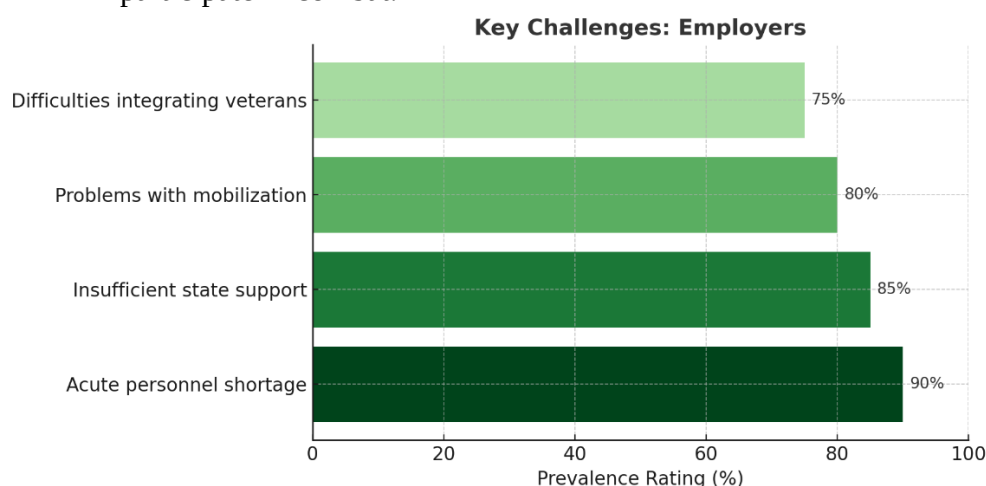
At the same time, there is a **low level of awareness about green job opportunities**, which highlights the need for **targeted information campaigns**.

4. KEY SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

Based on the results of the in-depth interviews, the following key systemic challenges were identified:

4.1. On the part of employers:

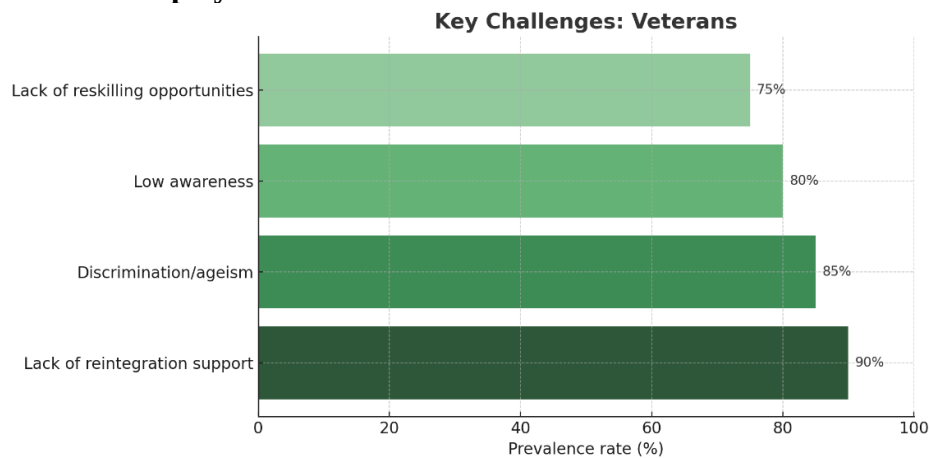
- **Acute shortage of qualified personnel**, caused by:
 - Mass migration of specialists abroad;
 - Workforce mobilization without compensation mechanisms for businesses;
 - Inability to reserve critically important staff in non-critical sectors.
- **Insufficient state support for human resources policy**, particularly:
 - Lack of effective co-financing and incentive mechanisms for employers;
 - Absence of support for organizing vocational training or reskilling programs.
- **Low level of institutional coordination in mobilization processes**, including:
 - Lack of communication with Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centers (TRSSCs) regarding workforce planning and reserves;
 - Negative perception of “busification” practices—forced withdrawal of employees without coordination with enterprises.
- **Organizational challenges in veteran integration**, specifically:
 - Mismatch between veterans’ salary expectations and companies’ financial capabilities;
 - Difficulties integrating veterans into existing teams;
 - Social tension between demobilized employees and colleagues who did not participate in combat.



4.2. On the part of veterans:

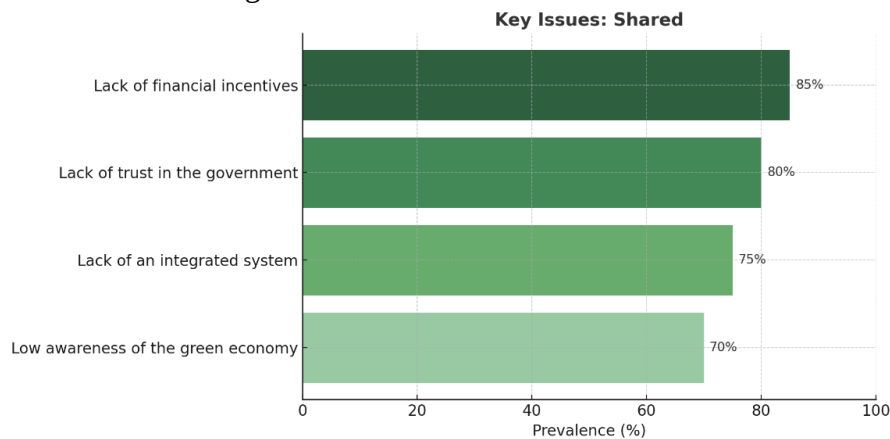
- **Discrimination in the labor market**, including:
 - **Ageism** – reluctance among employers to consider candidates aged 40+;
 - **Biases** regarding the **psycho-emotional condition** of veterans.
- **Lack of support during the transition to civilian life**:
 - **None of the respondents** received systematic adaptation or psychological assistance;
 - **Rehabilitation services** are provided mainly by **volunteers or NGOs**, rather than state institutions.
- **Low level of awareness**:
 - Most veterans are **unfamiliar with the concept of green jobs** or with existing **state or international support programs**;

- There is a lack of **targeted information campaigns** for veterans.
- **Insufficient retraining opportunities:**
 - None of the demobilized respondents had taken **reskilling courses**, despite all of them expressing interest;
 - There is no clear **mechanism for funding training** with a **guarantee of future employment**.



4.3. Key Shared Challenges

- **Lack of trust in government institutions** – Both employers and veterans doubt the actual availability of state support and emphasize the need for concrete tools such as funding, job reservation, tax benefits, and training.
- **Absence of an integrated training and reintegration system** – There is no mechanism in place to effectively align labour market needs with the reintegration needs of veterans.
- **Low awareness and communication about green jobs** – Both groups (employers and veterans) have only superficial or fragmented understanding of green economy opportunities.
- **Lack of financial incentives for green job creation** – Both businesses and veterans lack confidence in investing time and resources in this area without external support.



Annex 1. Report photo gallery



NGO Living Planet with a member of "Work.ua" job portal team



NGO Living Planet with a representative of Kernel (an agricultural leading company)



NGO Living Planet with a representative of Airlogix – the Ukrainian UAV manufacturer



NGO Living Planet president visiting Sunsynk company – a distributor of solar invertors in Ukraine



NGO Living Planet with members of DTEK team (national electric power supplier)



NGO Living Planet with the HR Manager of Foxtrot retail network (consumer electronics)



NGO Living Planet visiting the company “Myronivsky Bread Product” – key player in the Ukrainian agricultural market



NGO Living Planet together with members of the Ukrainian volunteer community



NGO Living Planet visiting Koval'ska Corporation – leader in the Ukrainian construction business



NGO Living Planet visiting members of "Yasno" – a subsidiary enterprise of DTEK (electric power supply)



NGO Living Planet with 3rd Independent Assault Brigade



NGO Living Planet visiting the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine