

KEY MESSAGES

GREEN JOBS

for Ukraine's Recovery
and European Integration



International
Labour
Organization



Introduction, Context, and Definition

This leaflet acts as a summary of key messages from the report prepared under the project “Potential for Green Jobs in Ukraine: Integrating Ukrainian Veterans into the Green Economy,” based on analytical research conducted in partnership with UNEP, ILO and the NGO “Living Planet”.

Green jobs are those created within the green economy, such as renewable energy, organic agriculture, waste recycling, and environmental protection. They are decent employment opportunities that drive economic growth while maintaining ecological balance. Extensive research was conducted to better understand the job creation potential for green economy enterprises in Ukraine, particularly with regards to veterans. For Ukraine, the creation of green jobs is more than environmental policy — it is an instrument of future-oriented economic recovery.

Key context underscores the urgency:

- Over **1.5 million veterans** are already registered with Ukraine’s State Employment Service; this number could exceed **5 million people** when family members are included.
- Ukraine’s economically active population has declined by **more than 25%** since 2021, while officially employed persons number fewer than **8 million**.
- Approximately **6.8 million Ukrainians** remain registered as refugees globally, with return prospects closely linked to the availability of stable, dignified employment.

- Ukraine maintains a large vocational education system (**3,015 institutions, 405,000 graduates annually**), but it does not fully align with the emerging demands of the labour market.

Despite this, a major gap persists: **veteran reintegration policies are not systematically linked to green recovery and climate-oriented investment**. The mismatch between available talent and emerging labour demand presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Veterans, many of whom possess leadership, logistical, and technical skills acquired during service, could become a key driver of the green transition — supporting reconstruction, energy modernization, environmental management, and sustainable manufacturing.

However, reintegrating the veteran workforce also poses several challenges that must be addressed, such as limited access to training programmes for green skills or a lack of incentives for employers. There is currently no dedicated funding for the reintegration of veterans into the green economy, and women service members and families of fallen defenders face additional challenges to must be overcome to avoid reinforcing existing inequalities.

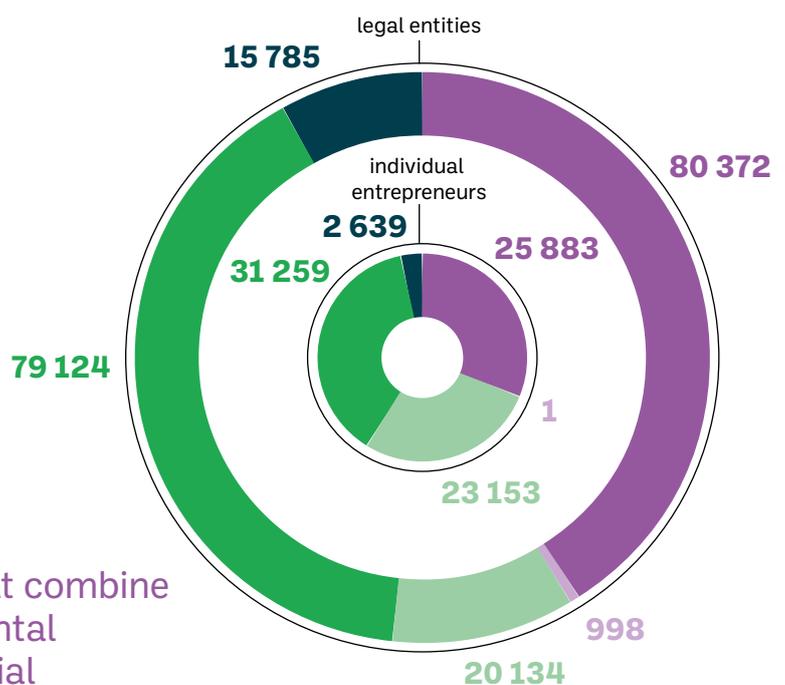
By investing now in appropriate design, technologies, and skills, Ukraine lays the groundwork for a labor market that is inclusive, forward-looking, and aligned with the EU’s climate goals — leveraging reconstruction not simply as repair, but as catalyst for transformation.

Priority Sectors and Economic Activities

Some sectors are primed for incorporating green jobs – and veterans.

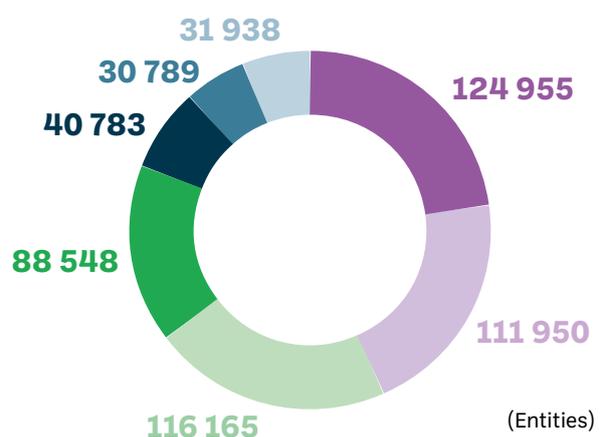
5 Sectors with the Highest Potential for Green Job Creation

- Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries
- Mining and Quarrying
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Energy, Water Supply, and Waste Management



7 priority economic activities that combine reconstruction needs, environmental benefits, and employment potential

- Construction, Real Estate Management, Restoration, and Infrastructure Maintenance
- Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries
- Trade
- Civil Society Sector
- Transport, Infrastructure, and Logistics
- Manufacturing and Waste Management
- Finance, Law, Accounting, Insurance, and Holding Companies



Veteran Entrepreneurship and Labour Market Integration

The integration of veterans into the labour market represents a cornerstone of Ukraine's just and sustainable post-war recovery. Veterans constitute one of the largest segments of the employable population — over 1 000 000 individuals with strong discipline, leadership, and technical skills, capable of adapting swiftly to new technologies and working conditions.

The green economy offers a broad spectrum of opportunities for veterans: engagement in production processes, technical supervision, logistics and management functions, as well as in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Combining these skills with targeting training programmes and support for veteran-led enterprises in alignment with green transition policies can pave the way for an inclusive and competitive economy consistent with European Union standards and the principles of sustainable development.

Veterans will have opportunities for green jobs arising in several crucial sectors, which will also contribute to the post-war recovery process, and social inclusion.

Some examples of Military-to-Civilian Skills Transfer include:

Demining logistics officer



Waste logistics coordinator



Bridging module: 4-week course in hazardous waste handling and construction & demolition waste (CDW) logistics.

Civilian outcome: Supervisor in municipal or private waste management company.

Field engineer (bridges, fortifications)



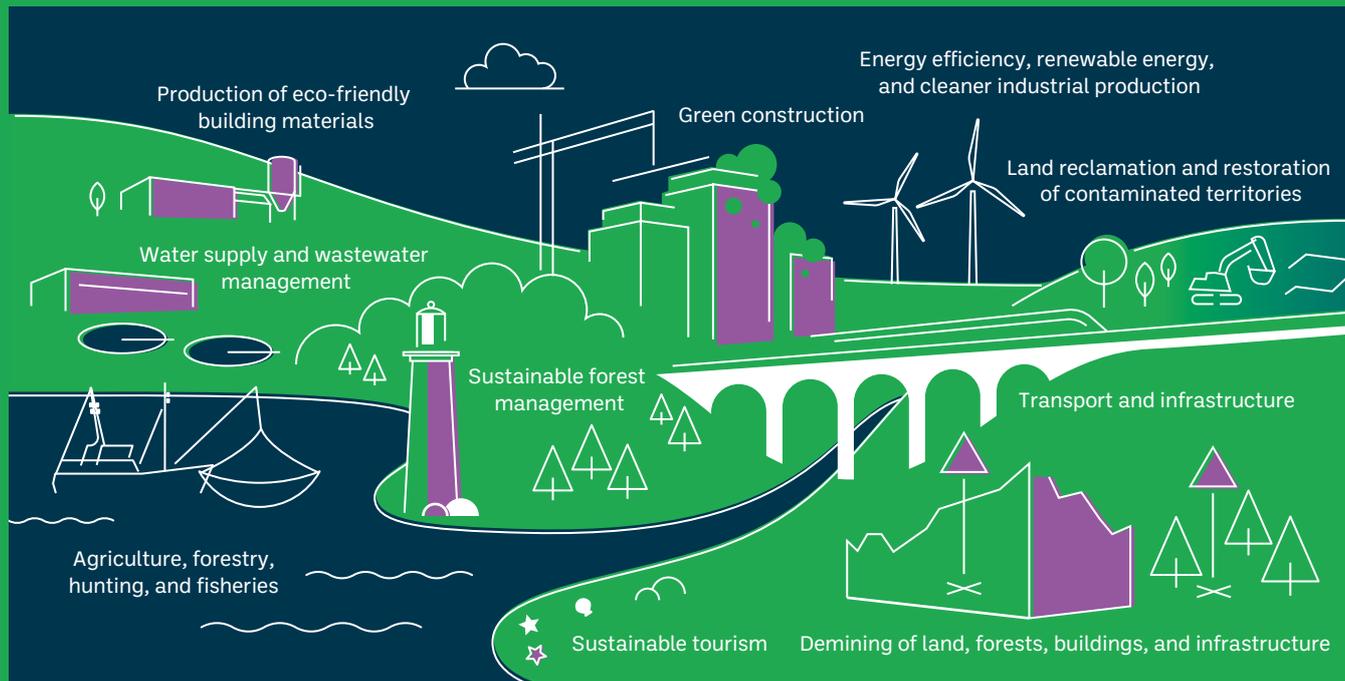
Renewable energy installation technician



Bridging module: 10-week course in installation and commissioning of solar PV and heat pump systems.

Civilian outcome: Certified installer under EU-compatible standards.

The ten priority sectors identified for integrating veterans into the green economy are:



These sectors are of strategic importance for rebuilding infrastructure, reducing environmental pressures, and generating new employment opportunities that align with competencies gained during military service.

Several Ukrainian producers and initiatives have already seen positive results in their efforts toward the development of green jobs. Common factors for success include:

- strong partnerships between government, business, and educational institutions;
- implementation of voluntary environmental standards;
- systematic human resource development, including the employment of veterans
- focus on innovation, energy efficiency, and corporate social responsibility.

International Experience

Around the world, different initiatives to create green jobs and train veterans for careers in the green economy have yielded success, such as the Solar Ready Vets Programme (United States), Germany's Green Jobs Initiative, and the Green New Deal Programme (Republic of Korea).

Support Instruments for Veteran Entrepreneurship

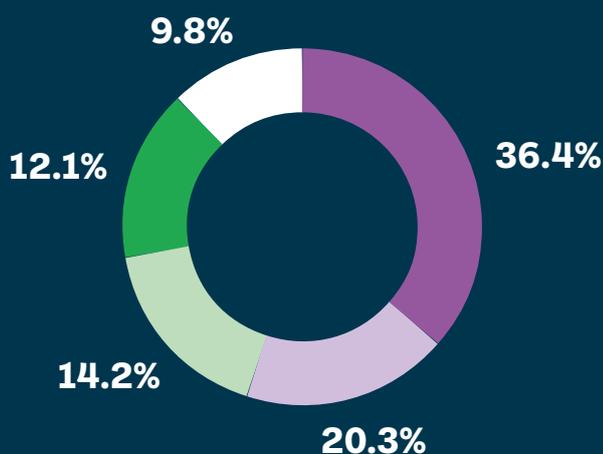
The development of veteran entrepreneurship is one of the key pillars of socio-economic reintegration for former military personnel and their families. In the context of post-war recovery, this process carries a dual purpose: it contributes to job creation and economic diversification while fostering a culture of self-employment, accountability, and sustainable development.

The skills that veterans have acquired through their military experience are often closely related to those needed for green jobs. Mapping existing military skills to civilian “green” professions allows veterans to be quickly validated for new labour markets. Combined with strategic retraining programmes, green entrepreneurship options, and more systematic policies of public procurement, veterans will have an enhanced capacity to re-enter the labour market — in a green capacity.

Readiness for Green Jobs

Preliminary estimates suggest that, following the end of the war, the total number of veterans — including family members — could exceed 5 million people, which represents both a challenge and opportunity for Ukraine’s economy. This study examined results related to veterans’ job preferences, potential alignment with green jobs, and employers’ willingness to hire veterans.

Veterans are seeking employment in the following sectors:

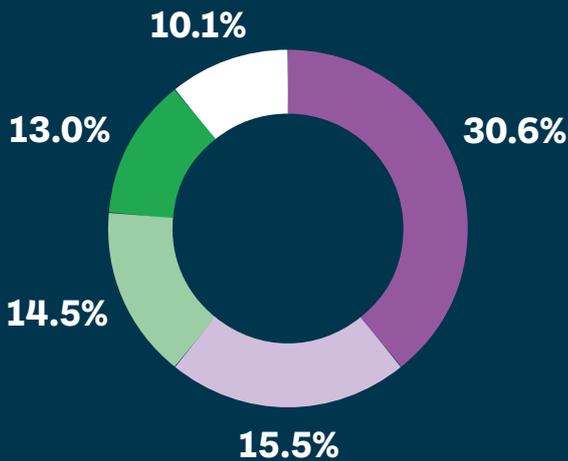
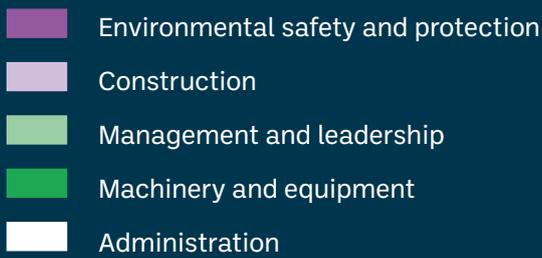


Vacancies related to these sectors already include — or could easily integrate — green job functions, such as:

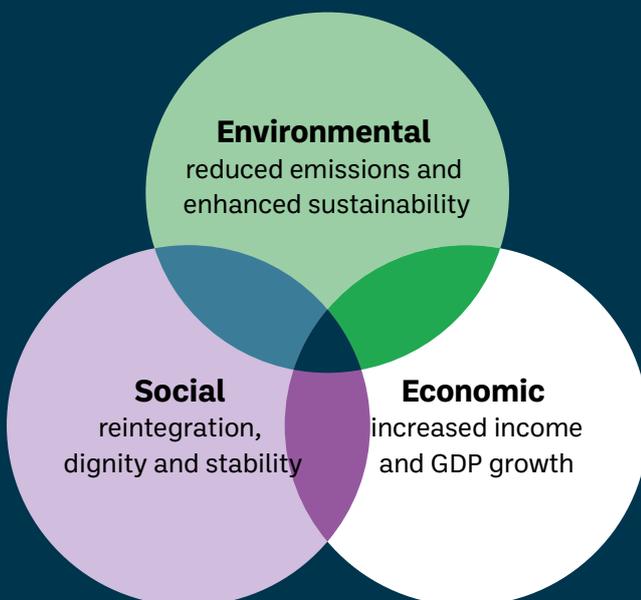
- operation and maintenance of renewable energy systems;
- use of agricultural drones and precision farming technologies;
- installation of energy-efficient and environmentally friendly equipment;
- logistics optimization and fleet electrification;
- digital monitoring and support for “smart buildings.”

Sectors with the highest percentage of “veteran-friendly” vacancies include: security, defence and occupational safety; mechanical engineering; energy; construction, architecture, and design; and media, communications, and the Armed Forces. **These sectors are crucial for post-war recovery, the implementation of environmental standards, and infrastructure modernisation, and they are gradually integrating green components.**

Veterans' professional preferences align well with potential green jobs:



Each job created in the green economy generates a triple impact:



On the employer side, 88% of companies expressed willingness to employ veterans, and 58% would even prioritise qualified veterans. Further, 42% of companies expressed readiness to create additional positions dedicated to on-the-job training and requalification of veterans within their enterprises.

At the same time, fewer than 1% of job seekers identify themselves as veterans in their résumés — pointing to a low level of recognition of military experience as a component of professional capital.

Based on these results, the jobs that veterans are seeking and those that they are prepared to work in coincide with potential green jobs. Further, employers have expressed willingness to hire veterans in these sectors. A key challenge that remains is the shortage of qualified personnel. However, the highest demand is for occupations that do not require long-term training but call for discipline, endurance, and adaptability to changing conditions — qualities inherent to many veterans.

The current situation

As of 1 June 2025, Ukraine had over 129,000 job seekers, compared to only 66,000 available vacancies — the majority of which are in sectors related to the green recovery. To bridge this gap, Ukraine could accelerate the development of vocational education and retraining programmes in green sectors and introduce incentives for employers who create jobs in construction, energy, logistics, agriculture and environmental services.

Expanding the Green Market and Increasing Veteran Participation

Ukraine's green market expansion requires coordinated demand-side and supply-side measures: demand for green measures, military-civilian skills pipelines, and institutional coordination for employment services and appropriate training.

New Opportunities for Growth

Veterans can become a strategic human resource for the green transition, potentially making up **15-20% of newly created green jobs** in Ukraine. They are already engaged in key sectors of the green transition — including **construction, forestry, transport, logistics, agriculture, and demining**, and have competencies well aligned with the requirements of green economy professions. The role of the state is not only to create such jobs but also to develop mechanisms for **professional transition, entrepreneurial support, and institutional partnership**.

Market readiness

Between 2023 and 2025, the number of **environmentally certified products from Ukrainian manufacturers increased by 45%**, and **investments in green modernization exceeded \$1.6 billion**. This growth reflects the sustainable development of a national green market with further integration into the EU Single Green Market and the growing commitment of businesses to environmental standards and social responsibility.

Local Initiatives and potential for upscaling

The Ukrainian Veterans Fund has already financed **over 1,100 grants to support small businesses**, leading to the creation of approximately **2,200 new jobs**. Most of these initiatives are concentrated in energy-efficient construction, agricultural processing, forestry, ecotourism, and service industries, demonstrating a clear shift toward sustainable small business development, which could be taken as inspiration on a wider scale.

At the same time, employers report significant skills shortages in areas such as technical competencies, environmental certification, compliance with green public procurement standards, and modern vocational training programmes. These structural gaps currently limit the scaling-up of green employment opportunities and underscore the need for targeted education, capacity-building, and stronger coordination between business, government, and training institutions.

The green business sector can become a powerful platform for social integration — where veterans return to active life not through subsidies, but through their direct contribution to rebuilding the country.

Roadmap

Phase 1

Institutional Anchoring and Pilot Implementation

Phase 2

Accelerated Implementation and Scaling-Up

Phase 3

Systemic Integration and EU Harmonization

The development of a National Taxonomy of Green Jobs creates a foundation for monitoring up to

2 million green jobs by 2030

Launch of the framework model "Military-to-Civilian Skills Transfer"

Pilot modular retraining programmes in priority economic activities

Integration of environmental requirements into the public procurement system

Veterans' Green Entrepreneurship Fund

National Building Thermo-Modernization Programme, aligning with green public procurement criteria and DNSH principle

Reclamation and Recycling of Demolition Waste

Reforestation and Sustainable Forest Management

Sustainable Tourism and Development of Recreational Activities in National Parks

Production of Eco-friendly Construction Materials and Products

Green Modernization of Transport and Infrastructure

Full-Scale Implementation of the EU acquis in Key Sectors

Development and Implementation of the "Green Path for Veterans" Programme

Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

Green Entrepreneurship 2.0

100 000

1 000

● New jobs

● Upgraded jobs

● Indirect jobs

Conclusions and Recommendations

Green jobs are not a niche policy choice for Ukraine—they are the connective tissue linking recovery, resilience, and European integration. Strategic donor investment in green employment can unlock large-scale job creation, mobilize veterans as agents of change, and ensure that reconstruction delivers lasting economic, social, and environmental dividends.

The findings of this study confirm that veterans represent a significant human and technical resource for Ukraine's green recovery. Their experience, discipline, and applied skills position them as a potential workforce capable of supporting the country's transition to low-carbon and resource-efficient development. The green recovery process demonstrates strong linkages between social reintegration and environmental transformation. It highlights that investment in veterans' upskilling and requalification can simultaneously address social inclusion, labour market needs, and climate objectives.

The study demonstrates that integrating veterans into the green transition is both a social imperative and an economic opportunity. With coordinated action between government, private sector, and international partners, Ukraine can transform post-war recovery into a catalyst for long-term sustainability, resilience, and human development.

Each stage includes specific measures, expected results in the form of newly created jobs, potential funding sources (public, donor, and private), and clearly identified responsible institutions for process coordination.

A roadmap was developed to help transform Ukraine's labor market into one that is sustainable, inclusive, and competitive. By 2030, the implementation of the roadmap is expected to:

- Create at least **2,000,000 new or modernized green jobs** across key sectors of the economy;
 - Ensure the **reintegration of 300,000–400,000 veterans** into the civilian economy through decent work, professional retraining, and entrepreneurship;
 - Strengthen **Ukraine's environmental and technological competitiveness** on the European market by aligning with EU standards;
 - Enhance human capital and social cohesion, creating **new opportunities for regional development**;
 - Lay the foundation for a **just, inclusive, and climate-neutral** national recovery.
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Recommendations and Roadmap

According to estimates by the Ministry of Economy and sectoral research institutions, up to 30% of reconstruction investments could be directed towards green technologies, generating permanent employment for more than 1.2 million people in construction, energy, water management, agroecology, and land reclamation.

At the core of the roadmap lie six cross-sectoral recommendations:

1. **Adopt a National Taxonomy of Green Jobs**, harmonized with the EU Taxonomy, to define sustainable activities, assess their environmental impact, and guide employment planning.
2. **Integrate military-acquired skills into civilian green professions**, ensuring recognition of competencies gained during service and their adaptation to labour market needs.
3. **Expand modular, practice-oriented retraining programmes** to enable rapid acquisition of applied skills in energy efficiency, environmental restoration, green infrastructure, and sustainable production sectors.
4. **Promote green entrepreneurship among veterans** through grants, soft credit schemes, business incubators, mentoring platforms, and support for social franchising.
5. **Strengthen green criteria in public procurement and financial instruments**, including the integration of social indicators related to veteran employment.
6. **Develop regions with high potential for veteran integration into green professions**, taking into account local resource bases and regional differences between eastern, central, southern, and western Ukraine.

Pathways for Expanding Veteran Participation in the Green Labour Market

1. **Educational Vector** — focuses on integrating green competencies into the vocational and technical education system, developing short certified upskilling and retraining programmes for veterans.
2. **Entrepreneurial Vector** — covers the development of veteran-led businesses in green niches such as recycling, eco-construction, renewable energy, sustainable tourism, and green logistics.
3. **Institutional Vector** — envisions the establishment of regional Green Recovery & Veteran Employment Hubs — multifunctional centres bringing together employment services, local businesses, educational institutions, veteran communities, and international partners.

In this context, the roadmap proposes a clear, structured development model implemented in three sequential stages:

- **Institutional consolidation and piloting** — establishing a national coordination platform, launching pilot regional hubs, developing standards, and creating a performance monitoring system.
- **Accelerated implementation and scaling** — expanding vocational education, mentorship, and entrepreneurship programmes, increasing private sector engagement, and mobilizing donor funding.
- **Systemic integration and EU harmonization** — institutionalizing regulatory mechanisms, adopting European quality standards for green employment, and linking Ukraine to the EU ecosystem for sustainable profession certification and human capital investment.





For more extensive background information and analysis, please consult the full report online.

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