

Good green jobs and labour migration

Opportunities for urban leaders

C4O
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Summary for policymakers

Climate change is the real crisis of our time, but how people adapt to its impacts, including through labour migration, does not necessarily need to be. Very limited attention has been paid so far to how migration can positively contribute to the green transition, and how better alignment between climate and migration policies can deliver a fairer and faster green transition for all. As the test for good policy-making will be in the world's largest urban centres, this research surveyed sixteen cities from across five regions, engaged over fifteen subject-matter experts and looked at the labour profiles of people expected to be forced from their homes to cities due to climate change in the next decades, to examine what city-led and national government policy needs to address.

Cities are increasingly on the frontline of challenges and at the forefront of responses.

[800 million jobs](#) are already at risk globally due to the impacts of climate change and unplanned green transitions; especially in urban areas, as major employment and economic hubs. In addition, in the global south - which is least responsible for climate breakdown - unemployment, poverty and economic informality continue featuring as major drivers of migration: Only [3 million formal jobs](#) were created in Africa by 2020, against 12 million youth entering the workforce in the same year, and similar ratios are observed across other global south regions. In parallel, climate change is projected to become a major driver of migration towards cities: 8 million people are likely to move to the ten global south cities by 2050, as a result of climate change, according to C4O and partners' latest research. Those moving into cities are expected to have a higher prevalence of primary sector skills than the existing urban population, bringing both challenges and opportunities for local governments in the green transition - from the potential for an inclusive bioeconomy to the need for rapid investment into urban climate action that cities can design in an inclusive way to deliver for growing cities and residents.

Whether at the origin, transit point, or destination of human mobility, cities are already leading by example, by:



Driving the creation of good green jobs for all, using climate investments to enhance the inclusion of people on the move, youth at risk of moving and other vulnerable residents, while meeting cities' climate action targets.



Developing a green, inclusive and diverse workforce, harnessing migrants' economic contribution, as part of wider strategies of skills building for all urban populations.

Cities can also use their formal and soft powers to deliver inclusive actions on three cross-cutting areas, notably by:



Investing in data and evidence that inform local plans, forecast future labour market needs and make the case for stronger national and international support, including by leveraging city to city cooperation or strengthened coordination with the national government.



Developing local, national and international partnerships help meet their green & just transition goals, leaving no one behind.



Engaging in mayoral diplomacy & advocacy, to influence national and global finance and policy outcomes in favour of local governments and frontline communities.

In the global north - where the bulk of historical emissions are concentrated - labour shortages are already delaying a urgently needed green transition, fueling inflation and costing businesses in lost economic output. No country has the [domestic workforce ready](#) to support its green transition efforts; with a projected gap of [7 million green energy workers by 2030](#) that could lead to a temperature rise of 0.1°C, by delaying progress on the construction of renewable assets for clean energy.

Across all regions, mayors are already leading by example, leveraging their soft and formal powers, and building a strong case for inclusive and urban-specific solutions. This report showcases over 35 innovative city-led actions across five key areas of opportunity.

Across regions, leading mayors are already proving that successful solutions exist, but significant policy and finance shifts are needed at the national and international level to bring these solutions at scale - including by working in close coordination with businesses, unions, and frontline communities. Also, in the context of a green & just transition, it is also important that multi-level responses do not overlook global injustices and deeper inequalities that underpin these global trends, at all scales of governance. In particular:

- efforts to economically include newcomers go hand in hand with measures to protect and support all workers - especially those frontline workers who are more likely to be affected by the green transition - and that
- solutions to leverage labour migration do not perpetuate dependencies, by eroding global south countries' human capital and fueling brain drain.

Recommendations

With 2024 likely to be the hottest year ever on record, no one benefits from delayed climate action and humanity cannot afford more missed opportunities. Based on the learnings from this research we call on our partners around the world, from central governments to international organisations and businesses to:

- 1. Invest in city-led climate action that creates good green jobs in cities of origin, transit and destination**, to both tackle root causes of migration and foster the economic inclusion of newcomers in resilient cities.
- 2. Ramp up urban workforce development programmes in cities**, ensuring that a growing demand for green labour is met with a qualified, inclusive and diverse workforce.
- 3. Remove barriers for migrants to access employment**, prioritising green urban sectors where shortages of labour and skills are most acutely felt, and working in partnership with the private sector.
- 4. Establish labour pathways focused on green skills and urban sectors in higher demand for labour**, strengthening alignment between immigration and green transition policies; while unlocking benefits for both countries of origin and of destination.
- 5. Work with cities to promote decent working conditions, social protection, and dialogue**, drawing from existing city-led examples and starting by driving recognition of informal workers - among whom migrants are overrepresented.



C4O has released a first-of-its-kind policy brief on **Good green jobs and labour migration: opportunities for urban leaders**, that can be downloaded [at this link](#).

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