

Fifteenth session of the IRENA Assembly

Side Event

11 January 2025, 01:00 - 14.30 GST
St. Regis Hotel, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi

Skilling for Tripling Renewables: Enhancing International Collaboration

Background

The energy transition will have profound implications for the workforce and the future of jobs. Over the coming decades millions of new renewable energy and transition jobs will be created, requiring the building of an inclusive and competent talent pool as well as the upskilling and reskilling of current workers in old and new energy industries.

Along energy transition supply chains skills shortages are already acute, a gap that will only grow as countries move to meet ambitious renewable energy targets such as tripling global renewable electricity capacity by 2030. Consequently, urgent action is needed to scale up workforce development in support of the renewables-based energy transition.

Countries require a nuanced understanding of these emerging workforce issues in terms of the types of jobs that will be created and their requisite skillsets. A just transition must entail efforts in support of an inclusive workforce, decent jobs that are aligned with labour standards and workers' rights, programmes to address job loss among fossil fuel workers, and mobilising financing and other support for training and mobility of workers.

Investing in education and training will be vital for equipping the current and future workforce, including women and the youth, with the skills and competences needed to take advantage of the opportunities of the net zero economy. Skilling measures will be necessary across the entire value chain, not only in areas such as installation or operation and maintenance but also equipment manufacturing in order to allow countries to maximise the local benefits of this transition. There is also a need to respond to emerging trends in key areas such as digitalisation and AI, and their implications for the future of renewable energy jobs.

Globally recognised skills standards and certifications will become ever more important to ensure that education and training systems match the needs of industry, and to facilitate workforce mobility.

Accelerating skilling for the energy transition requires a collaborative and concerted effort that brings together governments, industry, education and training providers, civil society and other local and global stakeholders.

IRENA is proposing to develop a new call to action on skills that aims to drive domestic and global cooperation in the following areas:

1. Accelerating Skills Development:

- a. Scale up education and training efforts to address current and emerging skills shortages in key priority areas including measures to:
 - i. Promote the development of digital skills as a foundation for scaling renewable energy solutions.
 - ii. Facilitate the growth of manufacturing skills to support the establishment of local and regional renewable energy production hubs.
 - iii. Enhance skills for decentralized renewable energy to empower communities and promote energy access.

2. Integrating Skills Development in National Plans:

- a. Commit to incorporating renewable energy skills development into national climate and energy plans, including the next update of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- b. Establish policies that prioritize renewable energy training and education as key components of the energy transition.
- c. Improve data availability on skill supply and demand including the integration of renewable energy related occupations in national labour statistics.

3. Building Public-Private Partnerships:

- a. Foster collaboration between governments, industry, civil society, research institutions, and education and training providers to scale up skilling initiatives and make skills development part of employer-union social dialogue.
- b. Invest in joint programs that support skills development, training centres, and vocational programs for the renewable energy sector.

4. Establishing International Skills Standards:

- a. Strengthen international standards for skills in renewable energy, ensuring quality, consistency, and mutual recognition across borders.
- b. Work towards harmonizing qualifications and certifications to facilitate workforce mobility and enhance renewable energy employment opportunities.

5. Integrating Renewable Energy into Curricula:

- a. Ensure that renewable energy knowledge, skills, and values are embedded in educational curricula at all levels including primary and secondary education, higher education and technical and vocational training and education (TVET).

- b. Promote awareness-raising efforts that inspire young people and current workers to pursue careers in the green economy.
- c. Build the capacity of educators, including teachers, lecturers and trainers, to empower them to integrate the latest renewable energy knowledge to their teaching practice.

6. Investing in Inclusive Workforce Development:

- a. Commit to inclusive workforce policies that address the needs of underrepresented groups, including women and youth.
- b. Support innovative financing mechanisms to enable access to skills development and training for all.

Objectives

During this event, stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback on the principles in the call to action as well as to consider specific commitments they could make to accelerate domestic and global skilling for the energy transition. Such commitments could encompass supporting global collaboration through the sharing of existing standards and qualification frameworks; distribution of open access curricula and training materials; exchange of best practices including policies and measures; and providing advisory services and technical assistance in areas of expertise. Domestically countries and institutions can also commit to implementing the principles outlined in the call to action as well as contributing to a tracking of global progress on skilling.

Guiding questions

- What measures has your country/company/institution taken to build the skills needed for the energy transition? What do you regard as successful initiatives, and can they be replicated?
- What targets have you set for workforce development and training over the coming years?
- What principles should be reflected in a global call to action on skilling for tripling renewables?
- What commitments can you make to support global cooperation to accelerate skills development?

For more information please contact:

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