Article

"Green jobs", current and upcoming work: March 2022

How the ONS has contributed to understanding "green jobs" through regular estimates and research articles, and what our future work on "green jobs" will include.

Contact:
Leah Harris and Gemma N Thomas
environment.accounts@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 456660

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1 . Overview of "green jobs"

The government's Green Jobs Taskforce final report shows the role of employment in the UK's transition to net zero territorial greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It also shows the role of employment in meeting other environmental goals, such as protecting and restoring nature. The report states that "Every job has the potential to become 'green' as the world moves to combat climate change".

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) sees the need for robust evidence on "green jobs" and was named in the Net Zero Strategy (October 2021). It states that "The Office for National Statistics will seek to refine our understanding and measurement of the green economy as the UK transitions to net zero, including looking at such issues as quality of work and diversity within the green economy."

There is currently no agreed definition that the ONS can use to produce statistics on green jobs. Various UK and international organisations use a range of definitions.

The term green jobs is used widely, so we have used it in this statement and across our work. However, we are measuring work more broadly in terms of jobs, employees and other metrics. Users should therefore interpret the use of green jobs as "green work".

We plan to propose possible definitions and methods within a user consultation. We will then publish experimental statistics for green jobs. We will build on our existing low carbon and renewable energy economy (LCREE) employment estimates and environmental goods and services sector (EGSS) employment estimates.

2 . Our current position

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces two independent, annual bulletins based on user needs and statistical best practice. These include estimates of two different interpretations of "green jobs". These two bulletins are:

- Low carbon and renewable energy economy (LCREE) estimates; latest estimates for 2020 were released on 17 February 2022

- Environmental goods and services sector (EGSS) estimates; estimates for 2019 to be released on 21 March 2022

These two sets of estimates provide data on other variables as well as employment, including turnover and business investment (LCREE) and output, gross value added and exports (EGSS).

We also produce standalone articles to respond to user needs. For example, our article on The UK's low emission vehicle sector used low carbon and renewable energy economy (LCREE) estimates for UK employment in this sector, and also explored the skills needed to work in this sector. Another example is our Wind energy in the UK article, which used LCREE estimates for UK employment in offshore and onshore wind, and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) estimates for global employment in wind.

Our article The challenges of defining a green job from April 2021 was cited in the Green Jobs Taskforce final report in July 2021 and the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee's Third Report on Green Jobs in October 2021.

3 . Upcoming work

Across all our workstreams, we will continue to:

- publish our existing estimates

- develop our estimates so the information provided is as relevant, timely and reliable as possible

- work with our users to maintain and develop effective relationships

- take part in international discussions related to the [System of Environmental-Economic Accounting](#), such as the [London Group on Environmental Economic Accounting meeting](#) held in October 2021, which cover best practice and new uses of our data and other countries' data

"Green" is complex to define; it could cover a range of environmental topics such as climate change, natural ecosystems (like woodlands or wetlands), natural resources (like water), or material use and waste.

In our estimates and most of our development work, we have concentrated on industries defined as green and calculated employment in green activities within them.

As we have expanded our research, we have identified three different ways to measure "green jobs". These are:

- an industry-based approach, which includes all jobs in a green industry or sector, with industries classified according to activities undertaken in them

- an occupation-based approach, which includes all jobs that are green (regardless of the industry they are in) and are based on the tasks undertaken by workers or objectives of their work

- a firm-based approach, which includes all jobs in a green firm; firms could be classified as green based on their level of emissions, and/or having made climate or emissions commitments

In our low carbon and renewable energy economy (LCREE) and environmental goods and services sector (EGSS) estimates, we use concepts from the occupation-based and industry-based approaches. While each covers different activities, we select and measure specific industries and relevant activity in those industries.

We intend to publish new research and analysis exploring these different approaches to measuring green jobs.

Research into "green jobs": time spent doing green tasks, UK, 1997 to 2019

We will publish this article on 7 March 2022. We will use the [US Occupational Information Network (O*NET) framework](#) to look at the time workers spend on green tasks in the UK, and how this has changed over time. We will also publish a methodology article alongside it.

Environmental economy estimates: a comparison of the low carbon and renewable energy economy survey (LCREE) and the environmental goods and services sector (EGSS) accounts

We will publish this methodology article on 21 March 2022. We will compare the methodology for the two sets of estimates. This will include similarities and differences in coverage, how the estimates are calculated, and how to understand what the data show. It will cover the methodology for employment and other variables.

"Nature jobs" using environmental goods and services sector data: 2019

We will publish this article on 21 March 2022. We will look at how we could use the EGSS estimates to explore "nature jobs", including definitional challenges and what our EGSS data can show. We identified this as a user interest.

Exploring regional estimates of activity in the low carbon and renewable energy economy, UK, 2019 and 2020

We will publish this article on 14 April 2022. We will look at methods to estimate turnover and employment in LCREE in the UK by combining data from the LCREE survey and the [Inter-Departmental Business Register](#), including estimates for UK countries and different regions of England. These will complement the UK country-level estimates that we already publish in LCREE. These will be experimental statistics.

4 . Further research and exploration

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently secured funding from HM Treasury's Economic Data Innovation Fund. This will speed up our "green jobs" work over the next financial year, looking at definitions, measurement, and monitoring.

In this project, we will review the currently used definitions of green jobs, building on our previous work and applying the framework we have outlined. As clearer definitions emerge, we will build a set of independent, experimental statistics. These can be used to produce analysis of job and employee demographics.

We will explore new sources, including surveys, administrative data, and data linkage. We will make sure users are given information to aid their interpretation of new and experimental sources.

We will also consider the definition of "green". For example, we will further develop our "nature jobs" work; this will include looking at further sources and a definition of this subcategory. Additionally, we will expand existing approaches, such as the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) work, to look at job quality and diversity. We will also look at how green jobs might sit on a spectrum alongside relatively "less green" jobs.

We will provide further details on the project scope as the project develops.

5 . Provide feedback

We will work collaboratively with colleagues across central and devolved government and external experts.

We will ensure that the data and statistics we produce continue to be useful to analysts and researchers, as well as other users. We welcome stakeholder feedback; you can email us at environment.accounts@ons.gov.uk.

We will provide an update on the work planned in this statement in summer 2022.