

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

- project proposal to the ASEM LEMC3-

1. Title of project:

“Skills for Green Jobs, Productivity for the Low-Carbon Economy”

2. Background

The environmental crisis poses new questions for the evolution of the labour force and its adjustment to the challenges of our times. The labour force needs to actively contribute to the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions as well as the industrial and agricultural waste. Moreover, the labour force can make an important contribution to building up adaptive capacity in societies and economies in order to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems to climate change effects.

Sustainability becomes central to business strategy. Enterprises integrate sustainability into products, operations, processes and accounting practices and increasingly demand green skills and knowledge. Skills for sustainability are needed in job areas including science and technology, trades-based occupations, manufacturing, financial services and business administration, construction, energy and other sectors.

The transition to a low carbon economy and the development of respective technologies necessitate capable and knowledgeable workers to be able to fully exploit the new practices and techniques. The challenge is to re-skill and up-skill workers in existing jobs to ensure they can manufacture, install and operate new technologies and to educate generations of students and young workers to take up new green jobs. In addition, the expansion of decent and quality employment depends on achieving productivity hikes. The formation of new skills and capabilities is central in order to increase productivity and enable workers decent jobs in the growing green sector.

Governments need partners in this global effort. Partners can provide insight and help improve the effectiveness of policies; they can provide financial resources and implement programmes; they can participate and create the projection of a global vision and take the world effort a level ahead. Integrating business and labour partners in building skills for sustainability ensures that such training is carried out effectively and bears fruit.

Green skills and ASEM initiatives

The Declaration of the 3rd ASEM Environment Ministers’ Meeting held in April 2007 recognises that “[t]he ASEM countries acknowledge the need for increased cooperation on capability development, including training on energy management by developed countries and showcasing of energy efficiency best practices.” Increased cooperation on training and human resources development on energy management would be beneficial for both Asia and Europe; however, increased cooperation more broadly on training for green skills and in general would benefit the two continents in more fields. This is also recognised in almost all of the Leaders’ statements, beginning from the Bangkok Summit of 1996 to Brussels in 2010 where the Leaders noted that “*the inclusiveness of labor markets crucially depends on education, job training and skill development strategies,*

including vocational training. Partnerships with the private sector may, where applicable, facilitate the preparation of the workforce for future opportunities in strategic sectors such as low-carbon emission industries and green technologies, but also in growth sectors such as health care and elderly care. As labor markets evolve over time, lifelong learning and career development tools, through investments in education and training which government policies should encourage, will help workers move into new opportunities.”

Moreover, in the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development of October 2008 the Leaders urged “enhanced action on technology development and transfer to support action on mitigation and adaptation, to accelerate development, deployment, diffusion, dissemination and transfer of affordable technologies for adaptation and mitigation.” It is obvious that the diffusion, dissemination and transfer of technologies can easier take place between societies that share a high level of skills.

Other ASEM events that elaborated –even if not in depth- on the issue of cooperation for green skills were the Seminar on Adaptation to Climate Change, held in October 2008 in Tokyo, and the 2nd ASEM Development Conference of May 2010 in Yogyakarta.

3. Purpose of project

General description of purpose

The purpose of the project is to create practical experience of improving green skills training programmes in enterprises. On the one hand the experience will highlight bottlenecks and weaknesses and benefits and strengths of the process and on the other hand it will delineate the space for improvement of the existing programmes.

Expected results

- Identify current deficiencies of training of selected industries
- Recognise challenges and weaknesses of the process with a view to creating problem solving experiences for these aspects of the trainings
- Recognise benefits and strengths of the process with a view to strengthening these elements of the trainings
- Create useful experiences for vocational education and training (VET) instructors and teachers in order to improve the embedding skills for sustainability in VET
- Provide with an improved model of collaboration and coordination between governments, employer and employee organisations, VET instructors, academia and communities

Objective

The objective of the project is to provide governments, business and trade unions all the information needed with a view to improving of and facilitating the setup of human resources development programmes for green jobs in the future.

4. Description of project

General description

The project is the exchange of experiences of vocational education and training programmes in selected sectors with the participation of government, management and union officials as well as vocational instructors and experts. The work done and the results will be summarised in a Conference after the end of the programmes in order to draw lessons and experiences that will improve the effectiveness of investment in green skills in the future.

Topics/Subject matters

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis of the existing human resource development programmes for sustainability skills
- Differences and similarities of the human resource development programmes for sustainability skills in Asia and Europe
- Challenges for managers, government officials, union members and vocational education and training instructors
- Evaluation and analysis of the impact on employment and vulnerable workers, production, productivity and competitiveness, ecological footprint, and communities

Participants

The participants in the project will be four government experts, two enterprises from different sectors that have already implemented green skills programmes, including employers and employees' organisations, and two vocational education and training instructors and teachers. Additionally, other participants might be coming from academia and local communities.

Resource persons

Two VET experts and four government experts on skills for sustainability

Methodology

Phase 1: One European and one Asian ASEM government will select two willing enterprises that have already implemented green skills programmes from different sectors to implement trainings for sustainability skills for their employees. Two VET instructors will assist the design of the trainings after they consult with the employers and the union members. Four government experts –two for each project- will observe, supervise and rapport on the progress of the process. They should be prepared to provide technical assistance and advice if and when needed. Trade unions and employers should be ready to collect information on the process, their role and envisage different approaches to their participation in the human resources development programmes for sustainability skills.

Phase 2: All the participants should be encouraged to undertake an evaluation designed by the government officials that partake in the process. The evaluation should draw initial

conclusions on the differences and commonalities of the trainings and more specifically the deficiencies and strengths of the existing programmes. The results should be presented in a consistent way in order to be useful for other governments and social partners in initiating effective trainings for sustainability skills. In the end of the trainings the instructors and government officials should be able to provide data on improving green skills trainings. Accordingly, the unions should be prepared to describe the impact of the trainings on commitment, creativity and capability of the employees as well as on behavioural change in comparison with their prior trainings.

Venue

The venue of the project will be two enterprises of two different sectors in one European and one Asian country.

Dates/Time frame

The exact date and programme of the project is to be determined. The trainings will be held in 2011, the evaluation and the Conference will be held in 2012.

Budget

It should be possible to organise each training session for 20,000 euros.

5. Follow-up and continuance

After the end of phase 2, the participants from governments, business and trade unions, as well as the VET instructors but also participants from academia and local communities will convene in a Conference to share experiences and draw lessons from the process. The Conference should highlight improvements of the training programmes, the problems that the participants met in implementing the trainings, the solutions given, and the governmental assistance needed, including in form of incentives, to be provided so that such trainings take place. The Conference could also put together a proposal about the financial sustainability of green skills trainings.