



► ILO Sectoral Brief

June 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on the forest sector

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting public health and causing unprecedented disruptions to economies and labour markets, including for workers and enterprises in the forest sector.¹ The sector provides work to at least 54.2 million women and men worldwide, many in the informal economy. Forests are central to mitigating impacts of climate change, and around 1.5 billion people, many of whom are indigenous and tribal peoples, depend on forests for food, income, jobs, energy and shelter.²

Despite recent improvements, forests remain dangerous workplaces and decent work deficits can be pervasive.³ The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges, with many enterprises and workers suffering as a consequence. In response, governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and other forestry stakeholders around the world, are collaborating to mitigate the impact of the pandemic with a view to protecting businesses and livelihoods, including through social dialogue and the promotion of international labour standards.



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COVID-19 pandemic has impacted forest product supply chains at all levels.

1 The forest sector has three sub-sectors: forestry and logging, wood manufacturing, and pulp and paper.

2 ILO. [Promoting Decent Work and Safety and Health in Forestry](#), Report for discussion at the Sectoral Meeting on Promoting Decent Work and Safety and Health in Forestry, Geneva, 6–10 May 2019.

3 ILO. [Conclusions on promoting decent work and safety and health in forestry](#) (SMSHF/2019/9).

► 1. The impact of COVID-19

The pandemic has impacted forest-related supply chains in various ways

As in many other industries, disruptions in forest-related supply chains have resulted in a sharp decline in exports and imports throughout the world.⁴ Global demand for wood and wood products, including tropical timber, graphic paper and wood furniture, has fallen. As orders for both timber and processed products have been postponed or cancelled, forest-related industries have not been able to continue operating at full capacity. These challenges have been intensified by the impeded performance of badly affected sectors intricately linked to forests and forestry, such as transportation, forest-based recreation and tourism, and sectors that use wood as a raw material, including construction and automotive manufacturing.⁵

This combination of stagnating production, reduced demand, shortages of raw materials, lack of working capital, freight rate increases and, in some cases, labour shortages, has forced many operations and enterprises to halt their activities, some permanently. They include paper mills and manufacturers, sawmills, wood product manufacturers and logging companies. The situation is particularly challenging for many micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries, which make up the large majority of enterprises in the forest sector and are highly vulnerable to economic downturns.⁶

On the other hand, there has been stable or even increased demand for other forest-based products, including packaging materials, wooden pallets and tissue for toilet paper and masks.⁷ The demand for toilet paper in particular increased around the world at the beginning of the outbreak, with an increase of close to 200 per cent a week in some European countries.⁸ The expected growth of e-commerce is likely to contribute to increased demand for packaging materials.⁹

As the pandemic has started to stabilize in some regions, there has been a phased restart of all activities, including forestry. However, it will take a long time and considerable effort for forestry production and trade to return to pre-COVID levels.

The challenging situation for forest-related industries has direct and severe implications for the workforce and enterprises

Employment

Despite the potential of the sector to promote growth and employment, the persistent decent work deficits have been worsened by the pandemic. Globally, many jobs have been lost and many more are still at risk, as companies around the world have faced challenges in retaining their workforce and meeting payroll commitments, leaving workers furloughed or unemployed.

Occupational safety and health

Forest work is characterized by high occupational safety and health (OSH) risks, which are compounded by contagious diseases, such as COVID-19. Forest work, such as logging, is frequently undertaken in remote areas with workers living in temporary camps, often in shared accommodation, with limited access to medical supplies and facilities. Isolation and limited accessibility make labour inspection and the enforcement of labour standards more challenging, leading to potentially high levels of labour turnover, especially in camps with poor working and living conditions. Workers are exposed to a high level of social contacts, increasing their risk of infection. If they feel unwell or unsafe, workers need to have the right to remove themselves from the workplace and collective living quarters.

4 ILO. [The effects of COVID-19 on trade and global supply chains](#), Research brief (2020).

5 See, for example, Pellervo Economic Research (PTT). ["Finnish forest sector will survive corona crisis better than many other industries, but particularly sawmill industry and small businesses may suffer"](#), Forest sector forecast – Spring 2020, 31 March 2020.

6 ILO. [COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy. Immediate responses and policy challenges](#) (2020).

See also Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). [The impacts of COVID-19 on the forest sector: How to respond?](#) (2020).

7 Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF). ["Understanding Covid-19 impact on the forest sector"](#), News, 28 April 2020.

8 Richa Naidu and Siddharth Cavale. ["Pulp friction: Border jams delay supply of toilet paper's only ingredient"](#), Reuters, Business News, 6 April 2020.

9 PTT. Forest sector forecast – Spring 2020, op. cit.

In sawmills and wood processing factories where operations have continued, it is often difficult to maintain physical distancing between workers, and adequate hygiene measures may not be readily available. Forest rangers may be at risk of contracting zoonotic diseases, such as COVID-19, as they come in contact with wildlife and are not readily provided with adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).¹⁰ In some cases, reduced monitoring due to physical distancing measures has led to opportunistic illegal loggers taking advantage of the situation.¹¹ Forest firefighters work, travel, eat and sleep close to one another, in isolated, hot and dirty conditions, sometimes sharing gear, making them highly vulnerable to contagious diseases.

Workers in the informal economy

Even in the pre-pandemic context, decent work deficits were more pronounced for informal workers, many of whom are women in activities such as collecting non-wood forest products and fuelwood. The high incidence of informality, in terms of both workers and economic units, is a major obstacle to advancing decent work in the sector, and contributes to illegal practices.¹² Much forest work is carried out through contracting arrangements, often including seasonal and temporary labour. The levels of labour protection may be low, making workers vulnerable during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers in the informal economy are often undeclared, low-skilled and work in poor conditions, without social protection or workplace health and safety measures.¹³

Migrant workers

In some countries, migrant workers constitute a significant proportion of the workforce in the forest sector. The pandemic has exacerbated their already vulnerable situation. Travel restrictions and border closures have made it difficult for migrant workers to enter countries where they are needed for such work as tree planting, fertilization, pruning, land clearing or

cork extraction,¹⁴ which may in turn create difficulties for the industry to find workers and in some cases lead to temporary workforce deficits.¹⁵

Migrant workers in destination countries are particularly vulnerable when enterprises are forced to close, as their wages are cut and they may not be covered by social protection systems or crisis response measures, such as wage subsidies or unemployment benefits. Moreover, those with irregular statuses may not be able to access medical services, even when they are available, due to their fear of detention or deportation. Those who wish to return home may be restricted from doing so.¹⁶ Further challenges include a lack of social networks and safety nets, and limited local language skills, which may restrict their access to information on local regulations, testing or confinement measures.

Indigenous and tribal peoples and other forest-dependent communities

Forests are the source of livelihoods for millions of people throughout the world, including indigenous and tribal peoples, who have a collective relationship with the land and natural resources that has special importance for their cultures and spiritual values.¹⁷ The pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerability of indigenous and tribal peoples and other forest-dependent communities, who were already facing the consequences of climate change, deforestation, forest fires and illegal logging.

Indigenous and tribal peoples tend to suffer from poorer health than the rest of the population, including respiratory illnesses, raising concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on their health.¹⁸ At the same time, they often have limited access to health care, and the services that are available may not be culturally appropriate.¹⁹ Indigenous peoples have called for the prohibition of entry into their areas to prevent the spread of the virus, as well as increased logistical and medical support.²⁰ Information on preventing and mitigating the pandemic is not always available in indigenous languages,

10 Ranger Federation of Asia. "Rangers health and safety – World Day for Safety and Health at Work" (n.d.).

11 ITTO. *Tropical Timber Market Report*, 1-15 May 2020, available at <https://www.itto.int/mis/>

12 ILO. SMSHF/2019/9 op.cit.

13 ILO. *COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges*, ILO brief, May 2020.

14 CEPF. "Understanding Covid-19 impact ...", op. cit.;

15 See ILO. *Seasonal Migrant Workers' Schemes: Rethinking Fundamental Principles and Mechanisms in light of COVID-19* ILO brief (2020), inter alia on the measures taken by industrialized countries to mitigate labour shortages in seasonal agriculture, where the challenges are similar to those in the forest sector.

16 ILO. *Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents*, Policy brief, April 2020.

17 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), Article 13.

18 ILO. *COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*, Policy brief, May 2020.

19 Sandra del Pino and Alex Camacho. *Considerations on Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Descendants, and Other Ethnic Groups During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) (2020).

20 See, for example, Joao Fellet. "Coronavirus 'could wipe out Brazil's indigenous people'", BBC News, 6 April 2020.

restricting their ability to respond to the disease in an appropriate and timely manner.²¹

In addition to health-related risks, lockdown measures have affected the ability of communities to pursue their livelihoods, with direct consequences for their nutrition and food security. The banning of the hunting and consumption of wild meat in some countries with a view to containing the virus has removed a main source of protein for some of these communities.²²

The pandemic has intensified pressure on forests in some countries

As a consequence of the halting of tourism, many park guides and rangers have lost their jobs, resulting in decreased patrols and conservation and leaving forests more open to unlawful activities, such as poaching and

illegal logging.²³ Moreover, people who have lost their livelihoods in the economic slowdown are increasingly using forests as a resource of last resort. While wild natural medicinal plants with scientifically-proven effects may be useful in the wider medical response to the pandemic, their increased use, combined with additional pressure on charcoal production and changes in land use, may lead to forest resource losses and increased carbon emissions.²⁴

Forests are an important element of disaster risk reduction and play a key role in preventing epidemic zoonotic diseases. Deforestation, loss of biodiversity and the reduction of forested areas may contribute to an increased risk of viral epidemics in future.²⁵ Supporting forests and the people living in them is beneficial both to protect the environment and reduce the risk of viral pandemics.²⁶

► 2. Responses by constituents and partners

Governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and other sectoral stakeholders, have stepped up their efforts to address and mitigate the challenges of COVID-19 and the consequent economic and social crises. Governments have introduced support packages and, while these are not generally specific to the forest sector, the wider measures adopted will have an impact on forest industries and workers.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

The measures introduced to help enterprises survive the pandemic include tax reductions and delayed payments, favourable interest rates, additional credit lines, and direct subsidies for salaries. Special emphasis should be placed on supporting the most vulnerable enterprises, including MSMEs and those in the informal economy.

Examples of targeted enterprise support include measures adopted in **Australia**, where the government of New South Wales has introduced an economic support package for forestry, horticulture and



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agricultural business recovery, first in response to the devastating forest fires, with the package being strengthened in the context of COVID-19.²⁷ In **Canada**,

21 ILO. COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples, op.cit.

22 Robert Nasi and John E. Fa. "COVID-19-led ban on wild meat could take protein off the table for millions of forest dwellers", *Forest News*, 30 March 2020.

23 Nita Bhalla and Harry Jacques. "Wildlife tourism in the pandemic: What ill happen to the parks, staff and animals?", World Economic Forum COVID Action Platform, 13 May 2020; Dina Fine Maron. "Poaching threats loom as wildlife safaris put on hold due to COVID-19", *National Geographic*, 10 April 2020.

24 FAO. The impacts of COVID-19 on the forest sector, op. cit.

25 World Economic Forum COVID Action Forum. "Forest losses could make diseases like COVID-19 more likely, according to study", 19 April 2020.

26 Carolyn Cowan. "How protecting forests and their communities can prevent the next outbreak", *Globe Southeast Asia*, 14 May 2020.

27 Dominic Giannini. "\$140 million funding for agribusiness and forestry amid COVID-19 downturn", *About regional*, 27 April 2020

the government of Alberta has deferred the payment of timber dues for up to six months,²⁸ while in the **United States** the Forest Service has allowed loggers more time to fulfil their contracts in national forests.²⁹

Public employment programmes have proved useful in overcoming previous crises, and have included reforestation, agro-forestry development and infrastructure maintenance programmes, which can provide income rapidly for large numbers of workers.³⁰ As part of its economic relief package, the Government of **Pakistan** has introduced a tree-planting project to revitalize natural infrastructure and create employment for daily wage workers, including many rural youth and women who have lost their jobs as a consequence of the pandemic.³¹ In **India**, the Ministry of Home Affairs has relaxed the lockdown rules for the collection, harvesting and processing of minor forest produce by scheduled tribes and other forest dwellers,³² while the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has encouraged the governments of states with tribal populations to offer a guaranteed price for the procurement of forest produce from communities.³³

There have also been attempts to find alternative employment opportunities in other sectors for forest workers who have been laid off or furloughed. In **New Zealand**, the Government has supported the redeployment of forestry workers in road maintenance, hazardous tree removal, reforestation projects, conservation activities, and through retraining and educational opportunities.³⁴ In **Sweden**, an initiative has been adopted to help recent immigrants, young persons with disabilities and workers laid-off as a consequence of the pandemic to train and work in tree planting, reforestation and logistics.³⁵ Seasonal workers engaged in gardening, forestry and picking wild berries have also been exempted from the entry ban into Sweden otherwise applicable to persons from outside the European Union (EU).³⁶ In **Finland**, specific provisions allow seasonal migrant workers from outside the EU

to enter the country to work in certain critical forestry activities.³⁷

Enterprises have taken innovative measures to expand their production, particularly of products for which demand has been stable or has increased during the crisis, such as surgical masks. In **Italy**, the decision to classify paper as an essential product, due to its importance for food packaging and sanitary and pharmaceutical products, ensured the continued operation of paper mills during the state of emergency.³⁸ In **Canada**, a paper mill which turned to manufacturing medical-grade pulp suitable for masks and gowns doubled its production.³⁹ A plant in **Scotland** has provided pallets, packaging, biomass fuel and wood-based construction materials for hospitals around the United Kingdom.⁴⁰ In **Brazil**, the Timber Industry Union of Northern Mato Grosso has supported its members by raising awareness of the disease and the related precautions and by providing advice to companies on compliance with health measures to prevent the suspension of production.⁴¹ Also in **Brazil**, Embrapa, the research institution for agriculture and forestry, has offered its laboratory facilities and staff for COVID-19 testing.⁴²

Protecting workers in the workplace

Governments, employers and employers' organizations, for example in **Canada, Gabon, New Zealand, Peru, the United Kingdom** and the **United States**, have developed specific COVID-19 safety and health advice to promote safety in the various forestry activities.⁴³

Forest enterprises in **Brazil, Ghana, Japan** and the **United Kingdom**, among others, have introduced workplace policies, such as limiting physical meetings and the number of people in commuting vehicles,

28 Jo English. "Forest Industry Commends Government for Dues Deferral", International Forest Industries, 14 April 2020.

29 U.S. Forest Service. "USDA Forest Service moves to support timber market, offers extension of timber contracts to address falling timber markets amid the COVID-19 pandemic", 16 April 2020.

30 ILO. *A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis*, Policy brief, May 2020.

31 Rina Saeed Khan. "As a 'green stimulus' Pakistan sets virus-idled to work planting trees", Reuters, Asia, 28 April 2020.

32 India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A), of 16 April 2020.

33 Ministry of Tribal Affairs. "Ministry of Tribal Affairs takes up various proactive measures in view of Pandemic COVID-19", Press release, New Delhi, 21 April 2020.

34 "COVID-19: \$28m to redeploy forestry workers", *Rural News*, 20 March 2020.

35 Skill Shift Initiative. "Skill Shift Initiative launches a fast track for new arrivals to Sweden and young people with functional diversity to work with tree planting", 15 April 2020.

36 "Forestry workers from abroad to be exempt from entry ban", Radio Sweden, 20 May 2020.

37 Finnish Government. "Seasonal employees from abroad for critical primary production sectors – entrepreneurs contribute to costs of charter flights", Press release, 14 April 2020.

38 "Covid-19: Paper production ring fenced in Italy", *Print Business*, 29 March 2020.

39 "COVID-19: B.C. mill doubles production of pulp for masks, gowns made in the U.S.", *National Post*, 5 April 2020.

40 Gregor White. "Workers at the Norbord wood processing plant in Inverness praised for 'vital' role in providing materials during coronavirus Covid-19 response", *The Inverness Courier*, 16 April 2020.

41 ITTO. *Tropical Timber Market Report*, 1-15 April 2020.

42 Embrapa. "Laboratórios da Embrapa realizam testes para identificação da Covid-19", Notícias, 24 March 2020.

43 See, for example: *Safetree*, New Zealand; *Confor*, United Kingdom; *Forest Resources Association*, United States; *European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW)*; *WorkSafeBC*, British Columbia; and ITTO. *Tropical Timber Market Report*, 16-30 April and 1-15 May 2020.

providing workers with PPE, improving sanitation and hygiene, implementing travel restrictions and promoting teleworking.⁴⁴

Trade unions have taken measures both to protect workers from being laid off and to ensure safe working conditions. The Building and Woodworkers International (**BWI**) has a website of country-specific sectoral responses by trade unions.⁴⁵ In **Brazil**, trade unions have collaborated with the centre for wood producing and exporting industries in the State of Mato Grosso to distribute 12,000 masks to forest workers.⁴⁶ In **Peru**, the National Federation of Wood Industry Workers (FENATIMAP) has launched a national training programme on biosafety for forest workers in an attempt to prevent COVID-19.⁴⁷ In **Malaysia**, trade unions, including those representing forestry and timber workers, released a joint statement calling for the Government and employers to step up action to protect workers, including migrant workers, and demanded mandatory COVID-19 tests for the whole workforce.⁴⁸

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

Social dialogue based on respect for freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining is key to the promotion of decent work in forestry.⁴⁹ Particularly in challenging contexts, social dialogue is essential to ensure sound governance

and the successful management of crises, enhance social cohesion and promote resilience.⁵⁰ Through social dialogue, employers' and workers' organizations play a key role in designing solutions that address the specific needs of a particular industry, sector or enterprise.⁵¹

In their joint statement, the social partners in the woodworking, furniture and wood panel industries emphasize that the key priority and focus should be to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for contractors, workers, owners and society.⁵² In the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**, the National Trade Union of Professional, Technical and Administrative Workers in the Wood and Allied Industries (SUNTIMAVEN) and Masisa, a wood products company, have agreed to secure the incomes, benefits and safety of regular workers during the pandemic, in accordance with the collective agreement.⁵³ In **Chile**, safe transportation, improved workplace hygiene measures and protected wages during the pandemic have been secured through social dialogue.⁵⁴ In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Independent Trade Union of Forestry, Wood and Paper Processing, in collaboration with employers' associations, has developed proposals to address the pandemic.⁵⁵ In the **Russian Federation**, most workplaces in the forest sector have organized antivirus committees, with trade union representation, at the workplace level.⁵⁶

► 3. ILO tools and responses

Through its Decent Work Agenda, the ILO works to achieve sustainable development and social justice for all women and men, with no one left behind. The ILO is collaborating with its constituents and partners

to address the impacts of the pandemic at different levels.⁵⁷

44 ITTO. *Tropical Timber Market Report*, 1-15 April and 1-15 May 2020; and Rupert Oliver. "Covid-19 puts Europe into lockdown and rewrites economic forecasts – ITTO European Market Report 31st March 2020", Forest Industries Intelligence (FII), 31 March 2020.

45 Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI). *COVID 19 - Union Response*.

46 Hugo Fernandes. "COVID-19 Cipem distribui 12 mil máscaras de tecido aos trabalhadores do setor de base florestal", CIPEM, Notícias, 15 April 2020.

47 BWI. *Peruvian forest workers to undergo COVID-19 biosafety trainings*, 10 June 2020.

48 BWI. *Malaysian unions call on government and employers to do more to protect workers*, stop COVID-19, 27 April 2020.

BWI. *Malaysia: Timber unions call for mandatory COVID-19 testing*, 2 April 2020.

49 ILO. SSMHF/2019/9 op.cit.

50 ILO. *The need for social dialogue in addressing the COVID-19 crisis*, Policy brief, May 2020.

51 ILO. A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis, op. cit.

52 "COVID-19: To fight the Corona pandemic, the European Woodworking and Furniture Industries propose measures to protect workers' health, support economic activity and the sector's recovery", joint statement by the European social partners in the woodworking and furniture industries sectors on COVID-19.

53 BWI. *Venezuelan union secures incomes and benefits amidst lockdown*, 8 May 2020.

54 BWI. *Chilean unions monitor OHS standards amidst pandemic*, 13 May 2020.

55 BWI. *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Forestry workers protect rights amid COVID crisis*, 29 March 2020..

56 BWI. *Unions from Central Asia and Eastern Europe prepare for International Workers' Memorial Day*, 24 April 2020.

57 All ILO resources related to the pandemic are available on its dedicated website on [COVID-19 and the world of work](#).

Many ILO Conventions and Recommendations, and the fundamental principles and rights at work, apply equally to all sectors, including the forest sector.⁵⁸ Several occupational safety and health (OSH) standards are relevant to forest work, including the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 192); the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), its accompanying Recommendation (No. 164), and its Protocol of 2002; and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 197).

The Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), includes forestry as a category of agriculture that must be covered by the national system of labour inspection. In some countries, forestry is covered by the general labour inspectorate, under the terms of the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), as a result of which labour inspection services include forestry inspections.

The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), sets out standards for the establishment, provision and governance of national social security systems, while the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), provides guidance for the establishment of nationally defined social protection floors consisting of basic social security guarantees to ensure the access of all persons in need to essential health care and basic income security. Together with the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2013 (No. 204), Recommendation No. 202 is a useful tool to address the lack of social protection often faced by informal forestry workers.

The Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141), recognizes the importance of ensuring the participation of rural workers' organizations in economic and social development. Rural workers should be fully involved in assessments of the impact of COVID-19 and governments should ensure the effective consultation and involvement of rural workers' organizations in the process of developing an appropriate response to the crisis.

The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), contains provisions concerning the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples to land and natural resources, and establishes the requirement to consult them on measures that may affect them directly.

The Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), places employment and decent work at the centre of crisis responses as means of promoting peace, preventing crises, enabling recovery and building resilience. It calls on member States to recognize the vital role of employers' and workers' organizations in crisis response, taking into account the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

The ILO's [Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#) contain useful guidance on promoting a green recovery from the pandemic.

ILO's forest-specific tools include the [Guidelines for labour inspection in forestry \(2005\)](#), which are targeted at labour inspectors/certifiers, forest managers and training and educational organizations, and which address some of the main issues and general principles of labour standards and their inspection in the forest sector, from planting to logging. The [ILO Code of practice on safety and health in forestry work \(1998\)](#) is intended to protect workers from hazards in forestry work and to prevent or reduce the incidence of occupational illness or injury.

The [Portfolio of policy guidance notes on the promotion of decent work in the rural economy](#) offers guidance to policy-makers, the social partners and development practitioners on effective ways of addressing employment and labour issues in the rural context, including a specific brief on promoting decent work in forestry.

Through its Employment- Intensive Investment Programme, the ILO promotes the use of local strategies to optimize and combine the use of local resources (including labour) in the rehabilitation and expansion of forests. Afforestation, reforestation and forest management and restoration are increasingly being included in ILO's public employment programmes.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ For more information on International Labour Standards and COVID-19, see ILO. [ILO Standards and COVID-19 \(coronavirus\)](#), May 2020.

⁵⁹ See ILO 2011. [Local investments for climate change adaptation: Green jobs through green works](#), Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (Bangkok 2011).

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