

EFFAT Project on Just Transition

Taking Part in climate action to build a just transition in the agro-food and tourism sectors

Background

The devastating effects of climate change are already with us: extreme storms, droughts and rainfall, soil erosion; accelerating loss of biodiversity; and climate-driven migration. Global temperatures are currently increasing 50 times faster than at any time in the human history.

All EFFAT sectors greatly contribute to climate change¹ while being, at the same time, greatly affected by it with many jobs at stake.

Agricultural employment is immediately and directly impacted by the rising incidence of desertification, advancing soil erosion and floods. Reduced yields due to rising temperatures – already evident in certain areas of southern Europe – can have a devastating impact on the job security of agricultural workers already largely employed in precarious jobs.

In Tourism, the sensitivity and vulnerability of destinations (such as winter- and coastal-recreation locations) to climate change suggest that the industry will undergo drastic future change and will need to adapt to increasing risks. Given future projections, the continuous monitoring and analysis of carbon emissions associated with tourism is becoming more pressing.

There can be no question of establishing a hierarchy between developing quality employment and combating environmental changes. Particularly within the EFFAT sectors where workers' rights violation on one side and environmental degradation on the other are tightly connected and both exacerbated by food and farming systems that are unsustainable, unequal and destabilizing. This is why the fight against climate change is also very much a fight for workers' rights, and therefore a trade union fight.

The introduction of new technologies is also having great repercussions on the EFFAT sectors, in particular on factory layouts, work organisations and workers' rights. At the same time, technology development can contribute to eco-efficient farming and processing through direct savings, mainly in energy and water use, and the reduction of waste.

Managing the twin digital and green transition is an urgent EFFAT's priority. Both transitions are triggering risks and opportunities for workers in our sectors: new jobs but also job losses, replacement of some existing occupations by new ones along with the need for new skills and adaptation strategies.

Developing an EFFAT vision on just transition

EFFAT vision on Just transition takes on board social considerations alongside environmental ones. EFFAT place the future of jobs and the sustainability of our sectors at the center of its position on Just transition.

EFFAT fully supports the ambitious environmental objectives of the EU Green Deal and the F2F Strategy. We are fully aware that we are on a dangerous path which may lead to irreversible changes in Earth's climate systems. Reverting these trends is vital for our planet, for future generations as well as for protecting jobs and workers' rights.

¹ According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) activities account for around 23% of total net anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. If emissions associated with pre- and post-production activities in the global food system are included, the emissions are estimated to be up to 37% of total net anthropogenic GHG emissions. According to UNWTO/ITF latest research, released in December 2019 at UNFCCC COP25, CO₂ emissions from tourism are forecasted to increase by 25% by 2030 from 2016 levels, against the current ambitions scenario. Therefore, the need to scale up climate action in tourism remains urgent as emissions could rapidly rebound after Covid-19 once operations restart and, ultimately, the cost of inaction with regards to climate will be in the long run larger than the cost of any other crisis.

However, delivering on those objectives is bound to be disruptive for the EFFAT sectors, leading to potential job losses as well as new business models and skills requirements. This is why these policies need a robust social dimension to ensure a smooth transition for individual workers and quality job creation.

Just transition for workers is not only about training and skills as some policy makers are trying to explain. It goes beyond that. It means carrying out rigorous socio-economic impact assessments also in terms of potential job losses and job creation. It means anticipating change through collective bargaining and the strong involvement of social partners in all processes of transformation; it means helping workers and their families with training and adequate social protection; it means promoting a fairer and more inclusive labour market by tackling discrimination at work, promoting gender equality, and workplace democracy.

This would mean changing nice slogans into real hope for working people.

Objectives of the project

Throughout the Project EFFAT will:

- Assess the level of involvement of EFFAT affiliates in national policy planning around the green and digital transitions
- Identify how climate change consequences will impact jobs and working conditions in our sectors in the years to come
- Develop a critical and forward-looking thinking within EFFAT on just transition, assessing both risks and opportunities, particularly in terms of job creation/destruction, skills and working conditions
- Identify clear objectives and specific drivers to achieve a sustainable, inclusive and socially just transition in agriculture, food processing and hospitality
- Identify the obstacles for such transition to be fair and just (e.g. financialization of the sectors, process of concentration affecting different levels of the food chain, precarious work)
- Exchange good practices on the work of trade unions around just transition
- Assess the role that tourism can play in delivering more sustainable food and farming systems
- Follow-up on the EFFAT project on Bioeconomy
- Define EFFAT's vision and political demands on just transition while providing affiliates with tools to promote trade unions' demands also at national level before their governments
- Strengthening synergies and cooperation with civil society organizations and allies to push for common demands
- Demanding the inclusion of just transition in the work programme of our sectoral social dialogue with GEOPA (Agriculture), FoodDrinkEurope (Food and Drink) and CEFs (sugar)

Deliverables

1. The EFFAT guide " Taking Part in climate action to build a just transition in the agro-food and tourism sectors ". The Guide should include the following elements:

- Assessing the root causes of the climate crisis and how our sectors contribute to it
- Identifying the impact of climate change on jobs and working conditions in the EFFAT sectors
- Identifying clear objectives and specific drivers to achieve a sustainable, inclusive and socially just transition in agriculture, food processing and hospitality
- Providing political recommendations and tools to influence environmental policies at national and EU level

2. Developing a working tool for workers' representatives in transnational companies and EWCs to deal with just transition related issues within their companies and factories.

3. Developing communication material (including videos and graphics) on our vision on just transition and in connection to relevant policy debates and legislative initiatives.

Provisional timeline indication

The project will run for 14 months. Below a provisional list of activities. Changes may occur.

17-18 November 2021	EFFAT Executive Committee <i>Preliminary discussion</i>
26 November 2021	First online Conference/1 day/5 languages
26 April 2022	Sectoral workshop - Tourism
17 May 2022	Sectoral workshop - Agriculture
9 June 2022	Sectoral workshop - Food processing/meat
13-14 June 2022	EFFAT Executive Committee <i>Interim evaluation of the project + preliminary discussion on political recommendations</i>
October/November	4th Horizontal Workshop/topics to be defined
Date to be confirmed	SEE seminar on Just Transition
Autumn/Winter 2022	EFFAT Executive Committee <i>Adoption of the political recommendations</i>
14 December 2022	Final Conference/1 day/5 languages - Online
January/February 2023	End of the project