

PRESS RELEASE

Odisha's green transition has massive employment opportunity, but workforce readiness is the deciding factor: iFOREST report



New study launched by iFOREST at World Skill Center, Bhubaneswar, calls for a dedicated Odisha Green Jobs and Skilling Mission

- Odisha's green economy, spanning renewable energy, the green investment pipeline, and climate-resilience sectors, could create lakhs of jobs over the next decade, up to 10 lakh at full scale
- Renewable energy alone could support close to 30,000 jobs by 2030, nearly doubling by 2035
- Nearly 89% of existing coal mining roles and over 75% of thermal power roles assessed can shift to green sectors with short-term skilling.
- Just 3.3% of Odisha's working-age population has technical education, a gap that need to be addressed through strengthening of technical education from school levels.
- Even with a strong skilling ecosystem, formal vocational training reaches just 3% of adults High value skilling along with certification will required for employability.
- Report calls for a dedicated Odisha Green Jobs and Skilling Mission (OGJSM) to align education, skilling and industry demand, and improve employability in emerging sectors.

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The International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology (iFOREST) today launched its report, "Odisha's Green Economy Workforce: Jobs, Skills and Entrepreneurship Opportunities," at the World Skill Center, Bhubaneswar. The launch brought together the state government, industry, training institutions, development partners and civil society to discuss how Odisha can build a workforce ready for its growing green economy.

The report frames Odisha's green transition as a double opportunity: new jobs in emerging green sectors, and a chance to reskill the state's large existing industrial workforce.

On scale, the state's renewable energy targets alone could support close to 30,000 jobs by 2030, nearly doubling by 2035. The approved green investment pipeline could add 48,400-plus jobs, with much higher potential across the full value chain. Agroforestry, forest management and mangrove restoration offer a double benefit, building climate resilience while creating jobs. Formal waste management is another major opportunity. Put together, Odisha's green economy could support up to 10 lakh jobs.

The report also finds strong potential to shift workers from traditional energy and industry into green sectors. About 89% of coal mining job roles assessed are highly transferable to metal and critical mineral mining, a fast-growing sector in the state. For thermal power, 75% of roles show moderate-to-high transferability to renewable energy and green hydrogen. Most gaps can be closed through short, targeted skilling rather than full retraining.

The main need is building a strong skilling ecosystem, and bridging education and skilling pathways. Odisha's labour force participation rate of 67.9% and unemployment rate of 3.3% in 2025 are both better than the national average. But only 3.3% of the working-age population has technical education, and formal vocational training reaches just 3% of adults. Most skills are still picked up informally, on the job or hereditarily. This can affect the access to well-paid, technology-driven jobs, for the local people.

Shri Sukanth Pradhan, Additional Secretary, World Skill Centre said, "The Department will extend all necessary support to advance Odisha's green-skilling agenda, recognising that green employment opportunities extend beyond renewable energy and industry to include a wider range of environmental and sustainability-oriented occupations".

The good news: Odisha does not need new infrastructure. It already has a large network of ITIs, polytechnics, PMKVY centres, Jan Shikshan Sansthan and the World Skill Center. The

priority now is to retrofit this network with green curricula, equipment and industry partnerships.

“Odisha has an enormous opportunity to build a green economy that creates jobs at scale,” said Dr. Srestha Banerjee, Director, Just Transition and Climate Change, iFOREST. “Making the most of it will take the state acting now, with a clear policy and a dedicated institution to lead the way. A ready workforce is what makes these investments pay off; without one, even the best-planned projects can fall short.”

Way Forward

iFOREST report recommends certain priority actions by the State Government in the immediate future.

1. Set up the Odisha Green Jobs and Skilling Mission as a dedicated programme under the Skill Development and Technical Education Department, with a State Apex Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary.
2. Set up District Skill Councils in industry-heavy districts to turn state priorities into local action with employers.
3. Update ITI and polytechnic courses to include green skills, starting with the trades most in demand, aiming to cover half of them by 2030.
4. Strengthen the labour market information system, to track green job demand by sector and district.
5. Amend DMFT Rules so District Mineral Foundation funds can support green skilling in mining districts.
6. Upgrade ITIs under the PM-SETU programme with green equipment and training; set Regional Green Skills Centres in the next 10 years.

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