

A JUST TRANSITION FOR WORKERS



A TRADE UNION GUIDE

“Preparing for the global transformation driven by climate change and Industry 4.0.”



WHAT IS A JUST TRANSITION?

The objective of a Just Transition is to provide a hopeful and optimistic future for all workers, especially for those in industries that may be impacted by efforts to limit greenhouse gases or by the introduction of new technologies.



A Just Transition must offer a future that workers, their families, and the communities and cultures they are part of can believe in, look forward to, support and commit to bringing about. We must fight for a good future.

The private sector has a role in building a Just Transition bridge to a sustainable future. In particular with large multinational corporations the principles of sustainable industrial policies and a Just Transition should be baked into collective agreements. Acting responsibly is good business in the long term.

However, sustainable industrial policies and Just Transition are mainly about public policy in the public interest. IndustriALL rejects a purely private sector vision of a Just Transition; the casino economy has largely created today's problems and has no answers to these questions. We will not shop our way to sustainability.

At all times, any public policy support must guarantee the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as defined by the 1998 ILO declaration. Union members' rights must be protected and unions must demand institutional stability – protection for the union as an institution – through the transition period.

Our demands are entirely reasonable, technically possible, and affordable.

The transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economy must be economically and socially just and fair for workers and their communities. Advanced technologies, or sustainable energy, or greener industries, must benefit everyone and not just a handful of billionaires. In an age where Oxfam reports that 26 individuals control as much wealth as half the population of Earth, there should be no question that a better sharing of the costs and benefits of change is needed.

The fight for a Just Transition supports, and is supported by, long-time union demands for strong social protection programmes (health care, income security, social services, education).

When demanding sustainable industrial policies and Just Transition programmes, political leaders must be reminded that in some ways, they are already committed to them in principle.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a serious threat to the well-being of everyone and its main cause is human activity. The evidence is irrefutable. Scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have issued a stern warning: the world has approximately a 12-year window in which to act if we are to keep global average warming to less than 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels and avoid environmental catastrophe.

This ambitious target is affordable and technologically feasible. What is lacking is the political will to take action and a Just Transition plan to maintain social coherence through the necessary transformations.



THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND JUST TRANSITION

In 2015, the twenty-first Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention (UNFCCC) on Climate Change, held in Paris, France, agreed to a set of principles to address the climate change crisis. Thanks to successful interventions by trade unionists, the Paris Agreement demands a Just Transition.

The basis of the Paris Agreement is that nations must develop their own commitments to greenhouse gas reductions, but then monitor



The transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economy must be economically and socially just and fair for workers and their communities.



- It is a key requirement of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted at COP21 in 2015
- It is the subject of the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration adopted at COP24 in 2018
- It is defined in ILO's Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All
- Investment in Just Transition programmes is explained by the organization Principles for Responsible Investment in their document Climate change and the Just Transition: a guide for investor action
- It is reflected in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

Trade unions, too, must face up to the changes that are upon us. Industry 4.0 is being discussed – what of trade union 4.0? What do unions need to do to remain credible and relevant to present and future members? Unions will retain neither credibility nor relevance by refusing to cooperate with each other, or attempting to defend the indefensible.

Sustainability – especially the social dimension of it – is fundamentally a union struggle. No-one else has the mandate or the capacity to speak on behalf of workers, workers' families, and the communities that depend on them. The future will be defined by the decisions taken now.

their progress and produce verifiable reports. The UNFCCC will periodically take stock of the aggregate progress and, based on scientific advice, advise member states to raise the ambition level of their commitments.

The important phrase, which appears in the preamble of the Paris Agreement, is that the Nationally Determined Contributions must “take into account the imperative of the just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs”.

This was greatly reinforced at 2018's COP24, in Katowice, Poland. COP24 was intended to finalize the rulebook to allow the Paris Agreement to be implemented. A declaration on Just Transition was adopted – a major achievement for the labour movement.



COP24 · KATOWICE 2018

The declaration signals a clear commitment on the part of United Nations member states to deliver a Just Transition. It will be up to the global labour movement and other civil society organizations to hold governments to their word. A far-reaching transformation of the economy is coming, and as Tony Maher, General President of the Mining and Energy Division of Australia's Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) stated quite simply: “We can do this with justice, or without justice”. The choice is ours.



INDUSTRY 4.0

IndustriALL Global Union uses the term Industry 4.0 to describe a basket of disruptive technologies and work structures that are rapidly transforming the world of work. These include advanced digitalization, artificial intelligence, semi-autonomous interconnected machines, advanced robotics, 3-D printing, nanotechnology, advanced biotechnology, and platform work, among others. The technologies themselves are not the problem; it is the logic driving their introduction, which at this time is to reduce labour costs and labour standards.

If we can guide the implementation of these new technologies, we can create quality work with reduced working time and improved occupational health and safety. Among IndustriALL's strategies for Industry 4.0 chief are:

- the demand for full participation of workers as global, regional, national and company level discussions on Industry 4.0 take place
- the protection of human and workers' rights, particularly rights to information, training and education, and privacy
- a Just Transition for workers, their families, and the communities that depend on them, through the transformation

Regardless of whether we take action on climate change or other environmental crises, or whether we embrace or ignore technological changes, these changes will come. A transition will take place and the only choice we have is if it will be a violent scramble for jobs or resources such as water, energy, and fertile land, desperate last-minute survival measures that completely dismiss human rights and social protection, or an orderly and Just Transition that respects and protects present-day workers while creating new decent work in sustainable industries.

A Just Transition provides a pathway to a sustainable future, in all aspects of its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. For the transition to be truly just, it must point to an optimistic future – a future that workers, their families, and the communities that depend on them can support and commit to bringing about.

// For a Just Transition to a future in which the environment is protected and the economy is thriving, workers need sustainable industrial policies, with strong social protections, and support for workers – guided by social dialogue.

WHAT DO TRADE UNIONS DEMAND?

Social dialogue

We demand a seat at the table. We demand the creation of multi-stakeholder Just Transition task forces / commissions / round tables on structural change and employment that are properly constituted and properly funded. We demand that these discussions take place at company, local, national, regional, and global levels. Social dialogue should establish basic structures and ground rules:

- a statement of purpose, that the objective is to implement sustainable industrial policies and Just Transition programmes to manage the transformation of industries to the benefit of all
- establishment of a permanent institution (national observatory, permanent round table, or similar)
- a stated goal of policy coherence between local, regional, and national plans, for example cities competing with each other to attract “green” industries only encourages a race-to-the-bottom mentality
- recognition of fundamental labour rights as core principles within any discussions - only strong unions can defend workers’ interests through the industrial transformation that is coming

Sustainable industrial policies and plans

We demand that sustainable industrial policies and plans be developed through the social dialogue process in which we are full partners. Governments and employers must implement sustainable industrial policies - sustainable in all dimensions: social, environmental, and economic - at company, local, national, regional and global levels. The policies and plans must promote greener industries, and also guarantee a Just Transition for workers affected by industrial transformations.

Sustainable industrial policies are primarily about public policy in the public interest, although there is a role for corporations to play, by establishing such policies at the enterprise level. Governments must fulfill their responsibilities as representatives of their constituents.

Industrial policies versus sustainable industrial policies

Any industrial policy uses incentives and disincentives, like financing, infrastructure, taxes, to favour certain industries and discourage others. Up until now, the sustainability of the results of these policies has rarely been considered. Sustainable industrial policies simply recognize that a more sustainable industrial base, customized for every nation, region, sector, should be a goal of any industrial policy.

- Sustainable industrial policies treat the environment, the economy, and society in an integrated manner. The aim must be a genuinely sustainable environment with reduced greenhouse gases, where former mining and industrial sites are restored and environmentally regenerated, where species and spaces are protected, energy and resources are used frugally, responsibly, and circularly, since there are no jobs on a dead planet. Sustainable industrial policies must be economically sustainable, increasing efficiency and productivity while creating new opportunities, while linking this to guarantees of job creation. The policies must aim for a genuinely sustainable society where technological change benefit all, wealth and income disparity are reduced, human and labour rights guaranteed, the weak and marginalized in society are protected, and there are opportunities for individuals, families, communities and cultures to thrive and prosper.
- They must be based on a commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

ARE WE READY?

International Labour Organization and Just Transition

In 2013, the ILO adopted a resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs, and proposing a policy framework for a Just Transition.

In 2015, the ILO convened a Tripartite Meeting of Experts to review, amend and adopt draft guidelines based on a thorough review by the Office of experiences from country policies and sectoral strategies towards environmental sustainability, the greening of enterprises, social inclusion and the promotion of green jobs.



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

This was done with the aim of influencing the Paris climate talks, or COP21.

The resulting ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition (full title: “Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all”; ILO document identification: [wcms_432859.pdf](#)) identifies nine key points to manage the impacts of potential environmental regulations and promote the evolution of sustainable and greener enterprises:

- Sustainable industrial policies must ensure that favoured industries create safe and healthy workplaces with workers' rights to know about the hazards of work, to refuse/shut down unsafe work, and to fully participate in health and safety policies, programmes and procedures.
- Corporations, especially multi-national corporations, must establish complimentary sustainable enterprise-level policies through social dialogue.
- Sustainable industrial policies at the national level guaranteeing a Just Transition will need to be made specific at regional and local levels.
- Each community should have a specific action plan, including plans for investing in and developing low-carbon industries, renewable energy production and storage, and improved energy efficiency.
- Necessary infrastructure, like roads, railways, water, energy distribution (electricity, gas), telecommunications and internet access, sewage treatment, waste management and recycling facilities, lighting, forest and land planning and management, regulation of emissions and noise from industrial plants, educational facilities and an educated workforce, will need to be identified, upgraded or developed.
- Regional plans should acknowledge the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the local economy.

Job creation and job access

Employment is the principal and preferred way of distributing wealth in society, ensuring that individuals, families, and communities have the means to thrive and prosper. Therefore, creating decent work must be a goal of sustainable industrial policies. Decent work is defined by the International Labour Organization's Decent Work Agenda and "involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men." When seeking new industries and examining the potential for decent work to be created, the entire supply and value chain must be considered. Labour rights and standards must be respected in all jobs.

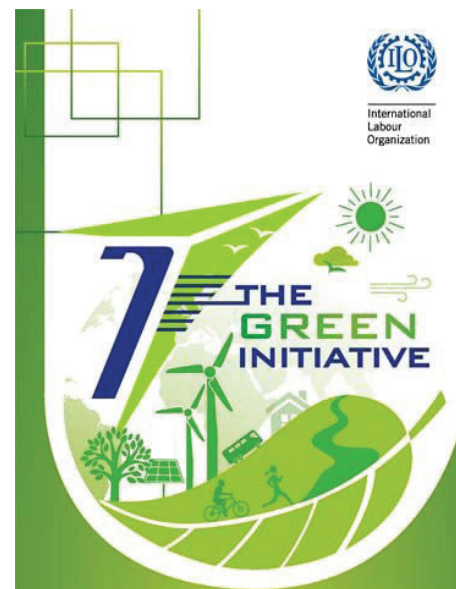
As society moves towards a sustainable future, large numbers of jobs will be created but there is no doubt that some jobs will be destroyed. Workers in those affected jobs must be kept whole.

- If incentives are offered to private industry they must prefer the conversion of existing sites to greener production or products over greenfield sites and they must be tied to job guarantees.
- The goal should be to create at least one new, decent job for each job lost.
- If a job disappears, the affected worker will be placed in a new, decent job, with wage guarantees and subsidies if necessary to keep them whole.
- New energy technologies, new production techniques, new products, reclamation, restoration and rehabilitation of mining areas and industrial sites, and building retrofitting for energy efficiency, can potentially create many jobs. These jobs should preferentially be made available to any workers displaced from unsustainable industries.

Energy

Energy is in many ways the key to the entire puzzle of sustainability. The availability of sufficient energy, reliably supplied at an affordable and predictable cost, makes the solution of all other problems possible. The lack of such an energy supply makes the sustainability unachievable.

- The energy plan – national or regional – should set out a sustainable future energy mix that ensures a secure supply of energy at a stable, affordable cost.



For a just transition towards a sustainable future

- I. Policy coherence and institutions (country specific)
- II. Social dialogue (multi-stakeholder)
- III. Macroeconomic and growth policies
- IV. Industrial and sectoral policies (greener jobs; decent work)
- V. Enterprise policies
- VI. Skills policies (also education)
- VII. Occupational safety and health
- VIII. Social protection policies (health care, income security, social services)
- IX. Labour market policies

- There must be sufficient investment in renewable energy and in sustainable and low carbon technologies, including carbon capture, to create decent jobs to absorb any workers displaced or made redundant in sun-setting industries.
- Renewable energy projects must offer workers a living wage or better, including health and pension, as well as other good labour conditions.
- Sustainable industrial policies should be cautious about claims of “breakthrough technologies”. There will be true breakthroughs since investment in research and development in sustainable technologies, particularly energy, are increasing. But there may also be false claims of breakthroughs for short-term financial gain. Any decision to explore breakthrough technologies must start with a risk and impact assessment – what will the technology mean to workers, their families, and the communities they live in?

Labour market adjustment programmes

A Just Transition would be unlike any previous transition process. Traditional top-down labour market adjustment programmes will be simply inadequate and must be replaced with worker-focused, customized solutions. Labour market adjustment programmes should take account of individual, family, and community needs and wants. Creative and worker-focused labour market policies should include an absolute right to financially and physically accessible education and training based on the principles of life-long learning and workers’ right to choose what best meets their needs and wants. This would include everything from skills training offered by unions, employers and educational institutions, apprenticeship programmes, and secondary and higher education. If a clerk wants to apprentice as a millwright, or a miner wishes to study music, this should be supported because in the end, society will benefit.

A Just Transition will cost money to implement but the payback to society will be enormous. This was proven, for example, by the unquestioned benefits that resulted from programmes to re-integrate demobilized USA military personnel following World War II. The “GI Bill of Rights” was effectively a Just Transition programme for soldiers, and the education and other programmes made available to them helped power one of the most prosperous eras in USA history.

There are options for funding it, for example by broadening the mandate of unemployment insurance schemes. It is not a matter of costs, it is a matter of priorities and fairness.

- Customization is key. There must be a plan and a pathway for each and every affected worker.
- There must be measures to reduce the impact of job and livelihood losses and industry phase-out on workers. Such measures could include a commitment to not dismiss workers for operational reasons during a defined transition period, and a right of first refusal to new jobs created in the “greener” economy, with moving and other assistance if necessary.
- Trade union rights must be protected throughout the transformations.
- During a defined transition period, for example five years, the incomes of affected workers will be guaranteed - kept whole.
- Early retirement or bridging to pensions for older workers should be available.
- Pathways to employment in new jobs with new skills, with the same employer or a different one, should be facilitated.
- There should be grants to communities to help them develop new sustainable industries.
- There is a role for collective bargaining at the local, national, and global framework agreement level. Agreements must be sought that guarantee transition rights, to retain, re-skill and redeploy affected workers with the same employer subsidiaries and contractors.



All of these nine key points, but explicitly point IV, incorporate the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda, for work that is productive and that delivers a fair income. The agenda includes security in the workplace and social protection for families, prospects for personal development and social integration, rights at work, including freedom to organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

The ILO’s entry into the Just Transition debate is of great significance. It gives the concept an internationally accepted definition for the first time, as well as an institutional life within a specialized agency of the United Nations.

References to Just Transition in other texts, such as the Paris Agreement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda will now tend to automatically evoke the ILO definition, even if it is not specifically referenced. However, like all ILO instruments, the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition must be regarded as a floor, not a ceiling, when defining a Just Transition.



Just Transition and IndustriALL's coal mining affiliates

IndustriALL's global network of coal mining unions met in Delhi, India, in October 2018, to escalate efforts to achieve a Just Transition and defend coal miners' interests in the face of challenges from climate change, Industry 4.0 and dangerous working conditions. IndustriALL coal mining affiliates from Australia, Botswana, Bulgaria, Georgia, India, Indonesia,

Mongolia, Spain, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine and Vietnam emphasized that a Just Transition, with guarantees of strong social protection programmes and sustainable industrial policies, is the answer to ensuring coal workers' jobs in the face of measures to meet carbon emissions targets.

Participants said governments and

employers must invest and deploy adequate resources in research and development of clean coal technologies, considering the capabilities and vulnerabilities of countries with different levels of economic development. Unions also underlined the need to assess the impacts of the technological transformations that are underway.

Just Transition and IndustriALL's energy affiliates



More than 200 representatives from 70 trade unions and 50 countries expressed their united determination to demand a Just Transition to protect the rights and living standards of workers as the energy industry undergoes massive changes. Meeting at IndustriALL's World Conference for the Energy Sector in July 2018, and facing changes, not only as the result of climate change emissions targets, but also due to technological changes, privatization, precarization, and rising energy demand, delegates concluded that trade unions are energy workers' best protection.



We must build union power, so we can have a seat at the table with governments and companies to create sustainable industry policies at the national level that guarantee Just Transition."

Valter Sanches, IndustriALL General Secretary



Just Transition and the ITUC

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) unites national trade union central organizations under a single umbrella, and through them represents some 107 million workers in 163 countries. In 2018, at its fourth World Congress, the ITUC endorsed several references to the need for a Just Transition:

- Congress deplors the massive and growing global inequality, and demands a Just Transition to a digitalized and low carbon economy
- The ITUC demands that all transformations in the world of work take place in the framework

of Just Transitions

- Governments must raise their ambition and ensure investment in jobs and Just Transition
- The fight against climate change requires investments in sustainable and low carbon technologies



Just Transition gaining traction in Canada

Canada's clean growth and climate action plan has a goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050, beginning with a phase out of emissions from coal-fired electricity generation by 2030.

Trade unions advocated for, and lead, the Just Transition Task Force

for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities. Members are union and local government representatives, civil society and experts. Among other things, the Task Force will make recommendations to government on the fate of 3,500 workers in the coal-fired electricity generation sector.

The Canadian Just Transition process envisions expanding employment insurance, bridging to pensions for older workers, vouchers for training and education and an agreement from employers to retain, re-skill and redeploy workers, and grants to communities to help them develop new jobs.



Implementing Just Transition in Germany

Germany's ambitious climate targets require 65 per cent of its energy to be supplied by renewable energy by 2030, with a reduction in emissions of more than 60 per cent in its energy sector by 2030, compared to levels in the 1990s. Currently, coal-fired electricity generation produces about 40 per cent of Germany's electricity but accounts for over 80 per cent of the CO2 emissions from Germany's energy sector. Further complicating Germany's plan is that it also intends to phase out nuclear power, which continues to supply about 10 per cent of Germany's generation capacity, by 2022.

German trade unions advocated for a Commission on "Growth, structural change and employment" to design a plan to advise this process. As a result, €40 billion will be allocated over 20 years for regional development, including infrastructure. The goal is to ensure that for each direct job loss, a new and decent job is created; and that as coal fired power leaves the grid it is replaced with renewable energy (along with the necessary energy storage technologies and energy efficiency improvements). There will

be a plan and a pathway for every single directly employed worker in coal-fired power plants and lignite mines, including employment in new jobs with new skills, income bridging, and bridging to pensions for older workers.

A feature of the German plan is a "no redundancies" commitment, meaning no dismissals of workers in power plants and opencast mines for operational reasons. If a job disappears, the affected worker will be placed in a new, decent job, and will be compensated in a lump sum payment for any difference in salary between the old and the new job. The package also addresses reclamation of mining areas and plants. Parts of the deal remain to be negotiated. The German state will guarantee the financial obligations of companies towards their workers, so that if companies go bankrupt the state will pay. German unions have a long history of delivering a Just Transition to their members.

The IG BCE and its predecessor organizations have played an essential role in ensuring a Just Transition over the last 25 years, as the workforce in the mining industry has been greatly

reduced. The collective bargaining process has seen innovative agreements with new workforce adjustment models.

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The Just Transition model used in the German mining industry is a great example of how such a process can be handled by unions. We commend the work done by the social partners, particularly IG BCE, during this transformation."

**Kemal Özkan IndustriALL
assistant general secretary**



Just Transition demanded by unions in South Africa

On 17 November 2018, workers from the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) took to the streets of Pretoria. Angered by government plans to close coal-fired power plants, privatize energy, and award renewable energy contracts to independent power producers without a Just Transition plan, they marched to

government offices where they read out their grievances.

Irvin Jim, general secretary of NUMSA, said:

“We demand a Just Transition, which will ensure that workers at coal-fired power plants who may lose their jobs as a result of the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, will be trained and absorbed into the renewable energy sector.”

David Sipunzi, the general secretary of the NUM, added:

“We call on the government to refrain from biting the hand that feeds the state. Scrap the power purchase agreement that favours private capital at the expense of Eskom.”



Just Transition agreement reached in Spain

Spain's draft climate law seeks to achieve a 100 per cent renewable energy supply by 2050, with 70 per cent renewables achieved by 2030. Coal and nuclear power stations are to be phased out by 2030.

Spain has developed a three-part plan in agreement with the mining and energy unions, consisting of

- a Just Transition for coal miners and communities
- a regional redevelopment

programme

- a national observatory

Many of the workers are over 48 years of age or with over 26 years of service and will be offered early retirement. Younger workers will receive a redundancy payment of €10,000, as well as 35 days' pay for every year of service. Additional funds will be available to restore and environmentally regenerate former mining sites; and jobs created in that remediation effort will preferentially be given to former miners. Money will be set

aside to upgrade infrastructure in the mining communities, including waste management, recycling facilities and water treatment plants, utilities (gas, lighting), forest recovery, atmospheric cleansing and reducing noise pollution.

Each mining community will have a specific action plan, including plans for developing renewable energy and improving energy efficiency, and investing in and developing new industries.

Just Transition at the regional level – New York State, USA

New York State has embarked on a plan to create nine gigawatts in offshore wind generation capacity, plus retrofit every public building in the state. This plan was advocated for and supported by trade unions via Climate Jobs NY.

The offshore wind projects will offer prevailing wage rates, including health and pension, as well as other good labour conditions.

State government funds will be available for skills training with unions. There are ongoing discussions between some of the potential wind power developers and labour unions on broad agreements on labour standards through the offshore wind value chain.

Just Transition at the regional level – California, USA

The California goal of 100 per cent renewable and clean energy is supported by organized labour. Public transport in Los Angeles is supported by a coalition of organized labour and community groups.

The California legislature has tied subsidies for electric vehicles to good labour practices, again with pressure from organized labour. Decent labour standards will be part of discussions of funding for the responses to California's wildfires.

Just Transition at the local level – Oslo, Norway and Vancouver, Canada

Several cities have taken steps to incorporate the Just Transition idea into municipal decision-making. The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group “connects 90 of the world's greatest cities, representing more than 650 million people and one quarter of the global economy”.

Oslo Norway launched the Oslo Declaration on Just Transition with C40, the ITUC, and the International Transport Workers' Federation. Meanwhile Vancouver established a Just Transition Roundtable with the British Columbia Federation of labour, and the ITUC in 2018.

Just Transition and business

The B-Team, an influential voice of business leaders who believe that businesses have a responsibility to lead the way towards a sustainable future, has developed guidelines for a Just Transition at the enterprise level. The ITUC and its Just Transition Center assisted in its development. The guidance outlines the “practical considerations, steps and processes companies should follow to ensure a Just Transition for the company's workers and the communities where the company operates”. The B-team asserts that a Just Transition at the enterprise level is a plan based on social dialogue with workers and their unions to reduce emissions and increase efficiency while creating opportunities and optimism for workers and the communities that depend on them. The B-Team believes that acting responsibly is also good business.



Just Transition and the Australian Council of Trade Unions

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has published its proposal for a Just Transition for coal-fired electricity sector workers, and the communities that rely on them. Australia has not managed past transitions in a socially responsible manner. The aim is to avoid repeating that history. By committing to the Paris Agreement on climate change, Australia is committed to ensure a Just Transition as it decides on its Nationally Determined Contributions.

The ACTU framework, yet to be adopted by the Australian government, identifies three main elements:

- A transition plan – ensuring that Australia's transition is managed in a fair and just manner, where affected workers and communities are supported to find secure and decent jobs in a clean energy economy
- A jobs plan – focusing on creating new jobs in a clean energy economy
- An energy plan – setting out a sustainable future energy mix that ensures the affordable and secure supply of electricity



Just Transition – European unions’ mining regions initiative

In a research project, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) aimed to explore with trade unions what is concretely needed to keep manufacturing activities and jobs, while drastically reducing emissions.

Seven regional case studies were examined: Yorkshire and the Humber in the UK, North Rhine Westphalia in Germany, Asturias in Spain, Antwerp area in Belgium, Norbotten in Sweden, Stara Zagora in Bulgaria, and Silesia in Poland. These regions have similarities in terms of industrial heritage and current energy production and manufacturing industries. They each have their own characteristics due to national policy and history or geography, but decarbonisation at the scale prescribed by the European policy framework is a huge challenge which will have major effects on their industries and workforces.

The study identified several keys to success:

- Regional strategies for a just transition to low-carbon industry
- Acceleration of the deployment of breakthrough technologies
- Involvement of trade unions and employers
- Investment in skills
- Local support for decarbonisation

Just Transition – a German trade union response to industrial transformations

Recognizing that major transformations of industrial production are on their way, four of Germany’s largest unions – ECG (railway and transport workers); IG Metall (metal, automotive, and related industrial workers), IG BCE (miners, chemical and energy workers), and IG BAU (building construction and wood workers) have agreed to cooperate to effectively defend the rights of workers in the face of technological and social changes.

Trade unions wishing to shape economic and social progress must work together more closely in the future. The foundation of their cooperation are their jointly developed positions for a “high-performance and sustainable industry in a solidarity society”. It covers topics such as Industry 4.0, renewable energy, investment, and growth. German unions have also coordinated their demands for a Just Transition.



JUST TRANSITION AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

Affiliates of IndustriALL and its predecessors originated and named the concept of a Just Transition, which has since spread through the global labour movement. At the 2016 Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, IndustriALL re-affirmed its commitment to achieving a Just Transition.

- The transition to a cleaner, sustainable economy must be economically and socially just and fair for workers and their communities
- Industrial manufacturing is experiencing and will experience the revolution of technology and further digitization of production even more in the future. ...While these fundamental changes can have big benefits for workers, communities and societies and better living standards, IndustriALL will not accept a transformation without the necessary Just Transition programs for the affected workers
- IndustriALL resolves to develop a sustainable industrial policy ... (and) campaign against transformation without the much-needed social justice and for a Just Transition for the affected workers