



GUIDE FOR CAREER COUNSELLING AND RECRUITING

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1 Why this guide?

In recent years, sustainability has become a central issue in many sectors, leading to the emergence of new professional roles linked to so-called "green jobs." These roles promote sustainable development, reduce the environmental impact of economic activities, and encourage the adoption of more ecosystem-friendly practices. These jobs not only contribute to environmental protection but also offer new economic and professional opportunities.

This guide stems from the awareness that the green economy will represent an increasingly significant part of the future job market. However, today, this reality is still perceived as inaccessible, especially for certain groups of people, including women. Prejudices and biases, often unconscious, committed by counsellors and recruiters themselves, can limit access to green jobs. A typical example is the perception that green jobs are predominantly technical and, therefore, less suitable for women, who traditionally study STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects less. As reported in the "*Gender Equality in the Workforce: Empowering Women in Green and Digital Jobs in the EU*" report published by the Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), and the European Commission's "*She Figures*" report (European Commission, 2021), women continue to be underrepresented in STEM fields, with significant implications for their presence in green jobs, which often require technical skills.

This gap is concerning, as it reduces the potential contribution of women to a key sector for the future of work and sustainability. This guide is part of a broader project aimed at reducing these prejudices and biases, bringing an increasing number of people – particularly women – closer to the green job market. It is essential to promote an inclusive and open vision of green jobs, showing that this is an accessible sector rich in opportunities for everyone, especially for women.

Who is it for?

This guide is primarily aimed at:

- **Career counsellors and advisors** helping individuals identify job opportunities in the green sector, providing them with tools to better understand the sustainable professions landscape and overcome any biases in their counseling.
- **Recruiters** who want to improve their selection processes by eliminating gender or technical skills biases and identifying suitable candidates for green roles within companies.

What is the purpose of the guide?

The goal of this guide is twofold: on the one hand, to support career counsellors in offering a more inclusive and aware service to those seeking to enter the world of green jobs by breaking down biases related to gender and the nature of green jobs; on the other, to help recruiters select candidates with the right skills, values, and mindset to contribute to companies' ecological transition without letting biases negatively influence their decisions.

In this way, the guide aims to facilitate the matching of supply and demand in the sustainability sector broadly, expanding opportunities for everyone, particularly women, and contributing to building a fairer and more sustainable labour market.

2. Introduction

2.1 What are “Green Jobs”?

Green jobs are occupations that contribute directly or indirectly to environmental protection and the transition to a sustainable economy. These jobs not only aim to reduce environmental impact but also promote the efficient use of natural resources and the reduction of carbon emissions. Green jobs stand out for their focus on ecological practices, which can involve technological innovation, energy saving, sustainable resource use, and ecosystem quality improvement.

Key characteristics of Green Jobs

A green job has the following main characteristics:

- **Environmental sustainability:** The job must contribute to reducing environmental impact through green practices and the adoption of green technologies.
- **Energy and resource efficiency:** Green jobs promote efficient use of natural resources and energy, facilitating the transition to renewable sources.
- **Positive community impact:** Besides sustainability, these jobs also improve collective well-being and quality of life, often addressing social and economic infrastructures.
- **Innovation and technological development:** Many green jobs are linked to innovation in sectors such as renewable energy, waste management, and sustainable mobility.

Different areas of Green Jobs

Green jobs are not limited to specific sectors: they can be found across many occupational areas, from traditional industries to emerging sectors in the green economy. Here are some of the main areas where these jobs can be identified:

1. **Renewable energy:** Jobs related to the production and management of clean energy, such as solar, wind, hydro, and geothermal power.
2. **Energy efficiency:** Occupations aimed at reducing energy consumption, such as installing sustainable heating and cooling systems, energy efficiency consulting for buildings and industries.
3. **Waste management and recycling:** Jobs in this sector focus on strategies to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste, as well as sustainable resource management.
4. **Sustainable construction:** Involves constructing or renovating buildings according to sustainability principles, using eco-friendly materials and technologies that improve energy efficiency.
5. **Sustainable agriculture:** Jobs in this area include agricultural techniques that preserve soil, reduce pesticide use, and promote biodiversity.
6. **Sustainable mobility:** Includes jobs related to improving public transport, designing electric vehicles, and infrastructure for low-environmental-impact mobility.
7. **Ecosystem conservation:** This sector includes jobs in forestry, biodiversity protection, water resource management, and natural ecosystem regeneration.

Occupational sectors for Green Jobs

Green job sectors span various directions. Some key examples include:

- **Energy:** Renewable energy production, distribution, and consulting (solar, wind, hydroelectric).
- **Construction:** Sustainable architecture, design, and engineering for eco-efficient buildings.

- **Agriculture:** Organic and biodynamic farming, sustainable forestry.
- **Manufacturing:** Innovations in sustainable materials, low-energy manufacturing processes.
- **Transport:** Planning and development of sustainable mobility solutions.
- **Environmental services:** Water and waste management, environmental consulting.
- **Management:** Overseeing and strategising the implementation of sustainable practices across industries, including project management for green initiatives and corporate sustainability leadership.

Any job can become a Green Job

A surprising aspect of the green job landscape is that any profession can evolve with a greener perspective. From marketing to finance, from engineering to teaching, every sector can integrate sustainable practices and adapt processes that reduce environmental impact. For example, a chief strategy officer can specialize in sustainability strategies to reduce a company's carbon footprint, while a lawyer can focus on cases related to environmental regulations or sustainability rights.

Most In-Demand Green Jobs in Europe

In Europe, the transition to a more sustainable economy has led to increased demand for specialized professionals. Among the most in-demand green jobs are:

- **Technicians and experts in renewable energy**, particularly in the installation and maintenance of solar and wind power plants.
- **Environmental engineers** engaged in sustainability projects, alternative energy, and green infrastructures.
- **Sustainability consultants**, increasingly needed to help companies implement green strategies.
- **Energy efficiency specialists**, crucial for optimising energy consumption in public and private buildings.

The most in-demand green jobs in Europe reflect the growing need for specialized skills to support the ecological transition, spanning **sectors** such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, and sustainable mobility. According to CEDEFOP (2021), one of the fastest-growing segments is **renewable energy**, requiring technical roles for the installation and maintenance of wind, solar, and hydroelectric systems. Similarly, roles related to **energy efficiency**, such as energy managers and energy auditors, are increasingly needed to meet sustainability regulations in construction and industry.

The OECD (2020) also highlights that the green transition is creating jobs even in traditional sectors, thanks to the integration of sustainable practices that require updated skills. For instance, the **waste management** sector is evolving towards a **circular economy** approach, with strong demand for recycling and materials recovery specialists. Finally, Eurostat (2023) emphasizes the need for professionals in **sustainable mobility**, from electric transportation to eco-friendly urban planning, which are key sectors for Europe's environmental goals.

These studies indicate that green professions not only address environmental needs but also play a crucial role in the economy, requiring a mix of technical and managerial skills to meet the challenges of the sustainable transition.

Green jobs represent the future of the labour market, a driving force toward a more resilient, sustainable, and fair economy. Each of us can contribute to this green revolution, either through our current profession or by exploring new opportunities in the vast world of green jobs.

2.2 Recruiting and guiding towards "Green Jobs": what are the challenges?

Matching people with job opportunities is always a challenge, but specific obstacles emerge in the case of "green jobs" due to the innovative and evolving nature of these professions. For recruiters and career counsellors, the process of aligning a person with a green job involves complexities that go beyond simply analyzing technical skills or previous experiences. Let's explore the main difficulties when trying to understand whether a person is suitable for a green job and vice versa.

Challenges for Recruiters

1. **Lack of clarity on the skills required for green jobs:** One of the main obstacles for recruiters is determining whether a candidate possesses the necessary skills for a specific green role. Many companies are integrating sustainability into their strategies, but professional requirements are not always clearly defined. Green jobs may require a mix of technical skills, environmental knowledge, and soft skills, but the boundaries between these skills are not always clear. Recruiters may struggle to identify the right candidates, especially when qualifications do not exactly match the emerging role descriptions in the green sector.
2. **Transferability of skills from other sectors:** Since many candidates may not have direct experience in green jobs, one of the biggest challenges is assessing the transferability of skills acquired in other professional fields. For example, a mechanical engineer with experience in a traditional sector may have the technical skills needed for a renewable energy role, but the recruiter must evaluate their ability to adapt to a sustainable context and understand the environmental specifics of the role. This uncertainty in assessing transferable skills can hinder the selection process.
3. **Biases about who may be suitable for a green job:** Another significant obstacle is the risk of unconscious biases influencing recruiters' perception of candidates. For instance, some may unknowingly think that a candidate from a non-sustainability sector or a female candidate in a highly technical context may not be suitable for a green job. These biases limit access to talent who could excel in green roles but do not fit the traditional "technical" or "environmental" worker stereotype.
4. **Lack of specific assessment tools for green jobs:** Many recruiters use standardized selection tools that are not specifically designed for green jobs. As a result, the distinctive characteristics of green roles, such as the focus on sustainability or the ability to work on projects involving multiple stakeholders, are not always considered. The lack of clear metrics and appropriate assessment tools can complicate the choice of the best candidate.

Challenges for Career Counsellors

1. **Identifying the candidate's green values and interests:** Career counsellors must consider not only a person's technical skills but also their aspirations, interests, and values in relation to sustainability. Many people are drawn to green jobs for reasons beyond the professional aspect, such as the desire to contribute to a better future for the environment. However, it is challenging to match a person with a green job without a deep understanding of their motivations. The counsellor must invest time exploring the candidate's personal values, making the process longer and more complex.
2. **Adapting the professional profile to new green jobs:** Another challenge is understanding how a candidate's skills can be adapted to new green jobs, especially if they come from a background

not related to sustainability. The counsellor must help the person see how their previous experiences may be relevant in a green context. For example, a manager experienced in change management could play a key role in a company implementing a sustainability strategy, even without direct environmental training. This "transformation" process of the professional profile requires sensitivity and competence on the part of the counsellor.

3. **Overcoming the candidate's internal biases toward green jobs:** Many candidates, especially women, may not consider green jobs due to biases that see them as highly technical or not suitable for their profile. Counsellors need to work to overcome these psychological obstacles and help candidates consider a broader range of professional possibilities, challenging stereotypes related to gender and job types. This may require awareness-raising efforts and a mindset change that does not happen immediately.
4. **Overcoming concerns about the uncertainty of green jobs:** Green jobs are an expanding sector, but being relatively new, many candidates perceive some uncertainty regarding long-term prospects. This can discourage some people from considering careers in sustainability, fearing a lack of stability. Counsellors must address these concerns and provide a clear vision of the opportunities and future potential of green jobs based on updated data and sector growth projections.

2.3 An Innovative Model: IKIGAI

The principles of IKIGAI and modern career development theories provide a useful framework for **overcoming these challenges**, enabling recruiters and career advisors to build sustainable and fulfilling career paths.

The Japanese concept of IKIGAI, which represents the intersection of what one loves, what one is good at, what the world needs, and what one can be paid for, offers a theoretical foundation applicable to recruiting for green jobs. Mogi (2018) and García & Miralles (2016) emphasize how IKIGAI can help people identify their passions and skills and connect them with their professional fulfillment.

The IKIGAI model can serve as both a practical and philosophical guide for counsellors and recruiters, as it goes beyond traditional matching based solely on technical skills. Specifically, it is ideal for overcoming some of the challenges we discussed earlier, creating a more complete and meaningful match between a person and a green job.

For **recruiters**, considering the principles of IKIGAI during the selection process enables a more comprehensive assessment of candidates' motivation toward sustainability—often a crucial element for roles related to the environment. This approach, focused on aligning personal values with career goals, also addresses the growing need to foster genuine engagement, especially in sustainable sectors.

In **career guidance**, integrating IKIGAI with traditional career development approaches can help advisors build adaptive and flexible career paths. Brown and Lent (2013) explore how career development and counseling theories can guide individuals toward opportunities that highlight their aptitudes. Assisting people in identifying overlaps between their technical skills and the emerging needs of the green job market allows career advisors to design training paths that bridge potential gaps and enhance employability.



The „What I love“ sphere

This dimension pertains to activities or interests that bring us joy and that we would pursue even without material gain. According to Mogi (2018), exploring what we love allows us to live authentically and find pleasure in our daily actions. García and Miralles (2016) emphasize that cultivating passion helps us stay motivated and engaged, even when facing challenges.

The „What the world needs“ sphere: the value match

This dimension reflects the value we can offer to the world by addressing relevant needs or issues. According to García and Miralles (2016), this component gives a sense of impact and purpose to our lives, helping us feel part of a larger picture. Mogi highlights that working toward a mission allows us to connect deeply with the social and cultural context, enhancing our commitment to collective goals.

The „What I am good at,, sphere: the value of soft skills

The third area refers to the skills and competencies in which we excel, which can be cultivated to realize our potential. Mogi argues that discovering what we are good at and then strengthening it allows us to experience a sense of progress and continuous improvement. García and Miralles add that these competencies are often those for which we can be recognized and appreciated by others.

The sphere "What you can be paid for": work

Finally, this area concerns the economic aspect of our ikigai—the activities that can provide financial stability and security. Mogi (2018) argues that this aspect grounds us in reality, making Ikigai not only an ideal path but also a sustainable one. García and Miralles note that this area is often necessary for

building a lasting and satisfying career, combining passion and skills with tangible professional opportunities.

A match based on wellbeing

The IKIGAI model offers a holistic approach that not only helps overcome technical difficulties but also contributes to creating a more profound and fulfilling match between a person and a job. This model aligns with the socio-cultural shift that sees work not only as a means of livelihood but also as a source of well-being and personal fulfillment.

In a world where people increasingly seek meaning and satisfaction in their work, IKIGAI helps counsellors and recruiters not to limit themselves to evaluating skills and experience but to investigate deeper aspects such as passion, values, and attitudes. By doing so, the model facilitates the creation of healthy working relationships based on motivation and individual well-being. This approach not only improves the match between people and green jobs but also promotes greater long-term sustainability for both companies and workers.

3. Recruiters towards Green Jobs

In the context of the growing demand for professionals linked to green jobs, recruiters face unique challenges. Finding a match between a candidate and a green role is not just about technical skills but requires an approach that takes into account passion, personal values, and soft skills. This is where the IKIGAI model can make a difference, helping recruiters identify candidates who can not only perform a role but are also motivated and aligned with the values and needs of the green job.

3.1 Overcoming challenges for recruitment

Recruiting for green jobs poses unique challenges related to the emerging and constantly evolving nature of these roles. Below, we analyze how the recruitment difficulties in the green sector, mentioned in the introduction, **can be overcome** to improve the alignment between candidates and green jobs.

1. Clearly defining the skills required for green job

Overcoming this challenge means correctly interpreting the skills needed for roles in constant evolution. Green jobs often require a unique combination of technical skills, environmental knowledge, and soft skills, but the boundaries between these capabilities are still fluid. For example, the role of a sustainability manager might require technical knowledge in environmental engineering, but also the ability to negotiate with stakeholders, understand international regulations, and implement corporate social responsibility strategies.

The lack of a precise definition of skills can lead recruiters to exclude potentially suitable candidates simply because their resume does not exactly match the vaguely defined role descriptions. Or, it can lead to hiring candidates with technical skills but without the ability to adapt to the transversal nature of green jobs.

However, by exploring the sphere of "what one loves," the recruiter can shift focus from purely possessing technical skills to assessing a candidate's interest and passion for a particular green field. This approach allows the recruiter to gauge the candidate's enthusiasm for environmental topics and their curiosity about new subjects. When someone is truly passionate about what they do, a lack of technical skills can be offset by intrinsic motivation and a willingness to learn. Passion, in fact, can drive

a person to quickly acquire the necessary skills to excel in a green job, even through self-learning. In this sense, IKIGAI helps bridge the technical gap, facilitating a match based on what the person loves, transforming curiosity and passion into a lever for rapidly learning what will be required in the role.

Concrete Example:

A recruiter is looking for a **Project Manager for a wind farm** in the renewable energy sector. The company hiring may not have a clear understanding of all the technical details required for the role, as the sector is constantly evolving, and it may be difficult for the recruiter to establish a precise list of technical skills required. In this context, the recruiter could decide to focus on broader thematic areas and skills, such as **wind energy** and **complex project management**, the ability to work with various stakeholders, and the aptitude for facing new challenges. Instead of detailing every necessary technical skill, they could investigate only the technical background and then focus on the candidate's interest, asking what aspects of renewable energy attract them and how they have previously sought to deepen their knowledge in these areas. If a candidate demonstrates a **genuine passion** for energy transition and the environment, this can become a decisive lever to quickly learn any missing technical skills.

2. Evaluating the transferability of skills from other sectors

Overcoming this challenge means recognising the transferability of skills acquired in traditional sectors to the green world. Many candidates may not have direct experience in green jobs, but they could possess technical skills that can be adapted. The problem is that often, transferable skills are not immediately evident.

This way, recruiters risk underestimating a candidate's skills simply because they do not come from a "green" sector, thus limiting the pool of candidates to those who already have direct experience in green jobs, ignoring potential talents from other sectors. Alternatively, they may hire someone with relevant technical skills but who is unable to apply them in a sustainable context.

However, one of the keys to success for effective matching in green jobs is finding a match between the person's values and the positive impact that the job can have in the world. The sphere of "what the world needs" allows recruiters to explore this crucial aspect. For a recruiter, this means looking beyond technical skills and investigating the candidate's intrinsic motivation. If a person is deeply motivated by the opportunity to contribute to environmental improvement or global sustainability, this becomes a valuable indicator. A strong values match between the candidate and the company's mission can not only help overcome any biases related to technical skills but can also foster a stronger and more lasting connection with the role. This intrinsic motivation represents an important element that can lead the candidate to commit with dedication, making them a valuable resource for the company. A motivated and passionate candidate may be willing to quickly develop new technical skills or successfully transfer those they have acquired to a new context.

Another element that can help the recruiter overcome the challenge of assessing the transferability of skills from other sectors is soft skills, that is, the area of "what I am good at" when thinking about IKIGAI. For the recruiter, exploring this sphere means going beyond technical evaluation and trying to understand the candidate's personal traits and transferable skills. For example, in a green work context, the ability to collaborate with people from different sectors, such as scientists, engineers, and communicators, to implement sustainable solutions could be essential. If the candidate has strong interpersonal skills, they could be a great fit for these roles, even if they have a less solid technical background.

Concrete Example:

A **mechanical engineer** trying to transition from the traditional automotive sector to the **renewable energy** sector. Suppose this candidate has worked for several years designing internal combustion engines, a field that may seem far from green jobs. In a traditional selection process, the recruiter might consider the lack of direct experience in green technologies as a gap and discard the candidate. However, by applying the IKIGAI approach, the recruiter can also explore the candidate's **personal motivation** and interest in sustainability ("what I love" and "what the world needs"). For example, the candidate may reveal a strong passion for clean energy and have studied innovative solutions to reduce emissions in the automotive sector, out of personal interest. This genuine interest in sustainability, combined with their transferable technical skills, could be exactly what the company needs.

3. Overcoming biases about who is suitable for a green job

Unconscious bias is a common obstacle in the recruitment world, especially when evaluating candidates for green jobs. Some recruiters may unconsciously believe that only people with a strictly technical or traditionally environmental background are suitable for green roles, or they may have preconceived notions about candidates from other sectors or regarding gender, such as a woman in a technical role.

This perpetuates gender or professional stereotypes, excluding talented candidates. It also limits diversity in hiring, depriving the company of diverse skills and perspectives that can enrich the green sector. Or it results in rejecting candidates with strong motivation and transversal skills simply because they do not fit the traditional "technical worker" stereotype.

Overcoming this challenge means overcoming these stereotypes to access a broader and more diverse talent pool and ensuring that anyone with the right skills and motivation is considered, regardless of their background. Using IKIGAI allows the recruiter to explore the candidate's deeper motivations ("what the world needs") and assess how their personal values align with the company's mission, regardless of their professional background. This approach helps overcome biases, evaluating candidates who, although not having traditional green experience, have the passion and energy necessary to learn and contribute significantly.

Concrete Example:

A woman with a background in **organizational psychology** might not seem like the ideal candidate for a role in an **energy consultancy firm**. However, if she is strongly motivated by **sustainability values** ("what the world needs") and has the ability to work in complex teams, she could excel as a sustainability project coordinator, where managing relationships between stakeholders and implementing sustainable changes in organizations are fundamental.

4. Developing specific evaluation tools for green jobs

Many selection tools used today are not designed to assess the specific skills and attitudes required for green jobs. The challenge for recruiters is to effectively evaluate candidates for roles that go beyond traditional parameters, using tools that often do not consider the distinctive features of green jobs.

This risks selecting candidates based on traditional criteria without identifying those who genuinely have a strong motivation for the green sector. Or it risks losing candidates who could excel in green jobs but do not fit the conventional selection methods. In other words, with traditional tools, there is a risk of not considering the impact of soft skills and personal motivation, which are often crucial for green jobs.

However, to overcome this challenge it's necessary to innovate selection processes by developing more targeted metrics and evaluation methodologies that allow for the identification of candidates who are not only competent but also capable of contributing to sustainable change. In this regard, the lack of assessment tools can be addressed by adopting a more holistic and qualitative approach, such as the one offered by IKIGAI. This model allows for evaluating not only technical skills but also the alignment between the candidate's values and the environmental impact of the role ("what the world needs"), the match between the candidate's attitudes and the specific activities of the role ("what I am good at"), and the connection between the candidate's interests and the field in which they will operate ("what I love"). Building new selection tools around IKIGAI enables the exploration of aspects that traditional methods fail to capture.

Concrete Example:

An **IT technician** might apply for a **data analyst** role at a renewable energy company. Although they have no direct experience in the sector or role, their **values** strongly oriented towards sustainability and their **passion** for technological innovation make them an ideal candidate for a company seeking people capable of managing technological development but with a strong drive towards a green mission.

3.2 New Recruitment Strategies

The IKIGAI model, in addition to being an answer to the main challenges a recruiter may face when it comes to green jobs, can be a valuable guide throughout the entire recruitment process.

1. Screening Applications: Evaluating Passion and Interest

In the traditional selection process, the first step is **screening applications**, where the experience and skills listed in the resume are primarily evaluated. However, by applying IKIGAI, the recruiter can begin investigating not only the technical skills but also what truly motivates the candidate.

A candidate may not have all the required technical skills, but if they show a deep passion for environmental issues or a strong curiosity about the green sector, this passion can be the key to quickly acquiring the missing skills. For example, open-ended questions can be included in the pre-selection questionnaire or phone interview to better understand the candidate's interests in the green field and what motivates them to pursue this specific job opportunity.

Example questions to include in screening:

- "What sustainability or environmental issues interest you the most and why?"
- "Tell me about a personal experience where you tried to contribute to an environmental or sustainable cause."
- "Which environmental projects or initiatives inspire you the most?"
- "What fascinates you the most about [sector or specific green aspects of the role]?"

This way, the recruiter does not just evaluate existing skills but opens the door to candidates who may not yet be experts but are curious and enthusiastic about learning. Passion can indeed be a predictor of long-term commitment.

2. Job interview: evaluating the value match

During the **job interview**, the recruiter can use IKIGAI to explore not only the candidate's skills but also their values and desire to contribute to positive change in the world. The "what the world needs" sphere helps find a match between the candidate's values and the impact of the green job.

At this stage, the recruiter can ask questions that explore the candidate's motivation to work in a sector that has a positive impact on the environment. This helps identify candidates who not only have the skills but are also motivated by a strong desire to make a difference, which makes the match more solid and less subject to biases related to who "should" fill a certain role.

Example interview questions:

- "In your opinion, what is the greatest contribution a company should make to the world in terms of sustainability?"
- "What drives you to want to work in a role related to environmental sustainability?"
- "Which major cause do you feel you want to contribute to?"
- "What would make you proud to work here?"

These questions help the recruiter evaluate the candidate on a value level, discovering whether their beliefs and aspirations align with the company's mission. A strong value match can compensate for the lack of technical experience and create candidates who are more motivated and have a greater sense of belonging to the company.

3. Technical Assessment: Transversal Skills and Soft Skills

Another key point that the IKIGAI model helps explore is the assessment of **soft skills** and transversal competencies, represented by the "what I am good at" sphere. Often, green jobs emphasize hard skills, i.e., technical competencies, which at this stage risk compromising a good match. This is because hard skills, with the help of a good technical background, are easily assimilated. In contrast, soft skills, such as precision, organization, the ability to work in teams, adaptability, and creativity, are not easily learned and can represent a gap between the candidate's "style" and the role's demands, which is difficult to bridge.

The recruiter can use IKIGAI to investigate what the candidate's soft skills are and how these could apply in the green context. It is one thing to expect technical skills to be applied correctly to the tasks required, but it's another to expect how these activities should be performed in the company context: with meticulousness, speed, great attention to relationships, etc. To assess the match on this level as well, questions can be asked that explore interpersonal attitudes and the ability to adapt to evolving contexts.

Example questions to assess soft skills:

- "Tell me about a time when you had to collaborate with people from different disciplines to achieve a common goal."
- "Describe a project where you had to deal with sudden changes and how you managed them."
- "How do you typically proceed when you need to perform a task like [specific activities required by the role]?"
- "Tell me about a strength of yours and how you express it daily at work."

Exploring transversal skills through the IKIGAI model allows the recruiter to find candidates who, even if not technically perfectly aligned, have the necessary attitudes to excel.

Conclusion: a new approach to green recruitment

Applying the IKIGAI model to the green job selection process offers recruiters a powerful tool to overcome challenges related to assessing technical skills, soft skills, and personal values. This holistic approach allows recruiters to go beyond the traditional candidate-role matching based solely on resumes and find people who not only can learn and grow but are motivated to contribute to positive change in the world.

IKIGAI not only helps improve the match between person and green job but also creates professional relationships based on well-being and personal fulfillment—an essential perspective in today's socio-cultural context, where more and more people seek meaning and satisfaction in the work they do.

3.3 Focus: the "Green Job" posting

Job postings today tend to be rather homogeneous: lists of requirements, generic descriptions, and clichéd phrases that often become indistinguishable from one another. In a market where the competition to attract top talent is high, especially for green jobs, it becomes crucial to stand out. This is particularly important when talking about jobs related to sustainability and the environment, as attracting candidates with the right technical skills is not enough: it is necessary to find people who share the company's mission and values and who are motivated by an authentic desire to contribute to positive change.

But how do you create a job posting that stands out from the crowd and attracts the right candidates for a green job? The key lies in thoroughly analyzing the role and being able to translate these characteristics into effective and persuasive communication, using an approach that considers not only technical skills but also passions, attitudes, and values—in other words, an approach inspired by the IKIGAI model.

The IKIGAI job description

Before writing the job announcement, the first step is to thoroughly analyze the role for which you are seeking a candidate. This process requires going beyond traditional lists of skills and technical qualifications to identify what makes that role truly unique and meaningful.

The goal is to discover which passions, attitudes, and values best fit the role and the company context, so that you can attract people who not only can do the job but who feel deeply connected to it. This is especially important for green jobs, where the social and environmental value of the job is often a decisive factor for candidates.

How to Map the IKIGAI Components of a Green Role?

- **What I love:** What are the aspects of the role that could excite the ideal candidate? For example, the job may involve continuous exploration of new sustainable solutions, interaction with nature, or the ability to have a tangible positive impact on the environment.

- **What the world needs:** How does the role contribute to positive change? The ideal candidate will be motivated by a broader vision, such as contributing to the fight against climate change or supporting sustainable agricultural practices.
- **What I am good at:** What are the attitudes that will be fundamental for excelling in this role? It could be attention to detail, but also relational skills and project management in complex contexts.

To all of this, we add more **traditional** aspects, such as the activities and responsibilities connected to the role, the workplace, working hours, and employment classification. Finally, we identify the **usual requirements**: what specific skills are necessary, what languages and/or software are required, what degrees and experiences are ideal for the role.

Writing a Green Job posting

Once the key characteristics of the role have been mapped in terms of technical skills, passions, attitudes, and values, it's time to translate them into an announcement that attracts and engages the ideal candidate. To do this, it's essential to adopt the principles of effective communication, using an approach that makes the job announcement appealing and targeted.

1. Identifying the target

Before writing the job announcement, it's important to know who you're addressing. What is the ideal profile for the role? It's not just about skills, but also about passions, interests, and values. For example, if the role involves managing renewable energy projects, the target could be someone with engineering skills, but also with a strong passion for sustainability and energy transition.

2. Adapting the tone of voice

The tone of voice of your job announcement should reflect the company's identity and, at the same time, resonate with the target audience. If the company has an innovative and youthful imprint, a fresh and dynamic tone may be ideal. If the context is more institutional, a more professional tone may be suitable, while still aiming to inspire motivation.

3. Using a hook

The opening of the announcement is crucial: it must immediately capture the candidate's attention. A good hook can be a phrase that touches on ambition and the impact of the job, for example: "Do you want to contribute to reducing the world's carbon footprint?"

4. Engaging emotionally and connecting

Here, IKIGAI comes into play: it taps into the candidate's passions, attitudes, and values. If an announcement can make the candidate feel emotionally connected to the job, the chances of attracting motivated and genuinely interested individuals increase. Avoid classic lists of skills and focus on conveying why the job is meaningful. Focus instead on the person. For example, instead of saying "we are looking for a project manager for solar projects," you could say: "We are looking for a passionate individual with new ideas who wants to actively contribute to the transition towards a greener world, managing innovative projects in the solar energy sector."

5. Closing with an engaging Call to Action (CTA)

Finally, the announcement must include a clear and motivating call to action that invites the candidate to take the next step. An effective CTA is clear, direct, and engaging. For example, you can close with: "Do you want to put your passion for the environment and your technical skills at the service of a more sustainable future? Apply now and join our green team!"

Example of a Job Announcement for a Green Job

Title: Project Manager for Solar Energy Projects – Give a Green Turn to Your Career!

Introduction (hook):

Have you always dreamed of actively contributing to the fight against climate change? We are looking for someone who shares our passion for sustainability and wants to help us build a greener future.

Job Description (engaging and connecting):

As a Project Manager for our solar energy projects, you will have the opportunity to lead the implementation of innovative solutions that will reduce the carbon footprint of entire communities. This role will allow you to fully express your organizational skills and nurture your passion for sustainability. You will work closely with engineers and stakeholders, creating systems that produce clean energy and help transform the way we live.

What we are looking for (IKIGAI):

- A passionate person about sustainability, excited about working on projects that have a positive environmental impact.
- A person with a natural inclination to keep an overview and continuously organize work when working in teams.
- A person convinced that the future is renewable and who wants to take part in this green revolution.

Requirements:

- 3 years of experience in project management.
- Expertise in the renewable energy sector or experience in related technical fields.

What we offer:

Office in Milan, company car and laptop, flexible working hours, long-term contract.

Call to Action (CTA):

Do you want to turn your passion for the environment into a career that makes a difference? Apply now and join our team of green innovators!

4. Career Counsellors towards Green Jobs

In the increasingly dynamic and complex landscape of green jobs, career counsellors also face unique challenges. The growing demand for professionals in sustainability-related sectors requires not only an in-depth knowledge of the job market but also a deep understanding of candidates' aspirations and values. Just like recruiters, counsellors must adopt new approaches and strategies to support candidates in their journey towards green roles.

4.1 Overcoming challenges for career counseling

With the growing focus on sustainability and the rapid development of green jobs, the role of career counsellors is crucial in preparing candidates to seize these new opportunities. The difficulties that arise during career counseling can be transformed into opportunities by using innovative tools and approaches, such as IKIGAI, to create meaningful connections between candidates' skills, their personal values, and the demands of the green world.

1. Identifying the candidate's green values and interests

Overcoming this challenge for counsellors means understanding candidates' aspirations, personal values, and interests concerning green jobs. Sustainability is not just a matter of technical skills but also motivation and passion for the environment and social change. However, probing these aspects requires time and sensitivity, as people are often not fully aware of their deep motivations. To help candidates find their way in green jobs, counsellors need to be skilled in facilitating the process of self-reflection and mapping personal values.

In this context, an approach like **IKIGAI** can also be useful for counsellors. Exploring the 'what I love' sphere allows for an investigation of the person's interests and connecting them to existing opportunities in green jobs. This helps guide the person toward career paths that not only align with their passions but also foster personal and professional growth, offering a wide range of possibilities in the sustainability sector.

Moreover, investigating the sphere of 'what the world needs' helps expand the concept of green jobs, going beyond the more traditional technical roles. For example, not all green jobs are directly related to technology or engineering: there are lawyers working on environmental cases, trainers working in nature, and other professions that have a positive impact on the environment, even though they are not strictly technical. Investigating this sphere helps identify broader professional opportunities that align with the person's values and motivations, even if the candidate doesn't have a background directly linked to sustainability.

Concrete example:

A candidate with **marketing** skills may not have considered a role in a **renewable energy** company. The counsellor, by investigating their personal values, discovers that the candidate is deeply interested in sustainability and climate change. Using an IKIGAI-based approach, the counsellor helps the candidate understand how their marketing work can contribute to promoting sustainable solutions, creating a connection between their work and their values.

2. Adapting the professional profile to new green jobs

Many candidates approaching green jobs come from traditional sectors and may struggle to understand how their skills can be transferred to the new sustainability context. This is one of the most important challenges for counsellors, who must help candidates "transform" their professional profiles. The skills acquired in traditional contexts can be highly relevant for green jobs but require reworking to be applied effectively.

To overcome this challenge, a career counsellor must be able to identify and highlight transferable skills, demonstrating how these can be adapted to new green roles. Following the IKIGAI approach, this means exploring the sphere of 'what I am good at,' seeking to identify the person's strengths and linking them to the specific characteristics of green jobs. For example, if a person has a natural inclination toward leadership and change management, they could be directed toward managerial roles or sustainability project coordination, even without a specific background in the sector.

Concrete Example:

A person experienced in **change management** in a corporate context might be seen as unsuitable for a role as a **sustainability consultant**. However, the counsellor recognizes that change management skills can be extremely useful for a company implementing a sustainability strategy, thereby revealing the candidate's relevance to the role.

3. Overcoming the candidate's internal biases towards green jobs

Many candidates may hesitate to consider green jobs due to internal biases or stereotypes. Some people, especially those from non-technical sectors, may perceive these roles as highly specialized and out of their reach. This issue is particularly widespread among women, who often encounter gender stereotypes that portray green jobs as less accessible.

Overcoming this difficulty means that counsellors must be able to challenge these biases and help candidates see the potential of green jobs more broadly. Raising awareness of the opportunities that exist and the skills that can be acquired or transferred is a key step in overcoming these obstacles. The process may take time but represents an opportunity to educate candidates and broaden their professional vision.

Concrete Example:

A woman with a degree in **social sciences** may not consider a career in green jobs. However, a counsellor can show her how her skills in managing interpersonal relationships and communication are highly valuable for organizations involved in **environmental awareness-raising**, helping her reflect on a possibility she had not previously considered.

4. Overcoming concerns about the uncertainty of green jobs

Green jobs represent a rapidly growing sector, but because they are relatively new, many candidates perceive some uncertainty about the long-term prospects. Many people worry about the stability or economic security of these roles. This perception can discourage highly qualified candidates from considering a career in the sustainability sector.

Overcoming this challenge means that counsellors need to be able to provide candidates with a clear and informed vision of the prospects for green jobs, based on concrete data and sector growth projections.

Demonstrating that the skills required for green jobs are increasingly valued and that the demand for these professions is expected to grow can help dispel fears and encourage candidates to take this path.

Concrete Example:

A candidate interested in working in the **renewable energy** sector expresses concerns about the stability of the field. The counsellor, using up-to-date **labour market** data, provides the candidate with information on growth projections and long-term opportunities, helping them understand that a career in green jobs can be a solid and strategic choice.

4.2 New career guidance strategies

After examining how to overcome the main challenges for a career counsellor guiding someone toward green jobs, let's explore how the IKIGAI model can become a powerful tool throughout the entire career guidance process. IKIGAI, in fact, helps not only to identify roles that match a candidate's skills but also to identify areas for growth and align personal values with the positive environmental impact these jobs can have.

The guidance process through IKIGAI can be divided into three main phases: 1. internal analysis, 2. external investigation, and 3. matching. These phases guide the candidate in discovering their path towards a green career, helping them recognize their characteristics and skills, as well as identifying opportunities in the job market. Let's see how these phases unfold.

1. Internal analysis: discovering the candidate's "green" traits

The first phase of the guidance process involves introspective analysis, aiming to bring out the candidate's personal traits, passions, and values in relation to sustainability. Here, two spheres of IKIGAI come into play: "what I love" and "what the world needs." This phase is crucial for identifying what truly drives the candidate towards green jobs and for outlining their aspirations and motivations.

To facilitate this self-analysis, the candidate is guided to reflect on past experiences and what excites them about sustainability. Questions that can stimulate this reflection include:

- What environmental and sustainability topics interest you the most and why?
- Have there been personal projects or experiences where you tried to reduce environmental impact?
- What green causes or initiatives inspire you the most?
- What impact do you want your work to have on the world?

The goal is to help the candidate connect their passions and values with green jobs, understanding that the desire to contribute to a more sustainable world can be a powerful motivational driver in their career path.

2. External investigation: discovering green jobs in the region

Once the candidate's passions and motivations have been understood, the second phase involves exploring the green job opportunities available in the region. The counsellor helps the candidate identify not only traditional green sectors, such as renewable energy or waste management, but also less obvious roles where sustainability plays a central role. For example, law firms that deal with environmental cases, sustainable fashion companies, or tech start-ups developing solutions to reduce ecological impact.

It's important to note that not only strictly "green" sectors offer opportunities: many companies and organizations are adopting sustainable practices in traditional sectors. During this phase, tools like sectoral mapping or green job databases can be used to facilitate research. Useful questions to ask include:

- What companies in your area are adopting sustainable practices?
- Besides purely "green" sectors, are you aware of traditional professions that have introduced a sustainability focus (for example, environmental marketing, green engineering)?
- What characteristics make a profession "green" in your view?

This step helps expand the candidate's vision, allowing them to consider professional opportunities in sectors they might not have thought of but that have a strong positive environmental impact.

3. Matching: finding the meeting point between candidate and green job

The final phase involves finding the point of intersection between the candidate's characteristics and the identified green jobs. This involves working on aligning all spheres of IKIGAI with a potential job. Specifically, aligning "what I love" and "what the world needs" with the sector or professional field in which the candidate could work; and then aligning "what I am good at" with the role they could successfully fill. The counsellor's task is to highlight the points of contact between the candidate's IKIGAI spheres and specific green jobs, as well as to identify any technical skills gaps that might prevent the candidate from immediately entering the desired sector.

In this phase, it is essential to create a framework of transversal and technical skills required for the green jobs identified and compare them with those of the candidate. If gaps emerge, a plan can be developed to address them, suggesting training or practical experiences. Key aspects to focus on include:

- Which sectors or professional fields among those explored align best with your passions and values?
- Which roles could you successfully fill based on your attitudes?
- What technical skills do you think are useful for the green jobs you've identified?
- Which ones do you already possess, and which are you missing? What can you do to acquire them?
- What drives you towards that specific green job?

This phase leads to the creation of a conscious match between the candidate and job opportunities, focusing not only on technical skills but also by emphasising a motivation based on passions, attitudes, and values.

Conclusion: a holistic approach to green job counseling

Applying the IKIGAI model to career counseling for green jobs offers a holistic and personalized vision. It's not limited to a simple search for technical skills but delves deeply into the candidate's motivations, values, and personal ambitions. This approach helps facilitate the match between individual and role, with particular attention to well-being, considering "ideal jobs" to be those where the person might feel most fulfilled.

Moreover, thanks to the possibility of identifying potential skills gaps, it becomes possible to plan targeted growth paths, allowing the candidate to acquire the necessary skills to successfully integrate into the green job market.

4.3 Focus: the cover letter for a "Green Job"

The cover letter is a crucial moment in applying for a green job, as it allows the candidate to communicate not only their skills but also their passions, attitudes, and values. In this context, the IKIGAI approach proves to be particularly effective, allowing the candidate to highlight how their motivation and desire to contribute positively to the environment align with the role they are applying for.

Structure of the Cover Letter for a Green Job

To create an effective and well-structured cover letter, it is useful to divide it into five main sections, each of which reflects a key aspect of the application process:

1. **Who I Am (Introduction):** Name, surname, title, and qualification.
2. **What I Have Done (Relevant Past Experiences):** A brief summary of studies and work experiences that are important for the job being applied for.
3. **Why I Am Applying to You (Motivation and Alignment with IKIGAI):** An explanation based on passions, attitudes, and values that align with the role and company context.
4. **Awareness of Technical Gaps and Willingness to Fill Them:** Acknowledgement of any gaps and a commitment to grow.
5. **Call to Action (CTA):** Request for a meeting or interview.

1. Introduction: who I am

In the opening of the letter, it's important to be clear and concise. Introduce your name, qualification, and explicitly mention the role you're applying for.

Example: "My name is Marta Rossi, I hold a degree in Environmental Engineering, and I would like to apply for the position of Project Manager for solar energy projects at your company."

2. Past experiences: what I have done

In this section, the candidate briefly summarizes their most relevant work and educational experiences for the role. It's not necessary to list everything but to select the experiences that demonstrate skills and knowledge in the green sector.

Example: "Throughout my academic and professional journey, I have developed expertise in the renewable energy sector, collaborating on photovoltaic plant projects and innovative solutions to improve energy efficiency. In particular, my experience as a project assistant at XYZ Srl allowed me to deepen my knowledge of managing sustainable projects, with a focus on reducing CO2 emissions.."

3. Motivation: why I am applying to you

This is the core part of the letter, where the candidate should connect their motivation with the job opportunity, using the key points of the IKIGAI model: what they love, what the world needs, and what they are good at.

Example: “ *My passion for sustainability and the environment is what led me to specialize in renewable energy, a sector where I see the future of our society. I firmly believe that the world needs increasingly innovative solutions to combat climate change, and working for a company that shares this vision, like yours, represents a unique opportunity for me to combine my skills with my desire to have a positive impact on the planet. I am convinced that my organizational abilities and problem-solving skills can be fully expressed in the role of project manager.* ”

4. Awareness of technical gaps and willingness to fill them

It's important to recognize any technical gaps but do so constructively, showing willingness and enthusiasm to address them. This demonstrates self-awareness and commitment.

Example: “ *I am aware that, despite having gained experience in managing energy projects, I still need to deepen my knowledge of software for managing complex projects. However, I am confident that my strong motivation and desire to grow in this field will enable me to quickly bridge these gaps.* ”

5. Call to Action (CTA): request for a meeting

The conclusion of the letter should be clear and action-oriented, with a direct request for a meeting or interview, maintaining a tone of confidence and openness.

Example: “ *I would be happy to discuss with you in person how my skills and motivation can contribute to the success of your projects.* ”

Communication Style for a Green Job Cover Letter

In addition to the content, the presentation style is crucial to convey motivation and enthusiasm. A tone of voice that is engaging, authentic, and professional will make the candidate stand out from others.

- **Opening Hook:** You can insert a first sentence that grabs attention, highlighting passion or a specific motivation for the role. For example, an emotional hook might be linked to the company's mission or a successful project that inspired the candidate.
- **Tone of Voice:** For a young and innovative company, the tone can be fresh and dynamic; for more formal contexts, communication may need to be more institutional but still personal.
- **Emotionality:** Don't be afraid to express what truly drives the candidate to seek the job, using phrases like "I firmly believe," "I am deeply convinced," or "I am excited to."

5. Conclusions

In an increasingly sustainability-oriented world, green jobs offer unique opportunities to build careers that combine social and environmental impact with professional growth. Through this guide, we've analyzed how the IKIGAI model can be applied in both the recruitment process and career counseling,

highlighting the importance of aligning passions, attitudes, and personal values with the needs of the green job market.

From creating job announcements that attract the right talent to strategically using cover letters to highlight authentic motivations and bridge technical gaps, it is clear that success in green jobs requires more than just technical skills. It requires a holistic vision that connects personal values with the commitment to sustainability, a challenge for both job seekers and employers.

For recruiters, using the IKIGAI model means having concrete tools to recognize a candidate's potential to create a meaningful impact, seeking not only technical experts but also individuals who are authentically motivated and deeply aligned with the company's goals. This model suggests that talent can find a natural harmony between skills and aspirations, fostering better employee retention and job satisfaction.

For career counsellors and job placement professionals, the challenge is to support candidates in discovering paths where they can find meaning, helping to build solid and flexible profiles to meet the demands of a constantly changing world. The connection between the four areas of IKIGAI is particularly relevant in a market where the transition to sustainable practices is not limited to a few sectors but extends to all professions.

Looking to the future, the main challenge for recruiting and career guidance professionals will be to keep alive the inclusive and sustainable practices outlined in this guide, valuing each individual and promoting career paths that genuinely address the needs of the ecological transition. Integrating the IKIGAI model into the selection and guidance process can enrich the labour market with flexible and passionate professionals capable of responding creatively to the changes that characterize new environmental scenarios.

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