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# Promoting green jobs through the inclusion of informal waste pickers in Chile

The ILO is calling for the integration of informal waste pickers into Chile's formal economy and the creation of green job opportunities in this key economic sector.

To this end, the ILO has been providing technical assistance to an inter-ministerial taskforce, responsible for designing a public policy for the inclusion of informal waste pickers into the waste management sector. Established in 2010 by the Chilean Ministry of the Environment, this taskforce is comprised of representatives from the Ministries of Health, Social Development, Labour and Social Welfare, and Housing and Urban Development. In addition, representatives from the Solidarity and Social Investment Fund, Municipalities, Chile's National Movement for Waste Pickers, and the AVINA Foundation have also participated in the taskforce.



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## Chile's waste management sector

Chile's waste management sector offers great potential for green job creation but is characterised by a lack of decent work conditions.

Over the years, the generation of waste has significantly increased in Chile. For instance, municipal waste generation in 2009 was estimated at 6.5 million tons - an increase of 28% compared to waste levels in 2000.

Nationally, it is estimated that some 60,000 waste pickers live and work in Chile. Most pickers run the streets daily to select and pick waste, using either motorised or non-motorised vehicles to transport recyclable materials to collection sites. Waste pickers derive their income from the sale of recycled materials to commercial recycling companies, intermediaries or recycling centres. On average, a waste picker collects between 2 and 10 tons of recyclable waste per month.

Despite their important role in national recycling mechanisms, waste pickers represent one of the most marginalised working groups in Chile. Their informal working conditions, lack of occupational safety and health, and lack of social protection are of major concern.

## Developing Chile's public policy for the inclusion of informal waste pickers in the waste management sector

In the context of Chile's integrated solid waste management policy, this future public policy is aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental inclusion of waste pickers. An indication of the social, economic and environmental objectives, which are intended to be addressed by the proposed policy, is presented below.

Social objectives:

- Increase access to social protection
- Build and maintain an information system on waste pickers
- Increase social recognition of the work of waste pickers

Economic objectives:

- Promote integration of waste pickers into recycling chains
- Enhance productive capacity of waste pickers

Environmental objectives:

- Promote inclusion of waste pickers into sustainable waste management, optimising their potential in waste recycling.



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With support from the ILO the taskforce conducted a study to analyse the current situation of waste pickers in Chile.

The findings highlighted the economic, social and environmental benefits provided by informal waste pickers to municipalities. Moreover, they revealed encouraging experiences from different Chilean municipalities regarding the different types of policy instruments employed to improve the living and working conditions of waste pickers.

The study findings, consolidated in a report, provided a first step in defining public policy options for the social inclusion of waste pickers.

Building on this, the ILO has provided assistance to the second phase of the work of the taskforce, namely the design and elaboration of a public policy proposal and action plan. Importantly, the whole policy formulation process was framed by social dialogue, with the active participation of all relevant stakeholders.

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### For more information:

[www.ilo.org/green-jobs-programme](http://www.ilo.org/green-jobs-programme)

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