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HIRING OUTLOOK · 2026

Carbon Markets Hiring Outlook 2026

A data-backed read on where carbon-market and green hiring is heading — the growth rates, the skills shortage, and the regulatory forces driving demand, with every figure sourced.

The short version

Carbon-market hiring in 2026 sits inside a broader green-jobs boom that is measurably outpacing the wider labour market — and within that boom, the compliance and border-carbon niche is the sharpest single demand spike. The constraint is no longer whether the roles exist; it is that the supply of people who have actually done the work is thin. This guide lays out the numbers, attributes each one, and reads them for what they mean if you are deciding whether to move into the field.

A note on definitions: most published statistics track "green jobs" or "green skills" broadly, not carbon markets specifically. Carbon-market roles are a high-growth slice of that larger category, concentrated in compliance, trading, MRV, project development and removals. Where a figure is broad, we say so.

The numbers: green hiring is outpacing the market

The clearest signal comes from labour-market data, not industry hype.

- **Green hiring is growing at roughly twice the rate of green skilling.** LinkedIn's Global Green Skills Report 2026 found that the share of green hiring grew about **25% year-on-year**, roughly twice the rate at which workers are acquiring green skills (around 13%). The same report found workers with at least one green skill are being hired at about **1.5x the rate** of the wider workforce. That gap — demand rising faster than qualified supply — is the single most important dynamic for anyone entering now.
- **Green employment is already large and growing.** In the UK, the Office for National Statistics estimated roughly **652,000 full-time-equivalent green jobs in 2024**, up **27.8%** on 2015. PwC's Green Jobs Barometer separately recorded UK green job adverts rising **9.2%** year-on-year to over **272,000**. The UK is one market, but it is a leading indicator for a mature carbon economy.

- **The direction is structural, not cyclical.** The World Bank's *State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2026* documents the continued expansion of carbon-pricing instruments worldwide — each new scheme is a fresh source of non-discretionary compliance hiring.

Read together: this is not a niche that depends on sentiment. Demand is being created by regulation and corporate commitments, and the people who can do the work are scarce.

Where the growth is concentrated

Not all carbon hiring is growing equally. Three areas stand out.

Compliance and border carbon (the sharpest spike)

The compliance market — the EU ETS, UK ETS, and especially the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) — is where demand is rising fastest, because companies must act by law. The scale of what's coming is large: analysts at the Belfer Center have cited projections that **CBAM revenues could reach around $80 billion annually by 2040**, against a current voluntary carbon market an order of magnitude smaller. A mechanism moving that much value needs reporting analysts, embedded-emissions specialists and trade-compliance crossovers — exactly the roles our CBAM Hiring Primer maps.

Removals, projects and the voluntary market

The voluntary market is more cyclical but is where the science-and-project roles concentrate — developers, MRV specialists, ratings analysts and removals engineers. UK analysis has suggested a domestic carbon-credits market could create thousands of jobs, more than half of them in nature-based projects (ecologists, foresters, land managers) with a further tranche in engineered removals.

Article 6 and the public sector

Government-to-government carbon trading under Article 6 is building a new layer of public-sector and advisory demand — programme offices, registries, negotiators and MRV. In ASEAN, projections tied to the regional carbon market and Article 6 have pointed to as many as **13.7 million green jobs by 2050**; that figure is broad and long-horizon, but the direction is unambiguous. See our Article 6 careers guide.

Why the demand continues

Four structural forces sit behind the numbers, and none is a short-term fad:

1. **Regulation is expanding, not retreating.** CBAM's definitive phase, ETS expansions, and the operationalisation of Article 6 all create mandated work on fixed legal timelines. 2. **Corporate net-zero commitments persist.** Thousands of companies have targets that require measurement, reduction and credible offsetting — and the staff to deliver them. 3. **The integrity shift creates specialist roles.** As the market professionalises around quality (ratings, the Core Carbon Principles, stricter MRV), it rewards specialists over generalists — deeper roles, not just more of them. 4. **The talent pipeline lags the demand.** Green hiring outpacing green skilling (LinkedIn's 25% vs 13%) means the shortage is structural: the people who build real track records now will be hard to replace.

The skills gap is the opportunity

The recurring theme across every data source is a **supply shortage of experienced people**. For job-seekers, that is the opportunity: the market rewards demonstrated work, and the barrier to entry is lower now than it will be once the field matures. The most valuable profiles sit where a concrete skill — trade compliance, GHG accounting, software, project development, law — meets carbon fluency.

If you are weighing a move, three of our guides map the routes: Breaking Into Carbon Markets for the overall map, the best certifications and courses to fill gaps, and the salary guide to set expectations. To choose a side of the market, see voluntary vs compliance careers.

What it means — for job-seekers and employers

For job-seekers: the window favours entrants. Demand is outrunning qualified supply, the compliance niche is the sharpest spike, and a credible piece of real work beats another credential. Point your existing skill at carbon rather than starting from zero.

For employers: expect to compete for scarce experienced talent, especially in CBAM, ETS and MRV. The practical response is to hire for transferable skill plus trainable domain knowledge, and to widen the geographic net — much of the new supply-side demand is in exporter and host-country markets, not only in the traditional hubs.

How we read it from our own feed

Carbon Desk tracks live roles across employers' own career pages and tags them by market, regime, function and region. Our Carbon Hiring Index is a daily read on that feed — a ground-level complement to the macro numbers above. The pattern it shows is consistent with the data: compliance and removals demand is durable, the roles are specialised, and the employers are increasingly diverse — from registries and ratings to governments and heavy industry. Browse the live roles at carbondesk.global.

Sources

- LinkedIn — *Global Green Skills Report 2026* (green hiring +25% YoY, ~1.5x hire rate for green-skilled workers; green-skilling ~13%).
- UK Office for National Statistics — *Estimates of green jobs, UK* (March 2026): ~652,000 FTE green jobs in 2024, +27.8% on 2015.
- PwC — *Green Jobs Barometer* (UK green job adverts +9.2%, ~272,000).
- World Bank — *State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2026*.
- Belfer Center (Harvard Kennedy School) — CBAM climate-finance analysis (CBAM revenue ~$80bn/yr by 2040 projection).
- edie — UK carbon-credits market job-growth analysis (nature-based and engineered removals).
- ASEAN / ASEAN Common Carbon Framework analyses — up to 13.7 million green jobs by 2050 (broad, long-horizon projection).

Figures are drawn from the sources named and reflect their definitions and dates; "green jobs" is broader than carbon-markets specifically. Confirm the latest figures at each source before citing.

Get the sharpest carbon roles first. Carbon Desk tracks carbon-markets, CBAM, compliance and decarbonization roles and sends the best ones to your inbox weekly — screened, categorised, free. Subscribe at carbondesk.global.