

Journal of legal and social studies

Issn: 2507-7333

Eissn: 2676-1742

**On the institutional structuring of the renewable energy sector:
for the purpose of strengthening energy security in Algeria**

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Date of send: 2026/06/01	date of acceptance: 2026/07/01	Date of Publication: 2026/09/01
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Abstract:

Algeria is working to ensure the effectiveness of the energy transition by using renewable energies to achieve sustainable energy security. The renewable energy sector has seen the employment of several institutional models to supervise this sector, and these models have varied in terms of designations and institutional position within the ministerial structure since 1996. Since then, Algeria has not settled on a single choice for an effective institutional model tasked with achieving a real launch of the new and renewable energy file, which has negatively affected the institutional effectiveness of the supervising ministry. Therefore, it has sought by all means to contribute to achieving a clear promotion of renewable energies in order to ensure energy security in Algeria.

Keywords : energy security; renewable energies; institutional structure; energy.

المخلص :

تعمل الجزائر على ضمان فعالية الانتقال الطاقوي بإستعمال الطاقات المتجددة لتحقيق الأمن الطاقوي المستدام، حيث عرف قطاع الطاقات المتجددة توظيف العديد من النماذج المؤسسية للإشراف على هذا القطاع، و قد تعددت هذه النماذج من حيث التسميات و الموقع المؤسسي داخل الهيكل الوزاري منذ 1996 ، و لم تستقر الجزائر منذ ذلك الحين على خيار واحد لنموذج مؤسسي فعال مكلف بتحقيق الإنطلاقة الحقيقية ملف الطاقات الجديدة و المتجددة مما أثر سلبا على الفعالية المؤسسية للوزارة الوصية، لذلك سعت بكل الطرق إلى المساهمة في تحقيق ترقية واضحة للطاقات المتجددة في سبيل ضمان الأمن الطاقوي في الجزائر.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأمن الطاقوي ، الطاقات المتجددة ، الهيكل المؤسسي ، الطاقة .

Introduction:

Countries around the world, including Algeria at the present time, are striving to ensure their energy security by relying on a gradual transition toward renewable energies and reducing dependence on depleting fossil energies.

Therefore, Algeria has turned toward the option of strengthening energy security by activating a policy of promoting renewable energies in order to achieve sustainable energy development.

To this end, Algeria has chosen to organize the institutional structure of the renewable energy sector, headed by the ministry in charge of managing this sector, considering it institutionally at the top of this sector. As such, it is the supervising body and the primary authority responsible for formulating and implementing the general energy policy in all its dimensions in Algeria.

However, this ministry has undergone the application of different institutional models since 1996, all of which aim, in general, at the effective implementation of alternative energy policy in order to achieve sustainable energy security.

On this basis, we raise the following problem: **in light of the multiple institutional structuring of the renewable energy sector, to what extent can this affect the guarantee of energy security?**

To address this problem, this article relies on the case study method, which traces the evolution of the manifestations of the institutional structuring of the renewable energy sector, in addition to the analytical method based on the analysis of legal texts related to this subject.

Through this article, we aim to comprehensively the content of the institutional structuring of the renewable energy sector and its development since 1996, and to assess the degree of its positive or negative impact on the activation of new and renewable energy programs as a strategic option to achieve energy security.

Based on all of the foregoing, this study is divided into two main sections, the renewable energy sector before 2020: attempts to activate the institutional launch in order to promote energy security (first section), as and as the renewable energy sector after 2020: multiple institutional models to activate the policy of achieving energy security (second section).

First Section: The Renewable Energy Sector before 2020: Attempts to Activate the Institutional Launch in Order to Promote Energy Security.

The institutional framework of the renewable energy sector was institutionally affiliated with the Ministry of Energy before 2017 (first requirement), after which a

model of institutional transition toward the Ministry of Environment was adopted (second requirement).

First Requirement: The Renewable Energy Sector before 2017: Institutional Affiliation with the Ministry of Energy.

At the level of the ministerial institutional structure in Algeria, the renewable energy sector did not witness the emergence of an independent sector, as its institutional embodiment was represented by a general directorate within the institutional organization of the Ministry of Energy in 1996. It then experienced organizational stability within the same ministry that lasted until 2017.

First Subsection: The General Directorate: An Institutional Organization within the Structure of the Ministry of Energy in 1996.

The first signs of the emergence of the institutional structure of the renewable energy sector in the Ministry of Energy and Mines. appeared through the appointment of government members in 1996¹, where the model of the Ministry of Energy and Mines emerged after abandoning the model of the Ministry of Industry and Energy.

Within this institutional structure, the renewable energy sector was embedded within the organization of the ministry's central administration², which comprised several general directorates, which constitute the basic pattern for implementing the ministerial program.

In this context, the General Directorate for the Distribution of Energy Products was established, which encompassing the Directorate of New and Renewable Energies³, which exercises its powers based on the Sub-Directorate for the Promotion of Renewable Energies.

The most prominent characteristic of the administrative organization of the Ministry of Energy and Mines is the distance in the administrative supervisory hierarchy between the sub-directorate, which is directly related to the implementation of the policy for promoting renewable energies, and the Minister of Energy and Mines at the top of the administrative hierarchy. This constituted an obstacle to the proper making and implementation of strategic administrative decisions in the field of renewable energies.

Second Subsection: Organizational Stability within the Ministry of Energy until 2017.

The model of supervision by the general directorate, with its branches, over the new and renewable energy sector experienced long-term stability, during which institutional affiliation persisting until 2017, This stability is attributed to administrative continuity at the helm of this ministry, as it was led for a long period by only two ministers across several governments from 1999 to 2015⁴.

In contrast to this stability, this model underwent significant changes in terms of structural designations and the powers vested in the general directorate in charge of renewable energies. The central administrative organization of the Ministry of Energy and Mines was modified, whereby the General Directorate of Energy became responsible for the renewable energy sector, by virtue to its authority to prepare programs for the promotion of renewable energies and to ensure their implementation.

However, it is noteworthy here that the General Directorate of Energy⁵, given the tasks it undertakes, has many of its powers, during their implementation, directly supervised by the Sub-Directorate of New and Renewable Energies, which is responsible for carries out the following⁶ :

1. Encompassing the national potential of renewable energies.
2. Formulating the policy for the development of renewable energies and ensuring its implementation.
3. Participating in the determination of cooperation plans in the field of renewable energies

This institutional structuring became clearer in terms of tasks in 2015, as the General Directorate of Electricity, Gas, and New and Renewable Energies took charge of preparing all arrangements related to the production of renewable energies, as well as in the field of energy efficiency and its development policies⁷.

In order to ensure the proper implementation of the tasks of this general directorate, the Algerian legislator expanded the structure of the sub-directorates in charge of renewable energies to ensure energy security, as three sub-directorates were established, namely:

- 1. The Sub-Directorate of New and Renewable Energies:** responsible for establishing the regulatory framework related to renewable energies, advancing their development, and implementing their programs.
- 2. The Sub-Directorate of Energy Efficiency:** this sub-directorate is responsible for preparing measures related to energy efficiency, monitoring them, and ensuring their implementation while promoting the adoption of the use of clean energies.
- 3. The Sub-Directorate of Nuclear Energy** responsible, in order to enhance energy security and alternative energies, for preparing policies for the development of nuclear electricity⁸ and achieving their proper implementation as it is considered one of the effective alternatives to fossil energies.

Second Requirement: The Institutional transfer to the Renewable Energy Sector toward the Ministry of Environment in 2017.

The term renewable energies appeared for the first time in the governmental institutional structure in 2017 under the name of the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energies⁹ .

First Subsection: The Regulatory Framework of the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energies.

The Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energies, as the primary actor in the field of renewable energies, occupies the apex of this sector. The minister, in order to promote energy security, works to anticipate and propose incentive measures in coordination with the relevant sectors, and on setting strategies and action plans for the development and promotion of new energies and their implementation. In addition, the ministry contributes to all measures aimed at developing the potential for integration of renewable energies into the industrial fabric, while preparing the energy consumption model and managing energy use¹⁰ .

It is noteworthy here that despite the emergence of renewable energies at the level of the ministerial structure of the Ministry of Environment, the institutional model of the general directorate was not excluded. The Directorate for the Development, Promotion, and Valorization of Renewable Energies was charged with the following¹¹:

1. Preparing and defining, in consultation with the relevant sectors, the national programs for the development and promotion of renewable energies, along with appropriate incentive measures for this purpose.
2. Preparing the legislative and regulatory framework governing the field of new and renewable energies.

Second Subsection: Assessment of the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energies:

The integration of the renewable energy sector within the institutional framework of the Ministry of Environment came as a result of economic and legal reasons.

Among the most significant economic reasons is the oil price shock of 2014, as this is considered the greatest threat to energy security, which could lead to a real crisis for national security as a whole¹². This prompted Algeria to adopt measures to reduce the intensity of the national economy's dependence on global energy markets, such as notably through investment in the field of renewable energies¹³. Among the legal reasons is Algeria's effort to implement its international commitments, as it ratified the Paris Climate Agreement in 2016¹⁴, which has a direct intersection with renewable and clean energies.

In this context, it is not surprising to find the consolidation of this institutional integration, as it comes through the unity of tasks undertaken by the ministry in implementing energy management measures within the framework of combating climate change¹⁵. However, in contrast to all this, the regulatory texts governing the institutional structuring of the ministry were issued with considerable delay, more than four months after the governmental reshuffle¹⁶, despite the fact that the Ministry of Environment was hosting the renewable energy sector for the first time in Algeria. This inevitably affects the effectiveness of this institutional integration at the level of the Ministry of Environment's structure.

Second Section: The Renewable Energy Sector after 2020: Multiple Institutional Models to Activate the Policy of Achieving Energy Security.

The renewable energy sector in 2020 witnessed the emergence of an independent institutional model responsible for the energy transition and renewable energies (first requirement), after which it experienced several other institutional models aimed at strengthening energy security (second requirement).

First Requirement: Institutional Independence: The Desire to Activate the Renewable Energy Sector.

With Algeria's growing interest in the renewable energy sector, the desire to genuinely activate this sector also increased.

First Subsection: Establishment of the Ministry of Energy Transition and Renewable Energies.

Algeria established an independent ministerial model for the renewable energy sector under the name of the Ministry of Energy Transition and Renewable Energies, aiming through it to activate this sector in order to contribute to ensuring sustainable energy security¹⁷.

In order to give real effectiveness to this new institutional model, the Algerian legislator issued the regulatory framework for this ministry through Executive Decree 20/322 concerning the powers of the newly created minister¹⁸, as well as Executive Decree 20/323 relating to the organization of the central administration and its powers¹⁹.

The minister possesses very broad powers within the governmental work context in the field of renewable energies, encompassing almost everything major and minor related to renewable energies according to Executive Decree 20/323, contributing to their development and achieving the desired energy transition

What confirms this is the institutional structure of this ministry, which includes six central directorates, four of which directly oversee, through their tasks, the renewable energy sector and the energy transition, namely²⁰ :

1. Directorate of Energy Transition
2. Directorate of Energy Control.
3. Directorate of Grid-Connected Renewable Energies
4. Directorate of Off-Grid Renewable Energies

Although these regulatory texts were detailed, we note a persistent delay in their issuance, as they were not issued until about five months after the establishment of this ministry without clear reasons. Therefore, this delay is incomprehensible and illogical, especially since it concerns a newly established institutional model that has no prior institutional precedents to rely on in its work. This enshrines a kind of ambiguity and overlap in the implementation of national programs in the field of energy transition and renewable energies on one hand, and negatively affects the promotion of energy security on the other hand.

Second Subsection: The Institutional Return of the Renewable Energy Sector to the Ministry of Environment in 2022.

The establishment of the Ministry of Energy Transition and Renewable Energies was an important indicator for activating the process of accelerating the energy transition after the proven ineffectiveness of total reliance on hydrocarbons²¹. However, this did not prevent the Algerian authorities from backtracking on this newly established and nascent experience by returning once again to the institutional structure of the Ministry of Environment²².

This institutional return raised many questions, especially since the experience of the independent institutional model did not last long enough for us to evaluate it

accurately and judge its failure. Moreover, its emergence coincided with the "COVID-19" period, during which most activities experienced partial or total stagnation.

On this basis, the consolidation of the independent model was nothing but a political commitment more than a strategic choice, considering that it was a commitment included in the commitments of the President of the Republic during his election campaign²³ in 2019.

Although the Ministry of Environment has prior institutional experience with the renewable energy sector, the completion of the regulatory framework came, as usual, late after seven months through the issuance of:

- Executive Decree No. 23/381, which defines the powers of the Minister of Environment and Renewable Energies ²⁴.
- Executive Decree No. 23/382, which defines the organization of the ministry's central administration²⁵.

The content of which was identical to the executive decrees issued in 2017. Moreover, this ministry also experienced administrative instability, as the previous minister was replaced by another after only six months²⁶ from the previous governmental reshuffle, which, along with the previous manifestations, practically constitutes negative impacts on the renewable energy sector and necessarily on the policy of strengthening energy security.

Second Requirement: Other Institutional Models for Promoting Energy Security.

The renewable energy sector witnessed, after 2022, other institutional models in an attempt by Algeria to strengthen the renewable energy sector in order to promote energy security.

First Subsection: The Secretary of State in Charge of Renewable Energies in 2024: A New Institutional Model.

The government reshuffle of 2024 included a shift in the institutional model of the renewable energy sector back to the Ministry of Energy, as it was previously, but with the abandonment of the model of the general directorate, through the creation of the position of Secretary of State attached to the Minister of Energy and Mines in charge of renewable energies²⁷, as a new institutional mechanism.

The regulatory framework for the Secretary of State's performance of tasks is based on entrusting him with the renewable energy file under the supervision of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energies by means of Executive Decree No. 25/84²⁸, which does not explicitly indicate the powers of the Secretary of State. Thus, and in view of the central administrative structure of the ministry, we find that it includes nine directorates, only one of which is directly concerned with the renewable energy file²⁹, which leads us to say that this new model of the Secretary of State constitutes an addition whose tasks and powers are ambiguous on the one hand, and on the other hand represents a strong regression compared to the wide powers previously granted to the Minister of Energy Transition and Renewable Energies.

In addition to all of the above, this also tends to confirm that the Secretary of State, who is a minister within the government team, is in fact merely a central director in charge of the general directorate responsible for the renewable energy sector.

Accordingly, with all these previous elements, the effectiveness of this new institutional model remains largely limited, to the extent that it casts doubt on the efforts of the Algerian State in materializing the programs related to renewable energies and the energy transition.

Second Subsection: Institutional Splitting: Another Option for Unifying the Institutional Framework of Renewable Energies in 2025.

This time, Algerian authorities, in the government reshuffle of 2025³⁰, resorted to the option of the model of institutional splitting in order to unify the energy and renewable energy sectors within a single institutional framework.

1. Institutional Splitting: The latest government reshuffle included an institutional separation between the hydrocarbons sector and the energy sector, a precedent unprecedented in nature, after they had for many years shared a single and unified institutional framework. This institutional splitting followed the major challenges facing the energy sector both locally and globally; the hydrocarbons sector is considered large and extremely heavy, requiring constant monitoring at the international level³¹, which constitutes a challenge experienced by the Ministry of Energy and Mines, leading to the materialization of this institutional splitting process. This new model aims to deepen the concentration of responsibilities in each energy field, thus improving the administrative efficiency of project implementation³².

2. Unification of the Institutional Framework of Renewable Energies: In parallel with the institutional separation process, the Algerian legislator proceeded to unify the institutional structure of the Ministry of Energy and Renewable Energies, following the long-term use of numerous institutional models in charge of the new and renewable energy sector over many years.

This latest model embodies the Algerian State's effort to more effectively address global challenges, particularly in the field of energy transition, and may be perceived as an attractive measure aimed at attracting foreign investors³³ as a necessity for activating the policy of achieving energy security. Moreover, this institutional unification can foster integration between different types of energy, whether conventional fossil fuels or renewable energies, by using the energy mix as another strategic option to strengthen energy security in Algeria.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, our study shows that the institutional structuring of the renewable energy sector is of great importance in terms of preparing and implementing policies and programs for renewable energies. However, the institutional instability of the ministry responsible for supervising this sector and the many structural changes since 1996 have considerably limited its contribution to promoting renewable energies and have greatly weakened the effectiveness of the role expected from it. Undoubtedly, this has made the process of strengthening renewable energies in order to achieve energy

security, at least at present, still out of reach, and its realization requires the political will of the State to align with legal and institutional efforts.

We therefore conclude in this article with the following result:

- The numerous changes that have affected the institutional structure of the renewable energy sector since 1996 have constituted an obstacle to the implementation of renewable energy programs within the framework of strengthening energy security.
- Failure to allow sufficient time for the stabilization of the different institutional models has led to the limited institutional role of the ministry supervising the renewable energy sector.
- The constant delay in issuing the regulatory texts accompanying any institutional change has created ambiguity and overlap in the powers related to the implementation of energy policy and programs in order to achieve sustainable energy security

On this basis, a set of recommendations can be presented:

1. There is a need to establish and consolidate an independent institutional structure for the ministry supervising the renewable energy sector.
2. The government must choose an appropriate institutional model responsible for renewable energies and grant it reasonable temporal stability in order to achieve the expected results.
3. The regulatory texts must be issued in a timely manner in order to remove ambiguity in the management and implementation of strategic dossiers relating to energy transition and renewable energies.

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List of Footnotes:

- ¹ - This appointment took place during the first government of Ahmed Ouyahia, For more details, see Presidential Decree No. 96-01 of 05 January 1996 containing the appointment of government members, Official Journal of the Algerian Republic , No. 01, of 07 January 1996, p.04.
- ² - Executive Decree No. 96-215 of 15 June 1996 containing the organization of the central administration of the Ministry of Energy and Mines, Official Journal of the Algerian Republic , 37, issued on 16 June 1996, p.16.
- ³ - Article 04 of the Executive Decree No. 96-215, same reference, p.17.
- ⁴ - It was headed from 1999 to 2010 by Minister Chakib Khelil, followed by Minister Youcef Yousfi from 2010 to 2015. For more details, see the Arabic

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- ⁵ - Executive Decree No. 07-267 of 09 September 2007 containing the organization of the central administration of the Ministry of Energy and Mines, Official Journal of the Algerian Republic, No. 57, of 16 September 2007, p.05.
- ⁶ - Article 04 of the Executive Decree No. 07-267, same reference, p.07.
- ⁷ - Executive Decree No. 15-303 of 02 December 2015 containing the organization of the central administration of the Ministry of Energy, Official Journal of the Algerian Republic, No. 65, of 06 December 2015, p.06.
- ⁸ - Article 03 of the Executive Decree No. 15-303, same reference, p.08.
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- ¹⁰ - Article 04 of Executive Decree No. 17-364 of 25 December 2017 which determines the powers of the Minister of Environment and Renewable Energies, Official Journal of the Algerian Republic, No. 74, of 25 December 2017, p.08.
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- ¹⁴ - Bouthelja Hussein, Algeria's Compliance with the Paris Climate Agreement, Al-Bahith Journal for Academic Studies, Vol. 10, No. 02-2023, p. 311.
- ¹⁵ - Safia Mahour, The Main Actors Contributing to Environmental Public Policy-Making in Algeria Based on the Official Journal 1974–2017, Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 12, No. 01-2020, p. 571.
- ¹⁶ - Executive Decrees No. 17-364 and 17-365 were issued on 25 December 2017, whereas the governmental reshuffle had taken place earlier on 17 August 2017.
- ¹⁷ - This occurred during the third government of Abdelaziz Djerad, under the supervision of Minister Chems Eddine Chitour. For more details, see Presidential Decree No. 20-163 of 23 June 2020 containing the appointment of

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- ²³ - Samer Abu Warda, Renewable Energies in Algeria, website <https://attaqa.net/2025/09/15/>, consulted on 14 October 2025 at 22:05.
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