

Green Jobs Mechanism for Green Economy and Sustainable Development

الوظائف الخضراء آلية لتفعيل الاقتصاد الأخضر وتحقيق التنمية المستدامة

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Abstract:

This study aims to address the concept of both green economy and green jobs, in order to highlight the effective and vital role played by the latter as an innovative and environmentally friendly mechanism, which aims to achieve sustainable development by applying policies and approaches that balance the process of economic progress and environmental protection by controlling all negative impacts on environmental elements and regulations.

Through our study of the research topic, we have reached a set of results, mainly in the fact that green jobs are the main driver of the green economy in all its agricultural, urban, recycling, transport and energy sectors. They also include green jobs in preparation for green competition by raising support, correcting economic activities and optimizing the use of natural resources, as well as giving new incentives to strengthen public infrastructure.

Key words: Green Economy; Natural Resources; Sustainable Development, Green Jobs; Environment.

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تناول مفهوم كل من الاقتصاد الأخضر والوظائف الخضراء، من أجل إبراز الدور الفعال والحيوي الذي تلعبه هذه الأخيرة باعتبارها آلية مستحدثة وصديقة للبيئة تصبو إلى تحقيق

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التنمية المستدامة من خلال تطبيق السياسات والمناهج الموازنة بين عملية التقدم الاقتصادي وحماية البيئة عن طريق السيطرة على كل التأثيرات السلبية التي تلحق الأذى بعناصر وأنظمة البيئة. ولقد توصلنا من خلال دراستنا لموضوع البحث إلى مجموعة من النتائج، تكمن أساسا في كون الوظائف الخضراء تمهيدا للمنافسة الخضراء عن طريق رفع الدعم وتصويب الأنشطة الاقتصادية والاستغلال الأمثل للموارد الطبيعية، وكذا منح حوافز جديدة لتعزيز البنية التحتية العامة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاقتصاد الأخضر، الموارد الطبيعية، التنمية المستدامة، الوظائف الخضراء، البيئة

1. Introduction

The environment is a natural resource that provides society with several essential services that support human life. It supplies raw materials and the energy necessary to convert them into consumer goods through the production process, and then it receives these materials and energy in the form of waste resulting from production and consumption processes. For the environment to continue providing these essential services, the volume of production and consumption waste must not exceed the environment's absorptive capacity.

The twenty-first century faces two fundamental problems: first, preventing the risks associated with climate change and the deterioration of natural resources, which pose a significant risk to the quality of life for both present and future generations; and second, achieving social development and decent work. Following the financial crisis of 2008, efforts to achieve development goals weakened, leading governments to intensively seek economic models and concepts that preserve the climate, enhance the ecosystem, boost environmental investments, and reduce social disparities. In this context, a new type of job, known as "green jobs," emerged, gaining national and international recognition as an opportunity to redirect the economic model towards a green economy.

These jobs provide incentive-based reforms in most strategic sectors, such as renewable energy and sustainable waste recycling.

Moreover, the shift towards green jobs helps move the world towards a new development direction that ensures sustainability and environmental stability. Optimal use of these jobs represents a permanent pillar for the green economy, providing stability against sudden

economic fluctuations. Green jobs are considered the green economy's opportunity to pave new, more sustainable ways to build a clean climate future, efficiently and interactively use resources, reduce poverty, and protect the environment.

The importance of the topic lies in the depth of the issue it presents, primarily related to the significance of green jobs as a new global trend on which the green economy is based and continues according to its specific indicators and sectors.

Study problem

The main question that formulates the problem of this study is as follows:

To what extent can green jobs achieve the success of the green economy in light of the proposed environmental transformations and changes?

The following sub-questions fall under this problem:

- What do we mean by the green economy and green jobs? What are their importance and objectives?
- How is the implementation of green jobs reflected in the green economy?
- What are the impacts of green jobs on the green economy at both the international and Arab levels?

2. The Conceptual Framework of the Green Economy

As a result of the collapse of the prevailing economic system, numerous financial, food, and climate crises have emerged, necessitating the search for economic reforms capable of attracting natural capital. Consequently, the green economy system has emerged, primarily focusing on addressing accumulated crises by creating environmentally friendly green jobs aimed at correcting economic activities and optimizing the use of natural resources. In this context, the discussion will begin with an examination of the green economy, followed by an exploration of green occupations.

2.1. The Green Economy : Concept-Importance-Objectives.

Researching the issue of the green economy requires researchers to construct a theoretical framework that positions this issue as a civilized alternative to the existing economic models. In this section, we will attempt to clarify this issue, starting with its concept, then its importance, and finally its objectives.

2.1.1. Definition of the Green Economy

There have been several attempts to develop a general and the green economy is a novel economic paradigm that seeks to achieve sustainable development. In this section, we will consider three prominent definitions, attempting to build on these concepts to establish a comprehensive definition for this study

a. Definition of the Green Economy According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

The United Nations Environment Program defines the green economy as an economy that mimics the environment in its characteristics and composition, reducing risks by decreasing carbon emissions and pollution while increasing resource and energy efficiency, ultimately improving human well-being (Korine & Harraq, 2019, p. 177).

From this definition, we observe that UNEP has linked various aspects of society; the economic aspect cannot be separated from the social aspect, and the strength of the latter is closely tied to the former. (Khanfar, 2014, p. 55)

b. Definition of the Green Economy According to the International Labor Organization (ILO)

The International Labor Organization defines the green economy as a highly efficient economic option in terms of resource utilization. Additionally, it is inclusive of social life, involving both the private and public sectors in terms of growth and income, and it is a source for creating jobs that achieve sustainable development (El-Din, 2014, p. 422). From the ILO's definition, it is evident that the green economy is comprehensive in terms of management, involving both the private and public sectors. Moreover, the ILO agrees with UNEP in defining the

green economy as an alternative resource that addresses environmental crises negatively impacting society and contributes to alleviating these issues by creating new jobs.

c. Definition of the Green Economy According to Chapple

Chapple defines the green economy as a continuous improvement process focused on the environment, utilizing advanced technologies that enable cleaner production processes. These processes, in turn, reduce the phenomena of global warming and pollution, which threaten humans and society in various ways (Drouazi & Semmar, 2019, p. 89).

From the previously mentioned definitions, we conclude a comprehensive and composite definition of the green economy as follows: it is an economy that emulates the environment, taking it as its subject and foundation without causing harm, characterized by the following features (Drouazi & Semmar, 2019, pp. 89-90):

- An economy with reduced carbon emissions and increased resource efficiency that includes all social groups.
- Income growth and job possibilities are influenced by investments from both the public and private sectors.
- Increased efficiency in resource and energy consumption, preserving biodiversity and ecological services to avoid their depletion.

2.1.2. Importance and Requirements of the Green Economy

Numerous studies and reports have demonstrated the benefits of adopting a green economy, this encompasses the 2011 report published by the United Nations Environment Program, which emphasized the inevitable environmental, economic, and social benefits of this economy. Therefore, we shall discuss the significance of the green economy first, followed by its prerequisites.

a. Importance of the Green Economy

The importance of transitioning to a green economy is evident through its reformative functions affecting the environment, economy, and society (Said, Mowafaq, & Takrart, 2018, p. 112):

- **Environmental Aspect:** The green economy is significant because it reduces carbon emissions and waste that could harm the environment. It also acts as a shield to protect biodiversity and prevent the depletion of forests and marine resources.
- **Economic Aspect:** It contributes to the evolutionary movement of global economic growth in the long term, surpassing the current growth rates.
- **Social Aspect:** The green economy creates vast job opportunities across various economic sectors, reducing unemployment and improving individuals' living standards. Anticipated investments in the agriculture sector aimed at enhancing its environmental sustainability are predicted to mitigate rural poverty. Additionally, the green economy positively impacts food security and is anticipated to mitigate water and the purpose is to address energy poverty by implementing solutions that focus on optimizing the use of natural resources and minimizing investment in green infrastructure, such as renewable energy services, drinking water, and sanitation.

b. Requirements for Transitioning to the Green Economy:

Several mechanisms encourage the activation of the green economy, summarized by a researcher as follows (Drouazi & Semmar, 2019, p. 91):

- Political incentives for implementing green economy mechanisms;
- Focusing on rural development and achieving growth in these areas;
- Preventing water pollution by regulating and rationalizing the use of water resources;
- Encouraging and valuing environmentally responsible investments;
- Implementing environmentally-friendly and highly efficient manufacturing technology in newly established companies, while formulating policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions in industrial development;
- Governing the public transportation sector;
- Adopting sustainable environmental standards;

- Recycling and investing in solid waste through environmentally friendly methods.

2.2. Green Jobs : Concept-Importance-Objectives.

Human activity in the economic field in contemporary times necessitates the consideration of numerous jobs that fulfill material needs without resulting in negative consequences, while also ensuring the continuity of life. Among the most prominent of these are green jobs, which are the focus of this section. We will discuss their definition, importance, and highlight their main objectives.

2.2.1. Definition of Green Jobs

The advancement of the green economy has resulted in the rise of green jobs as a contemporary mechanism that plays a crucial part in the modernization of businesses and the economy. This concept has been defined by several specialized organizations in this field. We will review the key definitions, we shall begin with the United Nations Environment Program, followed by the International Labor Organization, and ultimately combine these definitions into a comprehensive one.

a. Definition of Green Jobs According to the United Nations Environment Program

According to the United Nations Environment Program, green occupations are defined as those that actively contribute to the preservation of environmental quality and the prevention of pollution. These jobs include work in agriculture, manufacturing, administrative activities, and the service sector (Qaham, 2016, p. 363). This suggests that considering jobs that preserve the environment has become essential in contemporary times due to the significant pollution and blockage that adversely affect the environment and humanity at large.

b. Definition of Green Jobs According to the International Labor Organization

The Global Report on Green Jobs Initiative was initiated by the International Labor Organization in 2008, the document is named "Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World" and

it focuses on the specific features of green jobs in the field of renewable energy, buildings, transport, core industries, agriculture, and forestry. It emphasized the role of labor market policies and social protection. The definition provided by the ILO is consistent with that of the United Nations Environment Program, identifying green jobs as professions that contribute to environmental preservation and reduce risks such as pollution and global warming (Berkenou & Thabeti, 2016, p. 26).

According to the Green Jobs Initiative carried out by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), International Labor Organization (ILO), and International Organization of Employers (IOE), and according to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), green employment include those in the field of agriculture, manufacturing, construction, installation, maintenance, operational and technical activities, and these are administrative and service activities that have a substantial impact on the preservation or restoration of environmental quality. These occupations must also fulfill the enduring requirements and goals of the labor movement, including ensuring sufficient remuneration, secure working environments, and the protection of workers' rights (Berkenou & Thabeti, 2016, p. 26).

From the above definitions, we can conclude that green jobs are environmentally compatible professions that utilize the environment without causing harm. They require institutional efforts aimed at creating and ensuring the sustainability of these jobs in a manner that benefits the environment in the long term.

2.2.2. Importance of Green Jobs

The shift towards a green economy has led to the production of green goods and services within green jobs that rival non-green jobs in similar sectors regarding high skill levels and wage rates. Thus, green jobs are considered a means to attract people from impoverished communities to work by training them in skills to produce environmentally friendly products or services. Consequently, green jobs have significant importance, which can be summarized as follows:

a. Environmental Importance

Green jobs serve as a civilized alternative, offering a prominent service in the green economy specifically and the overall economy generally. They preserve the environment and mitigate the risks of all forms of pollution by performing two functions simultaneously: the first involves cleaning and purifying the environment, and the second involves production and the creation of new jobs that are less costly in terms of raw materials because these materials are recycled and reinvested. Therefore, green jobs are considered an alternative for protecting and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity (Maqafi, 2019, p. 144).

b. Economic Importance

Green jobs provide crucial services for the economy as they aim to offer numerous new fields, including employment, income, and government revenues, not to mention the workforce that contributes to improving individuals' living standards. In this context, we will present a set of statistics cited by a researcher: " Approximately 8.5 million green employments exist in the United States, with the majority concentrated in companies associated with the manufacturing and dissemination of renewable energy." According to a report from the United Nations Environment Program, approximately 2.3 million individuals have entered employment in the renewable energy industry in recent years. Additionally, nearly 8 million people are expected to be employed in the wind and solar energy sectors over the coming decades (Berkenou & Thabeti, 2016, p. 30).

2.2.3. Objectives of Green Jobs

The implementation of green jobs aims to achieve a set of goals, which one researcher has summarized as follows (Rashi & Brouche, 2016, p. 214):

- Preserving Environmental Integrity: This is achieved by reducing carbon gases in the atmosphere.
- Doubling Profits for Economic Institutions: Institutions that rely on such jobs benefit from additional wealth generated through recycling, which is less costly and environmentally friendly.

- Improving the Economic Performance of the Institution: This is done by enhancing the performance of the green jobs management chain in all its practices, including supply, transportation, storage, manufacturing, and more.
- Enhancing the Production Process: This involves achieving optimal energy use and reducing the waste of natural resources.
- Reducing Distribution and Packaging Costs: Efforts are made to lower the costs associated with distribution and packaging processes, thereby decreasing the volume of waste resulting from these operations.

3. The Role of Green Jobs in Promoting the Green Economy

Having started with the green economy as a general premise and then addressed the issue of green jobs as a crucial part of the green economy, this section aims to explore the relationship between green jobs and the green economy. Therefore, we will discuss two prominent elements: first, the investments, branches, and purposes of green jobs, and second, their impacts on both national and international levels.

3.1. Green Jobs : Investments-Branches- Purposes

This part of the study covers three main sections, all of which pertain to green jobs. The first section discusses investments in green jobs, the second covers their branches, and the third focuses on their purposes.

3.1.1. Investments in Green Jobs

Green jobs rely heavily on investment as their primary support. their concentration is on four important sectors of the green economy: renewable energy, energy efficiency, solid waste recycling, and wastewater treatment. These findings were confirmed by the "Economic and Environmental Council 2012," which stated that green jobs contributed to creating more than 50,000 new job opportunities by 2020. The Green Jobs Opportunities Map, created under the "Be Green" project, also highlights a substantial potential for integrating youth aged

15-24 into various fields such as air quality monitoring, combating global warming, forest exploitation, developing renewable energies, and rural development. Efforts are being made to create green jobs that support the infrastructure for wastewater treatment (500 million cubic meters of wastewater annually), waste collection and recycling, reforestation, energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, water consumption rationalization, and the advancement of alternative water sources (United Nations, 2016, p. 03). From the Green Jobs Opportunities Map, we can conclude that this type of economy can contribute to a sophisticated cultural renaissance that ensures human survival and a healthy life by preserving the environment and investing positively in it.

3.1.2. Branches of Green Jobs

Green jobs encompass various branches and sectors. According to the United Nations Environment Program, they include renewable energies, concentrated solar power, different types of solar energy, wind energy, energy efficiency, wastewater treatment, waste management and valorization, as well as aquaculture, risk adaptation and management, forest wealth valorization branches, and new green branches such as aromatic and medicinal plants to support growth and provide job opportunities (United Nations, p. 08).

3.1.3. Purposes of Green Jobs

Green jobs aim to achieve several objectives, the most prominent of which are focusing on social responsibility, environmental protection, sustainability, alternative technologies, energy efficiency, and environmental awareness. Additionally, these occupations have the objective of safeguarding ecosystems and preserving biodiversity, minimize energy and water usage by implementing highly effective solutions, establish a carbon-free economy, and strive to eliminate the creation of any waste or pollution on a permanent basis. All these goals are pursued within the framework of achieving a green economy. Therefore, we shall elucidate the effects of these occupations on both the domestic and global scales.

3.2. The Impact of Green Jobs on Western and Arab National Levels

In this section, we will discuss the impact of green jobs by dividing it into two parts: the first focuses on the Western countries, and the second on the Arab countries.

3.2.1. The Impact of Green Jobs on the National Level in Western Countries

Green jobs have achieved various impacts on the national level in Western countries. For example, the "International Labor Office" conducted a survey on manufacturing in the United States, finding that nearly 100,000 out of approximately 700,000 jobs in four major industries can be considered green jobs, significantly stimulating employment. One example is the recycling of large quantities of heat generated by major industries. According to current practices for each gigawatt of combined heat and power in the United States, global capacities of 330 gigawatts of combined heat and power could provide over 820,000 green jobs in new facilities. The case of the large global manufacturer M3 illustrates this success, as the company reduced its global greenhouse gas emissions by 72% in 2011 through its integrated green jobs strategy. The company's P3 (Pollution Prevention Pays) program, launched in 1975, has cumulatively prevented more than 1.4 billion kilograms of pollutants by directly employing green jobs such as reducing energy use and utilizing resources more effectively, thereby saving money through lower operating costs and increased product sales (International Labour Office, 2013, p. 51).

Statistical estimates indicate that one in four jobs (25%) in the United States over the next twenty years will be directly or indirectly related to green jobs. In 2009, the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) estimated that 14 million people were employed in 45 various jobs related in some way to "green employment." This trend is attributed to several factors, including rising rates of green buildings and increasing green products. Estimates suggest that the U.S. economy could create 23

million green jobs or related positions by 2038 in various sectors such as renewable energy, construction, and green transportation (Al-Buraidi, 2015, p. 379). These statistics indicate that the United States has been a pioneer in recognizing the benefits of green jobs, as evidenced by the significant progress reported.

India's experience in this field can also be cited, with the enactment of the "National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" in 2006, acting as a social safety net and means of ensuring economic stability for impoverished individuals in rural areas. This legislation is structured as a public works initiative, ensuring that every home with an adult volunteer involved in the program will get a minimum of 100 days of paid employment per year. The size of this initiative has quadrupled since its inception, with investments reaching approximately \$8 billion in 2010, generating a total of 3 billion workdays and providing advantages to 59 million households. About 84% of these investments are allocated to water conservation, land development, and irrigation systems.

The world will not forget the job losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led millions to lose their jobs globally. Some governments responded haphazardly by diverting funds to unsustainable sectors as part of solutions to mitigate these losses. However, a more effective approach was taken by countries like China, which incorporated green measures as an essential part of stimulus packages to revive the economy. These measures aimed to balance economic and environmental aspects by shifting to the use and exploitation of green energy sources as a clean, renewable, low-cost, and non-polluting alternative, replacing non-renewable energy sources with green energy to achieve the fundamental pillars of sustainable development. This included green technology and its branches: green chemistry, green nanotechnology, green buildings, green information technology, and renewable energy (Laghdar, 2023).

3.2.2. The Impact of Green Jobs on the National Level in Arab Countries

The strategy focused on the green economy can contribute to achieving green growth and benefiting the environment by creating green jobs to renew and maintain natural capital, thereby alleviating poverty. Various economic sectors aim to reduce poverty and transition to a green economy.

As per the 2020 study published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the MENA area is now actively considering the implementation of green jobs as a highly effective strategy for economic development. This includes using environmentally friendly alternatives such as solar energy technology, wind energy for smart green cities, and projects focused on desalinating seawater (supported by renewable energy sources) and developing public transport systems (Laghdir, 2023).

3.2.3. The Impact of Green Jobs on the National Level in North African Countries

For example, in North African countries, Algeria has implemented a national strategy to support private investments to reduce poverty and achieve the goals set within the United Nations Millennium Project framework through programs that include (Belailia & Azzouzi, 2021, p. 458):

- Enhancing human development rates over the years by improving health and educational services and raising the guaranteed minimum wage.
- Developing a national strategy for sustainable development that builds a green economy through partnerships with leading countries like Germany in renewable energy and automotive industry development.
- Formulating five-year and sectoral development plans and adapting their goals to meet local community requirements by incorporating additional indicators that benefit individuals and local communities.

- Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the country's needs for financial, material, and human resources necessary to cover all strategic sectors and achieve defined developmental outcomes.
- The government has set ambitious and specific commitments to integrate sustainability into development plans, with significant programs and investments in renewable energy sectors, waste management, and wastewater management is guided by a national environmental plan (NES) and a sustainable development action plan (SD-NEAP) (Qaham, 2016, p. 170).

Algeria's adopted green policies rely on various economic tools such as environmental taxation and the gradual removal or transformation of subsidies on major natural resources (like energy, water, and fuel prices). The "polluter pays" principle, which incorporates the expenses associated with environmental resources into the pricing of goods or services available in the market, is also adopted. The Algerian legislator used a simplified criterion to identify polluters through the 2002 Finance Law, linking it to the activity of the economic agent subject to declaration by the President of the Municipal People's Council, the governor, or the minister depending on the nature and severity of the activity.

A study by the National Agency for Cooperation for Development revealed that it is possible to create 1.4 million jobs in Algeria by 2025 in activities related to the green economy. The job development potential under this new economic model is estimated at 1,421,619 jobs across various fields such as household waste recycling, agriculture, and renewable energies. This was disclosed during the "Employability and Entrepreneurship for Youth and Women in the Green Economy in Algeria" forum, which noted that the number of institutions engaged in such activities in 2012 was at least 27,202. Among them, 3,407 were involved in waste restructuring, 1,470 in water management, 168,648 in green building, 631.68 in green space management, and 30,085 units in environmental services such as auditing, studies, and training. A recent

report indicates that these activities are highly popular among job-seeking youth and women (Qaham, 2016, p. 170).

Based on the data provided on Algeria as a model for North African countries, we conclude that the idea of green jobs is not confined to a specific region but has spread globally. Its implementation has begun in some countries, as seen in Algeria, where the previous statistics affirm this trend.

4. Conclusion

From the aforementioned discussion, we have answered the research question posed in our introduction regarding the contribution of green jobs. We conclude that green jobs have significantly propelled the green economy forward, aiming to achieve sustainable economic and social development. Our conclusion is based on several findings:

- Green jobs are the primary driver of the green economy across all its sectors, including agriculture, construction, recycling, transportation, and energy.
- Green jobs prepare the ground for green competition by eliminating subsidies, correcting economic activities, optimizing the use of natural resources, and providing new incentives to strengthen public infrastructure.
- Green jobs can serve as a bridge between eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and achieving environmental sustainability according to the Millennium Development Goals, thereby realizing an eco-friendly green economy.

Given that green jobs create new employment opportunities, which help reduce the unemployment rates exacerbated by the global financial and economic crisis, and promote the growth of the green economy in order to attain the objectives of sustainable development., we propose the following recommendations for Arab countries in general, and Algeria in particular:

- Develop a strategy focused on creating and encouraging innovation in activities classified as green jobs.

- Enact laws that provide incentives for green investments, which would in turn create green jobs.
- Design training programs for workers to supply, operate, and maintain equipment that uses alternative energy sources.

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