

OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS FOR WOMEN IN THE TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



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ABSTRACT

This article provides a systematic analysis of the role of women, available opportunities, and the main obstacles in the transition to a green economy. Within the scope of the study, the theoretical foundations of the concept of the green economy and the interrelationship between sustainable development and gender equality are highlighted. The research findings indicate that women have high potential in the fields of renewable energy, environmental entrepreneurship, organic agriculture, and green innovations. The article also develops evidence-based recommendations aimed at supporting women to ensure an effective and inclusive transition to the green economy.

Keywords: green economy, gender equality, sustainable development, women's employment, green innovations, environmental policy, renewable energy, inclusive economic growth.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье представлен систематический анализ роли женщин, имеющихся возможностей и основных препятствий на пути перехода к «зеленой» экономике. В рамках исследования рассматриваются теоретические основы концепции «зеленой» экономики и взаимосвязь между устойчивым развитием и гендерным равенством. Результаты исследования показывают, что женщины обладают высоким потенциалом в таких областях, как возобновляемые источники энергии, экологическое предпринимательство, органическое сельское хозяйство и «зеленые» инновации. Кроме того, в статье разработаны основанные на фактических данных рекомендации, направленные на поддержку женщин в целях обеспечения эффективного и инклюзивного перехода к «зеленой» экономике.

Ключевые слова: зеленая экономика, гендерное равенство, устойчивое развитие, занятость женщин, зеленые инновации, экологическая политика, возобновляемые источники энергии, инклюзивный экономический рост.

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada yashil iqtisodiyotga o'tish jarayonida ayollarning o'rni, mayjud imkoniyatlar va duch kelinayotgan asosiy to'siqlar tizimli tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot doirasida yashil iqtisodiyot tushunchasining nazariy asoslari, barqaror rivojlanish va gender tenglik o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqlik yoritilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari ayollarning qayta tiklanuvchi energiya, ekologik tadbirkorlik, organik qishloq xo'jaligi va yashil innovatsiyalar sohalarida yuqori salohiyatga ega ekanini ko'rsatadi. Shu bilan birga, maqolada yashil iqtisodiyotga samarali va inklyuziv o'tishni ta'minlash uchun ayollarni qo'llab-quvvatlashga qaratilgan ilmiy asoslangan tavsiyalar ishlab chiqilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: yashil iqtisodiyot, gender tenglik, barqaror rivojlanish, ayollar bandligi, yashil innovatsiyalar, ekologik siyosat, qayta tiklanuvchi energiya, inklyuziv iqtisodiy o'sish.

Introduction

Background & Problem Statement

After the industrial revolution in the 1800s, it became obvious that traditional production methods had a significant carbon footprint, resulting in rapid global climate changes that negatively affect every living species on the globe in numerous ways. To address this issue, worldwide organizations, lawmakers, ministries, and corporations maintain new procedures on a regular basis to protect the earth and all living things on this planet.

In its report 'Towards a Green Economy' from 2011, the UNEP defines a green economy as: *green economy as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.*

However, the transition to a green economy is not inherently gender-neutral. Historically, women have been underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, restricted access to finance and land ownership, and cultural norms that confine them to traditional roles (OECD, 2020). This disparity not only undermines the principles of social equity but also hinders the effectiveness and inclusivity of the green transition itself. To change the situation, targeted efforts are needed to ensure the active participation of women in the emerging "green" labor market and eliminate gender disparities, especially as the energy landscape shifts towards sustainable development. Embracing women's crucial role in the green economy is not just about equality; it is about unleashing a force that can genuinely transform our world for the better, as emphasized by the words of ambitious leader: *"When women thrive, all of society benefits, and succeeding generations are given a better start in life"* – Kofi Annan.

Today, on the basis of the economic changes taking place on a global and regional scale, including the concept of "sustainable development", promoted by the UN, the processes of transition to a new, "green" economy are also being activated in Uzbekistan. Of particular importance in this direction is the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 514¹, adopted on September 29, 2023, which sets out the tasks of coordinating the issues of the "green" economy, organizing responsible units and forming an appropriate regulatory framework.

These decisions and initiatives are not just technical or institutional changes, but are concerned with the active participation of all segments of society, especially women. Because one of the main ideas of the "green" economy is to ensure inclusive and sustainable development. Therefore, the active participation of women in the labor market not only promotes social justice, but also promotes sustainable economic growth. In particular, the contribution of women

¹ Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 29.09.2023 No. 514 on measures to organize the management system for the transition to a "green" economy <https://lex.uz/docs/6622631>

entrepreneurs, mothers operating in the public and private sectors to the economy cannot be denied. Their labor not only increases GDP, but also forms a reinvestment mechanism through preschool education, social services and family consumption. This is an important part of the rational management of resources and the development of human capital in a "green" economy.

Therefore, overcoming restrictive stereotypes of women's activities, their active involvement in economic processes — is an important factor in the effective transition to a "green" economy in Uzbekistan. This is one of the main factors that not only correspond to the goals of sustainable development, but also provide prospects for national development.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the expanding piece of knowledge on gender and sustainable development, by providing a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities referring to women's empowerment in the green economy. It points out the necessity of incorporating gender perspectives into environmental and economic policymaking to assure equitable and sustainable consequences. The evidence-based recommendations generated are expected to inform policymakers, researchers, and organizations for empowering women, enhancing their participation, and maximizing their contributions to the green transition.

Literature Review and Discussion

In the 60s and 70s of the 20th century, the economic and social consequences of environmental problems became the center of scientific discussion. During this period, the term "economy of the use of nature" was formed, economic approaches appeared that took into account the impact of economic activity on the environment. These approaches offer an assessment of socio-economic consequences as external influences and their resolution by economic means. For example, these include the idea of solving environmental problems through the sale of greenhouse gas emissions.

These views are closely related to the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development is the development taking into account the possibilities of the next generation, while meeting the needs of the current generation. It is based on a balanced growth of social, economic and environmental components. The models developed by E.R. Lindal and J. R. Hicks² provide for the use of Environmental Technologies, saving environmental resources in maximizing the flow of gross income.

In recent years, especially after the financial crisis of 2008, the inefficiency of traditional economic models has become visible, and interest in a new approach — the concept of a green economy-is growing. A green economy is an economic system that does not harm nature, effectively uses resources and provides social justice.

² Heal, G. M., & Krström, B. National Income and the Environment 2001
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=279112

N.I. Ivanova and L.V. Levchenko³ emphasizes the following principles in the implementation of the green economy:

- ✓ justice and equality;
- ✓ careful use of Natural Resources;
- ✓ ensuring public participation;
- ✓ openness in public and private sector activities;
- ✓ ensuring stability of the circuit;
- ✓ achieve efficiency in production and consumption;
- ✓ ensuring the harmony of interests between generations.

These theoretical approaches are important in substantiating women's participation in the green economy. After all, without gender equality in the economy and the participation of active women, real sustainable development cannot be achieved. Women are especially manifested as an important subtext of the green economy with their cautious attitude towards nature and striving for social justice. Therefore, the scientific sources considered above serve as a theoretical basis in the study of the possibilities and barriers of women in this process.

Research Methodology

The relevance and necessity of the transition to a "green economy" is determined by the following factors:

- the need for technological modernization of the economy in order to reduce the negative consequences of environmental pollution and the end of Natural Resources;
- increase the competitiveness of the economy, reduce the dependence on hydrocarbon raw materials and reduce its share in the final product;
- the application of "green" innovations that make it possible to update high-tech areas with a large multiplicative effect;
- reducing dependence on hydrocarbons in the process of transition to a low-carbon economy⁴.

The Gender equality strategy has clear guidelines aimed at strengthening women's participation in the environmental field. These guidelines are primarily aimed at improving women's environmental knowledge and skills, their participation in environmental decision-making processes, and expanding expertise. This strategy also focuses on encouraging women to participate in environmental tasks, educating and educating them as professionals in the field of modern "green" technologies and advanced energy sources. In particular, as a result of our studies of existing regulatory legal acts in the relationship of women and the green economy, national programs (for example, "Strategy for achieving gender equality

³ Иванова Наталья Игоревна, Левченко Лариса Владимировна «Зеленая» экономика: сущность, принципы и перспективы // Вестник ОмГУ. Серия: Экономика. 2017. №2. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/zelenaya-ekonomika-suschnost-prinzipy-i-perspektivy> (дата обращения: 14.10.2025).

⁴ «Зеленая экономика» Training manual – Publishing house «Инновационное развитие» 2023, 208 pages, p. 18

in the Republic of Uzbekistan-2030"⁵, "National strategy for the transition to a green economy"⁶), reports from organizations such as UN, UN Women, ILO (International Labor Organization), UNEP and World Bank, we focused on the following aspects:

- The importance given to the role of women in the green sector in laws;
- Correspondence between national and international policies;
- Recommendations in the reports of organizations and their implementation in practice.

Findings

Green Economy Strategy also focuses on the problems of environmental justice and social equality. Therefore, the importance of gender equality issues is important in the transition to a green economy. The concept of "green economy" is aimed at achieving environmental sustainability, rational use of Natural Resources, the introduction of low-carbon technologies, in which it is important to create equal opportunities for women and men. In the implementation of the green economy, it is necessary to expand the contribution of women to economic and environmental development. Based on the results of the study, we came to the following conclusions.

✓ The active involvement of women in the green economy is an important factor in achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development. In particular, there is an opportunity to create jobs for women in areas such as renewable energy, organic agriculture, environmental tourism.

✓ It was found that women, especially in rural areas, did not have enough opportunities for education and professional development in green technology. This limits their competitiveness.

✓ While many countries have norms regarding gender equality, it has been observed in practice that these policies are not fully enforceable.

✓ In the course of the study, it was revealed that a number of environmental projects led by women are providing effective results, especially at the local level, ensuring social stability.

Conclusion

The transition to a green economy is one of the main criteria for sustainable development on a global scale. The active participation of women in this process can be effectively carried out by increasing their knowledge and skills in the environmental sphere. Studies show that gender equality is one of the important factors that increase the productivity of green policies.⁷ Women can influence the sustainable development process not only as consumers but also as innovators, educators and decision makers. The transition to a green economy requires

⁵ Resolution of the Senate of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 28.05.2021 SQ-297-IV on approval of the strategy for achieving gender equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan by 2030

⁶ Decision of the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 04.10.2019 PQ-4477 on approval of the strategy of transition to a green economy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2019-2030 <https://lex.uz/docs/4539>

⁷ United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). (2021). *Green Economy: A Brief for Policymakers*. Retrieved from: <https://www.unep.org>

technological modernization of sectors of the economy, diversification of energy sources, saving resources and the introduction of low-carbon production systems. The effective use of women's labor and potential is considered important in this process. The international experience on the expansion of women's participation in the formation of economic and environmental policies⁸⁹ (ILO, 2020; OECD, 2021) confirms the importance of the gender approach in the development of the green economy.

Therefore, within the framework of Uzbekistan's "national strategy for the transition to a green economy" and "strategy for achieving gender equality–2030", it is advisable to implement specific programs and measures aimed at realizing the potential of women in the environmental sector. This, in turn, serves to promote social justice, sustainable economic growth and environmental security in the country.

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