



The role of women in promoting green economy in Uzbekistan

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Modern environmental challenges necessitate a rethinking of traditional approaches to economic development. In Uzbekistan, where the greening of the economy is gaining momentum, the issue of gender equality in the green economy is particularly relevant. Women in the country are demonstrating increasing activity in the implementation of environmental initiatives, as evidenced by data from various social programs.

Uzbekistan's national strategy for transitioning to a green economy is gradually integrating a gender component. Women constitute a significant portion of the workforce in traditionally "green" sectors – agriculture, education, and healthcare.[1] However, their representation in leadership positions in environmental projects remains insufficient.

Uzbekistan's vocational education system is beginning to adapt to new environmental requirements. The growth in the number of women receiving education in renewable energy and sustainable development is particularly indicative. This trend is especially noticeable in regional universities, where specialized "green" programs are being created.

Women's entrepreneurship in the field of environmentally friendly technologies is demonstrating steady growth. Small and medium-sized enterprises led by women are actively exploring niches in organic farming, eco-tourism, and waste recycling. Government microcredit programs contribute to the development of this sector.

In agriculture, which remains a key sector of the economy, women play an important role in the introduction of water-saving technologies. Their practical experience in irrigation and land use issues is becoming a valuable resource for developing climate change adaptation strategies.

In urbanized areas, women are actively involved in greening and waste separation programs. Women-led community organizations are successfully implementing projects on environmental education and urban ecosystem development.

The number of female scientists conducting research in the field of sustainable development is increasing. Their work focuses on land degradation, water conservation, and alternative energy, contributing to the formation of a scientific base for the green economy. Uzbekistani female specialists are actively participating in

international programs for the exchange of experience in the field of environmentally sustainable development. This cooperation allows for the adaptation of best global practices to local conditions and strengthens the country's position in the international arena. Women are increasingly holding key positions in environmental agencies and ecological committees.

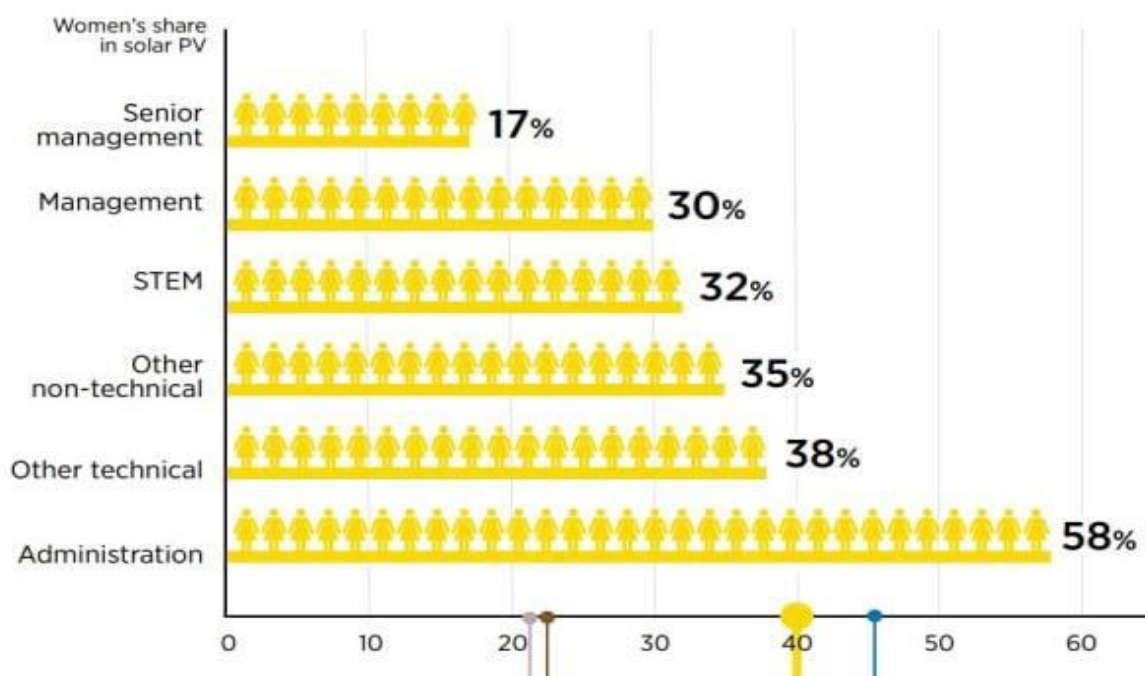


Figure 1 Women in the solar photovoltaic sector compared with other sectors[5]

In the most recent report in the series A Gender Perspective, IRENA assessed the challenges faced by women working in the solar photovoltaic (PV) sector. The assessment considered both modern markets and energy access scenarios. The study, the third in the series, obtained primary data from individuals and organisations in the solar PV sector by means of a global online survey (IRENA, 2022a). The analysis showed that women represent 40% of the full-time positions in the solar PV sector, almost twice as much as in the wind or the oil and gas sectors (21% and 22%, respectively).[4] The solar PV sector exceeds women's average 32% share across the broader renewable energy sector but falls somewhat short of the share of women employed in the overall economy (see Figure 4). Women's representation across solar PV job roles is uneven. They are most frequently hired for administrative positions, where their share reaches 58%. Meanwhile, women represented comparatively small shares, 32% of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) positions and 35% of non-STEM technical positions (such as lawyers or procurement experts).

Further, women hold 38% of other non-technical positions (e.g. marketing, sales, distribution, product assembly or installation). The better performance in this category is largely due to off-grid solar, which has multiple positions and initiatives targeting women. This may also influence leadership composition, with women accounting for 30% of managerial jobs. However, women represent 17% of the total senior management roles in the solar PV industry. Effective actions are needed to ease women's entry into the industry and improve their career prospects and progression. Creating gender awareness is essential to fully understand the complexity of the barriers faced by women. Further, national policies are needed to create safer spaces

and better workplace practices, policies and regulations. Also, women need networks and systems to support training and mentorship to enable full utilisation of their talents. IRENA will continue to work for reducing barriers, fostering inclusivity and empowering women to actively participate and excel in the sector.[1] Furthermore, IRENA is fully committed to mainstreaming gender considerations, integrating gender equality and equity into its policies, programmes and initiatives. Prioritising gender equality and promoting diversity in the renewable energy sector fosters a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

Despite progress, traditional stereotypes persist, limiting women's participation in the technical aspects of the green economy. Overcoming these barriers requires comprehensive measures to change public consciousness. Further integration of women into the green transformation processes of Uzbekistan's economy involves the development of targeted educational programs, strengthening measures to support women's entrepreneurship, and increasing representation in government bodies.

Uzbekistan's experience demonstrates that women are becoming an important driving force in the transition to a green economy. Their participation at all levels - from local initiatives to national programs - is a necessary condition for achieving the country's sustainable development goals. Further expansion of opportunities for women to realize their potential in this area will contribute to accelerating the ecological transformation of the economy.

List of references

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