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IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR CREATING SUSTAINABLE NEW JOBS

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Abstract. The increasing urgency to address climate change, digital transformation, and socio-economic inequalities has intensified global efforts to create sustainable employment opportunities. This paper critically examines the immediate prospects for generating sustainable new jobs through the integration of green economy principles, technological innovation, and inclusive labor market strategies. It identifies key sectors—such as renewable energy, digital services, and the care economy—that demonstrate high potential for rapid job creation while aligning with long-term sustainability goals. Furthermore, the study analyzes policy instruments and institutional mechanisms necessary to accelerate the transition toward a more resilient and equitable labor market. The findings suggest that strategic investments in human capital, green infrastructure, and inclusive economic policies are vital to realizing the immediate and scalable benefits of sustainable job creation.

Keywords: sustainable employment, green economy, job creation, digital transformation, inclusive labor markets, renewable energy, social enterprise, green jobs, workforce development, economic resilience.

Introduction

The global economy is at a critical juncture, facing multiple, interrelated challenges including climate change, technological disruption, and persistent socio-economic inequalities. These challenges are not only reshaping the structure of labor markets but are also redefining the very nature of employment. In response, the concept of sustainable job creation has emerged as a strategic priority for governments, international organizations, and private sector actors alike.

Sustainable jobs—those that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially inclusive—represent a crucial pillar for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the areas of decent work, economic growth, and climate action. Unlike traditional forms of employment, sustainable jobs contribute to long-term socio-economic resilience and ecological stability, aligning employment strategies with broader sustainability objectives.

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In the post-pandemic recovery era, the urgency to create new employment opportunities has intensified. However, the quality and sustainability of these jobs are now just as important as their quantity. This context presents a timely opportunity to reassess national and global labor policies, prioritize green and digital sectors, and invest in human capital capable of adapting to a rapidly evolving economic landscape.

This paper aims to explore the immediate prospects for creating sustainable new jobs by identifying promising sectors, evaluating enabling policy frameworks, and addressing the key challenges to implementation. By focusing on both short-term potential and long-term impact, the study seeks to inform decision-makers on how to catalyze sustainable employment as a pathway to inclusive and resilient economic development.

Literature review

Sustainable job creation is a widely researched topic in the global academic and policy-making community. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to how environmental sustainability, digital transformation, and inclusive economic growth can be integrated into national employment strategies. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022)[1] defines sustainable jobs as those that provide decent incomes, protect workers' rights, and contribute to environmental protection and social equity. This concept has become particularly relevant in the context of post-pandemic recovery and climate change mitigation efforts.

Globally, studies such as those by Bowen and Kuralbayeva (2015)[2] and Mazzucato (2018) highlight the importance of public investment in green infrastructure and mission-oriented innovation policies as drivers of sustainable employment. Meanwhile, Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014)[3] focus on how digital transformation can create new employment opportunities, provided that adequate upskilling and social inclusion strategies are in place.

In the context of Uzbekistan, the topic of sustainable job creation is gaining traction as the country pursues structural reforms aimed at transitioning to a green and innovation-driven economy. According to the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan 2022–2026, the government is committed to supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency, digital economy development, and regional economic diversification—all of which are potential sources of sustainable employment. Moreover, the Strategy for the Transition to a Green Economy until 2030 outlines specific targets for creating environmentally friendly jobs,

[1] International Labour Organization. (2022). *World Employment and Social Outlook 2022: Investing in sustainable recovery*. https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2022/lang--en/index.htm
[2] Bowen, A., & Kuralbayeva, K. (2015). *Looking for green jobs: The impact of green growth on employment*. Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment. https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/publication/looking-for-green-jobs-the-impact-of-green-growth-on-employment/
[3] Brynjolfsson, E., & McAfee, A. (2014). *The second machine age: Work, progress, and prosperity in a time of brilliant technologies*. W. W. Norton & Company.

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especially in sectors such as solar and wind energy, water resource management, and sustainable agriculture.

Studies conducted by local researchers (e.g., Rakhimova, 2021[4]; Turaev, 2023[5]) emphasize that Uzbekistan's young and growing labor force presents both an opportunity and a challenge. While there is significant potential for green and digital job creation, current labor market structures remain heavily reliant on low-skilled, informal, and environmentally harmful employment. Moreover, the mismatch between the skills provided by the education system and those demanded by the evolving labor market limits the country's capacity to rapidly scale up sustainable job creation.

Efforts are being made to address these challenges. For instance, the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction has introduced training and upskilling programs in partnership with international organizations, aimed at preparing the workforce for emerging green and digital sectors. Additionally, social enterprises and the care economy are gradually being recognized as potential sources of inclusive and sustainable employment, particularly for women and youth in rural areas.

Despite these positive developments, scholars such as Karimova (2022)[6] caution that the absence of integrated policy frameworks and limited coordination among stakeholders pose significant risks to the sustainability of employment programs. Effective governance, long-term financing mechanisms, and public-private partnerships are identified as critical success factors for turning Uzbekistan's labor market transition into a sustainable development pathway.

In conclusion, the literature underscores that Uzbekistan has strong potential for sustainable job creation, especially in green, digital, and care-related sectors. However, realizing this potential requires coherent policies, capacity building, and targeted investment in human capital—aligned with international best practices and adapted to the country's specific socio-economic context.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and descriptive research design to explore the immediate prospects for creating sustainable new jobs, with a particular focus on both global trends and the national context of Uzbekistan. The research methodology is based on secondary data analysis, comparative literature review, and policy document evaluation.

[4] Rakhimova, S. (2021). Youth employment and the green economy: Uzbekistan's roadmap for sustainability. *Economic Bulletin of Uzbekistan*, 4(1), 23–31.
[5] Turaev, B. (2023). Digitalization and employment: Future labor market trends in Uzbekistan. *Uzbek Journal of Economics and Management*, 7(3), 45–52.
[6] Karimova, D. (2022). Sustainable employment in Uzbekistan: Challenges and policy recommendations. *Journal of Central Asian Studies*, 10(2), 88–98.

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A qualitative research approach was selected due to the exploratory nature of the study and its emphasis on understanding complex social, economic, and environmental factors influencing sustainable employment. This approach enables the synthesis of existing knowledge, identification of emerging patterns, and formulation of context-specific recommendations.

The study draws on multiple sources of secondary data, including:

- Reports and statistical bulletins from international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), OECD, and the World Economic Forum;
- Academic journal articles and research papers focusing on green economy, labor markets, and digital transformation;
- National policy documents from the Government of Uzbekistan, including the "New Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2022–2026" and the "Strategy for Transition to a Green Economy until 2030";
- Publications and data from the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of Uzbekistan.

While this study provides valuable insights into short-term opportunities for sustainable job creation, it is limited by its reliance on secondary data. In-depth fieldwork or primary surveys were not conducted, which may limit the granularity of certain findings. Future research could incorporate empirical methods, such as interviews with policymakers or employers, to validate and expand upon these results.

Result and discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the most immediate prospects for sustainable job creation are concentrated in three key sectors: renewable energy, digital economy, and the care and social services sector.

In the global context, renewable energy alone is projected to create over 14 million new jobs by 2030 (ILO, 2022). These include roles in solar and wind power installation, energy efficiency audits, and sustainable construction. Similarly, the digital economy—encompassing data science, software development, and IT services—continues to expand, particularly as businesses and governments accelerate digital transformation.

In Uzbekistan, these global trends are mirrored by growing investment and policy focus in analogous areas. For example, under the "Green Economy Strategy 2030," Uzbekistan has initiated major solar power projects and rural electrification programs, which are expected to generate thousands of green jobs, especially in underserved regions. Furthermore, government-led digitalization reforms have created new employment opportunities in e-commerce, fintech, and digital education.

Policy analysis reveals that Uzbekistan's strategic documents—including the "New Uzbekistan Development Strategy (2022–2026)" and the "Youth Employment Support

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Program"—highlight the importance of sustainable job creation as a development priority. Tax incentives for green technology adoption, vocational training programs, and entrepreneurship support schemes have already been introduced.

However, policy implementation challenges remain. Interagency coordination gaps, limited access to financing for small enterprises, and the need for better alignment between the education system and labor market demand are recurring barriers. Addressing these issues is essential for realizing the employment potential of sustainability-oriented sectors.

One of the most critical constraints identified is the skills mismatch between job market demands and the current capabilities of the workforce. The transition to a green and digital economy requires specialized competencies—ranging from renewable energy engineering to digital marketing and caregiving for an aging population. While Uzbekistan has begun investing in vocational education, the scale and quality of training remain insufficient to meet future needs.

Moreover, the study finds that rural populations, youth, and women are particularly underrepresented in emerging sustainable sectors due to limited access to education, technology, and financial services. Without targeted inclusion strategies, these demographic groups may remain marginalized despite job growth in the broader economy.

In the short term, job creation opportunities are most viable in infrastructure development projects, digital public services, and labor-intensive renewable energy installations. These initiatives offer "shovel-ready" jobs that can support economic recovery and poverty reduction.

In the long term, the greatest potential lies in fostering innovation ecosystems and green entrepreneurship. Creating a supportive regulatory environment and improving access to capital will be key to enabling small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to drive sustainable employment growth.

Sector	Short-Term Potential	Long-Term Potential	Key Barriers
Renewable Energy	Construction and maintenance jobs	Energy tech innovation and exports	Technical skills gap, funding
Digital Economy	E-services, ICT training centers	AI, software, and fintech industries	Digital divide, rural access
Care & Social Services	Health and education services	Demographic-responsive job growth	Gender bias, undervaluation of work

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Sustainable Job Creation Opportunities in Key Sectors[7]

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Table 1 provides a comparative overview of three priority sectors for sustainable job creation. It distinguishes between immediate short-term employment opportunities and long-term structural employment potential. Additionally, the table outlines key barriers specific to each sector that may hinder the realization of these opportunities. This classification supports targeted policy interventions for sustainable and inclusive labor market development in Uzbekistan and similar economies in transition.

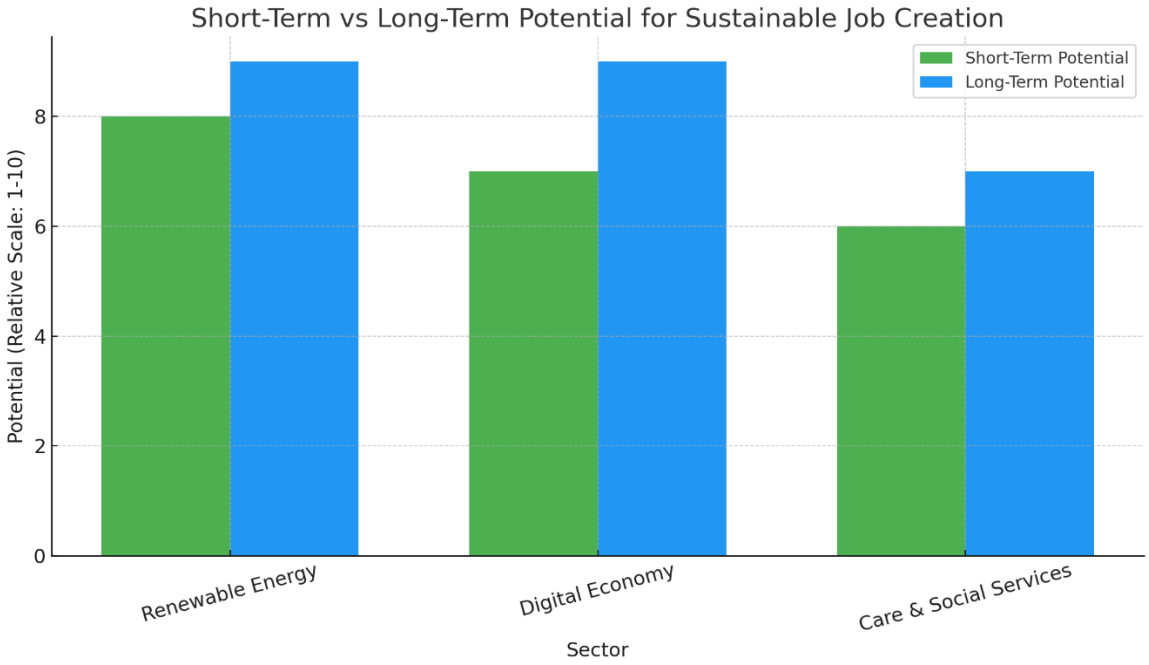

Figure 1. Comparative Potential of Sustainable Job Creation by Sector

Conclusion[8]

Figure 1 illustrates the short-term and long-term potential for sustainable job creation across three key sectors: renewable energy, digital economy, and care and social services. The values are represented on a relative scale from 1 to 10, based on global trends and national policy analysis.

This visual comparison highlights that while all three sectors present immediate job opportunities, renewable energy and the digital economy exhibit particularly strong long-term potential due to their scalability and alignment with global economic transitions. The care sector, though slightly lower in projected long-term growth, remains essential for inclusive development, especially in light of demographic changes. Policymakers can use this analysis to prioritize sectoral investment and workforce development programs.

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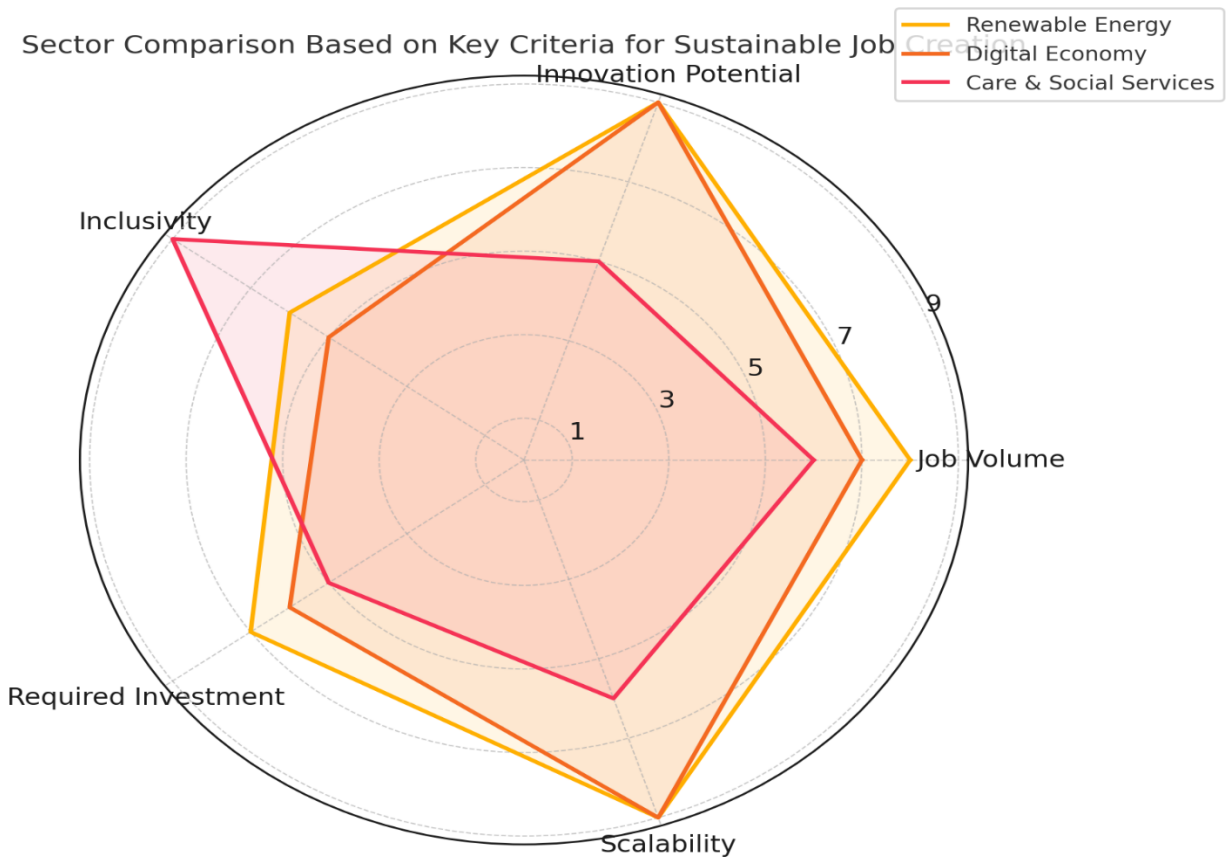

Figure 2. Sector Comparison Based on Key Criteria for Sustainable Job Creation[9]

Figure 2 provides a multidimensional comparison of three sectors—renewable energy, digital economy, and care & social services—based on five critical factors: job volume, innovation potential, inclusivity, required investment, and scalability.

The radar chart reveals that renewable energy ranks highly across most categories, especially in scalability and innovation. The digital economy also shows strong performance, particularly in innovation and scalability, although it is somewhat less inclusive. The care and social services sector scores highest in inclusivity but relatively lower in innovation and scalability. These insights suggest that a balanced policy mix should consider both growth potential and social equity when promoting sustainable job creation.

Conclusion

This study has explored the immediate prospects for creating sustainable new jobs by analyzing global trends, sectoral opportunities, and the specific context of Uzbekistan.

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The findings highlight that the renewable energy sector, digital economy, and care and social services are currently the most promising areas for employment generation that aligns with environmental and social sustainability goals.

Uzbekistan, like many emerging economies, stands at a critical juncture where structural reforms, digital transformation, and green economy initiatives converge. The country's policy frameworks—including the "Green Economy Strategy" and the "New Uzbekistan Development Strategy"—demonstrate a clear commitment to inclusive and sustainable employment. However, effective implementation requires overcoming persistent challenges such as skills mismatches, infrastructure deficits, and financing constraints.

In the short term, public investment in green infrastructure and digital public services can generate high-impact employment opportunities. In the long term, building innovation ecosystems and enhancing vocational education will be essential to ensure that the workforce is equipped for future labor market demands.

Therefore, it is imperative for policymakers, educational institutions, and private sector actors to collaborate in shaping an enabling environment for sustainable job creation. Particular attention must be given to youth, women, and rural communities to ensure equity and resilience in employment outcomes. Only through a systemic and inclusive approach can immediate job creation efforts contribute meaningfully to long-term sustainable development.

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