

THE ECOLOGICAL AND ENERGY TRANSFORMATION OF UZBEKISTAN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S “GREEN FUTURE” INITIATIVE

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Abstract: *This article explores Uzbekistan’s ongoing ecological and energy transformation within the framework of the European Union’s “Green Future” initiative. As a strategic partner in Central Asia, Uzbekistan is actively pursuing sustainable development goals by reforming its energy sector, introducing green technologies, and implementing environmental protection policies. The study highlights the country’s shift from fossil fuel dependence to renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, and discusses the institutional, economic, and international dimensions of this transformation. It also addresses the role of EU cooperation in capacity building, policy development, and investment mobilization.*

Keywords: *Uzbekistan, European Union, Green Future, renewable energy, energy reform, ecology, sustainable development, green economy.*

Global climate change and environmental degradation have made green transformation a critical priority worldwide. In this context, the European Union (EU) has launched the “Green Future” initiative aimed at supporting its partner countries in developing sustainable ecological and energy systems. Uzbekistan, as a key partner in the EU-Central Asia cooperation agenda, is actively aligning with this initiative to modernize its economy, transition to clean energy, and protect its natural environment. This article examines Uzbekistan's transformation efforts, institutional reforms, and international collaboration in building a green and sustainable future.

The EU’s “Green Future” Initiative: Overview

The “Green Future” initiative was introduced by the European Union to promote ecological resilience, reduce carbon emissions, and foster renewable energy development in partner countries. It includes financial aid, technical assistance, and policy support for countries like Uzbekistan, which are at the early stages of environmental reform. This initiative is in line with the EU’s broader Green Deal, aiming to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Key components include:

- Support for renewable energy projects

- Modernization of environmental regulations
- Climate adaptation and mitigation programs
- Development of green finance mechanisms

UZBEKISTAN'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY CHALLENGES

Uzbekistan has faced several pressing ecological and energy-related challenges, such as:

- Overreliance on fossil fuels (natural gas and coal)
- High greenhouse gas emissions
- Water scarcity and Aral Sea degradation
- Outdated infrastructure in the energy sector

These issues have necessitated urgent reforms to improve environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.

POLICY REFORMS AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN UZBEKISTAN

In response to global trends and domestic needs, Uzbekistan has adopted a series of reforms, including:

- The Strategy for the Transition to a Green Economy (2019–2030)
- National Renewable Energy Development Plan
- Environmental Code of Uzbekistan (2023)

Additionally, the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Ecology have taken leading roles in implementing these strategies through legislation, public-private partnerships, and international cooperation.

RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Uzbekistan has set ambitious goals for renewable energy:

- 25% of total electricity generation from renewables by 2030
- Installation of over 5 GW of solar and wind power capacity
- Attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI) into clean energy projects

Recent successes include:

- The launch of large-scale solar plants in Navoi and Samarkand regions
- Wind farm development in the Karakalpakstan region
- Partnership with international companies (e.g., Masdar, TotalEnergies)

These projects are reducing the country's carbon footprint and diversifying its energy sources.

EU-UZBEKISTAN COOPERATION IN THE GREEN SECTOR

The European Union has become a key partner in Uzbekistan's green transformation through:

- Financial instruments: grants, loans, and investment guarantees via the European Investment Bank (EIB)

- Technical assistance: regulatory support and training programs
- Bilateral cooperation: through the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA)

EU-funded programs such as “Sustainable Energy for Central Asia” and “SwitchAsia” are directly contributing to the capacity-building of local institutions and stakeholders in Uzbekistan.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GREEN TRANSFORMATION

The shift towards a green economy brings both opportunities and challenges:

Opportunities:

- Job creation in renewable energy and green technology sectors
- Improved public health due to reduced air pollution
- Energy independence and security

Challenges:

- High initial investment costs
- Need for skilled labor and advanced technology
- Resistance to change from traditional energy stakeholders

To address these, Uzbekistan is implementing vocational training, public awareness campaigns, and incentivizing green investments.

Uzbekistan’s ecological and energy transformation, driven by the EU’s “Green Future” initiative, reflects a strong commitment to sustainable development and international cooperation. While challenges remain, the progress made in policy reform, renewable energy development, and EU collaboration demonstrates a promising path forward. This transformation not only benefits the environment but also strengthens the country’s economic resilience and global standing. Continued support from the European Union will be vital in ensuring long-term success and achieving the shared vision of a greener, cleaner, and more sustainable future for Uzbekistan and the region as a whole.

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