



Promoting the role of SSE in developing the green economy in Jordan

Policy Brief

MedRiSSE project

Replicable Innovations of SSE in the provision of services & creation of decent jobs in the post covid-19 crisis recovery

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1. Executive Summary

Jordan's green transition has been set up high on the authorities' policy agenda, in the context of growing environmental challenges and in the backdrop of the global urgency to act in an attempt to undermine the direct and indirect threats brought by climate change. A global effort to support the green economy is today critical to catch up on lost time and overcome part of the numerous hindrances that have been standing in the way of achieving the UN's sustainable development goals.

To support its policy agenda, the Kingdom has set, in 2017, an ambitious National Green Growth Plan (NGGP)¹ intended to be a roadmap setting guidelines for green growth projects and aligning green policies and investments to support national development goals. Still, over six years down the line, progress remains slow and implementation encounters many challenges.

Although the Plan itself is the result of a wide consultative effort and recognizes the importance of cooperation between the various stakeholders involved in this strategic green transition, practically, economic actors who can be key to fueling green growth, lack the enabling framework and the public support that would allow them to thrive. Moreover, whereas partnerships between the public and private sectors are explicitly emphasized in the NGGP, there is much less emphasis on cooperation between the public sector and social and solidarity economy (SSE) stakeholders, both profit and non-profit making organizations. The plan does not clearly acknowledge the role that the third sector can play in supporting Jordan's green transition, nor does it touch on the nexus between the development of the green economy and the overall business and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

In practice, the Jordanian economy has not been offering enough room for startups or existing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) – both social enterprises or private businesses, to set up and thrive in the green economy sector. Policy dialogue and green programs' rollout have marginalized civil society organizations as well as those innovative initiatives that have the potential of impacting their direct environment and leveraging change.

¹ <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/jor178927E.pdf>



This policy brief is intended to supply a basic reference and a starting point for a roadmap that would back Johud's advocacy efforts in terms of supporting the development of Jordan's green economy. It focuses on two complementary approaches to backing the development of the green economy: (a) supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem as a whole, and social entrepreneurship in particular, and (b) enhancing the role of SSE agents as active partners of the public and the private sector in promoting green initiatives and contributing to bridging gaps and tackling challenges in terms of awareness, knowledge, financing and policy and project design and implementation.

It calls for urgent policy intervention to support the green transition and highlights the key part that can be played by social and solidarity economy players in catalyzing policy change and supporting multi-stakeholder cooperation.

The brief is structured as follows:

- **Overview of the context, the needs, the challenges.** Jordan is seeking to develop its green economy. A National Plan has been set back in 2017 but its implementation remains slow and lacks inclusivity. What is meant by 'green economy'? Why is it important to support the green transition of an economy? What is at stake in terms of economic and social development? What are the main hindrances standing in the way of green economy growth in Jordan today?
- **Promoting the green economy: the active part that can be played by social and solidarity economy actors and social businesses.** What kind of policy tools can be envisaged to support the green transition? What would be the impact of promoting the green economy efficiently? What role can SSE actors play in this framework?
- **Recommendations and asks.** SSE actors can play a critical role in supporting the growth of the green economy in Jordan. There is an array of intervention areas where civil society organizations, NGO's and social enterprises can make an impact and help things move forward. They include: awareness raising, skill development, capacity building, supplying information and advising the public sector, securing funding, catalyzing partnerships, supporting research and disseminating knowledge, and overall enabling green initiatives to find a market and thrive. Cooperation between the SSE sphere and the public sector is central to achieve an inclusive and efficient green transition in Jordan. This policy brief solicits such cooperation, which builds first and foremost on a formal recognition of the SSE as a full-fledged partner to Jordan's public and private sectors, and an enabler of



positive change whereby Jordan growth model would evolve towards a greener more sustainable economic and social one.



2. The problematic

Jordan's green transition has been set up high on the authorities' policy agenda, in the context of growing environmental challenges and in the backdrop of the global urgency to act in an attempt to undermine the direct and indirect threats brought by climate change. A global effort to support the green economy is today critical to catch up on lost time and overcome part of the numerous hindrances that have been standing in the way of achieving the UN's sustainable development goals.

To support its policy agenda, the Hashemite Kingdom has set, in 2017, an ambitious National Green Growth Plan (NGGP)² intended to be a roadmap setting guidelines for green growth projects and aligning green policies and investments to support national development goals. Still, over six years down the line, progress remains slow and implementation encounters many challenges.

Although the Plan itself is the result of a wide consultative effort and recognizes the importance of cooperation between the various stakeholders involved in this strategic green transition, practically, economic actors who can be key to fueling green growth, lack the enabling framework and the public support that would allow them to thrive.

Moreover, whereas partnerships between the public and private sectors are explicitly emphasized in the NGGP, there is much less emphasis on cooperation between the public sector and SSE stakeholders, both profit and non-profit making organizations. The plan does not clearly acknowledge the role that the third sector can play in supporting Jordan's green transition, nor does it touch on the nexus between the development of the green economy and the overall business and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

In practice, the Jordanian economy has not been offering enough room for startups – both social enterprises or private businesses, to set up and thrive in the green economy sector. Policy dialogue and green programs' rollout have marginalized civil society

² A National Green Growth Plan for Jordan (2017), Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Jordan, <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/jor178927E.pdf>



organizations as well as those innovative initiatives that have the potential of impacting their direct environment and leveraging change.

2.1. Preamble: defining the 'green economy'

The green economy can be defined as an economic system that promotes sustainable development and concurrently addresses environmental challenges. Overall, the green economy represents a holistic approach to economic development that considers the environmental, social, and economic dimensions, with the goal of achieving long-term sustainability and a more resilient and inclusive society.

It encompasses economic activities, policies, and practices whose mix contributes to growth, environmental sustainability, social wellbeing, and the transition to a low-carbon resource-efficient society.

Key elements and principles of the green economy include:

1. Environmental stewardship: the green economy prioritizes the protection and conservation of natural resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity. It acknowledges the interdependence between economic activities and the environment, aiming to minimize adverse impacts on the latter and to promote responsible and sustainable resource management.
2. Low carbon transition: the green economy aims to transition away from fossil fuels towards cleaner and renewable energy alternatives. Green transition aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change by implementing measures such as promoting renewable energy sources, energy efficiency measures, and sustainable transportation systems.
3. Circular economy: the green economy builds on the principles of a circular economy, where resources are used more efficiently, materials are recycled and reused, waste is minimized. It promotes sustainable production and consumption patterns to reduce the reliance on finite resources and minimize impact on the environment.



4. Green technologies and innovation: supporting the green economy rhymes with promoting the development of environmentally friendly technologies. These include renewable energy technologies, energy-efficient systems, clean manufacturing processes and sustainable agriculture practices. A green economy relies on innovation and research to drive sustainable growth.
5. Policy and governance: supportive policy frameworks and effective governance structures are essential to promoting the green economy and driving sustainable growth. Integrating environmental considerations into economic decision-making processes is key, and so is designing and enforcing pertinent regulatory measures, and promoting partnerships between the various stakeholders (e.g. public-private partnerships).
6. Social equity and inclusive growth: the green economy emphasizes the importance of social equity and inclusivity. Promoting the green economy aligns with creating decent jobs, improving livelihoods, enhancing social wellbeing while addressing environmental challenges. The benefits of the green transition are meant to be shared equitably among different constituents of society, including marginalized communities.

2.2. Why supporting the green economy is critical for Jordan

In line with the global mobilization efforts to fight climate change and attempt to reverse its effects, and in accordance with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, Jordan has demonstrated its commitment to transition to a green economy. A multitude of reasons justify and support this political choice, and advocate for more extensive and affirmative action.

Below are a few key and compelling arguments in favor of Jordan's green economy development³.

1. **Jordan needs to improve its energy security and diversify energy sources.** The country's dependence on imported fossil energy resources compromises its energy security, and represents large budget challenges as well as a negative carbon

³ Various sources, including the 'National Green Growth Plan for Jordan' (2017), Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Jordan



footprint. Promoting the green economy can help reduce this reliance by diversifying the energy mix. Investing in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power would ensure Jordan has a more sustainable and secure energy supply and is ultimately less vulnerable to price fluctuations of fuel and geopolitical risks.

2. **The Kingdom should rapidly address environmental sustainability and fresh water security.** Jordan faces significant environmental challenges, including water scarcity, desertification and pollution. These challenges can be efficiently addressed through leveraging policy tools and measures in the framework of green economy promotion. Transitioning to renewable energies, promoting energy efficiency, waste reduction and management, and implementing sustainable water and land management practices, can contribute to helping Jordan overcome these environmental challenges and ensure the protection and preservation of its natural resources and ecosystems. On the pressing issue of water, introducing practices related to water conservation, wastewater treatment, and the introduction of innovative technologies in the realm of the green economy, would help Jordan rapidly address its water challenges and ensure the long-term availability and accessibility of water resources.
3. **Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures are key to curve vulnerability and improve sustainability.** Jordan is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially as far as water scarcity, higher temperatures, and extreme weather conditions are concerned. By embracing the green economy, the country can contribute to global efforts to mitigate climate change and improve its adaptation capacity through adopting climate-resilient practices and sustainable resource management.
4. **Jordan should exploit every opportunity to drive growth, diversify its economy, enable businesses to thrive, innovate, and create jobs for its youth.** The country suffers from high unemployment rates and migration of talent due to lack of employment prospects. By attracting investments and enabling the creation of new industries related to the green economy, Jordan has the potential to stimulate growth, support economic diversification, enhance competitiveness and generate employment opportunities in green sectors such as renewable energy, energy-efficient technologies and infrastructure, sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, etc. Moreover, green economy fields of activity typically foster innovation



and technological advancement. Investing in research and development for green technologies and fostering 'green entrepreneurship' have the potential to spur innovation and attract skills, thus further fueling growth and employment, and potentially positioning Jordan as a regional hub for green technologies.

5. **Jordan has much to gain by improving public health and boosting the wellbeing of its citizens.** Cleaner and healthier environments lead to improved public health, greater wellbeing, an overall improvement in the quality of life, and hence lower healthcare spending. By aiming for less air pollution, more efficient waste management, improved agricultural practices, efficient management of water resources, etc. Jordan is likely to generate a positive impact on the overall ecosystem and promote healthier living conditions for its citizens.
6. **By actively promoting its green economy, Jordan positions itself among the responsible global players, demonstrates its commitment to global sustainability goals, and secures a reputation that can pave the way for additional international support.** Jordan's promotion of the green economy demonstrates its commitment to sustainable development and anchors its reputation as a responsible reliable player in terms of acting on climate change and actively seeking to improve the prospects for its current population and for future generations. By doing so, the country also enhances its potential to attract international investments, better secure foreign aid and international cooperation projects, build solid partnerships with international stakeholders, and benefit from technology transfers. In this framework, by acting fast and efficiently, Jordan could also grab the opportunity of positioning itself as a regional leader in terms of green growth and further capture the economic spillovers of promoting the green economy by developing a pertinent ecosystem that would make the country a regional hub for green development.
7. **Strengthening community resilience and promoting social equity through green economy-related opportunities, would help Jordan secure social development and stability, together with fostering sound growth.** Jordan suffers from uneven and often inequitable growth across its territory⁴. A few urban areas thrive while several others, mostly rural, lag behind in terms of economic and

⁴ 'Socio-Economic Inequality in Jordan', UNDP-UNICEF (2015)



social development. Fostering the development of a green economy across the country can, in many ways, contribute to community resilience and social equity. When providing access to clean energy, sustainable jobs, and improved living conditions, the green economy would be improving livelihoods, promoting social inclusion, building community resilience, reducing inequalities and achieving better inclusion of vulnerable communities in society. Furthermore, the green economy can help empower local communities by engaging them in green initiatives. Examples of such community involvement in local projects include community-based renewable energy projects, agricultural cooperatives focusing on sustainability, and eco-tourism initiatives.

Overall, promoting the green economy in Jordan aligns with the country's long-term development goals, addresses pressing challenges, and offers multiple socio-economic and environmental benefits both in the short and long run.

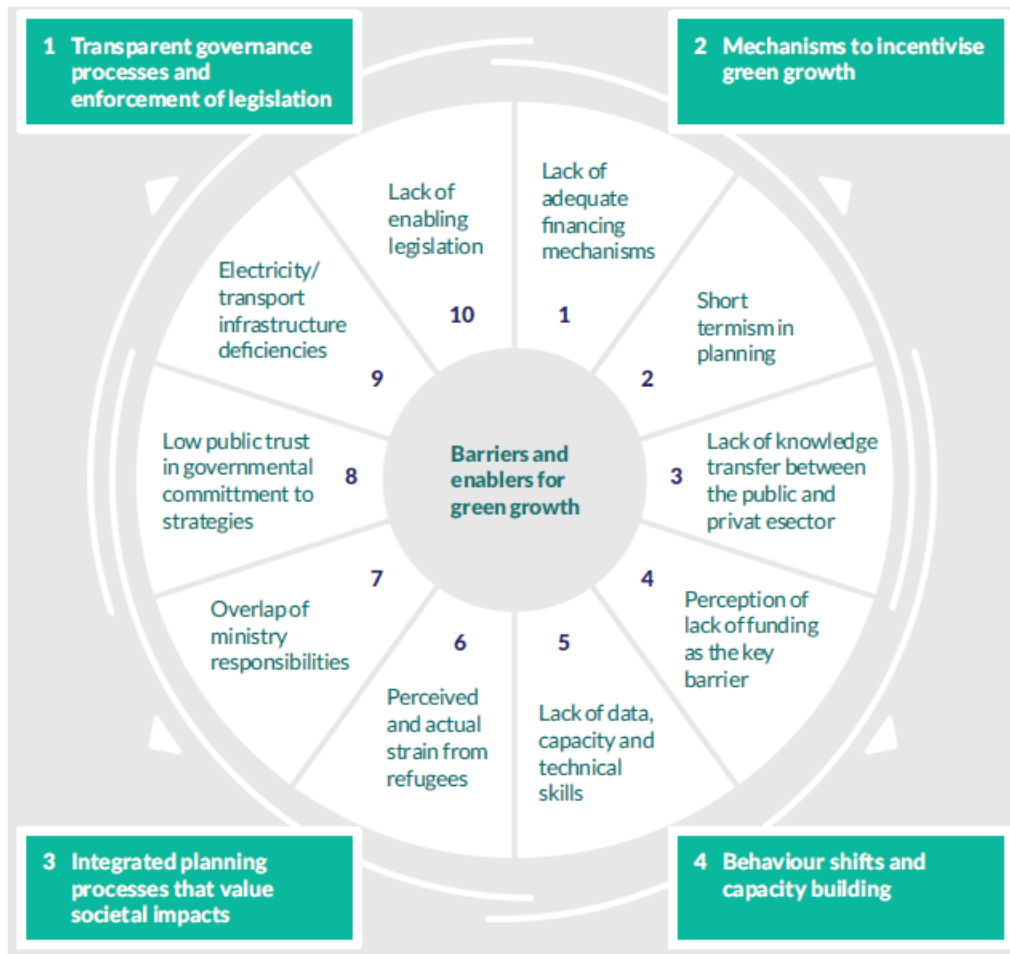
2.3. Policies and measures implemented to foster green growth in Jordan: a gap between the goals set and the practice

“Jordan 2025 A National Vision and Strategy” and the *“National Green Growth Plan” (2017)* are two referential strategic planning reports that chart a path for Jordan’s future. Both reports acknowledge that the main challenge encountered when it comes to plan rollout pertains to implementation.

Back in 2017, the NGGP had already identified eight (8) key cross sectoral barriers to the efficient implementation of the green growth plan, and brought forth four (4) ‘driving principles’ to address these barriers. Figure 1 below presents an overview of these challenges and of the high level principles that should translate into specific policies and concrete measures in order to actively overcome the challenges and provide stimulus for progress.



Figure 1. Barriers to green growth and its driving principles



Source: NGGP, 2017

The NGGP showcases a range of recommended policy actions that would support, practically, the transition towards a green economy (ref. §4 of the plan). However, despite having identified several opportunities to kick-start green clusters in a set of targeted sectors and fields of activity, Jordan has, to date, achieved limited success in mainstreaming the green economy potential into those sectors – namely energy, water, waste, agriculture, tourism and transportation. The drive that the green economy activities would therefore be expected to bring to Jordan’s growth remains limited.



What is holding back Jordan's green potential?

Box 1. Main challenges to green economy growth in emerging countries (including Jordan)

- Limited financial resources, sometimes requiring innovative financial mechanisms to support the green transition
- Social and economic challenges are usually set as a priority, before green initiatives
- Limited public awareness: the promotion of the green economy requires extensive behavioral change which in turn, requires time and effort
- Non-enabling policy and regulatory frameworks: the absence of clear policies, incentives, and regulations discourage green investments
- Technology needs and the knowledge gap: technology transfers and capacity building are usually achieved through foreign investments and international cooperation
- Inadequate infrastructure to support the green transition; green development requires significant investments both from the public and the private sectors
- Energy and water resource constraints: transitioning to clean energy necessitates energy diversification and thus infrastructure investments to move away from traditional fossil energy sources and secure water through optimal water management and sanitation processes.
- Political and institutional challenges: they can slow the implementation of green initiatives.

Looking closer at Jordan's case, both the policy approach and the practical measures set to roll it out have so far fallen short of expectations. This paper focuses mainly on one aspect of the green growth rollout plan that could have been better capitalized on, and especially, that still carries great potential in terms of improving the performance of the green transition envisioned in Jordan.

The research conducted for the purpose of this policy brief has clearly identified one main setback in Jordan's green growth program: the development of the green economy has been considered as a standalone objective, almost disconnected from the resources and the ecosystem that would allow for such development. The stakeholders involved in designing and implementing the 'plan' have actually marginalized the linkages that exist between the economic, social and environmental spheres, and the policy framework in which these fields evolve.

A non-enabling business ecosystem. Funding, lack of technical skills and absence of data are often pinpointed by the public authorities as key challenges to embark on large scale green projects and roll out green programs. However, recent market feedback collected by NGO Johud (mainly through informal interviews with stakeholders from the business ecosystem) on the barriers to green economy development emphasizes ecosystem inefficiencies and drawbacks as factors setting back the potential of Jordan's



entrepreneurship momentum, and keeping the country from achieving green growth to its full potential.

Practically, Jordan seems to lack an enabling business and investment climate that would secure enough stimulus to entrepreneurs and investors (both local and international) in order to capitalize on various areas of the green economy. Innovation, technological progress, and competitiveness would be the immediate consequences of such a positive business landscape. In reality, local entrepreneurs report a non-enabling ecosystem that fails to ensure stability, drive ventures, or fuel innovation (complex and unclear administrative procedures, barriers to registration, red tape, lack of support mechanisms, clientelism, lack of transparency, a weak legal framework, limited access to finance...). This non-enabling business environment is a major deterrent to growth and clashes with Jordan's vision of positioning the country as a regional green hub.

"Despite the humongous opportunity for green growth in the Middle East, magnified by climate change, water scarcity, oil dependency and environmental footprint, green SMEs are plagued by severe challenges and competition."

"One of the major obstacles to the progress of green SMEs in the Middle East has been poorly-designed regulation ... Market regulations which stifle competition pose a big hurdle to SMEs operating in renewables, energy, environment and sustainability sectors."

"The most pressing challenges are (1) increasing disconnect between education and market needs and (2) the disorientation of research and development from industry priorities and trends."

"Government agencies, business associations and NGOs need to play a bigger role in advocating more streamlined priorities for green growth across all industrial sectors."

Extracts from articles published by EcoMENA, by Ruba Al-Zu'bi

A weak economic-social-environmental nexus. From a broader viewpoint, Jordan's current way of doing business and current approach of green growth, showcase a weak nexus between all of: green development, the enabling potential of the business ecosystem, governance, competitiveness, infrastructure, the legal framework, the quality and skills of human resources, the extent of community involvement and the potential of civil society involvement.

While partnerships between the public and the private sector have been evoked by the NGGP and some have even concretized in the framework of large projects, the adopted approach and the governance of the NGGP have left little room for efficient exchange and collaboration with the private sector – and even less with civil society actors – beyond the actual implementation of infrastructure projects.



The relations between the green economy and education, skills, inclusion, health, livelihoods, local community dynamics, social wellbeing ... have not been given enough credit. The development–human/social dimension nexus has been relatively neglected.

What is probably a loophole in the country's green program rollout is actually worth taking a closer look at. Indeed, the relation between economic growth and the social realm is likely to represent high leverage potential for driving environmentally sustainable growth, and an important opportunity for the country to grab.

What can be done in the short run to unleash this potential and advance the green economy with a hands-on realistic approach?

3. The approach: building the case for a greater role of the SSE in Jordan's green growth trajectory

As a preamble to the approach proposed and to the arguments brought in favour of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) as a partner in green growth in Jordan, the two boxes below present a brief overview of the SSE and of its main components.

Box 2. Defining the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)

The social and solidarity economy (SSE) is a diverse range of economic activities that are organized around the principles of solidarity, cooperation, and social justice. SSE organizations are typically owned and controlled by their members, and they reinvest their profits back into the community.

The SSE includes a wide range of activities, including:

- Cooperatives: Cooperatives are businesses that are owned and controlled by their members. They are democratically run, and they reinvest their profits back into the community.
- Mutual benefit societies: Mutual benefit societies are organizations that provide financial and other services to their members. They are typically non-profit organizations, and they are run by a board of directors elected by their members.
- Social enterprises: Social enterprises are businesses that combine social and economic goals. They are typically for-profit businesses, but they reinvest their profits back into the community or to achieve their social mission.
- Solidarity economy initiatives: Solidarity economy initiatives are projects that promote the principles of the SSE. They can include community gardens, worker-owned businesses, and social impact investment funds.

Source: The International Labour Organization (ILO), the European Commission



Box 3. Social enterprises (SEs) in Jordan

SEs are innovative community-centered organizations that use business strategies to address social issues. They are particularly well positioned to help alleviate some of the challenges Jordan faces. They distinguish themselves from NGOs and other small enterprises by being profit-driven and reinvesting those profits into their missions. SEs are in a unique position to address diverse issues such as women's empowerment, youth radicalization, and civil society support. In addition, their creativity and flexibility allow them to efficiently leverage their resources and networks to provide solutions in acute and prolonged crisis situations. As they grow, SEs can scale up operations to cover a wider range of issues, provide additional services, or expand to more communities. Since SEs value the extent of their mission-related impact over financial gains for shareholders, investment in these organizations constitutes a direct investment in Jordan's communities.

Jordan currently does not have a dedicated social entrepreneurship pathway for organizations to legally register. Because of this, SEs must decide between registering as an NGO with the Ministry of Social Development or as a company with the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Both options have their challenges, and social entrepreneurs report difficulty in registering due to overly complex registration procedures. In addition, SEs registered as companies with the Ministry of Industry and Trade are subject to unfavorable tax laws.

Source: Extract from '*Investing in Jordan Through Support for Social Enterprises*', Lilian Tauber, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Feb 2021

3.1. The added value of the SSE to the green growth trajectory

Assessing the green economy's potential in the framework of a more holistic approach to development could unlock the green potential in several fields, with a highly positive multiplier effect on the whole economy and on society.

SSE players can play a vital role in promoting the green economy and actively contribute to the transition to green growth and environmental sustainability. Because they are community-based organizations, they can noticeably bridge the gap on several fronts between the public sector's goals and the society (i.e. citizens), and help achieve policy goals that have positive social spillovers.

Practically, whether on their own, in collaboration with the public sector and/or with the business community, the SSE actors can play a critical part in an array of fields.

SSE organizations can undertake a number of actions in the aim of fueling green transition. The main types of contributions that can be brought by the SSE ecosystem are discussed below.

International experience has showcased that cooperation with the public sector on all of these intervention levels has proven highly efficient in terms of results, helping



deliver greater responsiveness from stakeholders, smoother implementation, and greater impact.

Policy advocacy and favorable regulations are starting blocks for a green transition. Involving the Social and Solidarity actors and ecosystem at policy design level can help introduce favorable regulations to support both, SSE actors and private businesses, to embark on green initiatives. Based on their experience and on their closeness to field realities, NGOs and other SSE actors can be valuable partners for the public sector. By playing a policy consultation role, providing hands-on input, expertise, and recommendations during the policy-making process, they can support the emergence of environmentally friendly policies and regulations. Hence, they can ensure that policies align with the principles of the green economy and address community needs.

Public awareness and advocacy are fundamental for green growth. Awareness raising on environmental issues is a pillar for promoting the green economy, especially for youth and new generations. SSE organizations can influence public opinion, help shape policy agendas, and advocate for sustainable practices at local, regional, and national levels. They can assist the public sector in educating the public about the importance of developing green activities and adopting sustainable behaviors. They can be active partners in the framework of public or joint campaigns, helping raise awareness and drive behavioral change. Last but not least, SSE organizations can combine their experience, knowledge and outreach potential (namely their high potential to leverage social media platforms) to help design and implement educational programs (both school and adult level) dedicated to raise awareness and engage the citizens.

Transition to a green economy entails engagement at all levels: community, businesses, public sector. The SSE can be a privileged facilitator of such multilateral engagement and a catalyzer of a participatory approach to green growth. SSE actors, and in particular NGOs, can actively engage with local communities to promote sustainable development. Not only do they have great potential in terms of raising awareness on green issues and educating community agents on good practices that would help advance green growth, SSE players can also help empower those partner or beneficiary communities to develop green initiatives or simply to want to participate in local decision-making processes on sustainability. Ultimately, through their presence and their activities, they have the capacity to rally local communities and improve the



inclusion of vulnerable or marginalized groups in the local economic realm, by empowering them and enabling them to take part in various ways in green projects and initiatives. Such projects can encompass community gardens, renewable energy cooperatives, and sustainable livelihood programs.

Capacity building and education are needed to empower people and organizations throughout the green transition process. The green transition is a process implicating a range of economic sectors and activities and requiring behavioral change and new approaches on many levels. It requires capacity building and training across stakeholder groups. In particular, it entails enhancing the skills and knowledge of the workforce in green sectors. SSE organizations are likely to have the flexibility and the capacity to mobilize funds and competencies to provide the needed training programs, workshops, and educational initiatives to build the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities in adopting sustainable practices. SSE actors can also be vectors for mobilizing donor funding for supporting vocational training, entrepreneurship in the green sectors, and developing skills and job opportunities for green jobs in sectors such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, waste management, and other green industries.

Research, analysis and information-rich publications help understand field reality, design relevant policies and disseminate best practices in developing green solutions. Because they operate at grassroot level and develop ties with the people and the communities they intrinsically work with, NGOs, social enterprises, and other SSE organizations are able to collect meaningful information, assess needs, measure action and policy impacts, and disseminate useful information to the public, to authorities, and to businesses. They are able to provide valuable insights to policymakers, promote evidence-based and flexible solutions, drive informed decision-making, and hence facilitate the adoption of sustainable practices.

A green transition rhymes with new investment, new funding needs, and new financing streams and practices focused on sustainability. SSE actors are well positioned to advocate for responsible and sustainable finance practices, and to attract capital into green sectors. In particular, NGOs can engage with international financial institutions and donors to tap into much needed investment funding to help move away from traditional energy sources and support impact driven green projects. They can contribute to shaping foreign assistance programs and orienting their budgets. SSE actors can help to match donor or investor funding that is earmarked for green growth,



with local green initiatives that need funding to see the day or scale. On yet another level, thanks to their background and history in the field, NGOs and social enterprises have the potential to secure donor funds for promoting businesses included under the green economy. They can for instance help introduce new financial mechanisms (such as impact investing) intended to support green sectors of activity, and support the green ecosystem development. Moreover, in the framework of their programs, SSE organizations can also play a part in disseminating sustainable business and consumption practices, thus further supporting the green momentum.

Building a green economy entails implementation of an array of investments and a diversity of projects over the short, medium and long run. SSE actors can be first-hand project partners and implementers of green projects that are results oriented, especially those initiated by the public sector. They are usually well positioned to support and/or undertake projects that contribute to the local economy and to environmental sustainability. Typically, such projects would include initiatives related to renewable energy, eco-tourism, waste reduction and recycling, conservation of natural resources, and sustainable agriculture and land management. NGOs and other SSE players can secure funding, mobilize resources, and collaborate with other stakeholders to implement such projects.

Alongside the social and solidarity ecosystem, the business ecosystem as a whole has a role to play in promoting and supporting green transition. By joining forces, the SSE and the private sector in general, can make things advance on the green front. Investment is key in the transition towards environmental sustainability. The private sector unavoidably has to increase its investments in green technologies and renewable energy. By doing so, it will create new jobs and fuel growth in the medium run. Sustainable practices have to be introduced and adopted. New practices have to become mainstream in the business world, whether in terms of waste management, energy efficiency, innovation to keep reducing greenhouse gases, etc. While the dynamics of the green transition are clear, they are nevertheless contingent on an enabling and supportive ecosystem. That is where advocacy for green policies plays an important part in a country's green transition. Because they are key in driving green growth, businesses have to be supported on different levels in order to thrive. Laws, regulations, taxes, administrative procedures, access to knowledge, access to competencies, access to finance, access to markets, alignment with international standards ... are all elements of the ecosystem that need to be fine-tuned to the needs



of the green economy in such a way as to incentivize businesses to invest and conduct change.

It is therefore only reasonable for the business community to be advocating for a favorable environment to go green. And collaborating with the SSE community can only drive this change more efficiently, as the complementarities are significant as far as contribution to building a green economy is concerned.

3.2. Envisaging practical public-SSE collaboration schemes for bolstering Jordan's green growth: inspiration from foreign experience

The public sector plays a pivotal part in several aspects of green economy growth that are foundational, e.g. policy frameworks, regulations, infrastructural investments. It sets the pace for the green transition that a country is aiming for. However, several aspects of the role played by the public sector can actually be enhanced, and their impact bolstered through active partnerships and serious collaboration with the rest of the stakeholders involved in the economic and social realms.

Public-private partnerships are usually mainstream when it comes to implementing major projects with large investment and technical and operational needs. Nevertheless, other economic players, on top of which third sector players, have a proven competitive edge in supporting green initiatives, from approach to conception/design through mobilization and implementation.

SSE actors offer the potential of catalyzing green growth and amplifying the impact of actions through hands-on cooperation with the public sector on several fronts. An efficient partnership between the SSE and the public sector would be two-way, a win-win pact aiming for maximizing impact and sustainability.



Following are three success stories of public-SSE cooperation models inscribed under the 'green growth' development goal. These bold green initiatives were built on opportunities that were identified and capitalized on, and that have generated positive momentum within their target communities. They illustrate the variety and extent of

A preliminary to actively involving SSE actors in Jordan's green growth dynamics would be for public authorities to recognize these actors as key stakeholders in the green growth process. Favorable regulation and an enabling ecosystem (simplified registration process, alleviated administrative procedures, tax incentives, financial support, special considerations in the framework of public procurement, etc.) are necessary to allow SSE players to thrive and actively take part in Jordan's green transition.

the partnerships that could be built between third sector organizations and a public sector that is eager to achieve its sustainability goals and improve overall community wellbeing.

These examples can represent an inspiration for Jordan's green economy stakeholders either to adapt and/or adopt such collaborative schemes, or consider designing other collaborative schemes emanating from local needs and opportunities, all of which can help drive the green economy across the Kingdom.

Example 1. Strategy, skills, jobs, labor market.

Everywhere around the world, the green transition is creating new job opportunities, with millions of individuals needing to be upskilled across various sectors. Green skilling has become a major trend and drive in the global labor market. The transition

to net-zero (carbon emissions) in the UK for instance, has driven the government to set up a green taskforce grouping stakeholders from all of the public, private and third sector to advise the government on its green strategy, with a particular focus on the support needed for the labor market. The Taskforce set out recommendations for how the the government, industry, the education sector alongside other stakeholders can work together to grasp the opportunities of a green industrial revolution and meet the challenges of supporting high carbon sectors and their workers through the transition to net zero.

Another cooperation initiative is the Green Jobs Workforce Academy set up by the government of Scotland in partnership with non-profit organizations and private sector entities. The Academy provides information, advice, and training to help people get into green jobs, thanks to a range of resources, including a skills assessment tool to help people identify their skills and match them to green jobs, a training directory to help find training courses in green skills, a job board to help people find green jobs, and a mentoring program to help people transition into green jobs.



Example 2. Awareness raising, sustainable consumption, green practices. In France, the government (through the Ministry of ecological transition) has partnered with a number of SSE organizations to create a network of "green shops" (shops selling products that are environmentally friendly such as organic food, agricultural products produced by community-supported agricultural initiatives, fair trade clothing, and recycled homewares). The initiative was launched in 2018 under a large-scale national investment program intended to promote innovation, support the development of the green economy and fuel inclusive economic growth. The French government's approach is built on the belief that social enterprises can play a key role in creating a more sustainable economy, and that green shops can help raise awareness on environmental issues and encourage people to make more sustainable choices. To this end, the government is providing funding to social enterprises that are working to open green shops.

Example 3. A participatory approach to designing green sustainable livable urban areas. The city of Barcelona (Spain) is successfully going forward with the "Superblock" project. The project aims "to operate a street transformation model for the entire city, helping citizens to reclaim part of the space currently occupied by private vehicles. The goal is to achieve a healthy, greener, fairer and safer public space that promotes social relations and the local economy." "This 21st century street model ... represents a paradigm shift in urban planning for public spaces, moving from streets designed for cars to streets designed for people" (Barcelona city website: <https://www.barcelona.cat>). The "Superblock" project was designed with the participation of the residents. Their active involvement was ensured through public consultations to gather feedback from residents on the project, through collecting residents' ideas and concerns over a citizen participation online platform set up by the City Council, through work groups encompassing a broad range of participants that met regularly to discuss and finetune the project, and through informative awareness raising events that helped secure community support to the project and optimize adhesion.



Box 4. Involving local communities in the design and implementation of green projects in cooperation with SSE actors

This bottom-up approach helps secure community adhesion and support for green initiatives, especially those that require the citizens' involvement and efforts as success factors. Securing community engagement as early as possible in a project's lifespan, ensures that the project is responsive to the needs and priorities of the people who will be most affected by it. SSE organizations that are close to the people, that know the social fabric, have a competitive edge as far as engaging the people in collective actions and rallying the people for a cause. SSE players can help engage local communities in the design and implementation of green projects in a number of ways. Below are a few illustrations:

Community workshops. They are great way to gather input from local residents on their needs and priorities. These workshops can be useful to brainstorm for green projects, to engage in discussions on the pros and cons of different options, and to collect feedback on the final plans.

Community surveys. They can be used to gather more detailed information from local residents regarding their attitude towards green projects, their willingness to participate in them, their ideas to fine-tune green projects or for new endeavors.

Community advisory boards. They are usually composed of representatives from the community, and can take the shape of neighborhood associations, environmental organizations, and local businesses organizations. Such boards can be used to provide continuous input and feedback from residents on green projects, and can be effective partners to local authorities such as municipalities.

Volunteering opportunities. They can be a great way to get locals involved in the implementation of green projects, across generations. Volunteer work can touch on a broad range of activities, going from planting trees to collecting waste or monitoring water quality.

Outreach programs and education. They serve to demystify green challenges and spread awareness among local residents about green practices. They can be held in schools, community centers, and other public places and are very useful to rally the local citizens.

Other more classic forms of cooperation between the SSE and the public sector can be easily developed to foster a vibrant ecosystem for growing the green economy, supporting the development of innovative solutions that address environmental challenges, promote social inclusion, and contribute to sustainable development. Such initiatives can take various forms:

- Creating a supportive policy environment: working towards reaching policies and regulations that encourage and support social innovation in the green economy. E.g. a legal framework that recognizes and incentivizes social enterprises,



innovation-driven initiatives, and community-based organizations working towards sustainable solutions. This can include providing financial incentives, simplified registration processes, and access to funding for social innovation projects.

- Fostering collaboration and networking among the stakeholders: the SSE community, the public sector and business organizations could pool their efforts to create networking events and platforms where all sorts of stakeholders (entrepreneurs, researchers, academics, SSE organizations, government agencies, incubators etc.) can leverage ideas and resources to drive green incentives.
- Designing and delivering capacity building programs that enhance the skills and knowledge needed to grow the green economy: SSE actors and public institutions could collaborate to provide workshops, mentoring, and technical expertise to develop innovative projects. Focus areas could include sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, waste management, and circular economy practices.
- Launching incubation and acceleration programs that support green initiatives: the programs could for instance be financially supported by the public sector and be operated by organizations for the SSE and the private sector. They could offer mentorship, access to resources, business development support, and networking opportunities to profit-targeting startups and social entrepreneurs to efficiently set up and scale their green ventures.
- Improving access to finance to promote innovation in the green sector and investment in green technologies: the SSE and the public sector could join forces to tap into domestic and international funding opportunities (public, private, bilateral, multilateral, regional etc.) and reach out to private and institutional investors who have vested interests in financing projects that would foster environmental and social sustainability. Dedicated financial vehicles such as impact funds could be set up to channel funding (both debt and equity) towards green initiatives.
- Creating collaborative platforms dedicated to research and dialogue: these platforms can be co-developed with the SSE and the public sector, and serve as spaces or labs for dialogue, idea generation, debate over the multiple issues emanating from the development of a green economy.



4. Recommendations

In order to kick-start Jordan's weakening drive to grow its green economy, the local SSE community can play a key role in placing green growth high on the Jordan's policy agenda and in many ways, supporting the implementation of green projects.

Why? There is urgency in combating climate change in absolute terms, and especially to spur sustainable growth in Jordan, with much needed positive spillovers on the social, economic, and environmental fronts. The public sector is struggling with social and budgetary priorities, and is very likely to welcome a locally-borne solid backup to its greening efforts.

Opportunity. The pressing challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the rise of green technologies are perceived as a compelling impetus to green transition. Green projects are multiplying across the Middle East and Jordan should imperatively ride the wave.

Timing. There is a real opportunity to approach and mobilize the main stakeholders in the shortest timeframes. Building a green economy is a process that will require time and collective effort. All of the stakeholders should be rapidly made aware of their interests in joining the transition endeavour. A small group of SSE actors can rapidly form a nucleus for an interest group to push for reviving the 'green buzz' in Jordan. Another argument in favour of initiating a collective mobilization effort in Jordan is the annual COP meeting on climate change (28th meeting) which will be held in the Arab world this year, Q4-2023 (Nov.30-Dec.12) in Dubai (UAE).



Box 5. The main stakeholders involved in Jordan's green transition

Mobilizing a large number of stakeholders will help create impact to catalyze change.

Stakeholders include:

- central administrations (ministries, general directorates) e.g. Ministry of Environment (MoE, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Supply
- public institutions and consultative bodies (public organizations such as universities, boards, councils, specialized agencies, etc.) e.g. the Jordan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund, Jordan Green Building Council, Jordan Investment Commission, Jordan's Economic and Social Council
- local governments (municipal councils, regional governments)
- SSE players (NGOs, social enterprises, cooperatives, foundations working on the green cause, etc.)
- private sector players (business councils or associations, chambers of commerce, professional organizations, industry representative bodies, etc.),
- international organizations involved in sustainable development (UN agencies, cooperation and development agencies, development banks, etc.)
- and last but not least, the citizens (any association of citizens – preferably formal – that has the capacity to reach out to groups of citizens all concerned by a common issue).

Approach and actions.

Efficiently supporting the momentum to grow the green economy has to be a multi-stakeholder approach, with multiple facets that should help ease economic and social tensions in many ways. Some actions that can be led by SSE organizations include:

Campaigning to rally SSE players to the approach: *de facto* social and solidarity organizations (they are not formally recognized as so in Jordan) can be privileged partners for the public sector to develop the country's green economy, from policy design to securing funding and project implementation. This momentum is expected to enhance the ecosystem's recognition of SSE organizations and help showcase the diversity of their activities and the depth of their outreach into the Jordanian social fabric.

Advocacy action within the public and the private sectors to revisit and/or enact laws and design regulations that support green initiatives. The whole ecosystem should become more enabling for green initiatives, in the framework of a holistic approach to green growth. This implies starting upstream, by revisiting the legal



framework regarding company registration, types of organizations that are formally recognized, taxation and tax incentives (and deterrents) to support the business environment in general and green initiatives in particular. This implies alleviating administrative processes for profit-making and non-profit organizations etc., and reaching the mechanisms through which public entities can practically collaborate with the private or the third sector in order to better incubate and support initiatives that drive sustainable growth and promote employment. A formal recognition of SSE actors and of social enterprises in particular, fits under this umbrella. Such recognition would enable social enterprises, NGO's and other organizations with an environmental and a social aim to become powerful forces for positive change within their communities.

Practically, advocacy is achieved through a combination of information and awareness raising campaigns, networking events, showcasing success stories from around the world, intense media coverage, strategic partnerships, engaging international donors, reaching out to central government to provide evidence of the need and the importance of acting, and advice for orienting public decision-making.

Reaching out to public opinion through awareness raising and through community engagement. The SSE community can choose to focus the design of new projects (mostly submitted to foreign donors for funding) on greening. As part of the success of a green transition relies on the citizens, grassroots actions are needed to engage the communities in initiatives that affect their daily lives directly: access to clean water, sustainable waste management and recycling opportunities, access to clean and cheap power, optimising water use, etc.

Tapping all possible resources that can be locally and internationally mobilized to support green projects. SSE organizations have a wealth of connections with international donors while the private sector has the capacity to mobilize private impact driven investors. Once the policy framework is clear and the legal framework is enabling enough, financial resources would have to be secured to fuel growth. The rise of green finance is an additional opportunity to grab, as financial mechanisms that can support green initiatives, both private projects and at country level, are strongly developing.

