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## TECHNICAL BRIEF

### Green Job Opportunities

#### Opportunities for jobs and entrepreneurship for women in Burkina Faso's green transition

This technical brief serves to highlight and promote gender-responsive green employment solutions that fit the situation of Burkina Faso. Furthermore, it aims to recommend government officials that agriculture, forestry, energy, and waste management emerge as the four most promising sectors for creating green jobs and are intricately interconnected within the context of the Sahel and the Great Green Wall Initiative.

The global transition toward a green economy is anticipated to yield a substantial number of new job opportunities, particularly for women, within sub-Saharan Africa and across the world. The shift towards environmental sustainability is projected to generate 24 million employment opportunities on a global scale over the coming two decades. Consequently, various strategic plans have been implemented to facilitate the transition to a green recovery, including a renewed commitment to advance the Great Green Wall (GGW) Initiative in the Sahel region. The Great Green Wall Initiative aims to create 10 million jobs through green transition. In order to fully harness the potential of a green economy and address prevailing gender disparities, it is important to place women at the forefront of this green transition. However, women face Micro-economic, structural and cultural barriers as well as barriers to business development and effects of Climate Change that prevent them from fully benefitting from the transition to a green economy.

Burkina Faso's situation in the Sahel region is driven by a combination of security threats, humanitarian crisis, development challenges, and environmental vulnerabilities. The country is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, and desertification have led to agricultural challenges, food insecurity, and increased pressure on natural resources. Therefore, the development of a green economy and the creation of Green Jobs is crucial for Burkina Faso's development. Women depend more on but have less control over and access to natural resources. Burkinabe women face important structural and cultural barriers that prevent them from fully benefitting from the transition to a green economy. The key barriers can be summarized as access to education, finance and technology, land tenure, domestic and care work as well as general social norms and gender-based violence, and the unequal distribution of unpaid care. This unequal burden on women's time and energy limits their opportunities to participate in the labour market, including gaining access to green jobs within the emerging green economy. Moreover, climate change tends to increase the burden of unpaid care and domestic work.

The Government of Burkina Faso has made the transition to a Green and Inclusive Economy a priority. In recent years, the Government of Burkina Faso has developed several national strategies and policies aimed at promoting the economic empowerment of Burkinabe women. However, several barriers hinder the effective implementation of a gender-responsive green economy framework. To fully capitalize on the potential of a Green Economy, as well as to decrease the existing gender inequalities, women need to be put at the center of the green transition.

This brief summarizes the leveraging of the green transition towards the creation of gender-driven green jobs in Burkina Faso. These findings are part of a study conducted by UN Women and UNCCD in two countries of West Africa—Burkina Faso and Senegal—with an aim to inform policies to promote gender-responsive green entrepreneurship.

# 1. The Great Green Wall Initiative in Burkina Faso

Established in 2007 under the leadership of the African Union, the Great Green Wall initiative is dedicated to restore degraded landscapes across the Sahel region, with the ultimate goal of positively impacting the lives of millions on the continent. Today, the initiative's objective is to rehabilitate 100 million hectares of presently degraded land, capture 250 million tons of carbon, and generate 10 million environmentally sustainable employment opportunities by the year 2030.<sup>1</sup>

In Burkina Faso, the Great Green Wall initiative covers five regions: Plateau-Central, Centre-Nord, Sahel, Nord and Est, which encompasses 15 provinces and 101 municipalities, over 92 709 sq. m.

Its mission is to efficiently take urgent measures in order to reverse the trend of land degradation and loss of biodiversity and realize climate-resilient ecosystems.<sup>1</sup>

Its aim is to further accelerate the development of the regions through the following aspects:

- **Strengthen** the resilience to climate change and improve land restoration,
- **Maintain** soil fertility and increase the use of non-timber forest products,
- **Increase** household food security by promoting revenue-generating activities.

## The ambition of the Sahel initiative:



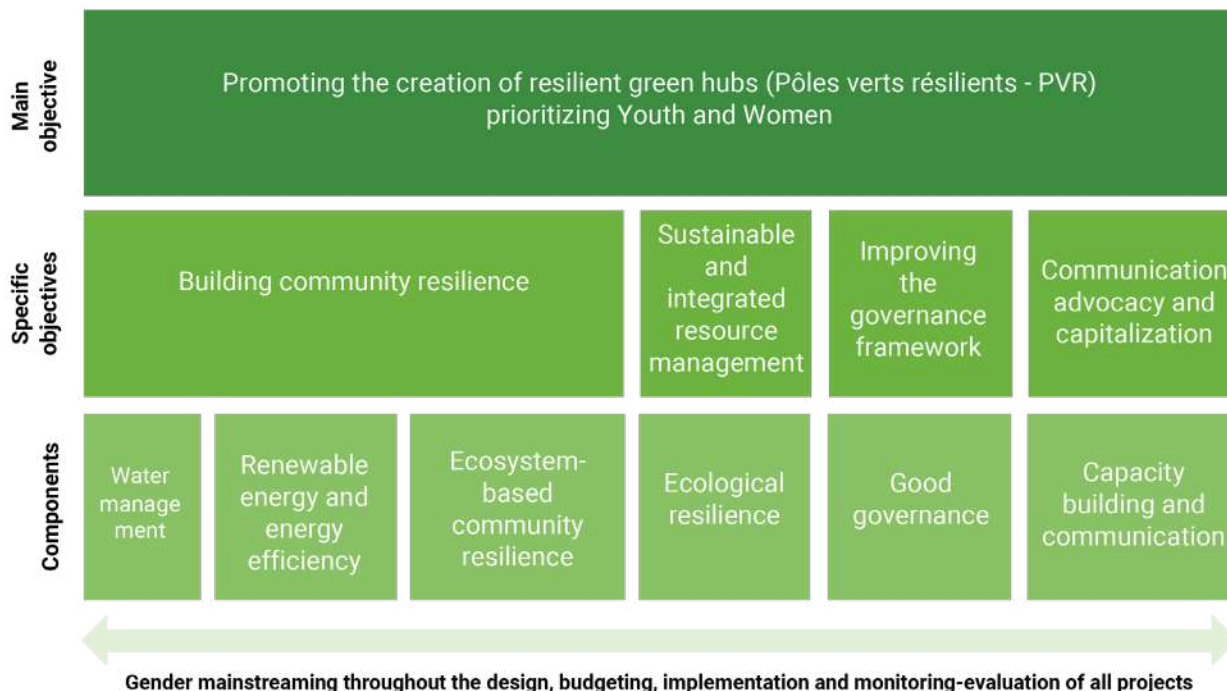
Rehabilitate **100 million** hectares of presently degraded land in all 11 countries

capture **250 million** tons of carbon



and generate **10 million** environmentally sustainable employment opportunities by 2030.

Figure 1. This infographic presents Senegal's cross-cutting strategy relevant to Burkina Faso's context.



## 2. The Government of Burkina Faso is prioritizing the shift towards a green and inclusive economy

A number of green transition policies have been implemented:

- The National Policy for Sustainable Development and the National Strategy on Green Economy 2019-2023
- The Strategy and the Action Plan for the Great Green Wall initiative in Burkina Faso 2023-2030.

In 2022, the Government of Burkina Faso led the process of formulation of its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), which in the context of Burkina Faso is titled "Burkina Faso's 2050 Vision for Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilience Development."

At the regional level, Burkina Faso has adopted:

- The Roadmap for the implementation of the final document of the ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Strategy in the West African region,
- Point 2 Action Plan of the Roadmap of the final document of the ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Strategy.



### National strategies and policies

In recent years, the Government of Burkina Faso has also developed several national strategies and policies aiming to promote the economic empowerment of Burkinabé women.

Among others, the Politique Nationale Genre (Burkina Faso's National Gender Policy), la Stratégie Nationale Genre (National Gender Strategy) 2020-2024 and the Stratégies nationales pour le renforcement du rôle des femmes dans le processus de développement (National strategies for strengthening the role of women in the development process) pursue this goal.

The Stratégie Nationale Genre (SNG) (National Gender Strategy) and its Action Plan 2020-2022 were approved in 2021 following the evaluation of the Politique Nationale Genre (National Gender Policy) 2009-2019 that was conducted in 2019. It aims to address the gender gap in all areas and to promote the effective enjoyment of fundamental human rights for all social classes.



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To fully harness the potential of a green economy, it is important to place **women at the forefront** of this green transition.

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### 3. Women's participation in the labour force in Burkina Faso

Although the Government of Burkina Faso is putting emphasis on gender equality, the reality on the ground shows great disparities when it comes to women and work in Burkina Faso.

#### Women in the labour market:

Women's labor force participation rate is 58.3 %, compared to 73.1 % for men.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, men earn on average 22 % more than women in wages.<sup>3</sup> The representation of women in senior and middle management positions remains disproportionately low, with 24%.<sup>4</sup>

#### High levels of informality:

Women are overrepresented in the informal economy. Informal women-led companies are concentrated in the following sectors: trade (65.4%), handicraft (16.5%), services (12.3%) and production and processing (5.8%).<sup>5</sup>

#### Women's entrepreneurship:

There is a gender gap in formal companies in Burkina Faso: less than 8.9% of companies are estimated to be created by women. Women-led companies are facing various challenges such as the limited availability of capital, credit, land, training and technology.

#### Access to technology:

Burkinabé women are facing a considerable gender gap in access to technology. Only 30% of women have access to a mobile phone.<sup>6</sup> The total Internet penetration in the country is only 23%.<sup>7</sup> The limited access to technology impacts women's engagement with formal financial institutions and e-commerce, which restricts their company's development potential.

#### Unpaid care work:

Women and girls are responsible for most of the unpaid care work. In rural areas, for example, women are responsible for the burden of water collection in every 9 out of 10 households. As a result, women have little time to spend on revenue-generating activities or education.



#### Approach & methods

Approach based on (i) the analysis of the enabling environment for a green economy, (ii) the identification and analysis of the green economy opportunities in specific sectors, and (iii) the constraints, the potential and the participation of women in the green economy.

This study focuses on **four sectors** for (i) the relevance for the Burkinabe economy in the context of the GGW area and (ii) the potential for Green Jobs creation with a specific focus on women and (iii) scaling potential across the country.

#### Methods:

- Documentary research based on the review of more than 170 reports and publications.
- In-depth interviews with subject-matter experts, public institutions, economic actors, women-owned and women-led companies, civil society and other actors.
- Finally, a validation workshop was held to validate the results of the study and gather recommendations to improve the brief.



**Agriculture**



**Forestry**



**Energy**







**Waste management**  
(including repairing, recycling and reuse activities)

## 4. Study results: Green opportunities for women in Burkina Faso

Overview of the main green job creation opportunities for women in the region covered by the GGW for each key sector.

Figure 2. Mapping of green job opportunities for women in the GGW initiative area in Burkina Faso.

Note: This table presents the mapping exercise to identify opportunities for green jobs for women in Burkina Faso in the context of the GGW. An overall score is provided based on the average score of each of the three categories in the final "Opportunity score".

Sector	Green economy opportunities		Women's participation in the green economy						Enabling environment				Opportunity score	Quick wins (yes/no)
	Greening the economy	New products and services	Skills		Type		Level of employment		Strategic and legal framework	Socio-cultural context	Existing best practices	Strategic and legal framework		
			Low	High	Employed	Self-employed	Current	Projected						
Forestry 	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Yes
Agriculture 	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Yes
Energy 	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Yes
Waste management 	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Yes

● Low    ● Medium    ● High



### From green jobs to green entrepreneurship

The study identified a strong potential for green jobs creation for women in four key sectors which are crucial to the success of the Great Green Wall initiative.

In the short term, most opportunities for green jobs will arise through women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses in agriculture, forestry, waste management, circular economy or renewable energy.

## 4.1 Forestry



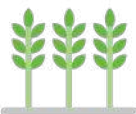
This sector holds promising opportunities for green jobs creation for women and plays a pivotal role in women cooperatives, with a designated role for national food security.

The **Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)** offer multiple high-value opportunities (shea, Arabic gum, tamarind and honey) that are still to be developed and would need active support (funding, R&D, marketing) to meet their full potential. This sector employs a large specialized labour and is valued at over USD 1 083 million.<sup>8</sup>

Ecotourism offers immense potential for sustainable development, showcasing the country's rich natural and cultural heritage. The active promotion of the ecotourism development for a responsible travel experience could provide opportunities for women's employment in the formal sector.



## 4.2 Agriculture



Most opportunities are closely linked to agriculture, dominated by subsistence farming and income-generating activities corresponding to low-end types of green job opportunities.

Improved opportunities tend to be located in the cotton, horticulture or organic grains value chains, with strong potential for job creation in the inputs activities (inputs, water efficiency, fodder), in transformation (canned food, treatment of organic waste to energy) or in commercialization (packaging, storage, transport, marketing).

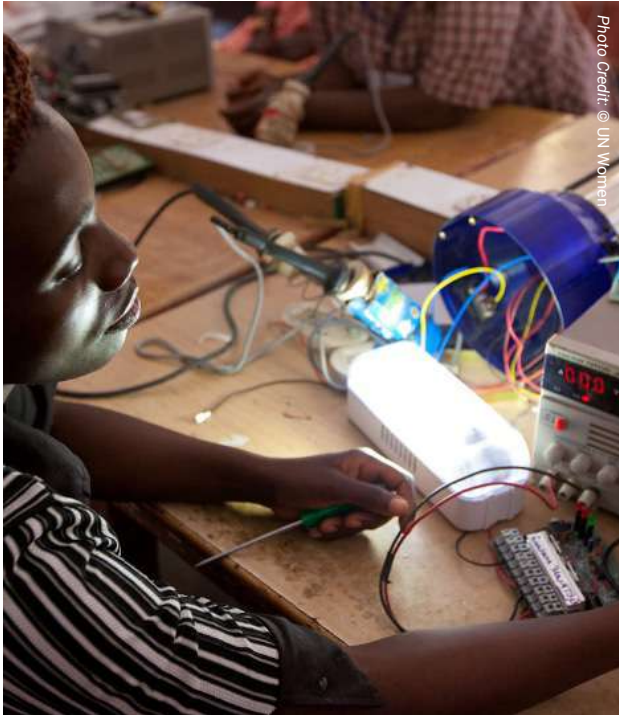
This sector was valued to nearly USD 4 billion in Burkina Faso in 2022.<sup>9</sup>



## 4.3 Energy



Access to energy is an important precondition that triggers the creation of green jobs in other sectors and value chains, such as agriculture and services.



For green jobs, the potential in the areas of solar energy is relatively high. However, the biggest potential for developing green jobs for women lies in installation and maintenance of solar energy systems.



## 4.4 Waste Management



Waste management in Burkina Faso holds promising green job opportunities for women in several subsectors, especially composting activities, as women are already highly involved in such related sustainable agriculture practices.



## 5. Recommendations and way forward

1

### Getting women entrepreneurs ready for the green economy

- Improve women and girls' access to education and vocational training, addressing gender-based segregation in education and promote their participation in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) fields,
- Develop targeted reskilling, upskilling and mentoring programmes which provide the technical skills and knowledge needed for the green economy, particularly in sectors such as sustainable agriculture, forestry, waste management and energy.

2

### Getting grassroots women/cooperatives ready for the green economy

- Provide organizations and women cooperatives with climate-resilient equipment and technologies.
- Support the organization of women into cooperatives and economic groups and strengthen their institutional capacities, including through aggregation into federations
- Ensure women and girls' rights to ownership of immovable property (land).
- to facilitate collective action, access to inputs, finance and markets.

3

### Leveraging women entrepreneurs' access to green finance

- Design, develop and better structure the offer surrounding bespoke green financial products, tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs and women's organizations.
- Develop specific facilities to support women's green financial inclusion and access to green finance mechanisms, improving women's information, knowledge and capacity to access complex processes around green finance, and collecting sex-disaggregated data to track women's access to green finance.
- Foster networking and collaboration among women to connect with peers' entrepreneurs of their age, mentors, and potential employers in the green economy or forge partnerships with businesses operating in the key sectors to create opportunities for women's employment and entrepreneurship.



## 4

### Address the difficult working conditions, heavy workload and unpaid care work of women

- Strengthen the institutional capacities of actors (government, development partners, women's associations, private sector, etc.).
- Invest in the development of care services and infrastructure and in the implementation of policies that recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work.

## 5

### Advocacy of women's networks in the green economy

- Strengthen the leadership, advocacy and representation of women throughout the design, budgeting, implementation and monitoring-evaluation of national and regional green strategies.
- Strengthen existing national platforms to facilitate and increase consultation, monitoring and coordination of gender and green economy actions at the country level. This will ensure stakeholder engagement (civil society, private sector engagement, women entrepreneurs, public-private partnerships, etc.).
- Encourage sex-disaggregated data collection to inform and implement policies, while promoting gender-responsive green transition processes.

## 6

### Foster Green jobs for women in the context of the Great Green Wall

- Foster the setup of innovative value chains centred on non-timber forest products and promote the practice of agroforestry, which plays a central role in advancing green economy, where gender is pivotal to the success of the Great Green Wall initiative.
- Mobilize finance (green finance) collaborating with commercial banks to create lines of credit for women-led companies, and sovereign funds from government institutions to support these credit lines and other financial mechanisms, leveraging green and climate finance.
- Implement innovative public-private partnership programmes to develop financing products that are tailored to the needs of women-led businesses and thus create the enabling conditions for a greater and more equitable access to finance for women green entrepreneurs.

# Acknowledgement

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United Nations  
Convention to Combat  
Desertification



## Endnotes

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### Opportunities for jobs and entrepreneurship for women in Burkina Faso's green transition

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), adopted in 1994, is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.

The objective of UNCCD is to support countries and communities with the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions. With 197 Parties, the UNCCD unites decision makers, scientists, civil society and the private sector around a shared vision and framework for action to transform how land resources are used and managed to ensure healthy lives and sustainable livelihoods. It is critical that these efforts continue to promote gender equality and gender-responsive approaches to the control and access to land.



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