International Labour Organization

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Employment, Environment, Climate Nexus Factsheet

August 2025

Introduction

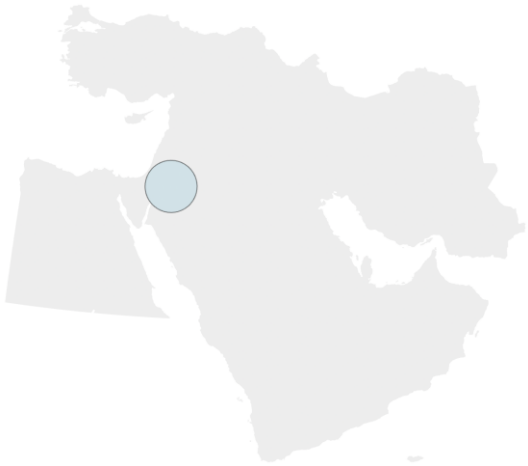
The **Employment, Environment, Climate Nexus Factsheets** are a series produced for countries and territories in the Arab States region.[i] This Factsheet provides data on labour market and environmental sustainability performance in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (henceforth referred to as 'Jordan'), as well as on vulnerability to climate change and the potential for green job creation.

- **Jordan** is a country of 11.4 million people. Population growth remains high due to both natural increase and the continued arrival of refugees.
- **Labour force participation** is among the lowest in the region, especially for women (14.9 per cent), with youth unemployment reaching 46.6 per cent. Over half of employment is informal, a condition that affects both Jordanians and the large refugee population.
- **Climate vulnerability** is moderate overall. Jordan has the third-lowest vulnerability in the Arab States according to ND-GAIN, though its adaptive readiness is limited by governance and social constraints. The country is also the second most water-scarce in the world and faces high exposure to drought and wildfires.
- **Jordan's 2021 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** commit to reducing emissions by 31 per cent by 2030 (5 per cent unconditionally and 26 per cent conditionally). The 2022–2050 Climate Change Policy sets a goal of near-zero emissions by mid-century.
- **Renewable energy** already accounts for 24 pe cent of electricity generation, led by solar photovoltaic. Major projects like the Baynouna Solar Plant and Tafila Wind Farm have supported this shift. As of 2023, around 33,560 people were employed in renewables, with further job growth expected.
- **Green jobs potential** is substantial: up to 100,000 new green jobs could be created by 2030, contributing to a national goal of 10 per cent green employment.
- **Data sources** include: ILOSTAT, IRENA, Department of Statistics (Jordan), UN World Population Prospects, World Bank (WDI), EPI (Yale), ND-GAIN, Climate Watch, Global Burden of Disease, and EM-DAT.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Jordan is a country of around 88,794 km^2 located in the Arab States (Figure 1).ii With Gross National Income (GNI) of US$ 4,370 per capita in 2022, Jordan is categorized as upper-middle income according to the World Bank income group classification.iii Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have grown 2.4 per cent in 2024 and forecast at 2.9 per cent in 2025.iv This compares to 2.1 per annum over the decade prior (2014-2024).

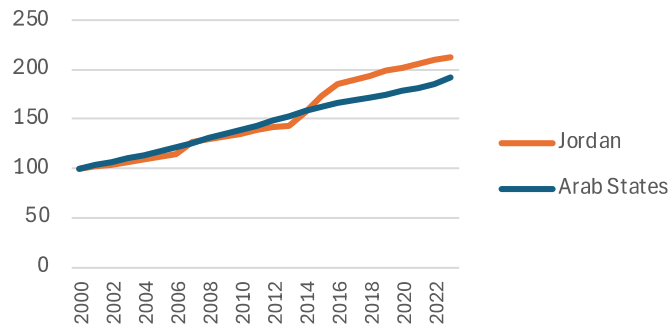
Figure 1. Location of Jordan



Disclaimer: The boundaries shown on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the ILO

The population was estimated at 11.4 million in 2023, representing annual average population growth of 4.1 per cent per annum over the last decade – higher than the regional average (Figure 2).[v] In 2022, a total of 91.8 per cent of the population lived in urban areas.[vi]

Figure 2. Population growth, Jordan and Arab States (Index 2000 = 100)

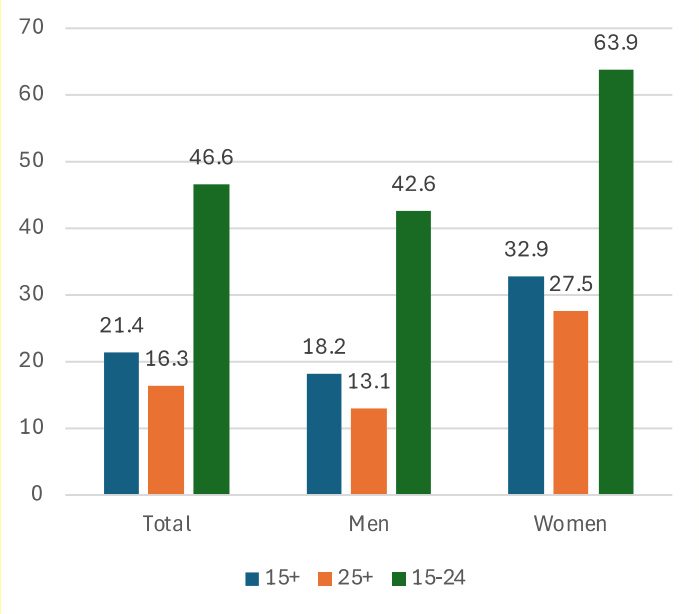


Source: United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2024 Revision.

LABOUR MARKET

The Jordanian labour market is characterised by low labour force participation for women that results in a low rate for the whole population. The total labour force participation rate was 34.1 per cent in 2024, for which the rate for men was 53.4 per cent, to 14.9 per cent for women.vii Gender differences are evident in other labour market variables too, including the unemployment rate. The difference is most marked for youth (Figure 3). The unemployment rate for working age population of men is 18.2 per cent compared to 32.9 per cent for women. Youth aged 15-24 also have an exceptionally high unemployment rate at 46.6 per cent to 16.3 per cent for adults (aged 25+).

Figure 3. Unemployment rate by age and sex (percentages)



Source: Department of Statistics, 2024

A major challenge for the country is the high number of refugees from neighbouring countries and territories, accounting for around a third of the population.viii A challenge is that with a highly informal labour market, many refugees and asylum seekers, despite being able to work formally with work permits, are instead absorbed into the informal labour market. Some estimates suggest that more than half of total employment is in informal employment.ix

▶ ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

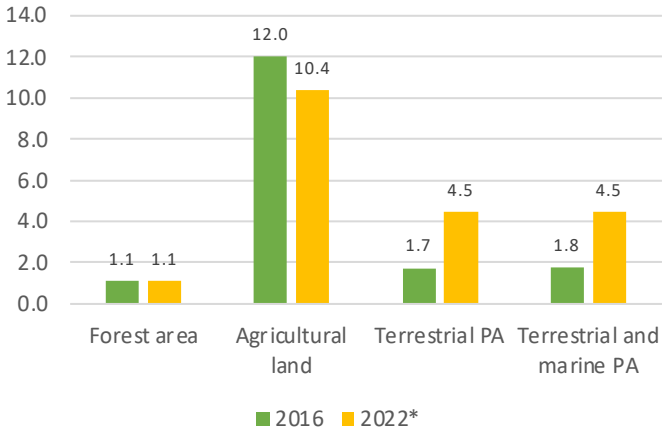
Nature and protected areas

Protected areas are a crucial means of environmental preservation and conservation. In Jordan, 4.5 per cent of total land area were protected areas in 2022 (Figure 5), compared to 1.7 per cent in 2016.[x] Terrestrial protected areas in this context are totally or partially protected areas of at least 1,000 hectares that are designated by national authorities as scientific reserves with limited public access, national parks, natural monuments, nature reserves or wildlife sanctuaries, protected landscapes, and areas managed mainly for sustainable use. Marine protected areas in this context refer to areas of intertidal or subtidal terrain--and overlying water and associated flora and fauna and historical and cultural features--that have been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment.

Jordan's land and marine areas under reserve protection include a mix of forest, nature and marine reserves.[xi] The largest and oldest is the 292-square kilometre Dana Biosphere Reserve, home to endangered species such as the Nubian ibex, Afghan fox, lynx, and sand gazelle, as well as numerous migratory and endemic birds, reptiles and plants.

Of Jordan's total land area, 10.4 per cent is agricultural land (compared to 11.6 per cent in 2001). Agricultural land in this context refers to the share of land area that is arable, under permanent crops, and under permanent pastures.[xii] Around 1 per cent of land is forest area.

▶ Figure 4. Forest area, agricultural land, terrestrial and marine protection areas, Jordan, 2016 and 2022 (percentage)



*Note: PA = protected area. Terrestrial protected areas (% of total land area); Terrestrial and marine protected areas (% of total territorial area); Forest area (% of land area); Agricultural land (% of land area). *2018-2022 latest available datapoint. Source: World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) accessed via World Development Indicators.*

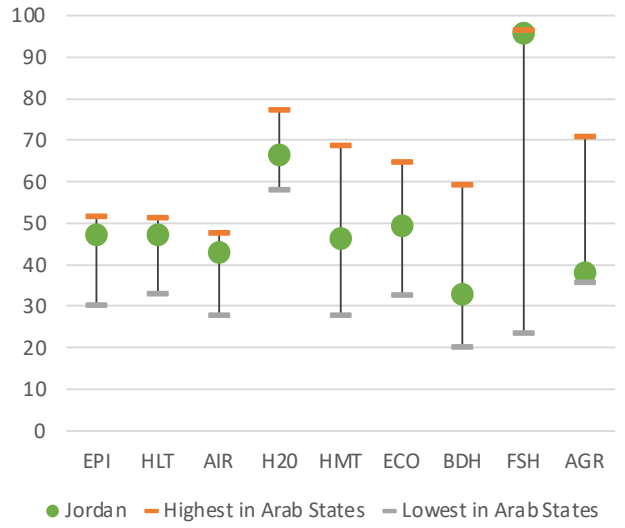
Environmental performance

Jordan ranks 54th of 180 countries in the latest Environmental Performance Index (EPI), 2022 – where top ranking means the best environmental performance.[xiii] The EPI assesses countries on 40 different performance indicators and ranks them according to their national efforts towards environmental health, ecosystem vitality and climate change mitigation.

According to the assessment criteria, Jordan scores 47.3 points on a scale of 0-100 (where 0 is worst and 100 best performing). For reference, the highest-ranking countries globally were in Europe, and included Estonia, Luxembourg, Finland and Germany, with scores of over 70. At the lower end it included Viet Nam, Pakistan, Lao PDR and Myanmar, with scores of below 30. For the Arab States, the highest rank was for United Arab Emirates with a score of 51.6 and lowest in Iraq with a score of 30.3. Jordan ranks 3rd of the 9 Arab States with a score in the database.

Figure 5 shows a selection of indicators for Jordan and how it compares to the highest and lowest scores for the Arab States, thereby allowing a gauge of where the country performs better or worse in relative terms. Qatar is consistently amongst the highest performers in the region.

▶ Figure 5. Environmental performance index and selected indicators, Jordan and Arab States, 2022



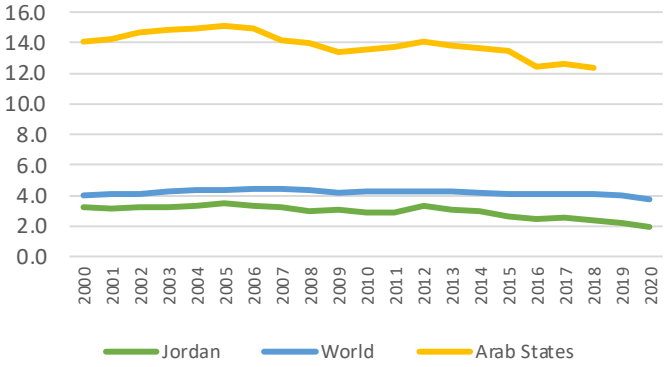
Note: EPI = Environmental Protection Index; HLT = Environmental health; AIR = Air quality; H20 = Sanitation and drinking water; HMT = Heavy metals; ECO = Ecosystem vitality; BDH = Biodiversity and habitat; FSH = Fisheries; AGR = Agriculture. Score 0 (worst) – 100 (best). Values of zero reflect absent data and are not included in the highs and lows. Source: EPI Score 2022. Available at: https://epi.yale.edu/downloads [20 March 2025]

CO2 emissions and decarbonization

The carbon dioxide (CO2) emission levels for Jordan were estimated at 20,974 kt in 2020.[xiv] This marks a significant increase from 16,268 kt in 2002, representing annual average growth in CO2 emissions of 1.2 per cent from 2000-2022. While total CO2 emissions are largely related to the size of the economy, a per-capita metric serves as a relative measure for comparing countries (Figure 6). In 2020, the unweighted average across countries in the Arab States region was estimated at 12.4 metric tonnes per capita. In Jordan it was estimated at 1.9 metric tonnes per capita for the same year, more than twice the regional average.

Jordan submitted its updated National Determined Contributions (NDC) to the UNFCCC in October 2021, setting a target to reduce GHG emissions by 31 per cent by 2030 compared to the business-as-usual scenario. This includes an unconditional reduction of 5 per cent and a conditional reduction of 26 per cent, contingent upon international support.[xv]

▶ Figure 6. CO2 emissions, 2000-2020, Jordan, Arab States and World, (metric tonnes per capita)

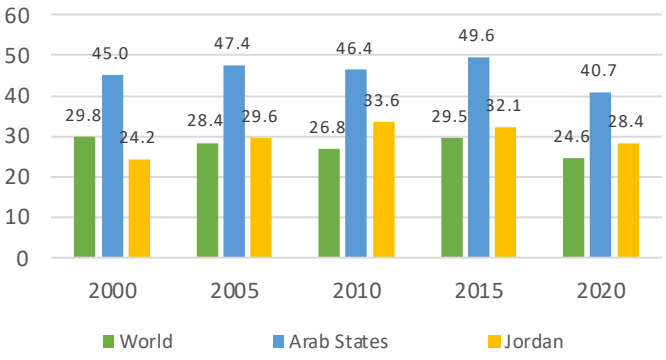


Note: Arab States and World are unweighted averages. Source: Climate Watch. 2024. GHG Emissions. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute [20 March 2025].

Air quality

The level of PM2.5 (atmospheric particulate matter with a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometres) emissions for Jordan is estimated at 28.4 (micrograms per cubic metre) in 2020, compared to 24.2 in 2000 (Figure 7).[xvi] It is more than double an unweighted average across countries in the Arab States of 40.7 in 2020. Notably, the World Health Organization's Air Quality Guideline threshold level emission is stated at 10 micrograms per cubic metre. The percentage of the population exposed to ambient concentrations of PM2.5 that exceed the WHO guideline (the lower end of the range of concentrations over which adverse health effects due to PM2.5 exposure have been observed) has been estimated at 100 per cent for Jordan based on the latest available data.

▶ Figure 7. Air quality PM 2.5 emissions, 2000-2020, Jordan, Arab States and World (micrograms per cubic metre)

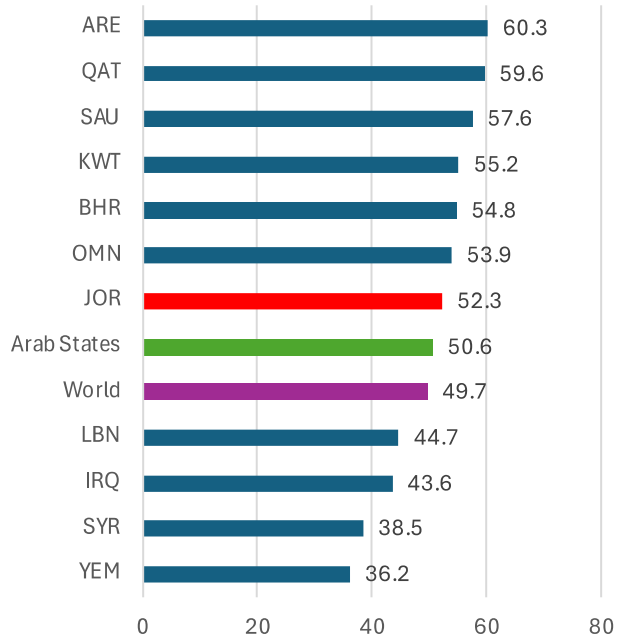


Note: Regional averages are unweighted averages. Source: Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. 2021. Global Burden Study 2019.) Air Pollution Exposure Estimates 1990-2019 [20 March 2025].

▶ VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index (ND GAIN) considers vulnerability to climate change and related global challenges as well as resiliency and preparedness.[xvii] As shown in Figure 8, Jordan has an average level of risk for the region, scoring only slightly higher than the Arab States regional and global average.

▶ **Figure 8. ND GAIN Index, Jordan, Arab States and World, 2022**

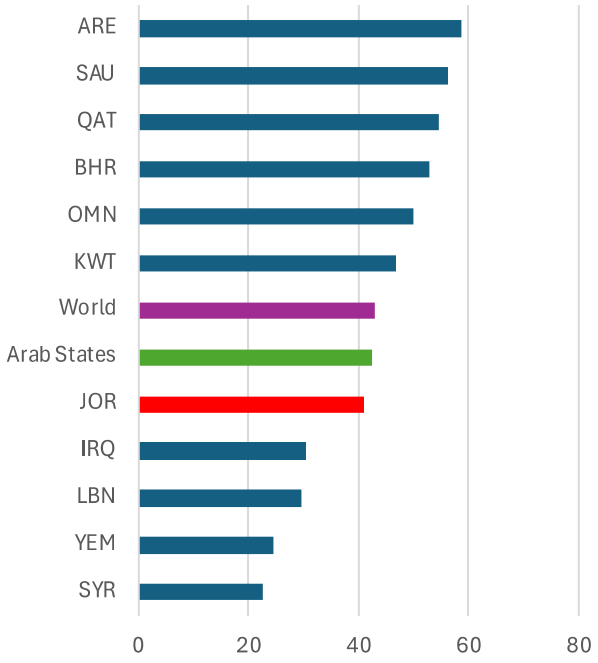


Note: Arab States and World are unweighted averages. Source: ND-GAIN Country Index. No data available for PSE. Available at: https://gain.nd.edu [20 March 2025]

The risk score (where 100 denotes lower risk, and 0 highest risk) of 52.3 is higher than Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, but of higher risk than Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The score represents a mix of vulnerability to climate change and readiness to adapt.

The ND GAIN index evaluates the readiness and the vulnerability of countries. The **readiness** factor of the ND GAIN index (see Figure 9), which refers to the 'ability to leverage investments and convert them to adaptation actions' is assessed in terms of economic readiness, governance readiness and social readiness and their ability to enhance the application and mobility of investment to promote adaptation. Economic readiness captures the ability of a country's business environment to accept investment that could be applied to adaptation that reduces vulnerability (reduces sensitivity and improves adaptive capacity). Governance readiness reflects the institutional factors that enhance the application of adaptation investments. Social readiness indicates the social factors that enhance the mobility of investment and promote adaptation actions. In this regard, Jordan ranks relatively low – higher only than Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and Syria (Figure 9). Suggesting shortfalls in appropriate economic, governance, and social readiness factors in place to facilitate climate change mitigation.

▶ **Figure 9. ND GAIN Readiness Index, Jordan, Arab States and World, 2022**



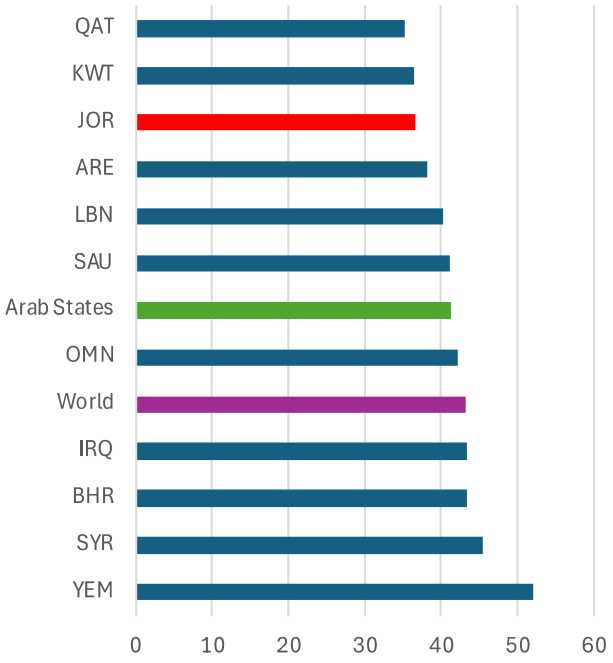
Note: Arab States and World are unweighted averages. Source: ND-GAIN Country Index. No data available for PSE. Available at: https://gain.nd.edu [20 March 2025]

The relative high readiness score reflects the country's high-income status and relatively high GDP. Other factors including the provision of basic services are widely available, reducing the impact even on vulnerable populations. Almost all of the population had access to at least basic sanitation services in 2022, basic drinking water services, access to electricity and access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking.[xviii]

The **vulnerability** components of the ND GAIN index looks at 'exposure, sensitivity and capacity to adapt to the negative effects of climate change' (see Figure 10). Accordingly, this is analyzed based on three dimensions: i) Exposure - the degree to which a system is exposed to significant climate change from a biophysical perspective, capturing the physical factors external to the system that contribute to vulnerability; ii) Sensitivity - the extent to which a sector is affected by climate-related hazards; and

iii) Adaptive Capacity - the ability of a sector to cope with or adapt to the impacts of climate change.

▶ **Figure 10. ND GAIN Vulnerability Index, Jordan, Arab States and World, 2022**

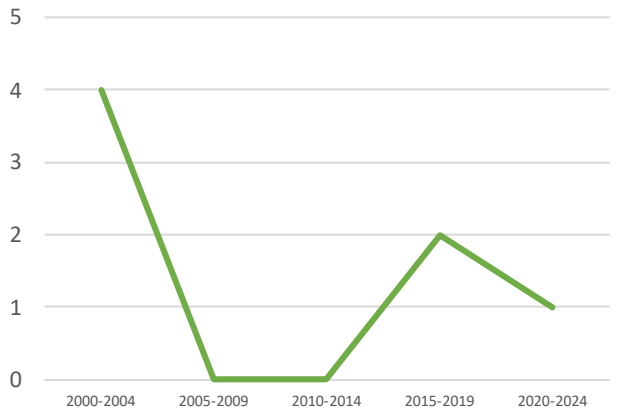


Note: Arab States and World are unweighted averages. Source: ND-GAIN Country Index. No data available for PSE. Available at: https://gain.nd.edu [20 March 2025]

In terms of vulnerability, Jordan ranks relatively highly (i.e. low vulnerability) in a context of Arab States, exhibiting the lowest vulnerability to climate change in the region behind Qatar and Kuwait (Figure 10). Despite this, over the 2000-2024 period, there have been various climate-change related natural disasters in Jordan (Figure 11), including drought, wildfires and flash floods.

Given its vulnerability to drought and fire and in an effort to strengthen its path towards carbon neutrality and combat a rising trend of forest fires, Jordan launched a reforestation campaign in 2024 to plant 10 million trees within the next decade, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.[xix]

▶ **Figure 11. Number of natural disasters, per 5-year period, Jordan, 1992-2022**

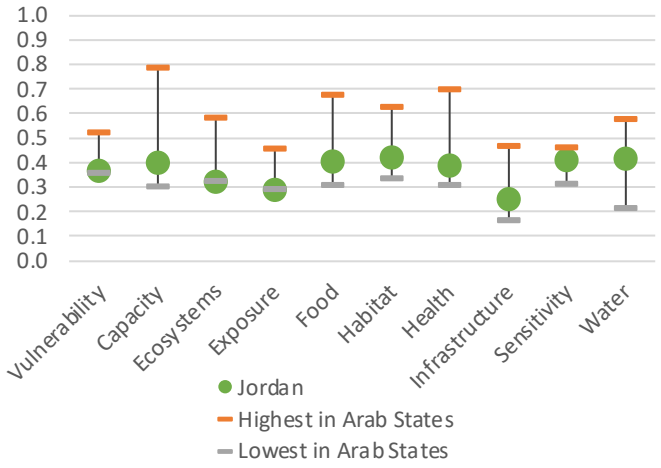


Source: ILO compilation using EM-DAT. Available at: https://www.emdat.be [25 March 2025]

Considered to be the second most water scarce country in the world,[xx]Jordan is looking to improve its future water security in the context of rising temperatures and geopolitical tensions. Currently water use is not efficient and the state covers almost half of the cost of delivering water in subsidies[xxi]. Its 2030-2040 National Water Strategy[xxii] includes plans to reduce losses from leakage and illegal use, improve wastewater treatment, diversify irrigation practices and increase the use of non-conventional water sources such as on-site water treatment and reuse. The Disi-Amman Water Conveyance Project[xxiii] is a public-private partnership (P3) project that is improving the capital's water access significantly.

Figure 12 provides other comparisons of how the country fares relative to other countries and territories in the Arab States region with respect to different composite indicators of the vulnerability component of the index. For instance, it shows that for ecosystems – i.e. that which provides the natural capital upon which human society builds its economy and social system and include natural resources that are at the foundation of all almost all product value chains – Jordan has a score of 0.32, relative to highs (least vulnerable) in the region of 0.58 and lows of 0.32. Shifting geoclimes due to changed temperature and precipitation cause stress within ecosystems unable to respond as quickly as these shifts require.[xxiv]

▶ Figure 12. Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index, Vulnerability and composite indicators, 2023, Jordan and Arab States (index score)



Note: Arab States is an unweighted average. Source: ND-GAIN Country Index. Available at: https://gain.nd.edu [20 March 2025]

▶ CLIMATE POLICIES AND PLANS

Jordan's '2022 - 2050 Climate Change Policy (CCP)'[xxv] brings together the country's policies and initiatives to counter climate change, with headline commitments of emissions reductions of 31 per cent by 2030 and a 'near-zero emissions target' for 2050, consistent with Jordan's 2021 update of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to the UNFCCC.[xxvi]

As of 2022, Jordan imported 93 per cent of its total energy at a value of almost 8 per cent of its GDP, placing a large strain on the economy and increasing its energy insecurity[xxvii]. The country's energy and climate strategies are therefore focused on self-sufficiency and autonomy, as well as climate change mitigation goals. Already a regional leader in solar and wind, which makes up over 20% of Jordan's own electricity generation[xxviii], the country aims to increase the share of renewables to 50% by 2030[xxix].

Under the Jordan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund[xxx] (JREEEF) established in 2015, financial measures such as loan interest rate subsidy, financial risk mitigation, credit guarantees, equity participation and subsidies are used to support household, industry, public and agricultural projects that work towards these climate and energy targets. Jordan is also pushing forward a range of large-scale renewables projects. Opened in 2015, the $287 million Tafila Wind Farm[xxxi] was the Middle East's first commercial, utility-scale wind power project and continues to be a major power producer in the Kingdom. The country's largest solar power plant at Baynouna near Amman became operational in 2020 and powers 160,000 homes[xxxii].

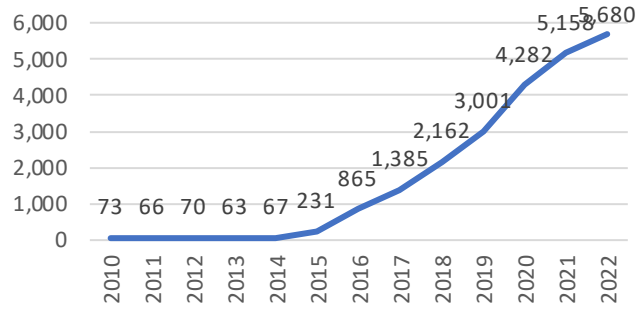
Jordan now has a particular focus on energy storage to help meet its climate targets; in 2024 for example the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources announced a 450-megawatt pumped hydroelectric storage project at the Mujib Dam south of Amman[xxxiii], which could power more than 300,000 homes.

▶ JOBS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

A 2023 study by GIZ[xxxiv] identified between 75,000 and 95,000 existing green jobs in Jordan, solely in the sectors of agriculture, waste and water, manufacturing, energy, tourism, and transport; equivalent to over 4 per cent of Jordan's total workforce. Though heavily dependent on the policies implemented and macroeconomic factors, the study also estimated that the implementation of announced green initiatives could create more than 100,000 jobs in Jordan by 2030, which would bring it closer to the Government's target of 10 per cent of employment being in green activities by the same year.[xxxv]

Renewable energy generation accounted for around 24 per cent of total energy generation in Jordan in 2022. Renewable energy generation has been increasing over the past decade in particular, from 67 GWh in 2014 to 5,680 GWh in 2022 (Figure 13). This represents growth of nearly 50 per cent per annum from 2012 to 2022.

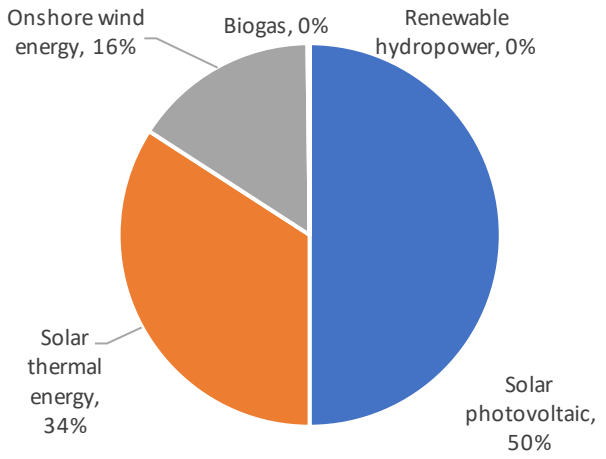
▶ Figure 13. Total renewable energy generation (GWh), 2001-2022



Source: ILO compilation using IRENA Renewable Energy Statistics 2025. Available at: https://www.irena.org/Data [20 March 2025]

The main source of renewable energy is solar photovoltaic, accounting for 50 per cent of all renewable energy generation in 2022. This is followed by solar thermal energy at 34 per cent, and onshore wind energy at 16 per cent, in 2022. While negligible compared to the others, there is also renewable energy generated from biogas and renewable hydropower (Figure 14).[xxxvi]

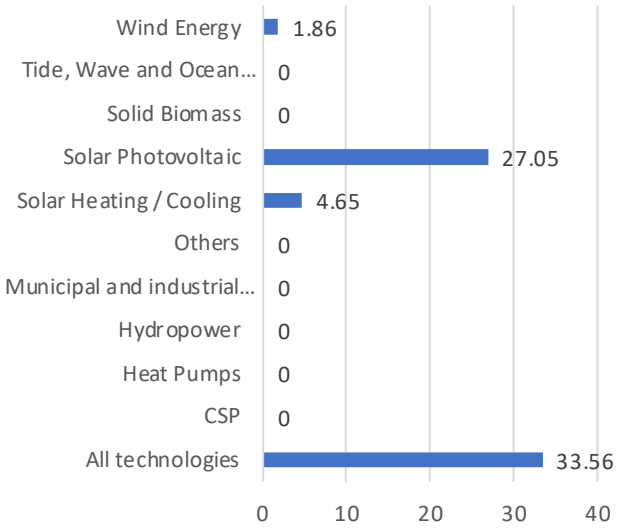
▶ **Figure 14. Renewable energy generation (GWh) by technology, 2022**



Source: ILO compilation using IRENA Renewable Energy Statistics 2025. Available at: https://www.irena.org/Data [20 March 2025]

According to estimates by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), 33,560 people in Jordan were employed in the renewable energy sector in 2023. 'Solar Photovoltaic' accounted for the highest share at around 80 per cent of total employment in renewable energy in the country (Figure 15).[xxxvii]

▶ **Figure 15 Renewable energy employment, by energy source, 2023 (thousands)**



Note: 'Others' include jobs which are not technology specific. Source: IRENA and ILO (2024), Renewable energy and jobs: Annual review 2024, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi and International Labour Organization, Geneva. Data available at: https://www.irena.org/Data/View-data-by-topic/Benefits/Renewable-Energy-Employment-by-Country [20 March 2025]

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▶ REFERENCES AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

[i] Arab States in this context refer to the countries and territories covered by the ILO Regional Office of the Arab States: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
[ii] Source: Food and Agriculture Organization, electronic files and web site. Accessed via World Development Indicators [20.03.25]
[iii] World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files. Accessed via World Development Indicators [20.03.25]
[iv] International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook, October 2024.
[v] Source: (1) United Nations Population Division. World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision. (2) Census reports and other statistical publications from national statistical offices, (3) Eurostat: Demographic Statistics, (4) United Nations Statistical Division. Population and Vital Statistics Report (various years), (5) U.S. Census Bureau: International Database, and (6) Secretariat of the Pacific Community: Statistics and Demography Programme. Accessed via World Development Indicators [20.03.25]
[vi] United Nations Population Division. World Urbanization Prospects: 2024 Revision [20.03.25]
[vii] Jordan, Department of Statistics, 2024
[viii] Development Pathways (2025). Jordan Labour Market: Briefing Note, March 2025.
[ix] Ibid.
[x] Source: World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) where the compilation and management is carried out by United Nations Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) in collaboration with governments, non-governmental organizations, academia and industry. The data is available online through the Protected Planet website. Accessed via World Development Indicators [20.03.25].
[xi] Protected Planet. "Jordan." https://www.protectedplanet.net/en/country/JOR
[xii] Source: Ibid.
[xiii] The 2022 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) provides a data-driven summary of the state of sustainability around the world. Using 40 performance indicators across 11 issue categories, the EPI ranks 180 countries on climate change performance, environmental health, and ecosystem vitality. These indicators provide a gauge at a national scale of how close countries are to established environmental policy targets. The EPI offers a scorecard that highlights leaders and laggards in environmental performance and provides practical guidance for countries that aspire to move toward a sustainable future. Source: EPI Raw Data, available at: https://epi.yale.edu [20.03.25]
[xiv] Source: Climate Watch. 2020. GHG Emissions. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. Accessed via World Development Indicators [20.03.25].
[xv] United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). "Jordan." https://www.unep.org/ndc/action-area/jordan
[xvi] Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. 2021. Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 (GBD 2019) Air Pollution Exposure Estimates 1990-2019. Accessed via World Development Indicators [20.03.25].
[xvii] The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Country Index is a measurement tool that helps governments, businesses and communities examine risks exacerbated by climate change, such as over-crowding, food insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, and civil conflicts. The Country Index uses 20 years of data across 45 indicators to rank over 180 countries annually based on their level of vulnerability, and their readiness to successfully implement adaptation solutions. Available at: https://gain.nd.edu [22 September 2023]
[xviii] Source: WHO UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (washdata.org). Accessed via World Development Indicators [20.03.25].
[xix] Petra News Agency. "National Water Strategy 2023–2040 Roadmap to Achieve Water Security." https://www.petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=57031&lang=en&name=en_news
[xx]UNICEF Jordan. "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene." https://www.unicef.org/jordan/water-sanitation-and-hygiene#:~:text=Jordan%20is%20the%20second%20most,which%20defines%20severe%20water%20scarcity.
[xxi]UNICEF Jordan. "Water Stress in Jordan: Executive Summary." https://www.unicef.org/jordan/water-stress-jordan-executive-summary#:~:text=Despite%20being%20a%20water%2Dstressed,US%24490m)
[xxii]Ministry of Water and Irrigation. *National Water Strategy 2023–2040: Summary*. https://www.mwi.gov.jo/EBV4.0/Root_Storage/AR/EB_Ticker/National_Water_Strategy_2023-2040_Summary-English_-ver2.pdf
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