

06.81.23

## CREATIVE ECONOMY: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTELLECTUAL LABOUR, INNOVATION AND THE ENVIRON- MENTAL AGENDA

<sup>1</sup>Victoria ALEKSEEVA, <sup>2</sup>Manzura RAKHIMOVA

<sup>1</sup> *Republican Center for the Study of Public Opinion “Ijtimoiy Fikr”, Tashkent, Uzbekistan*  
*viv20@yandex.ru*

<sup>2</sup> *National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

Link to this article: Alekseeva V.S., Rakhimova M.Kh. Creative economy - connection with intellectual labor, innovations and environmental agenda // SOCIOLOGY.KZ. - 2026. - №3(3). – P. 158 – 177.  
<https://doi.org/10.48010/2026.3/sskz.33>

**Abstract.** This article examines the relationship between the creative economy, intellectual labour, innovation, and the environmental agenda in the context of the transition towards sustainable development models. The relevance of the study lies in the need to identify the conditions under which intellectual and creative potential can be transformed into environmentally oriented innovative solutions that respond to societal needs. The study combines a comparative analysis of contemporary theoretical approaches with public opinion survey data. The empirical basis consists of a telephone survey conducted in Uzbekistan on 13–17 July 2026 using a random probability sample covering all regions of the country (N=615).

The findings reveal a combination of strong public support for the transition to a green economy and limited awareness of its content. They also indicate potential demand for environmentally friendly goods and services and show that environmentally responsible behaviour depends on affordability, convenience, access to information, and infrastructure. The most prominent priorities for environmental transformation include the rational use of water resources, waste recycling, and the development of renewable energy.

The authors argue that creativity and innovation do not automatically generate environmental value. Their potential is realised through the interaction of intellectual and creative labour with societal needs, economic and institutional conditions, and public readiness to adopt new solutions. Public opinion is therefore considered not only as a response to innovation but also as a source of information for its development. Further research should empirically examine the interaction between creators of environmental innovations, the institutional environment, and their potential users.

**Key words:** creative economy, intellectual labour, creative labour, innovation, green economy, environmental sustainability, public opinion.

## КРЕАТИВТІ ЭКОНОМИКА: ЗИЯТКЕРЛІК ЕҢБЕКПЕН, ИННОВАЦИЯЛАРМЕН ЖӘНЕ ЭКОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ КҮН ТӘРТІБІМЕН ӨЗАРА БАЙЛАНЫСЫ

<sup>1</sup>Виктория АЛЕКСЕЕВА, <sup>2</sup>Манзура РАХИМОВА

<sup>1</sup>«Ижтимоий фикр» Республикалық қоғамдық пікірді зерттеу орталығы,  
Ташкент, Өзбекстан

<sup>2</sup>Мырза Ұлықбек атындағы Өзбекстан Ұлттық университеті,  
Ташкент, Өзбекстан

## КРЕАТИВНАЯ ЭКОНОМИКА - СВЯЗЬ С ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛЬНЫМ ТРУДОМ, ИННОВАЦИЯМИ И ЭКОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ ПОВЕСТКОЙ

<sup>1</sup>Виктория АЛЕКСЕЕВА, <sup>2</sup>Манзура РАХИМОВА

<sup>1</sup>Республиканский центр изучения общественного мнения «Ижтимоий фикр»,  
Ташкент, Узбекистан

<sup>2</sup>Национальный университет Узбекистана имени Мирзо Улугбека,  
Ташкент, Узбекистан

**Андатпа.** Мақала креативті экономика, зияткерлік еңбек, инновациялық қызмет және экологиялық күн тәртібі арасындағы өзара байланысты орнықты даму модельдеріне көшу жағдайында зерттеуге арналған. Зерттеудің өзектілігі зияткерлік және креативті әлеуеттің қоғам сұранысына жауап беретін экологиялық бағыттағы инновациялық шешімдерге қандай жағдайларда айналуы мүмкін екенін анықтау қажеттілігімен байланысты. Зерттеуде заманауи теориялық тәсілдерді салыстырмалы талдау мен қоғамдық пікірді социологиялық зерттеу деректері ұштастырылды. Эмпирикалық негізді 2026 жылғы 13–17 шілдеде Өзбекстанның барлық өңірлерін қамтыған кездейсоқ ықтималдық іріктеу негізінде телефон арқылы жүргізілген сауалнама нәтижелері құрады (N=615). Зерттеу нәтижелері халықтың «оқасыл» экономикаға көшуді жоғары деңгейде қолдауы оның мазмұны туралы хабардарлықтың шектеулілігімен қатар жүретінін көрсетті. Сонымен бірге экологиялық қауіпсіз тауарлар мен қызметтерге әлеуетті сұраныс бар екені және экологиялық мінез-құлықтың экономикалық қолжетімділікке, қолайлылыққа, ақпараттандырылуға және инфрақұрылымдық жағдайларға тәуелді екені анықталды. Экологиялық трансформацияның негізгі басымдықтары ретінде су ресурстарын ұтымды пайдалану, қалдықтарды қайта өңдеу және жаңартылатын энергетиканы дамыту айқындалды.

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена исследованию взаимосвязи креативной экономики, интеллектуального труда, инновационной деятельности и экологической повестки в условиях перехода к устойчивым моделям развития. Актуальность исследования обусловлена необходимостью определить, при каких условиях интеллектуальный и креативный потенциал может преобразовываться в экологически ориентированные инновационные решения, востребованные обществом. На основе сравнительного анализа современных теоретических подходов и данных социологического исследования общественного мнения рассматривается роль общественного экологического запроса в данном процессе. Эмпирическую основу составили результаты телефонного опроса населения Узбекистана, проведенного 13–17 июля 2026 года по случайной вероятностной выборке во всех регионах страны (N=615).

Результаты выявили сочетание высокой общественной поддержки перехода к «зеленой» экономике с ограниченной информированностью о ее содержании, наличие потенциального спроса на экологически безопасные товары и услуги, а также зависимость экологического поведения от экономической доступности, удобства, информированности и инфраструктурных условий.

Авторлардың ұстанымы бойынша, креативтілік пен инновациялар өздігінен экологиялық құндылық қалыптастырмайды. Олардың әлеуеті зияткерлік және креативті еңбектің қоғамдық қажеттіліктермен, экономикалық және институционалдық жағдайлармен, сондай-ақ халықтың жаңа шешімдерді қабылдауға дайындығымен өзара ықпалдасуы нәтижесінде іске асады. Осы тұрғыдан қоғамдық пікір инновацияларға берілетін реакция ғана емес, оларды әзірлеуге қажетті ақпарат көзі ретінде де қарастырылады. Болашақ зерттеулерде экологиялық инновацияларды жасаушылар, институционалдық орта және олардың әлеуетті пайдаланушылары арасындағы өзара байланысты эмпирикалық тұрғыдан зерделеу ұсынылады.

**Түйін сөздер:** креативті экономика, зияткерлік еңбек, креативті еңбек, инновациялар, жасыл экономика, экологиялық тұрақтылық, қоғамдық пікір.

Наиболее востребованные направления экологической трансформации связаны с рациональным использованием водных ресурсов, переработкой отходов и развитием возобновляемой энергетики. Авторская позиция заключается в том, что креативность и инновации не создают экологическую ценность автоматически. Их потенциал реализуется при взаимодействии интеллектуального и креативного труда с общественными потребностями, экономическими и институциональными условиями и готовностью населения принимать новые решения. Предлагается рассматривать общественное мнение не только как реакцию на инновации, но и как источник информации для их разработки. Перспективным направлением дальнейших исследований является эмпирическая проверка взаимосвязи между создателями экологических инноваций, институциональной средой и их потенциальными пользователями.

**Ключевые слова:** креативная экономика, интеллектуальный труд, креативный труд, инновации, зеленая экономика, экологическая устойчивость, общественное мнение.

The modern economy is characterized by structural changes associated with the growing role of knowledge, intellectual potential, and innovation activity in the creation of economic value. Alongside natural resources, production capacities, and physical capital, human capital, the ability to generate new ideas and find opportunities for their practical implementation are becoming significant factors of competitiveness. One manifestation of these processes is the development of the creative economy, based on the use of knowledge, creative abilities, intellectual property, technologies, and innovations. This transition reflects a broader transformation of value creation mechanisms – from predominantly material production to an economy based on knowledge and intellectual labor.

The theoretical understanding of the creative economy has gone through several stages. One of the foundational approaches was that of J. Hawkins [1], who linked the emergence of the creative economy with the transformation of ideas and human creativity into an economic resource. Within this framework, creativity ceases to be viewed exclusively as a characteristic of artistic activity and acquires economic content – the ability to create new ideas and results of intellectual activity becomes a source of value formation. Hawkins himself, whom UNCTAD [2] characterizes as the author of the term "creative economy," continues to link the development of this sector with innovations and the economic potential of new ideas.

Further development of this direction is associated with R. Florida's concept of the "creative class" [3], which shifted the research focus from individual cultural and creative industries to the individual as a bearer of knowledge, professional competencies,

and the ability to create new solutions. Within this approach, creativity acts as a factor in innovative and regional development, and professions based on intellectual activity, the creation of new knowledge, and solving non-standard problems acquire particular importance. Later, Florida directly linked the theory of the creative class to economic development, identifying talent, technology, professions, and cities as key categories.

Another perspective in the scholarly discourse is represented by D. Throsby's approach [4], which examines cultural and creative industries through the lens of the relationship between cultural and economic value. His concentric circles model demonstrates that creative activity does not form a homogeneous sector: as one moves from the core of artistic creativity to a broader circle of cultural and related industries, the intensity of cultural content changes. Notably, in the empirical testing of this model, the share of creative labor is used as one of the indicators, which further emphasizes the importance of human intellectual activity in determining the structure of the creative sector.

The development of this approach has led to a gradual departure from an exclusively sectoral understanding of the creative economy. H. Bakhshi, A. Freeman, and P. Higgs [5] proposed the concept of creative intensity, which shifts the focus to the proportion of workers performing creative functions within a particular industry. This approach showed that creative labor exists not only in formally defined "creative industries": a significant part of specialists who create intellectual and creative value are employed in other sectors of the economy. In particular, the methodology proposed by the authors made it possible to include in the analysis the rapidly growing segments of software and digital activity, which traditional industry classifications might have accounted for incompletely.

Thus, the evolution of scholarly discourse demonstrates a gradual expansion of the very concept of the creative economy: from the economy of ideas and intellectual property – to human and creative capital, and further to the analysis of the content of labor and the role of creative competencies in various sectors of the economy.

The current stage of this discourse is characterized by a substantial broadening of the research framework, which consists of embedding the creative economy into the processes of digital, social, and environmental transformation. This broadening is confirmed by contemporary empirical studies of creative industries. For instance, J. Segre, M. Dattilo, and E. Salvador examine the interrelationship between creativity, innovation, technology, and environmental sustainability using the design industry as a case study. The authors proceed from the premise that creativity and innovation can contribute to the creation of new products and services while simultaneously acting as factors of sustainable development. Of particular importance here is design as a sphere that connects creative ideas, technological solutions, and user needs, and is thus capable of participating in the formation of environmentally oriented innovations [6].

This approach has been further developed, in particular, in the work of E. Pratt [7], who considers the creative economy in the context of the "triple transition" – digital, social, and environmental transitions. In contrast to an instrumental understanding of culture and the creative sector as auxiliary means of economic development, Pratt proposes to view them as a system of practices, institutions, and economic, social,

cultural, and environmental values embedded in development processes. In this interpretation, the creative sector acts not as a passive participant in structural changes, but as one of the potential drivers of these changes.

Recent UNCTAD data confirm the growing role of the creative economy in global trade. According to the organization's updated estimates, world exports of creative services reached a record USD 1.7 trillion in 2024, increasing by 12% over the year and more than doubling the exports of creative goods, which amounted to USD 709 billion. The share of creative services reached 20% of world services exports, while creative goods accounted for about 3% of world merchandise exports<sup>1</sup>. UNCTAD attributes the sustained faster growth of trade in creative services, in particular, to rising demand for software, research and development, digital content, and media. These trends indicate the growing importance of knowledge, intellectual labor, digital competencies, and innovation activities in the current structure of the global economy. At the same time, UNCTAD identifies digitalization, artificial intelligence, inclusiveness, and environmental sustainability as factors in the contemporary transformation of the creative economy.

Of particular relevance to this study is UNCTAD's emphasis on the environmental dimension of the creative economy. In the *Creative Economy Outlook 2024* [2], environmental sustainability is considered not as an issue external to creative industries, but in connection with decarbonization, ecosystem preservation, pollution and waste reduction, sustainable design, energy efficiency, and circular economy practices. At the same time, the international approach reveals a dual nature of this relationship: on the one hand, creative industries themselves have an environmental footprint and need to transition to more sustainable production models; on the other hand, creative competencies, design, technologies, and innovative solutions can contribute to the environmental transformation of the economy and consumption patterns.

It is precisely at the intersection of the directions discussed above that the problem field of this study is formed. Existing concepts reveal various aspects of the creative economy – Hawkins emphasizes the economic role of ideas and creativity, Florida highlights the importance of human and creative capital, Throsby focuses on the relationship between cultural and economic value, and Bakhshi addresses the content of creative labor and its spread beyond traditionally defined creative industries. Contemporary research and international approaches broaden this agenda by incorporating the creative economy into the context of digital, social, and environmental transformation. At the same time, the question of under what conditions intellectual and creative potential can be directed toward creating innovative solutions capable of generating not only economic but also social and environmental value requires further reflection.

The significance of the innovation link in this relationship is confirmed by research on green innovation. The results of a meta-analysis of recent empirical studies show a positive relationship between green innovation and the environmental performance of organizations, with the effect observed for both product and process innovations [8].

This issue acquires particular relevance for Uzbekistan. The development of human capital, digitalization, entrepreneurship, and innovation activity occur simultaneously

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://unctadstat2.unctad.org/>

with the need to address environmental problems related to water scarcity, land degradation, the consequences of the Aral Sea crisis, air pollution, urbanization, growing resource consumption, and the need to improve energy efficiency. This combination of economic, technological, and environmental challenges underscores the need to seek new approaches to using intellectual and creative resources in the interests of sustainable development.

The relevance of considering the creative economy in the context of sustainable development is also confirmed by the formation of an appropriate international agenda directly in Uzbekistan. At the 4th World Conference on Creative Economy, held in Tashkent in October 2024, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan identified the creative economy as one of the factors of structural transformation and economic diversification, linking its development with the opportunities arising from digital transformation, the spread of artificial intelligence, and the transition to a green economy. In this context, the creative economy is viewed not only as a standalone sector of economic activity but also as a potential resource for sustainable and inclusive development [9].

This study proposes a research framework that combines intellectual capital, creative labor, innovation activity, green entrepreneurship, and the creation of economic, social, and environmental value. This research logic is supported by recent empirical work. In particular, a study of the relationship between intellectual capital, green innovation, and sustainability in creative industry enterprises shows that intellectual capital and green innovation can act as interrelated resources for sustainable development, with sustainability serving an important mediating function between intellectual resources and the economic performance of enterprises [10].

In contrast to approaches that view the creative economy primarily through sectoral structure, cultural production, employment, or the economic contribution of creative industries, attention is focused on the functional role of intellectual and creative labor – its ability to participate in identifying problems, developing new solutions, and transforming them into products, services, technologies, and organizational models.

At the same time, the relationship between intellectual and creative potential, innovation activity, and the creation of environmental value is not automatic. The ability to generate new ideas and develop innovative products, services, technologies, or organizational models represents only one side of this process. Their practical effect is largely determined by the extent to which the proposed solutions respond to existing social needs, are accessible to potential users, and can be integrated into everyday economic and social practices. In this context, the environmental agenda is of particular interest for analyzing the creative economy. Addressing environmental problems requires not only technological innovations but also the search for new consumption models, ways of organizing urban and domestic environments, sustainable design, digital services, and educational and communication solutions. Thus, intellectual and creative labor can participate in environmental transformation at various levels – from the development of new products and technologies to the formation of practices for their use and dissemination.

However, the demand for such solutions is determined not only by the capabilities of their creators but also by the nature of public environmental demand. This approach

is consistent with the findings of recent research on the drivers of eco-innovation, which show that their development is shaped not only by the internal technological capabilities of organizations but also by market demand, institutional regulation, and external networks of interaction. This makes it possible to view public demand not as an external backdrop to the innovation process, but as one of the environmental factors that can influence the uptake and diffusion of environmentally oriented solutions [11].

Public perceptions of the most significant environmental problems, the willingness to use environmentally oriented goods and services, to change habitual patterns of behavior, or to bear associated additional costs shape the social environment in which innovations may or may not gain traction. Also of considerable importance are the economic affordability of such solutions, the availability of necessary infrastructure, public awareness, and the institutional conditions for their implementation.

This is precisely why the recourse to public opinion in this study serves a bridging analytical function. The examination of environmental attitudes among the population makes it possible to identify which environmental problems are perceived as most significant, which areas of the "green" economy have potential public demand, and which factors may constrain or stimulate the adoption of new solutions. From this perspective, public opinion data are viewed as a means of identifying the social conditions and potential demand for environmentally oriented innovations, in the creation of which intellectual and creative labor may be involved.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the development of an integrative research framework that links intellectual capital and creative labor with innovation activity and the environmental agenda, as well as in its application to the analysis of the social preconditions for green transformation in Uzbekistan based on public opinion survey data. In contrast to approaches that examine the environmental dimension of the creative economy primarily at the level of industries, technologies, and production practices, the research framework incorporates public environmental demand, perceived barriers, and conditions for the adoption of environmentally oriented solutions as perceived by the population.

Accordingly, the central research question is formulated as follows: under what social, economic, and institutional conditions can intellectual and creative labor contribute to the formation and diffusion of environmentally oriented innovative solutions in Uzbekistan?

## **Methodology**

The research methodology combines theoretical analysis and the analysis of public opinion data. The theoretical part is based on a comparative analysis and conceptual synthesis of approaches to the creative economy, intellectual labor, innovation, and environmental sustainability. The empirical basis consists of the results of a telephone survey conducted by the Republican Center for Public Opinion Study "Ijtimoiy Fikr" on July 13–17, 2026, using a random probability sample in all regions of Uzbekistan (N=615). Methods of descriptive and comparative analysis were applied. The survey examined environmental awareness, attitudes, consumer behavior, barriers, and conditions for adopting environmental solutions. The data obtained are used to identify

public demand and the social preconditions for the diffusion of environmentally oriented innovations.

### **Discussion and Debate**

The obtained results allow us to specify the question of the place of the creative economy in the environmental transformation of Uzbekistan. The empirical data provide no grounds to assert that the development of creative industries in itself leads to environmentally responsible behavior among the population. At the same time, they reveal public attitudes, needs, and barriers that shape the social environment in which intellectual and creative labor can be directed toward the development and dissemination of environmentally oriented innovations. It is in this context that the study's findings should be compared with contemporary understandings of the creative economy.

The theoretical approaches of J. Hawkins [1], R. Florida [3], as well as H. Bakhshi, A. Freeman, and P. Higgs [5], allow us to view the creative economy more broadly than traditional cultural and creative industries – through the human capacity to generate new ideas, the content of intellectual and creative labor, and its role in creating new value. Of particular importance for this study is the functional understanding of creativity: intellectual and creative potential can be realized not only in the creation of cultural products but also in technology development, design, programming, research, engineering, communications, and solving nonstandard professional tasks. This approach makes it possible to raise the question of applying intellectual and creative competencies to find solutions to environmental problems.

Contemporary technological transformation is simultaneously changing the very content of intellectual and creative labor. The spread of generative artificial intelligence shows that some operations previously directly associated with human intellectual activity can now be performed by algorithmic systems. Under these conditions, the research question shifts from contrasting humans and technology to examining the nature of their interaction in the process of creating new value. The results of recent studies on organizational AI adoption show that the effect of technology depends not only on its technical capabilities but also on human competencies and the nature of its perception: viewing AI as an opportunity to acquire new skills is associated with greater employee readiness for knowledge sharing, whereas perceiving technology as an obstacle or threat encourages defensive behavioral strategies [14]. Consequently, a technological tool expands the space of possibilities, but transforming them into innovative, economic, and social value requires human knowledge, learning ability, and creativity.

With respect to the environmental agenda, this proposition acquires particular significance. E. Pratt [7], examining the cultural and creative sector in the context of digital, social, and environmental transitions, characterizes it as a potential "agent of transformation." However, such a role does not imply that creative industries are inherently environmentally friendly. The digitalization of cultural and creative products may create an impression of dematerialized production, whereas cloud services, data storage, streaming content, and the associated infrastructure require significant energy

and water resources. Consequently, the environmental value of creative activity is determined not by its formal affiliation with the creative sector, but by the orientation of the innovations created and the nature of the use of intellectual, technological, and natural resources.

In this context, the question of how intellectual and creative labor can participate in transforming an environmental need into a specific product, service, technology, communication solution, or business model becomes fundamental. For instance, if a designer, architect, programmer, engineer, researcher, or entrepreneur uses professional knowledge and creative competencies to develop solutions in resource conservation, waste recycling, energy efficiency, sustainable consumption, or environmental communication, creativity acts not as the end result of activity, but as a resource for environmentally oriented innovation.

The results of this study allow us to consider the social preconditions of such a process. The first significant contradiction lies in the combination of strong support for the transition to a "green" economy with limited awareness of the content of that model. While 95.3% of respondents support the course toward a green economy, only 27.8% have a good understanding of the meaning of this concept. Citizens' perceptions are concentrated primarily around environmental protection, conservation of natural resources, and waste recycling.

This ratio suggests a gap between the value-based acceptance of environmental transformation and the understanding of the economic and innovative mechanisms for its implementation. The "green" economy is perceived by the population primarily through its environmental component and to a lesser extent as a model of technological, production, and consumption changes. This gap has practical implications: public support for environmental goals does not by itself imply the knowledge and competencies necessary to involve citizens in new economic and behavioral practices.

This is precisely where one of the potential functions of intellectual and creative labor becomes apparent. The contemporary UNCTAD approach [2] links the development of the creative economy with digitalization, innovation, and environmental sustainability, including sustainable design, waste reduction, energy efficiency, and circular models of production and consumption in this agenda. In this context, public environmental needs can be viewed as a source of tasks for creating new products, services, technologies, communication solutions, and business models.

The study results allow us to specify the areas in which such demand is most pronounced. Among the priorities for the development of the green economy, the population highlights rational use of water resources – 38.5%, waste recycling – 30.6%, development of solar and wind energy – 30.2%, and greening – 25.7%. These areas require not only financial resources and traditional infrastructure but also the development of new technological, organizational, design, and communication solutions. In this sense, the creative economy can be regarded as one of the spaces in which environmental needs take the form of specific innovative tasks.

The second significant contradiction is found between positive environmental attitudes and the conditions for translating them into behavior. According to the study results, 66.3% of respondents already try to lead an environmentally friendly lifestyle,

18.2% are ready to change their habits if convenient conditions are created, and 11.7% would do so provided such changes do not entail additional costs. These data show that the behavioral potential for environmental transformation exists, but its realization depends not only on citizens' individual values but also on the external environment.

A similar pattern is observed with regard to potential consumer demand. The willingness of a portion of the population to pay more for environmentally safe goods and services indicates the presence of certain demand for environmentally oriented solutions; however, for a significant part of consumers, price, discounts, benefits, and compensation mechanisms remain of fundamental importance. Therefore, the environmental appeal of a product alone does not ensure its mass adoption.

This leads to a conclusion important for this study: an environmentally oriented innovation must possess not only technological novelty and environmental effectiveness but also be accessible, convenient, understandable, and compatible with the everyday practices of the population.

In this regard, design, user experience, communications, and business model development become not secondary elements of green transformation but possible conditions for public acceptance of innovations. It is here that the approach of H. Bakhshi, A. Freeman, and P. Higgs [5], which shifts attention from formal sectoral boundaries of the creative economy to the content of creative labor, acquires applied significance: environmental transformation creates demand for the activities of designers, architects, software developers, researchers, engineers, communication specialists, and other professional groups capable of transforming environmental problems into practically applicable solutions.

This finding is consistent with the results of the study by J. Segre, M. Dattilo, and E. Salvador [6], which examines the relationship between creativity, technological innovation, and environmental sustainability in the design industry. Using data from Italian companies, the authors identified a positive statistically significant relationship between creativity and environmental sustainability, as well as a positive relationship between innovation activity and the environmental component of company performance. These results allow creativity to be viewed not only as a source of economic and technological novelty but also as a potential resource for the formation of environmentally oriented solutions.

At the same time, comparing this study with the results of the population survey in Uzbekistan reveals another trend. Whereas J. Segre and others analyze creativity, innovation, and environmental sustainability primarily from the side of producers and developers, the results of this study characterize the other side of the innovation process – public receptivity and potential demand for environmentally oriented solutions. The willingness of a segment of the population to pay more for environmentally safe goods and services, the pronounced interest in rational water use, waste recycling, and renewable energy, as well as the readiness of a significant proportion of citizens to adopt environmentally oriented practices, indicate the existence of a social environment potentially receptive to such innovations. At the same time, the dependence of readiness to change behavior on cost and convenience shows that the presence of environmental demand does not guarantee the adoption of a specific innovative solution.

The information deficit deserves separate attention. Insufficient awareness ranks among the notable barriers to the transition to a green economy, while explanatory work and environmental education are seen by the population as significant conditions for fostering environmentally responsible behavior. This expands the scope of application of creative competencies beyond the creation of material products and technologies. Data visualization, digital educational products, interactive services, social design, and modern media formats can perform the function of transforming complex environmental knowledge into accessible and practically meaningful information.

Particularly revealing in this regard is the result concerning young people. The younger generation possesses significant potential for mastering digital technologies and new professional competencies; however, the 18–24 age group demonstrates relatively low awareness of the content of the green economy and the mechanisms of civic response to environmental violations. This contradiction raises the question of the need to develop interdisciplinary competencies that combine digital and creative skills with environmental knowledge. Their combination can be regarded as one of the preconditions for the development of environmentally oriented entrepreneurship and the creation of new solutions in the field of sustainable development.

At the same time, a positive assessment of the potential of the creative economy requires a fundamental qualification. As noted by Pratt [7], as well as M. Püükkönen and C. de Beukelaer [12], it is inappropriate to automatically consider creative industries as environmentally sustainable: digital and cultural production also involves energy consumption, material use, and infrastructure, and the expansion of production may conflict with environmental constraints. This critical position is consistent with the findings of this study. Among the obstacles to the transition to a green economy, the population identifies not only environmental culture and lack of information but also income levels, the cost of green technologies, the state of infrastructure, control over enterprise activities, government support, and investment.

Consequently, creativity and innovation do not automatically generate environmental value. For that to happen, they must be embedded in a broader institutional, economic, and infrastructural system that enables the development, implementation, and diffusion of relevant solutions. This allows us to reject a simplistic view of the creative economy as inherently a "green" sector and to consider its environmental potential as the result of a specific combination of human capital, innovation, institutional conditions, and public demand.

In this regard, the research approach proposed in this article involves incorporating public opinion not only as a final reaction to an already created innovation but also as one source of information about social needs, expectations, and barriers. Sociological data make it possible to identify perceptions of environmental problems and public demands; intellectual and creative labor can transform these into possible solutions; subsequent assessment of public behavior and consumer choices can determine the degree of acceptance of these solutions and identify constraints on their diffusion.

At the same time, the limits of such an interpretation must be taken into account. The empirical results of this study do not allow establishing a causal relationship between the development of the creative economy and the environmental behavior

of the population of Uzbekistan. The surveys did not directly measure respondents' employment in creative industries, their use of specific green innovations, the activity of environmental startups, or the impact of particular creative products on citizens' behavior. Therefore, the data obtained should be interpreted as evidence of public demand and the social conditions for the potential development of environmentally oriented innovations, rather than as proof of an already existing effect of the creative economy.

Thus, the central question is not whether the creative economy is environmentally friendly in itself, but rather under what conditions intellectual and creative labor is capable of transforming public environmental demand into accessible innovative solutions that create economic, social, and environmental value. With respect to Uzbekistan, the results of the study allow us to identify several such conditions: the presence of public demand for environmental change, increased environmental awareness and competence, the economic affordability of innovations, their ease of use, the development of appropriate infrastructure, and the availability of institutional support. In this understanding, the creative economy can be viewed not as an independent universal mechanism for environmental transformation, but as a potential environment for the interaction of human capital, public needs, innovations, and green transformation.

### **Research results**

For the empirical analysis of the social conditions of environmental transformation, the results of sociological public opinion surveys in Uzbekistan were used. The analysis focuses on indicators characterizing the environmental awareness of the population, perceptions of the "green" economy, readiness to change every day and consumption practices, existing barriers, and public priorities for environmentally oriented development. These data make it possible to determine the social context in which innovative solutions related to the environmental agenda can be formed and disseminated.

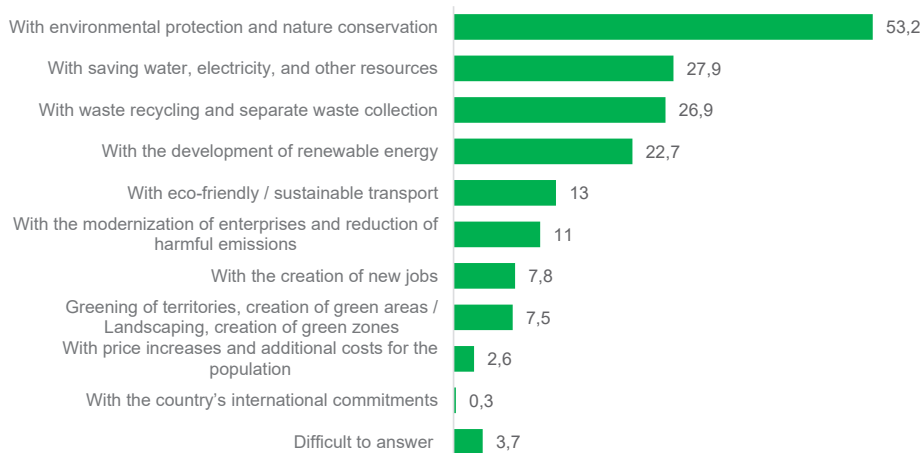
The empirical part of the study is aimed at identifying the public preconditions for the relationship between the environmental agenda, innovative development, and the creative economy in Uzbekistan. The analysis uses the results of sociological surveys that allow assessing the level of environmental awareness of the population, support for the transition to a "green" economy, readiness to change consumer behavior, perceived barriers, and the most sought-after areas of environmental transformation.

The obtained data indicate high public support for environmentally oriented development, accompanied by a simultaneously less developed understanding of the economic and innovative components of the "green" economy. Thus, 27.8% of respondents know the meaning of the term "green economy" well, and 22.3% have a general idea of it. At the same time, 17.1% have heard the term but do not know its content, while 32.8% have never heard of it at all. Thus, only about half of the respondents possess a full or general understanding of the content of this development model.

**Table-1.** Awareness of the concept of "green economy"? (% of total respondents)

|              | <i>Yes, I know well<br/>what it means</i> | <i>I have heard of it,<br/>but have a general<br/>idea</i> | <i>I have heard of it,<br/>but do not know<br/>what exactly it<br/>means</i> | <i>No, I have not<br/>heard of it</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>27,8</b>                               | <b>22,3</b>                                                | <b>17,1</b>                                                                  | <b>32,8</b>                           |
| <b>men</b>   | 28,4                                      | 22,4                                                       | 18,4                                                                         | 30,8                                  |
| women        | 27,1                                      | 22,2                                                       | 15,5                                                                         | 35,2                                  |
|              |                                           |                                                            |                                                                              |                                       |
| Urban        | 25,5                                      | 24,2                                                       | 14,9                                                                         | 35,4                                  |
| Rural        | 30,4                                      | 20,1                                                       | 19,5                                                                         | 30,0                                  |
|              |                                           |                                                            |                                                                              |                                       |
| 18-24        | 18,9                                      | 24,3                                                       | <b>25,7</b>                                                                  | <b>31,1</b>                           |
| 25-34        | 27,2                                      | 24,0                                                       | 15,2                                                                         | 33,6                                  |
| 35-44        | 28,0                                      | 17,5                                                       | 18,2                                                                         | 36,3                                  |
| 45-54        | 26,3                                      | 27,2                                                       | 18,4                                                                         | 28,1                                  |
| 55 and older | 33,3                                      | 20,8                                                       | 12,6                                                                         | 33,3                                  |

At the same time, the population's perceptions of the "green" economy are predominantly environmentally oriented. More than half of respondents (53.2%) associate it primarily with environmental protection and nature conservation, 27.9% with saving water, electricity, and other resources, 26.9% with waste recycling and separate waste collection, and 22.7% with the development of renewable energy. The economic, innovative, and social components of this model are represented in mass consciousness significantly less prominently.

**Figure-1.** Associations with the transition to a "green" economy? (% , multiple-response)

At the same time, the country's transition to a "green" economy enjoys virtually universal public support. In total, 95.3% of respondents fully or rather support this course, while the share of opponents is 1.0%.

The comparison of these indicators reveals a significant circumstance: public support for green transformation noticeably outpaces the depth of understanding of its content. The population largely accepts environmental development goals, but the economic, technological, and innovative mechanisms for achieving them are so far less prominent in public perception.

An important indicator of the population's attitude toward environmentally oriented changes is the willingness to support them not only at the level of general attitudes but also through their own consumer choices. The study results show the existence of potential demand for environmentally safe goods and services. Thus, 46.5% of respondents expressed a willingness to pay a higher price for such products. 17.2% are ready to incur additional costs provided that the price difference is insignificant. Furthermore, 16.3% of respondents link the possibility of choosing eco-friendly products to the availability of discounts, benefits, or other compensation mechanisms. The share of respondents who are rather or completely unwilling to pay more for environmentally safe goods and services is 16.6%.

The data obtained show that the environmental characteristics of a product or service can act as a significant factor in consumer choice; however, price affordability remains essential. In other words, a positive attitude toward eco-friendly products does not in all cases mean a willingness to bear additional costs. This suggests the existence of potential consumer demand for environmentally oriented goods and services, the realization of which depends, among other things, on their cost and the availability of economic incentives.

### **Barriers to the Transition to a "Green" Economy**

The study results show that the population perceives obstacles to the transition to a "green" economy as a set of interrelated factors. Most often, respondents point to the low level of environmental culture among the population – 31.4%. The second most common barrier is the lack of information about the principles and opportunities of the "green" economy – 24.9%. 18.7% of respondents link the existing constraints to the low-income level of the population.

Alongside this, respondents note institutional, economic, and technological obstacles. Corruption and a formal approach in the environmental sphere are mentioned by 12.5% of respondents, insufficient control over enterprise activities by 11.2%, and the high cost of environmentally safe goods and technologies by 10.7%. Insufficient necessary infrastructure is indicated by 8.9%, while a shortage of modern technologies and investments is cited by 6.8%.

These results are complemented by data from the second block of the study on environmental attitudes. In that block, 58.1% of respondents identified low environmental responsibility of the population as an obstacle to improving the environmental situation, 38.1% pointed to insufficient monitoring of compliance with

environmental regulations, 31.3% to low corporate responsibility, and 23.0% to the use of outdated production equipment.

Comparison of the study results shows that the population does not reduce the causes of environmental problems solely to individual behavior. Alongside environmental culture and awareness, the economic capabilities of the population, enterprise activities, the quality of state and public control, and the availability of infrastructure, technologies, and investments are also perceived as significant. Thus, the social barriers to environmental transformation simultaneously have value behavioral, informational, economic, institutional, and technological dimensions.

The results obtained allow us to view environmental transformation not only as a change in individual behavior but also as a process dependent on a broader system of economic, social, technological, and institutional conditions. This approach is consistent with Pratt's concept, which proposes viewing culture as a system of "practices, values – economic, environmental, social and cultural – and institutions rooted in a specific spatial and temporal context" [2].

### **Priority areas for the development of the "green" economy**

The population's perceptions of the most significant areas of the "green" economy also allow us to determine the structure of public demand for environmental change. The most priority area, according to respondents, is the rational use of water resources – noted by 38.5% of respondents. Separate waste collection and recycling were highlighted by 30.6%, the development of solar and wind energy by 30.2%, and greening cities and settlements by 25.7%.

The results obtained show that public perceptions of green transformation are concentrated around specific problems of everyday and economic activity: water use, waste management, energy supply, and the state of the urban environment. At the same time, these areas involve a combination of individual behavioral changes with the development of appropriate infrastructure and the introduction of new technological solutions.

Data from the second study complement this picture. Among the actions that the population is ready to support to improve the environmental situation, the most common are greening and tree planting – 64.5%, waste sorting – 50.5%, and saving water and electricity – 47.5%. At the same time, more complex forms of collective or behavioral participation receive less support: participation in public environmental initiatives (29.9%) and reducing plastic use (22.5%).

Comparison of these data reveals a trend: the greatest support is given to environmental practices that are understandable to the population and can be directly implemented in everyday life. More complex actions involving changes in established consumption patterns or active public participation are less widespread.

At the same time, this study allows us to complement this approach with an analysis from the perspective of potential public demand for environmental innovations. Whereas the Segre study [6] reveals the relationship between creativity and sustainability primarily at the level of company activities, the results of the population survey in Uzbekistan make it possible to assess the social environment in which such solutions

can be disseminated and gain public acceptance. The willingness of a segment of the population to pay more for environmentally safe goods and services, the orientation toward rational water use, waste recycling, and renewable energy, as well as the high prevalence of environmentally oriented behavioral attitudes, indicate the existence of potential demand for solutions that combine innovativeness, affordability, and environmental value.

Of particular importance for the analysis is the population's readiness to change their own daily practices. According to the study results, 66.3% of respondents state that they already try to lead an environmentally friendly lifestyle. 18.2% are ready to change their habits provided that convenient opportunities are created, and 11.7% would do so if such changes do not require additional financial costs. The share of those who are rather or completely unwilling to change habits is relatively small.

These results show that the population's readiness for environmentally responsible behavior is determined not only by the presence of relevant values and beliefs. Significant importance is attached to the conditions in which everyday choices are made: convenience, availability of infrastructure and services, as well as the amount of additional expenses.

This pattern is confirmed by responses to the question about factors that could motivate citizens to more environmentally friendly behavior. Most often, respondents mention environmental education and outreach work (38.5%), financial incentives, discounts and benefits (30.7%), support for environmental initiatives at the mahalla level (27.3%), and the example of friends, neighbors, and colleagues (20.2%). Among other factors mentioned are the availability of necessary infrastructure, public oversight, participation of opinion leaders, as well as support from employers and educational organizations.

Taken together, these results allow us to identify an important transition from declared environmental readiness to practical behavior. For a significant part of the population, the adoption of eco friendly models depends on how accessible, understandable, convenient, and economically acceptable they are. This circumstance acquires particular importance when assessing the prospects for the diffusion of new environmentally oriented goods, services, and technologies.

Overall, the analysis of the study results allows us to identify several interrelated trends. First, public opinion records a high level of support for environmentally oriented development and the transition to a "green" economy. At the same time, this support outpaces the depth of understanding of the economic, innovative, and technological mechanisms of green transformation.

The second trend is related to the presence of potential demand for environmentally safe goods, services, and new solutions; however, its practical realization depends on price, availability of infrastructure, public awareness, and the presence of incentive mechanisms.

The third trend manifests itself in the gap between environmental attitudes and practical behavior. A significant part of the population demonstrates a readiness for environmentally responsible actions; however, the spread of such practices is determined by how convenient, accessible, and integrated into everyday life they are.

Finally, the results show the complex nature of the barriers to environmental transformation. They are linked not only to the behavior of the population but also to economic, technological, informational, infrastructural, and institutional conditions.

Taken together, the results allow us to identify three empirically observable features: a high public demand for environmentally oriented development; a gap between support for green transformation and understanding of its economic innovative content; and the dependence of the transition from environmental attitudes to sustainable practices on the accessibility of technologies, infrastructure, information, and economic incentives.

## **Conclusion**

The conducted study allows us to view the relationship between the creative economy, intellectual labor, innovation, and the environmental agenda as a more complex process than a simple expansion of the creative industries or the introduction of individual "green" technologies. Theoretical analysis shows that as understandings of the creative economy develop, the research focus gradually shifts from sectoral affiliation to the content of labor, human and intellectual capital, the ability to create new solutions, and the formation of various types of value. Under conditions of environmental transformation, this logic acquires an additional dimension: what matters is not only the ability to create an innovation but also the possibility of its practical implementation, public acceptance, and diffusion.

The results of the sociological survey allow us to specify this relationship in the context of Uzbekistan. Public opinion reveals a pronounced demand for environmentally oriented development: 95.3% of respondents support the transition to a "green" economy. At the same time, only 27.8% have a good understanding of the content of this concept, indicating a gap between value-based support for environmental transformation and understanding of its economic, technological, and innovative mechanisms.

At the same time, potential consumer demand for environmentally oriented solutions has been identified. 46.5% of respondents are willing to pay a higher price for environmentally safe goods and services, 17.2% allow for additional costs if the price difference is small, while for a portion of the population, the adoption of such solutions is linked to the availability of discounts, benefits, and other economic incentives. The results obtained show that the environmental value of a product or service can act as a factor in consumer choice, but its practical realization is directly linked to economic affordability.

A similar pattern is observed in environmental behavior. Although 66.3% of respondents already try to lead an environmentally friendly lifestyle, for other groups, the convenience of relevant practices and the absence of additional financial costs become essential conditions for changing habits. Together with the identified informational, infrastructural, economic, technological, and institutional barriers, this shows that the transition from a positive environmental attitude to sustainable behavior is determined not only by individual motivation but also by the characteristics of the environment in which everyday choices are made.

In this context, the answer to the research question posed in this article is that intellectual and creative labor can contribute to environmental transformation, but this

relationship is not automatic. Creativity acquires environmental significance when intellectual competencies are transformed into technological, design, organizational, digital, communication, and entrepreneurial solutions that respond to real social needs. Their diffusion, in turn, requires economic affordability, clarity and ease of use, appropriate infrastructure, public awareness, institutional support, and public readiness to accept them.

Thus, the analysis allows us to refine the research framework proposed in the article. The link between intellectual capital and environmental value should be viewed not as a linear sequence of "intellectual capital – creativity – innovation – environmental outcome," but as a system of interrelated elements in which public acceptance of innovation plays a significant role. At the same time, public opinion acts not only as a reaction to ongoing changes but also as a source of information about the needs, expectations, and barriers that must be taken into account when developing new solutions.

For Uzbekistan, the areas in which public environmental demand is most pronounced are of particular practical importance: rational use of water resources, waste recycling, development of solar and wind energy, and greening of settlements. It is in these areas that a combination of technological innovations with design, digital services, new business models, communication solutions, and other forms of intellectual and creative labor appears promising.

At the same time, the study results do not allow us to assert the existence of a direct causal relationship between the development of the creative economy and the environmental behavior of the population. The sociological data used did not directly measure employment in creative industries, the use of specific environmental innovations, the activity of green startups, or the impact of individual creative products and services on citizens' behavior. Therefore, the results obtained should be interpreted primarily as evidence of the existence of social preconditions, public demand, and at the same time, constraints for the diffusion of environmentally oriented innovations.

Further development of this research line requires moving from the analysis of general population attitudes to the study of the actual interaction of three parties – innovation creators, the institutional environment, and their potential users. Such an approach will make it possible to empirically test under what conditions intellectual and creative potential is actually transformed into environmentally significant innovations and what mechanisms ensure their public acceptance and diffusion.

## References

1. Howkins J. *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*. – London: Penguin Books, 2007.
2. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). *Creative Economy Outlook 2024*. – Geneva: United Nations, 2024. – UNCTAD/DITC/TSCE/2024/2. – ISBN 978-92-1-003189-9.
3. Florida R. *The Creative Class and Economic Development* // *Economic Development Quarterly*. – 2014. – Vol. 28, No. 3. – P. 196–205. – DOI: 10.1177/0891242414541693.

4. Throsby D. The Concentric Circles Model of the Cultural Industries // *Cultural Trends*. – 2008. – Vol. 17, No. 3. – P. 147–164. – DOI: 10.1080/09548960802361951.
5. Bakhshi H., Freeman A., Higgs P. A Dynamic Mapping of the UK's Creative Industries. – London: Nesta, 2013.
6. Giovanna Segre, Martina Dattilo, Elisa Salvador, When creativity meets innovation: The role of technology and environmental sustainability in the design sector, *Journal of Engineering and Technology Management*, Volume 80,2026, 101968, ISSN 0923-4748, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jengtecman.2026.101968>, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0923474826000305>
7. Pratt A. C. The Creative Economy and the Triple Transition // *Frontiers in Communication*. – 2026. – Vol. 10. – Article 1745182. – DOI: 10.3389/fcomm.2025.1745182.
8. Amir Rahmani, Ali Bonyadi Naeini, Javad Mashayekh, Roohallah Aboojafari, Tugrul Daim, Haydar Yalcin, Green innovation for a greener future: A meta-analysis of the impact on environmental performance, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Volume 460,2024,142547,ISSN 0959-6526, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.142547> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959652624019954>
9. Grynspan R. World Conference of the Creative Economy: Statement by the Secretary-General of UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 2 October 2024. UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
10. Gidage M, Bhide S (2025), "Exploring the nexus between intellectual capital, green innovation, sustainability and financial performance in creative industry MSMEs". *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, Vol. 19 No. 3 pp. 457–484, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEC-07-2024-0134>
11. Liao Zhiwei, Lin Feng, Gao Pan, A meta-analysis of the factors influencing corporate eco-innovation, *Cleaner Waste Systems*, Volume 11,2025,100260, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clwas.2025.100260>. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2772912525000582>
12. Miikka Pyykkönen, Christiaan De Beukelaer, What is the role of creative industries in the Anthropocene? An argument for planetary cultural policy, *Poetics*, Volume 109,2025, 101971,ISSN 0304-422X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2025.101971>.(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304422X25000014>)
13. Australia builds a Pacific alliance system to keep China out. *The Economist*, Asia, August 27, 2026.
14. Xu, F., Qin, J., Zhang, D. et al. Linking organizational AI adoption to employee knowledge behaviours: the influences of appraisals and locus of control. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 13, 471 (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-026-06829-5>

**Авторлар туралы мәлімет / Сведения об авторах / Information about authors**

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Victoria ALEKSEEVA           | Deputy Director of the Republican Center for the Study of Public Opinion “Ijtimoiy Fikr”, Doctor of Sociological Sciences<br>E-mail: <a href="mailto:viv20@yandex.ru">viv20@yandex.ru</a> , ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7930-8144                                                                  |
| Manzura RAKHIMOVA            | Master’s student at National University of Uzbekistan named Mirzo Ulugbek                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Виктория Сергеевна Алексеева | «Ижтимоий фикр» Республикалық қоғамдық пікірді зерттеу орталығы директорының орынбасары, әлеуметтану ғылымдарының докторы<br>E-mail: <a href="mailto:viv20@yandex.ru">viv20@yandex.ru</a> , ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7930-8144                                                                  |
| Манзура Хамид кизи Рахимова  | Мырза Ұлықбек атындағы Өзбекстан Ұлттық университетінің магистранты                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Виктория Сергеевна Алексеева | Заместитель директора Республиканского центра изучения общественного мнения “Ижтимоий фикр”, доктор социологических наук, email: <a href="mailto:viv20@yandex.ru">viv20@yandex.ru</a> , ORCID ID <a href="https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7930-8144">https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7930-8144</a> |
| Манзура Хамид кизи Рахимова  | Магистрант Национального университета Узбекистана имени Мирзо Улугбека                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |