Call for papers:

The next issue of *Maghreb-Mashreq International* is dedicated to:

"***Energy Transition in the MENA Region: Issues and Prospects***."

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Call for papers: https://www.journaleska.com/index.php/mmi/announcement

Maghreb-Mashreq International is the English edition of the *Maghreb-Machrek* journal, published since 1964 and indexed in Scopus.

This issue includes up to ten papers selected through a double-blind process of peer reviewing.

Papers complying with the journal guidelines (See the Appendix), should be submitted to agpaedit@eska.fr and adair@u-pec.fr at the latest by **October 15, 2025.**

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Workshop/Webinar in Rabat, Morocco (online/in person): **November14, 2025**

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The energy transition in the MENA region: challenges and prospects.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is disparate, comprising three sub-regions: (i) the Arab-Persian Gulf (six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Kuwait and Iran); (ii) the Mashreq (Egypt[1], Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria); and (iii) the Maghreb (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia). The Gulf, along with Iraq, Algeria and Libya, are some of the main exporters of hydrocarbons (rentier economies) worldwide, while all the other (dependent) countries are net importers of fossil fuels.

The 'energy transition' means a complete change in the volume and nature of the energies used (hydrocarbons, coal) that produce CO^2, in order to decarbonise the economy, under the constraint of global warming resulting from human economic activity ('Anthropocene'). Therefore, this transition presents a complex "energy dilemma" for MENA nations.

The energy transition has emerged as the defining paradigm of the 21st century, engaging both developed and developing countries, driven by the urgent need to limit global warming to 1.5°C, as set out in the Paris Agreement. Several MENA countries have expressed their national commitments through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), often part of broader sustainable development and adaptation strategies (United Nations, 2015).

[1] The scope of the Mashreq (in the broad sense) corresponds to an energy definition, in as much as Egypt is not classified within the Maghreb area but is part of North Africa.

The challenges of the energy transition.

Adapting to the paths of global transition presents a series of challenges, particularly in terms of diagnoses and strategies, which may conflict with the economic and political interests of various countries. For hydrocarbon-producing economies, the energy transition implies a profound transformation of the energy sector, likely to result in significant revenue losses (IEA 2020b). Conversely, for energy-importing countries, the transition may offer economic benefits, notably through lower fossil fuel import bills. However, these benefits are not a panacea for all their structural challenges (de Hoog et al 2023).

The key question is: has the MENA region reached the turning point of the Kuznets environmental curve (Grossman & Kruger 1995)?

In this tense context, some countries may choose to delay or scale back their own energy transition programmes. However, given the MENA region's acute vulnerability to the effects of climate change, including increasing aridity, water scarcity, desertification and extreme weather events, delaying the transition risks undermining long-term prosperity and resilience.

This raises a fundamental question: does the problem lie in the use of fossil fuels themselves or in the emissions released into the atmosphere?

If the emissions can be captured (carbon sequestration) and removed from the atmosphere, the use of fossil fuels could continue without risk. If this does not apply, investment in decarbonising energy will incur considerable costs and reduce the energy efficiency of MENA economies.

So, what is the optimal energy mix? Should it be determined by a market mechanism based on carbon pricing, or by a non-market mechanism based on prohibition and gradual phase-out, until 'carbon neutrality' is achieved? Carbon pricing institutes a tax that sets a price per tonne of CO_2 and creates a market for the carbon emitted. The 'target value per tonne of carbon' implies that any reduction in emissions below a given cost per tonne of CO_2 must be undertaken. If emissions cannot be significantly reduced, then 'clean' renewable energies (solar, wind) or even green hydrogen should be substituted for fossil fuels.

MENA countries could become exporters of clean electricity or even green hydrogen. The region is comparatively well endowed with renewable resources (solar and wind), but the production cost of renewables is higher than that of fossil fuels: ten times the price of a barrel of oil produced in the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia, which generates a rent unmatched in any other industry.

The risks and costs of transition

According to the International Energy Agency's Net-Zero scenario (IEA 2021), the share of fossil fuels in the worldwide energy supply should fall from 80% in 2020 to 20% in 2050. The energy transition would then radically transform energy supply and demand over the next 30 years.

Regarding the current situation in some MENA countries, and the structure and dynamics of their energy industry, this scenario seems unrealistic.

If rents were to fall significantly, what would be the costs borne by the players in the hydrocarbon sector, in particular the national hydrocarbon companies, and the social groups dependent on the redistribution of rents?

The exporting countries (Algeria and the countries of the Persian Gulf) face the risk of having large untapped hydrocarbon assets ('stranded' assets), which will reduce their wealth and income. The fossil fuel reserves of these countries, which are the largest and cheapest to extract in the world, would then become obsolete (McGlade and Ekins 2015). In the Middle East, reserves are three times larger than the carbon budget, i.e., the maximum amount of carbon dioxide emissions that would make it possible to limit global warming to 2 degrees (van der Ploeg 2016).

Conversely, other MENA countries (Morocco and Jordan) are faced, to varying degrees, with considerable fossil fuel expenditure, because they lack such resources.

Transition dynamics that vary across MENA countries

With regard to their potential for solar, wind and hydro power, most of the countries in the region could become key players in the renewable energy sector on a global scale (IRENA, 2020). This change in energy production and consumption patterns also represents an opportunity for closer collaboration between these countries on energy issues, in a region that has very little in the way of international cooperation.

The effects of the energy transition are considerable. From the point of view of environmental policy, climate policies will lead to changes in demand (resources, input prices). In social terms, the transition will trigger a dynamic of job destruction/creation. From an economic and financial point of view, it could lead to the destruction of value (stranded assets), requiring compensation in a context of financial uncertainty.

Each MENA country is called upon to chart its own course towards a sustainable future, both economically and socially. Apart from the oil-exporting United Arab Emirates and oil-importing Morocco, both of which are engaged in ambitious efforts to develop renewable energy resources, the other MENA countries are lagging behind (IEA 2022).

The transition to fossil fuel substitution seems unavoidable. Despite their differences, MENA countries need to embrace this shift. It is essential for ensuring a more sustainable and equitable energy future. These countries are both energy suppliers and consumers. Cooperation will be necessary — even if only in electricity distribution.

This call for papers invites contributors to address the diversity of issues, consequences and/or prospects of the energy transition, using a political economy or socio-economic approach, from the perspective of case studies or comparative analyses that cover, but are not limited to, the following themes.

Themes (non-exhaustive)

1. National energy strategies in MENA countries: development, consumption and energy imports versus exports.

2. What should be the optimal energy mix?

3. What are the relevant energy performance indicators?

4. Measuring the carbon footprint: social cost (present value of a tonne of carbon) versus cost of climate action (target value of a tonne of carbon).

5. Macroeconomic, regulatory, fiscal and financial policies to promote renewable energies.

6. Assessing obstacles to the deployment of the energy transition: financing, stranded assets.

7. Reducing energy costs: Is the solution to be found in the circular economy and recycling?

8. Energy innovations. Are they necessarily frugal?

9. The political and social consequences of the energy transition on inequalities and employment.

10. Markets, electricity networks and regional cooperation.

11. Firm-Level Adaptation to the Energy Transition in MENA: Evidence from Microdata.

12. What does a socially equitable and climate-resilient energy transition look like in the MENA region?

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Authors Guidelines

Non anglophone authors are kindly requested to check that their paper is written in British English. If not, the paper will be rejected. The journal does not provide any translation service. Authors should send their revised full paper to agpaedit@eska.fr and adair@u-pec.fr

The full paper must not exceed 7,500 words, or approximately 48,000 signs (including spaces), in MS Word format (.doc or .docx, or rtf).

First page: Name(s) and first name(s) of the institution(s), professional address(s), email(s) and the last two publications of the author(s).

Second page: Title of the article, no mention of the author(s), an Abstract in French and in English (up to 200 words), six keywords (alphabetical order), and JEL codes, followed by the text and a list of bibliographic references.

Text: Times New Roman, size 12. No more than three levels, using Arabic numerals (1.; ***1.1***. and **1.1.1**.) for the title of each section (no indentation) with a 1.5 line spacing.

Please use full sentences and refrain from any listing with hyphens, bullet points or else.

Each paragraph is indented (0.5) as this one.

Figures (tables, graphs, diagrams and maps) in Times New Roman, size 10, simple spacing. no indentation. All must be labelled and numbered in Arabic numerals; their location must be indicated in the text. Source should be indicated as well as notes if any. No colours. No gridlines but very few horizontal dividing lines for Tables.

Box (es): Times New Roman, size 10 (no indentation), single spacing; title and Arabic numerals.

Footnotes in Times New Roman, size 10, no indentation, simple spacing. For very limited use, they must not contain references, which are included within the text and refer to the list of references.

References within the text are included as follows: (Abdou 2013), (Abdou & Salman 2015) or (Abdou et al 2017), if there are three or more authors. Otherwise, Abdou (2013) studies, or Abdou et al (2013) examine, or according to Abdou (2013).

Punctuation: Appropriate use of quotation marks and moderate use of capital letters according to typographical rules.

Bibliographic references: Times New Roman, size 10 indented as shown below.

Book: Name(s), Initial(s) First name(s) (year). *Title* (in italics). Location, publisher.
Abdel Ghafar, A. (2018). *A Stable Egypt for a Stable Region: Socio-Economic Challenges and Prospects*. Strasbourg: European Parliament, Policy Department.
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Thesis: Name, Initial(s) First name(s) (year). Title. Discipline. University.
Working paper: Surname(s), First name(s) (year). Title, Research Team, University or Institution.