Short Report

Main Reasons Companies Find It Difficult to Fill Green and Digital Economy Vacancies

Based on the UNESCO dashboard, companies operating in or linked to the **green and digital economy** reported several key reasons why it is difficult to find suitable candidates for vacancies in these emerging fields. Overall, the most cited reasons are **skills mismatch with labour-market needs**, **shortage of digital skills**, and **too few suitable applicants**. These findings suggest that the challenge is not only the availability of job seekers, but also the relevance of their qualifications, practical experience, and technical readiness for green and digital occupations.

At the overall level, **skills mismatch with labour-market needs** was the leading factor, representing **19%** of responses. This was followed closely by **shortage of digital skills** at **18%**, and **too few suitable applicants** at **17%**. **Lack of required specializations among graduates** also emerged as a significant issue at **14%**, while **limited practical training, including internships and on-the-job training**, accounted for **9%**. **Weak coordination between companies and TVET providers** represented **8%**, showing that institutional linkage between training providers and employers remains an important area for improvement.

Narrative Analysis by Province

Baghdad: In Baghdad, the most prominent reason is **too few suitable applicants**, representing **62%** of responses. This indicates that employers in the capital are facing a major challenge in finding candidates who meet the required profile for green and digital vacancies. Other reasons appear much lower, including **skills mismatch with labour-market needs** at **11%** and **shortage of digital skills** at **10%**. This suggests that the main issue in Baghdad is the availability of suitable candidates rather than only one specific skills gap.

Erbil: Erbil shows a more balanced distribution of challenges. The leading reason is **skills mismatch with labour-market needs** at **27%**, followed by **lack of required specializations among graduates** at **24%**. **Shortage of digital skills** accounts for **15%**, while **limited practical training** represents **12%**. This indicates that employers in Erbil face multiple interconnected challenges related to curriculum relevance, specialization, digital readiness, and practical exposure.

Basra: In Basra, the dominant reason is **shortage of digital skills**, representing **42%** of responses. This is followed by **skills mismatch with labour-market needs** at **24%** and **limited practical training** at **16%**. The results suggest that Basra's companies need candidates with stronger applied digital capabilities, supported by practical training and more market-oriented education.

Ninewa: Ninewa presents a relatively even distribution across several reasons. **Skills mismatch**, **shortage of digital skills**, **lack of required specializations among graduates**, and **limited practical training** each represent around **21%**. **Too few suitable applicants** accounts for **13%**. This indicates that the

challenge in Ninewa is broad-based, combining skills relevance, graduate specialization, digital capacity, and lack of practical work exposure.

Suli: In Suli, the leading reason is **skills mismatch with labour-market needs** at **30%**, followed by **shortage of digital skills** at **23%** and **lack of required specializations among graduates** at **19%**. **Limited practical training** accounts for **12%**. This suggests that companies require stronger alignment between education outputs and real labour-market requirements, particularly in digital and technical specializations.

Duhok: Duhok shows three main challenges. **Skills mismatch with labour-market needs** is the highest at **29%**, followed by **shortage of digital skills** and **limited practical training**, both at **24%**. **Lack of required specializations among graduates** represents **12%**. This indicates that employers in Duhok need candidates with both relevant technical skills and more practical workplace experience.

Babil: In Babil, the leading reason is **shortage of digital skills** at **31%**, followed by **lack of required specializations among graduates** at **24%** and **too few suitable applicants** at **21%**. **Skills mismatch** and **limited practical training** each represent **10%**. This shows that companies in Babil are particularly affected by digital skills shortages and insufficient graduate specialization in relevant green and digital fields.

Salah Al-Din: In Salah Al-Din, **shortage of digital skills** is the dominant reason, representing **50%** of responses. Other reasons, including **skills mismatch**, **lack of required specializations**, **weak coordination with TVET providers**, and **too few suitable applicants**, each represent around **13%**. Although the number of responses is small, the results clearly point to digital skills as the main constraint for employers in the province.

Al-Qadisiyah: In Al-Qadisiyah, the leading reason is **skills mismatch with labour-market needs** at **32%**. This is followed by **lack of required specializations among graduates** and **weak coordination between companies and TVET providers**, both at **21%**. **Shortage of digital skills** also appears strongly at **19%**. This suggests that the challenge in Al-Qadisiyah is strongly linked to education-market alignment and coordination between employers and training providers.

Dhi Qar: In Dhi Qar, the highest reported reason is **lack of required specializations among graduates**, at **40%**. This is followed by **skills mismatch**, **shortage of digital skills**, and **limited practical training**, each at **20%**. This indicates that companies in Dhi Qar mainly struggle with the absence of specialized graduates who can meet the needs of emerging green and digital occupations.

Summary Table: Main Reasons for Difficulty Filling Green and Digital Vacancies

Province	Responses	Main Reasons Reported — Highest to Lowest
Baghdad	**84**	1. Too few suitable applicants — **62%** 2. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **11%** 3. Shortage of digital skills — **10%**
Erbil	**123**	1. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **27%** 2. Lack of required specializations among graduates — **24%** 3. Shortage of digital skills — **15%** 4. Limited practical training — **12%**
Basra	**45**	1. Shortage of digital skills — **42%** 2. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **24%** 3. Limited practical training — **16%**
Ninewa	**24**	1. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **21%** 2. Shortage of digital skills — **21%** 3. Lack of required specializations among graduates — **21%** 4. Limited practical training — **21%**
Suli	**43**	1. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **30%** 2. Shortage of digital skills — **23%** 3. Lack of required specializations among graduates — **19%** 4. Limited practical training — **12%**
Duhok	**17**	1. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **29%** 2. Shortage of digital skills — **24%** 3. Limited practical training — **24%** 4. Lack of required specializations among graduates — **12%**
Babil	**29**	1. Shortage of digital skills — **31%** 2. Lack of required specializations among graduates — **24%** 3. Too few suitable applicants — **21%** 4. Skills mismatch / Limited practical training — **10%** each
Salah Al-Din	**8**	1. Shortage of digital skills — **50%** 2. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **13%** 3. Lack of required specializations among graduates — **13%** 4. Weak coordination with TVET providers / Too few suitable applicants — **13%** each
Al-Qadisiyah	**63**	1. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **32%** 2. Lack of required specializations among graduates — **21%** 3. Weak coordination between companies and TVET providers — **21%** 4. Shortage of digital skills — **19%**
Dhi Qar	**5**	1. Lack of required specializations among graduates — **40%**

Province	Responses	Main Reasons Reported — Highest to Lowest
		2. Skills mismatch with labour-market needs — **20%** 3. Shortage of digital skills — **20%** 4. Limited practical training — **20%**

Overall Observation

Overall, the findings show that companies face a **combined labour-supply and skills-quality challenge** in filling green and digital economy vacancies. The most common barriers are not limited to the number of job seekers but relate to whether graduates and applicants possess the right **technical specializations, digital skills, practical experience, and market-relevant competencies**. Baghdad stands out for the very high share of companies reporting **too few suitable applicants**, while Basra, Babil, and Salah Al-Din point strongly to **shortage of digital skills**. Al-Qadisiyah, Suli, Duhok, and Erbil highlight the importance of addressing **skills mismatch** and improving the alignment between education, TVET, and employer demand. These results suggest that future interventions should prioritize updated curricula, short practical upskilling programmes, structured internships, employer-led training, and stronger coordination mechanisms between companies, TVET providers, technical universities, and labour-market institutions.