

Clean Economy Innovation *(Quality Job Creation)*

Why is this topic important?

Clean economy innovation shows significant potential for quality job creation and new climate solutions that leverage the region's industry strengths, research institutions, and strategic location. The cluster has connections to advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and other key sectors as well as major assets such as UCR's research facilities, entrepreneurial programming, and expertise and CARB's world-class air quality labs. The region's geographic location represents another competitive advantage. California's leadership on climate action is creating new markets for clean economy innovations while Inland SoCal's extensive logistics infrastructure and proximity to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach make it easier to get goods to market.

This sector has sizable potential for equitable economic impact, provided that career pathways are accessible and support student and worker success. UCR's Opportunity to Advance Sustainability, Innovation, and Social Inclusion (OASIS) initiative has an important role to play in this regard. The initiative's emphasis on social inclusion pushes researchers and companies to take the needs of historically disadvantaged communities into account when developing clean economy innovations. Its involvement in regional workforce development reinforces this inclusive approach by establishing accessible pathways into quality jobs in the clean economy.

What we have heard from the community ...

"... highlight the air quality issue affecting our region as we have consistently ranked among the worst in the nation according to the American Lung Association."

Inland SoCal "... struggles with extreme heat, and we will need a local workforce to meet our cooling needs with upgraded air conditioners. These are important jobs as part of the clean economy and are usually small business owners."

"Small businesses that do energy-efficiency work should also be included, such as ... electricians and plumbers. There's a lot of funding from the state and feds to decarbonize and electrify. We will need more energy efficiency professionals who can install the equipment needed to reduce GHG emissions and/or energy demand on the grid."

Key data findings...

Although the Inland SoCal clean economy innovation cluster is still in its early stages, it presents an opportunity for the region to establish itself as an ideal place for cleantech companies to launch and grow.

Lack of early-stage capital is a core concern for the Inland SoCal clean economy innovation cluster. The region has a the limited pool of investors interested in funding young cleantech startups.

The availability of skilled workers in Inland SoCal that meet the needs of clean economy innovation companies remains a limiting factor for cluster growth.

Strategies and tactics

Clean Economy Innovation Cluster Development: Establish a formal collaboration across industry, the public sector, and universities to tackle issues that call for regional cross-sector solutions, including cluster growth initiatives, tech commercialization, business growth acceleration, global branding and business attraction, and workforce development.

OASIS Clean Tech Park: Follow through on the development of this dedicated space for applied research, proof-of-concept testing, and startup incubation. Once complete, the Park will provide a physical hub for clean economy innovation in the region.