Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Science, 32 (Suppl. 1) 2026
Agricultural Academy

DOI: https://doi.org/10.61308/ZJES1478

Purple economy – Symbiosis between care economy, gender equality, cultural diversity, and sustainable development, and its implementation in agriculture

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Abstract

Slavova, D. (2026). Purple economy – Symbiosis between care economy, gender equality, cultural diversity, and sustainable development, and its implementation in agriculture. *Bulg. J. Agric. Sci., 32*(Suppl. 1), 22–30

The text presents purple economy as a dynamic interaction and a unique synergy between social care and vulnerable human capital on the one hand, and cultural diversity and cultural realities as a key component of sustainable development. Purple economy is an alliance of economy, culture and social care trying to link economic development with sustainability. The text also reveals that when applied to agriculture, the purple economy emphasises how cultural values, traditions, creative industries, and identity can enhance agricultural development. In agriculture, purple economy means using cultural and creative assets to add economic, social, and ecological value to farming systems. It links culture, sustainability, creativity and agriculture to boost rural development, protect heritage, and create unique market opportunities.

Keywords: colour economy; sustainable development; social care; agriculture; agricultural development

Introduction

Purple economy is a modern alternative economic model. It is a cross-cutting issue, an interdisciplinary method in economics that addresses a variety of important societal issues such as education, health, women's empowerment, which enhances the overall standard of living. The purple economy means inclusiveness, care, equality, sustainability. It emphasises the social and cultural dimension in attributing value to goods and services. As a result, it fosters a new form of economic growth driven by the dynamic interplay between culture and the economy. Therefore, the purple economy is a dynamic interaction and a unique synergy between social care and vulnerable human capital on the one hand, and cultural diversity and cultural realities as a key component of sustainable development. When applied to agriculture, purple economy emphasises how cultural values, traditions, creative industries, and identity can enhance agricultural development. In agriculture, purple economy means using cultural and creative assets to add economic, social, and ecological value to farming systems. It links culture, sustainability, creativity and agriculture to boost rural development, protect heritage, and create unique market opportunities.

Scope and definition

Some researchers consider that the purple economy highlights emerging commercial opportunities within a highly competitive global market (Saiz-Álvarez & Palma-Ruiz, 2019). Others think that it represents a branch of economics that adapts to human diversity in the context of globalisation and incorporates cultural dimensions into the valuation of goods and services (Salgues, 2018). According to the organ-

isers of the First International Purple Economy Forum, "*Purple economy is far more than laying claim to a new term. It is about looking beyond the economic value of cultural outputs to encompass the cultural dimension of any asset or service. Purple economy is part of a wider ethical approach. It contributes to a richer and more diverse cultural environment. Such wealth and diversity are decidedly drivers for progress*."

A number of scientists define purple economy based on the interdependencies between economy and culture. Ouadi and Ouail (2022) stress that the purple economy forms an alliance between economy and culture, aiming to humanise globalisation by balancing economic development with sustainability. Therefore, purple economy integrates cultural aspects into economic practices, emphasising diversity and cultural value in a globalised world.

According to Medjdoud (2020), purple economy is a diverse and complex economy that enhances all goods and services by utilising the cultural aspect present in each field, highlighting the increasing significance of culture. Bouchier underlines that the purple economy focuses on taking into account the cultural aspects within the economy (Bouchier, 2013). Tobelem (2013) goes further, revealing that it seeks to enhance cultural diversity by emphasising humans' capacity to humanise globalisation and enhance new development with ethical, sustainable, and cultural aspects. Mechikel and Ouddane (2022) point out that purple economy is connected to societal cultures, adapting to individual cultural awareness and diversity, resulting in varying levels of consumer response based on cultural differences within society and among individuals.

Ilkkaracan underlines that purple economy is a key component of a sustainable economy. Whereas the green economy, stresses on ecological concerns, the social economy emphasizes social issues, the purple economy highlights the cultural dimension and the cultural value of products and services. It differs from the cultural economy, which is a distinct sector in itself. The correlation between the cultural dimension and sustainable development is evident as the economic dimension, which was assessed and reviewed, is supported by the social dimension (Ilkkaracan, 2016c). Additionally, the green economy promotes sustainable development, aiming to achieve justice and continuously improve service quality while also considering the environment. The purple economy is a well-organised economic system that aims to support the care workforce by evenly distributing the costs of care. In this way, it reflects the structure of the green economy, which emphasises the sustainable use of natural resources (Ilkkaracan, 2016c).

Nonetheless, the purple economy asserts that sustainable development can be accomplished by merging the aforementioned factors with a cultural foundation rooted in the region's traditions. Furthermore, it recognizes cultural realities by investing in human capital and represents a sustainable development approach that values diversity and cultural resources. It prioritizes rights such as maternity leave, flexible working time, fair compensation, and addressing the gender pay gap (Ilkkaracan, 2016c).

In brief, the most important characteristic of the purple economy is the partnership between economic, social and cultural aspects integrating human values and economic growth with sustainability. The purple economy is a unique model rooted in gender equality, social care and cultural diversity promoting development and enhancing wellbeing.

Therefore, it could be pointed out that purple economy is an alliance and synergy between care economy and culture to achieve sustainability. The key basics of the purple economy are care economy, vulnerable groups, diversity and cultural realities, sustainability.

In fact, purple economy fosters cultural environment by linking economic activity with culture, aiming to humanize globalization and integrate economic growth with sustainability (ECLAC, 2019).

Why purple?

Feminist economist Professor İpek İlkkaracan has introduced the concept of 'purple economy' from feminist perspective and developed an economic model that acknowledges the importance of care work in every facet of life. She underlines the challenges women encounter due to the societal stereotypes surrounding unpaid caregiving, which lead to issues like the employment gap, gender wage disparity, and job segregation. „Purple" is a symbolic colour for the feminist movement that calls for purple jobs, i.e. investment in social care and inclusive generation of the women's movement (İlkkaracan, 2013). It safeguards the rights and well-being of vulnerable population and people at risk. Thus, the purple economy is a symbol of generating purple jobs through gender equality strategies. It highlights the necessity of increasing social care services, especially during periods of crisis and high unemployment (İlkkaracan, 2016a).

The decision to use the colour purple is strongly based on societal values and cultural norms. Culture plays a key role in economic development by shaping a vision for a new economic system that works alongside the green economy and tackles various systemic challenges. The purple economy worldwide is seen in many countries across the globe. The purple colour aims to recognise the essential role of social care in various economic projects. This recognition seeks to

regulate the labour market while fostering an environment that supports fair, healthy and balanced working conditions.

Background and formation

Central to purple economy is the advancement of corporate social responsibility, built upon the principles of the International Charter on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1966. The expression first appeared in 2011 in France in a manifest, published in Le Monde (Le Monde, 2011).

Endorsers included the board members of the Diversum organization (Jean-Jacques Aillagon, Bruno Bourg-Broc, Bernard Cerquiglini, Gilles Ciment, Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam, José Luís Dicenta Ballester, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, Mercedes Erra, Pierre-Antoine Gailly, Jérôme Gouadain, Claudie Haigneré, Jean-Hervé Lorenzi, Jean Musitelli, Alain-Dominique Perrin, Odile Quintin, Bernard Ramanantsoa, Jean-François Rial, Pierre Simon) who later initiated the inaugural International Purple Economy Forum with support of UNESCO, the European Parliament, and the European Commission. The organisers stated that *"Purple economy' is far more than laying claim to a new term. It is about looking beyond the economic value of cultural outputs to encompass the cultural dimension of any asset or service. Purple economy is part of a wider ethical approach. It contributes to a richer and more diverse cultural environment. Such wealth and diversity are decidedly drivers for progress.*".

In 2013, the first inter-institutional working group, headed by UNESCO and other organizations, released its findings on the purple economy. The report introduced the idea of "Purple Jobs" (Ilkkaracan, 2016) – roles and professions, closely connected to the cultural sector and including activities such as creating cultural programs, converting historic buildings into museums, and granting cultural awards to institutions that support cultural development.

Purple economy and the sustainable development goals

The aim of purple economy is to increase social services, particularly during periods of crisis. This is especially valid for the period of COVID-19 pandemic. Purple economy endorses some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as GOAL 3: Good health and wellbeing. SDG 5: Gender Equality and GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality. GOAL 8: Decent work and economic growth. GOAL 4: Quality Education, etc.(Ilkkaracan, 2016).

A 2019 ILO report on studies conducted by Prof. İlkkaracan and Prof. Kim revealed that investing in social and healthcare sectors (aligned with SDG targets 3, 4, 5, and 8) could lead to the direct creation of more jobs by 2030, along with additional indirect jobs relative to current conditions. Additionally, these initiatives particularly aid the involvement of women with young children in the workforce, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation in this group.

Purple economy and green economy

A few decades ago, the term green economy emerged as a future vision for a new economic order in response to the environmental crisis. The Purple economy aims to offer an alternative future vision for a new economic order, complementary to the Green economy (Ilkkaracan, 2016) in address-



Fig. 1. The UN Sustainable development goals

Source: Women in Development, A/RES/70/219 (22 December 2015)

ing the many systemic challenges, including the crisis of the care economy: Purple economy refers to an economic order organised around sustainability of care work, care labour by redistributing care costs, just as the green economy is organised around sustainability by redistributing environmental costs in production and consumption patterns. Advocates of a fair and green transition often referred to as the "feminist green new deal", contend that the shift toward sustainable care systems can and should occur alongside environmental sustainability. Realizing these synergies and mutual benefits depends on increased public investment in the care sector to ensure decent and green jobs for women and vulnerable social groups (UN Women, 2015).

Figure 2 provides a clear vision of the purple economy.

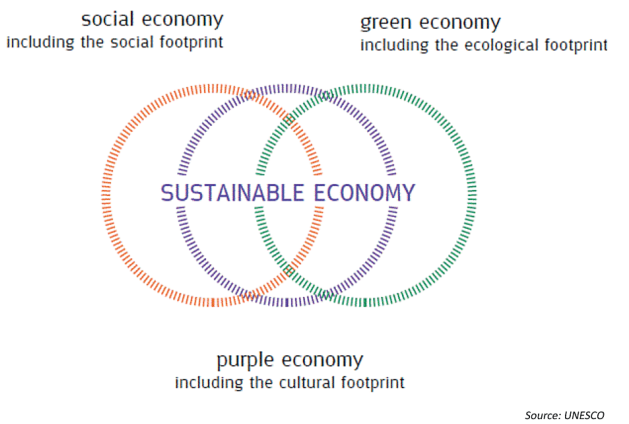


Fig. 2. The purple economy is at the centre of linking old forms of growth with new ones
Source: UNESCO

Some researchers insist care costs like environmental costs to be taken into consideration (Diski, 2022, Ilkkaracan, 2016). In fact, public investment in the care sector is crucial, as it can generate quality, environmentally sustainable jobs. At the same time, measures are needed to ensure that women benefit from employment and entrepreneurial possibilities in less female-dominated industries, such as energy and transport. The purple economy also stresses the importance of conducting evaluations before and after policy implementation to assess their impact on women and girls, with the goal of proper addressing existing or potential inequalities (UN Women, 2015).

Purple economy and gender equality

According to the UN report Progress of the World's Women 2015–2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights, gender equality is a central concern of the purple economy. Women perform 76% of unpaid work and 43% of paid work. When both paid and unpaid work are combined, women contribute a greater share of total working hours (52%) than men, despite having lower participation in the formal labour force (ECLAC, 2019). The data underscores the significant, yet often undervalued, role of unpaid care and domestic work, which remains disproportionately carried out by women. It also underlines the need for structural changes, such as better redistribution of care responsibilities, improved labour market access for women, and policies that acknowledge and support care work as an important component of the economy.

Some researchers and business representatives such as Jean Chalopin, Chairman of Deltec International Group stress that the purple economy embraces several key sectors and each one of them contributes significantly to the global economy while making sure that the people's needs are sufficiently taken on board and compassionately cared for. These sectors are:

- Healthcare encompasses a range of services, including medical care, pharmaceutical offerings, and mental health support.
- Educational services span from early childhood education to adult learning and vocational training programmes.
- Social services cover areas such as childcare, elder care, and social work initiatives.
- Nursing and residential care facilities offer long-term support for the elderly and individuals with disabilities.
- Volunteer efforts and non-profit organisations address community needs and foster essential connections for communal assistance.

Feminist economist Professor Ipek Ilkkaracan has made significant contributions to the discourse around the "Purple Economy" – a term she coined to establish an economic framework that highlights the critical role of care work in various aspects of life. She acknowledges the challenges women encounter because of societal expectations regarding unpaid care responsibilities, which contribute to issues such as the employment gap, the gender pay gap, and workplace segregation. Professor Ilkkaracan identifies four fundamental pillars that underpin the concept of purple economy:

1. Universal framework for social care services: It is essential to establish a comprehensive system of care services that guarantees access for all households. This can be achieved through the availability of public care services or state-subsidised private care services, ensuring they are accessible to everyone.

2. Labour market regulation for achieving work-life balance: This entails implementing strategies to distribute

caregiving responsibilities more equitably between genders, such as introducing paternity and parental leave. Additionally, it is important to create conditions that enable individuals of all genders to fulfil caregiving roles, which may include measures like reducing working hours.

3. Targeted initiatives to alleviate unpaid labour in rural households: Women and girls residing in rural regions often face heightened caregiving demands due to inadequate physical infrastructure. Therefore, it is crucial to develop effective infrastructure that can help alleviate their responsibilities.

4. Alternative macroeconomic policy framework: The successful implementation of the aforementioned measures relies on macroeconomic policies that facilitate the allocation of financial and human resources. Such policies should prioritise job creation, ensure adequate funding for social service infrastructure, invest in robust physical infrastructure in rural areas, and establish regulations that support the integration of these essential components. Purple economy seeks to tackle the gender-based division of labour and the unequal distribution of caregiving duties (UN Women, 2015). It promotes the development of comprehensive care policies and systems, encourages the recognition and redistribution of care work, and strengthens the care economy as a promising sector in the quest for a revolutionary recovery with equality (ECLAC, 2021).

The future of the purple economy promises growth and transformation. While digitalisation and artificial intelligence could replace manual work in many jobs, the purple economy's care and service-oriented sectors remain largely protected from complete automation due to the necessary human element required. Thus, we will witness the purple economy as a critical growth sector. However, the purple economy will need to address challenges in regulation, remuneration, and workforce development. One of the biggest bottlenecks is the fact that sectors within this economy are usually underpaid and undervalued, with low wages and poor working conditions. It is particularly up to financial service providers and investors to seek out financing opportunities.

In 2019, the European Women's Lobby (EWL), which is the largest umbrella organisation of women's non-governmental associations in Europe, working for the interests of women and girls in all their diversity and gender equality, proposed a Purple Pact (European Women's Lobby, n.d.) to the European institutions as an important contribution to the current feminist debates on the future of Europe, at a time when people in Europe and European leaders are seeking solutions to massive global challenges. This paper analyses the current economic system from a critical feminist perspective with the aim of proposing a radical shift in economic policy aiming to build a new and inclusive economic framework based on core feminist values.

According to EWL, the concept of the purple economy is founded on a macroeconomic framework that fully recognises the significant contributions of women to the economy, as well as the overall wellbeing of both women and men across all societal levels. It advocates for the implementation of economic metrics and monitoring systems that extend beyond traditional GDP measures, enabling evaluations that reflect true economic value, including unpaid labour, accountability, and transparency. The purple economy proposes specific strategies for restructuring the economic landscape and introduces policies and initiatives rooted in core feminist principles, which prioritise justice, solidarity, equality – encompassing equal opportunities – non-discrimination, and respect for diversity and the natural environment. Furthermore, the purple economy adopts a novel perspective on labour market policies and regulations, ensuring that they are aligned with the realities of individuals' lives and life trajectories, rather than imposing rigid frameworks upon them.

Purple economy and care work

The goal of the purple economy is to tackle the vulnerability of the care economy on both national and global scales by addressing the various inequalities caused by the disproportionate use of women's unpaid and underpaid work, and the lack of investment in the care industry (UN Women, 2015).

Purple economy shows a modern and fresh perspective on economics that acknowledges the critical role of care work, the enablement and autonomy of women for the health of societies, the operation of economies, and the sustainability of life. Care work takes place across a range of spheres, including the public and private sectors and private homes. According to the UN Progress of the World's Women 2015–2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights (UN Women, 2015), care work includes two closely connected types of activities, which may be either paid or unpaid. The first one involves care to a person. The second one involves household activities. Paid care work refers to occupations, in which individuals provide either direct, face-to-face care or indirect support that enables caregiving. In contrast, unpaid care and domestic work are carried out without financial compensation within households and communities. Typically located within the service sector, care work is frequently associated with low wages and difficult working conditions. The purple economy seeks to reshape the current paradigm by alleviating the double burden experienced by women (UN Women, 2015).

High-quality care not only fosters and enhances human capabilities but also generates advantages that could be in

favour of communities, societies, and economies, impacting future generations. Some studies have demonstrated that investing in social infrastructure produces greater multiplier effects on economy and employment compared to investments in physical capital (Yeates, 2009).

In contexts, where care is compensated, it is essential to ensure fair working conditions and equal pay for equal work to protect a workforce that is predominantly female.

Purple economy and UN resolutions related to gender equality and care work

Purple economy places culture, social values, and human well-being at the centre of economic systems, with particular attention to the gendered organization of labour and care. This perspective closely corresponds with key UN frameworks, which increasingly recognize care work as a fundamental component of sustainable development and gender equality.

The UN Resolution on Women in Development (UNGA, 2020) and the UN Resolution on Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development (UNGA, 2018) both provide critical frameworks for addressing gender inequality in economic and social spheres, with important implications for care work. The Women in Development agenda emphasizes integrating women fully into development processes, recognizing both their productive and reproductive roles. By highlighting women's contributions to unpaid care and domestic work, the resolution underscores the need for policies that reduce women's disproportionate care burden and ensure equitable access to economic opportunities.

Similarly, the resolution on Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development stresses the role of inclusive entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth, while promoting social and environmental sustainability. From a gender equality perspective, this resolution reveals the potential of entrepreneurship to empower women economically, especially when supported by policies that acknowledge and accommodate care responsibilities. Women's participation in entrepreneurship often interacts with care obligations, and without structural support - such as childcare services, flexible working arrangements, and social protection - the benefits of entrepreneurial opportunities may remain inaccessible to many women.

Viewed through the lens of care work, both resolutions highlight the necessity of integrating gender-sensitive approaches into development and economic policies. Recognizing and redistributing care responsibilities, investing in care infrastructure, and valuing unpaid work are essential for creating equitable conditions that allow women to fully engage in both development initiatives and entrepreneurial activities. These resolutions, therefore, reflect the principle that sustainable development and economic empowerment cannot be achieved without addressing the structural gendered inequalities embedded in care work.

Implementing the purple economy in agriculture: Integrating care, culture, gender, and sustainability

Applied to agriculture, the purple economy highlights the interdependence between gender relations, unpaid care work, cultural heritage, and ecological sustainability, forming a holistic approach to rural development.

A core contribution of the purple economy is its recognition of care as an economic force. Rural households depend on daily reproductive labour – childrearing, food preparation, seed saving. Feminist economist Marilyn Waring observed that "what we don't count, counts for nothing" (Waring, 1988), highlighting the systemic exclusion of unpaid care from national accounting and development policy. In agriculture, women undertake most of this labour. A purple approach counters this by embedding care-sensitive measures into agricultural programmes, such as rural childcare facilities, community care cooperatives, and social protection mechanisms that reduce time burdens. When care is supported, women gain greater capacity to engage in production, training, and leadership roles, enhancing both equity and productivity.

There is a strong link between agriculture and culture. Amartya Sen's recognition that "development is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy" (Sen, 1999) highlights why cultural autonomy is significant: communities must have the freedom to maintain and generate knowledge systems, by which they sustain their landscapes. Institutional sustainable measures such as conservation of indigenous seeds, formation of community seed banks and introduction of local customs within extension services also help in maintaining social identity besides conserving biodiversity. In addition, culturally embedded products – such as heritage varietals of plants and artisanal foods, or even agro-festivals – can contribute at least some proportion of their returns to benefit-sharing with local economies.

Gender equality is crucial for the purple economy in agriculture. Despite women being essential to agricultural work, they often face challenges such as insecure land rights, limited access to credit and technology, and a lack of representation in decision-making roles. Economist Bina Agarwal, an expert on gender and land rights, emphasises that "*women's independent land rights are vital for improving their wellbeing and negotiating power*" (Agarwal, 1994). A gender-transformative purple approach requires not only the inclusion of women in agricultural initiatives, but also the

elimination of structural inequalities that restrict their agency. This involves legal reforms related to inheritance and land ownership, gender-sensitive extension services, and the equitable distribution of caregiving responsibilities within families and communities. Empowering women leads to increased agricultural productivity, better household nutrition, and enhanced social resilience.

Ecological sustainability serves as the fourth pillar for advancing the purple economy. Elinor Ostrom's research plays a key role in this area. She argues that "*there is no reason to believe that bureaucrats and politicians, no matter how well-meaning, are better at addressing common-pool resource issues than the people who rely on these resources*" (Ostrom, 1990), emphasising the significance of community governance in ecological management. Agroecology aligns closely with purple principles by fostering soil health, biodiversity, diverse cropping systems, and community-driven adaptation strategies. However, ecological change cannot be separated from social conditions. Households facing unpaid care burdens or gender inequality may lack the necessary time and resources to implement sustainable practices. Thus, purple policies connect social wellbeing with ecological resilience, acknowledging their interdependent relationship.

Implementing the purple economy in agriculture needs integrated governance across sectors. Amartya Sen's idea that "*no one can live on production alone*" (Sen, 1999) highlights the importance of holistic policy frameworks that address the social and cultural foundations of economic life. Effective implementation relies on cross-sector budgeting, inter-ministerial working groups, and participatory programme design, particularly involving women, youth, and cultural custodians.

Although promising, the purple economy approach faces notable risks. Cultural initiatives may lead to commercialisation or appropriation if not governed appropriately. Gender programmes may inadvertently increase women's workload if care support is inadequate. Ecological projects may falter under short-term funding horizons. These risks underscore the importance of community governance, gender analysis, benefit-sharing agreements, and long-term financing strategies.

The purple economy offers a compelling framework for rethinking agricultural development in ways that are equitable, culturally grounded, and ecologically sustainable. By integrating care, culture, gender, and ecology, it embraces Polanyi's vision (Polanyi, 1944) of an economy rooted in social and moral relationships rather than detached market logic. At a time when climate change, biodiversity loss, and rural inequality challenge global food systems, the purple economy articulates an alternative developmental pathway – one that values human dignity, cultural diversity, and planetary health as interconnected foundations of resilient agricultural futures.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the potential and importance of the purple economy to the social and economic perspectives of life.

The purple economy represents a multidimensional framework that integrates economic activity, social care, and cultural engagement, aiming to harmonize economic growth with sustainability and social wellbeing. Unlike traditional economic models that focus primarily on production and profit, purple economy places social and cultural advancement at the core of economic activity, emphasizing the potential of culture and care in shaping equitable and resilient societies. By fostering innovative approaches to production and service delivery, it encourages the diversification of economic activities while simultaneously addressing societal needs.

A central feature of the purple economy is its contribution to the creation of an inclusive and diverse care environment. By prioritizing accessible and affordable care services, it seeks to meet the specific needs of communities and promote social cohesion. In doing so, it directly supports the establishment of decent work, particularly for women, who have historically faced a disproportionate share of both paid and unpaid care work. Through these measures, the purple economy not only enhances labour market opportunities but also works to reduce gender inequalities, thereby advancing broader objectives of social justice and equity.

The framework also emphasizes corporate social responsibility and the proactive role of institutions in fostering cultural development. By promoting the alignment of business practices with social and cultural objectives, the purple economy encourages organizations to contribute to societal wellbeing beyond mere economic performance. This approach reflects the broader goals of sustainable development, recognizing that economic activities are not neutral but have far-reaching implications for communities, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. In this context, businesses and institutions are viewed as facilitators of social infrastructure and inclusive growth.

Cultural considerations within the purple economy are particularly significant. By valuing cultural assets, knowledge, and practices, it encourages the production of high-quality goods and services that carry cultural meaning and social value. This perspective goes beyond traditional economic metrics, emphasizing long-term societal and en-

vironmental impacts, and ensuring that economic initiatives contribute positively to community identity, cohesion, and heritage preservation. The purple economy thus recognizes the "*cultural dividend*" embedded in economic activities, ensuring that cultural heritage is not only protected but also leveraged as a source of innovation, creativity, and sustainable economic value.

Purple economy's emphasis on the intersection of culture, care, and economic activity highlights its potential to contribute to long-term sustainability. By embedding principles of social justice, gender equity, and cultural preservation into economic practices, it establishes a model for development that is both resilient and inclusive. Purple economy not only drives economic renewal, but also ensures that growth is meaningful, socially responsive, and environmentally responsible. This integrated vision makes it a vital framework for policymakers, institutions, and communities seeking to reconcile economic objectives with the complex realities of social and cultural life.

The purple economy offers a new paradigm for agricultural and rural development that is more inclusive, sustainable, and economically viable. By leveraging the unique cultural heritage of different regions, it creates value beyond that of basic commodity production. This approach is not just about economic growth. It is about creating a more balanced and sustainable future for agriculture by integrating economic, social, and cultural dimensions. As such, it represents a promising avenue for revitalising rural communities and creating a more resilient food system for the future.

Integrating the principles of the purple economy into agriculture holds significant promise for women's empowerment in rural areas. By valuing culture, heritage, and human creativity – rather than only scale, mechanisation, or capital – it can lower entry barriers and open spaces for women-led, small-scale, diversified agricultural and rural-tourism enterprises. Empirical research shows that agritourism and rural entrepreneurship can strengthen women's economic independence, social capital, and leadership. Yet, achieving sustainable empowerment requires more than market-based opportunities: it demands institutional support, access to resources, capacity-building, and cultural change to ensure that women's participation is meaningful, recognised and equitable. In other words, purple agriculture can contribute to inclusive rural transformation – but only if embedded in frameworks that combine gender equity, social support, and cultural respect.

Finally, the purple economy promotes sustainable development by combining economic growth, cultural enrichment, creativity, and social responsibility. It goes beyond the financial value of cultural products, and drives societal progress. Purple economy offers a more balanced, inclusive, and sustainable model for economic activity.

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Received: **May, 10, 2026**; *Approved*: **July, 25, 2026**; *Published*: **November, 2026**