NEW FORMS OF WORK AND PLATFORM WORK IN SEMED

Country profile: Algeria
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Setting the scene

Main economic indicators

Algeria is an upper middle-income country with the 10th-largest proven natural gas reserves globally and is the world’s fourth-largest gas exporter. It also ranks 16th in the world in terms of proven oil reserves, and exports roughly 60% of its total production. The country’s hydrocarbon sector represents around 40–45% of its total gross domestic product (GDP). In 2021, Algeria’s GDP rebounded by 3.5% after contracting by 5.1% during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The subsequent surge in hydrocarbon prices resulting from the global recovery and the war in Ukraine has generated a substantial rise in Algeria’s export and budget revenues.

In 2021, the country’s expanding services sector accounted for 32.3% of the GDP; industry, 39.68%; and agriculture, 12.3%. Algeria is also working to develop strategic industrial sectors headed by the agri-food, mechanical, electronic, and electrical industries, textiles and the chemical and pharmaceutical industries.

Given the rising trend of ‘brain drain’ away from the region, the migration of skilled workers appears a critical issue for Algeria. This is caused by high unemployment among educated people, and low wages in the public sector. These trends increased especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Conversely, in recent years, many sub-Saharan migrants have come to Algeria either as their destination or as a transit point in their migratory journey. Each week, a large number of migrants of different nationalities (mainly from West Africa) enter Algeria. Most arrive in Algerian territory across the 1,500km border with Mali and Niger, in the middle of the Sahara Desert. In 2021, migration numbers doubled, especially after the easing of precautionary measures taken due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In that year, the number of illegal immigrants of various African nationalities rose to 10,889, compared with 5,825 in 2020.

The main issues relating to economic growth in Algeria include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of diversification in the economy, and an excessive reliance on oil and gas: as one of the most important producers of oil and gas, Algeria is not immune to the so-called ‘curse of oil’. The country has yet to rid itself of its exclusive reliance on primary-sector exports to generate growth and wealth. At the same time, this has created a dangerous dependence on imports to meet local demand.

- The country’s banking system is still developing. In particular, the black market for currencies in Algeria has taken on new dimensions and therefore deserves greater attention. Recently, Algeria has undertaken a series of reforms aimed at increasing the stability and profitability of its financial systems.

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and banking sector, and of its credit market.\textsuperscript{11} In addition, it has invested in modernising information and payment systems to enhance the quality of the banking services.

- Algeria’s business climate – in particular, its financial regulations, currency controls, unstable regulatory framework and slow-moving bureaucracy – result in hurdles to the transfer of funds internationally.\textsuperscript{12} This is mainly due to the fact that Algeria’s investment ecosystem is still in the process of development. In 2020, Algeria ranked 150th out of 190 countries worldwide in the ease of doing business index,\textsuperscript{13} after being ranked 157th in 2018 and 2019.\textsuperscript{14}

### Labour market

In terms of employment, participation in Algeria’s labour market remains low. Data from the ETF’s Key Indicators of education skills and employment (KIESE)\textsuperscript{15} shows that employment levels were exceptionally low in Algeria in 2019, standing at only 18.3\% of the population older than 15 years of age. These data also reveal a significant gender employment gap, with only 4.3\% women in employment, compared a seven times greater share of mean (31.7\%). While World Bank data indicate a much higher overall employment rate – 35\% in 2021 after a slight fall from 37\% in 2019 – they also indicate a significant disparity between women and men, with a rate of 12.65\% among women, compared with 57.28\% for men.\textsuperscript{16} Unemployment in Algeria in 2021 was estimated at 12.7\%. This rate was higher among women (22.1\% for women, and 10.4\% for men).

Importantly, the main labour market issue in Algeria remains the extremely widespread labour inactivity, marked by stark gender differences. In 2019, 75\% of population was inactive in the labour market – comprising 58.4\% of men and an overwhelming 92.2\% of women.\textsuperscript{17} This large gender gap in labour market activity can be explained by cultural factors.

Meanwhile, undeclared work and informal enterprises account for a significant proportion in the country’s economy.\textsuperscript{18} According to data from the Algerian National Office of Statistics in May 2019, declared work accounted for 58.1\% of the employed population, compared with 41.9\% who engaged in undeclared.\textsuperscript{19} This ratio of undeclared work has fluctuated between 40\% and 43\% between the first semester of 2017 and 2019.\textsuperscript{20} Regarding this, it must be noted that some participants in the formal economy in Algeria also conduct some activities in the informal sector, in order to get through the month and maintain their social benefits. This has been confirmed by interviews with freelancers conducted for this study. Algeria is one of the few countries in which the problems of the informal economy are the result of variations in economic structures, as Algeria is still in transition towards a market economy.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{15} ETF KIESE database (2022).


\textsuperscript{17} ETF KIESE database, 2022


\textsuperscript{19} Not affiliated to social security (CNAS for employees and CASNOS for non-employees).

\textsuperscript{20} Berrah, M.K,. (2019), Activité, emploi et chômage en Mai 2019, N°789, la Direction Technique chargée des Statistiques de la Population et de l’Emploi, ONS (Siège), http://www.ons.dz

During the COVID-19 pandemic, employment in Algeria’s public sector was mostly frozen or cancelled. While there has since been a small increase, this remains insufficient to offset the current higher rate of unemployment. Under these circumstances, the state faces certain challenges in employment, namely:

- Promoting entrepreneurship among graduates and fostering the creation of SMEs to provide more jobs;
- Focusing on practical and professional training to enhance the employability of graduates;
- Learning more about the needs of companies in order to match education with the labour market; and
- Adapting labour market regulations to new forms of work, and improving the level of wages to reduce brain drain.

In Algeria, notable trends have occurred in terms of work organisation and labour market flexibilisation. According to ONS statistics from May 2019, the active population, as defined by the ILO, was estimated at 12,730,000 people. Trends in the labour market displayed a strong growth in the volume of permanent waged employment and self-employment compared with September 2018, with a positive balance of 270,000 and 91,000 respectively. However, a significant decrease was recorded in the volume of non-permanent waged employees, estimated at 49,000. In Algeria, working hours for part-time work must be no fewer than half of the statutory maximum working time. Temporary, and notably casual, employment is primarily found in the rural areas, reflecting seasonal needs in agriculture; however, this category of work also accounts for nearly 45% of work in urban areas.

The main drivers of these trends in work organisation and labour market flexibilisation in Algeria are as follows:

- Strategic direction of Algeria: The country has launched a broad economic programme aimed at diversifying the national economic revenues outside of hydrocarbons, through several sectoral policies and approaches based on keeping pace with the developments in the global economy.
- Economic and social challenges: the country faces a high rate of unemployment, labour market inactivity and saturation of the public sector.
- Global changes: Algeria face the challenges of the post-COVID-19 environment, the emergence of new forms of work, and the challenges of the knowledge economy.
- Labour and entrepreneurship reforms: policy makers in the country have launched new reforms aimed at labour market flexibility, work organisation and the creation of ventures in the public and private sectors. These reforms will be addressed in the ‘Current regulation, policies and strategic approaches’ section of this report.

**Youth statistics**

With regard to the situation of youth in Algeria, a study on job search methods in the country found that new cohorts of Algerians are increasingly pursuing higher education and enrolling into universities,
compared with previous generations. This means that the proportion of educated people entering the labour market is increasing. As Algerian universities have a higher proportion of female students than male students, a higher proportion of women graduates are entering the labour market compared with men.27

Algeria has invested massively in education, which is supported by the state and completely free of charge for all educational cycles. In 2022, the number of enrolled students reached 1,700,000.28 However, this increased number of graduates has led to a decrease in the quality of education due to the lack of credibility and diminished confidence in the public and economic roles of universities in bringing about meaningful transformations.29 Similarly, the labour market is looking for individuals with updated skills in line with the evolution of the skill demands on the market.30 According to an interview with a representative of a local employment agency, no matching is undertaken between the needs of various social and economic sectors and the qualifications of graduates, which illustrates an inadequate connection between supply and demand of skills.

High rates of unemployment continue to plague the youth population (16-24) in Algeria, with the total rate among this group standing at 31.9% (27.8% among men and 54% among women). Furthermore, the proportion of young people (aged 15–24) not in employment, education or training (NEETs) also remains high, although there has been a decrease from 28.3% in 2018 to 26.20% in 2019. NEET rates in 2019 were 20.4% for men (down from 21.30% in 2018) and 32.10% for women (down from 35.8% in 2018).31 This disparity between men and women can be explained by several factors. These include: traditions in Arab countries, where priority in families is given to boys, especially with regard to employment, and unlike boys, girls are not forced to work; low-skilled jobs are in higher demand than high-skilled jobs32; the growth of the informal economy and the emergence of new forms of precarious employment,33 and a lack of experience and practical training that weakens individuals’ employment chances.

Internet and digitalisation

Algeria’s digitalisation efforts are relatively new and still developing. However, the process of digital transformation in Algeria has experienced a sustained acceleration since the COVID-19 crisis. According to the Network Readiness Index (NRI), which ranks a total of 131 economies across various components of digital readiness (technology, people, governance and impact),34 Algeria ranked 100th in 2022, a rise of seven places from 2020. In terms of individual pillars of the ranking, Algeria ranks 100th for technology (up from 108th in 2020), 86th for people (the same as in 2020), 107th for governance (up from 120th), and 96th for impact (up from 101st).35

With regard to Internet penetration and access, Algeria has lagged behind for a very long time, but since 2022 the situation has finally started to change. The government has placed the improvement of

31 ETF KIESE database, 2022
34 Technology pillar refers to (Access, content and future technologies), People pillar refers to (individuals, businesses and governments), Governance pillar refers to (trust, regulation and inclusion), Impact pillar refers to (economy, quality of life, and SDG contribution)
35 Network Readiness Index (2022), available at: https://networkreadinessindex.org/country/algeria/
connection quality and increasing access to high-speed internet among its priorities.\textsuperscript{36} According to the ‘Digital 2023 report produced by international firm Datareportal, which specialises in fixed and mobile Internet statistics worldwide, the internet penetration rate in Algeria reached 70.9% in January 2023 – a significant increase compared to the same period in 2022, when it was 60.6%. The number of internet users in Algeria has also increased significantly, reaching 32.09 million users in January 2023, compared with 27.28 million during the same period in 2022.\textsuperscript{37}

According to Statista, as of 2018, 17.7% of Algeria’s population had basic information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Moreover, 16.1% of people could send emails with attached files. Meanwhile, only 6.9% possessed advanced ICT skills such as using a specialised programming language.\textsuperscript{38} Algeria has over a million incorporated SMEs, among which 97.1% are micro-enterprises with fewer than 10 employees. These SMEs show a good level of adoption of basic ICT, but a low level of adoption of more advanced ICT such as enterprise resource management software.\textsuperscript{39}

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Online work, on and off digital labour platforms

Over the past decade and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, new forms of online work emerged in Algeria, whether carried out on or off digital labour platforms. Interviews and desk research conducted for this study show that although online work proliferated and it is visible in Algeria, there is no solid research and data on this type of work.

Prevalence of online work

According to data provided by the Online Labour Index (OLI), engagement in online work in Algeria has exhibited a generally upward trend between 2017 and 2023, accompanied by significant fluctuations. Notable spikes in worker activity were observed during the second half of 2019 and the second half of 2022, followed by sudden drops in activity. As of the most recent measurement in May 2023, worker engagement was 350% higher than when it was initially measured in June 2017. Throughout this period, Algerian workers accounted for 0.2% of global platform work activity across the platforms measured.

Figure 1. Change in engagement of Algerian online platform workers over time relative to June 2017

Source: Online labour index

Note: The graph presents percentage change in the number of active workers from Algeria on a specific day compared with the number of active workers at the start of data collection in 2017, which is used as a reference date. This graph was based on OLI data which calculated a weighted estimate of currently active workers by periodically sampling workers on four of the largest online platforms once every 24 hours.

Out of the 9,288 registered Algerian online workers on the three targeted platforms for automated data collection – Freelance, PeoplePerHour and Guru – only 565 workers, representing 6% of the total number of Algerian workers registered, can be classified as active (see figure below).

40 Online Labour Observatory, available at: http://onlinelabourobservatory.org/oli-supply/
Among these active workers, the majority – comprising more than 500 individuals, or nearly 90% of the total across the three platforms, – work on the Freelancer platform. PeoplePerHour and Guru account for 10% and 1% of the share of active workers, respectively (Figure 3).

Algerian freelancers are also active on many more platforms, aside from the three included in this analysis. The main general digital labour platforms active in Algeria are Upwork, Fiverr, Freehali, Freelancer, Truelancer, Guru.com, PeoplePerHour, Hubstaff Talent, Shoghionline, Ureed and Khamsat, while the main specialised web-based platforms are Dribble.com, TasmeemMe and DesignCrowd. According to interviews with freelancers and the Facebook group ‘Freelancers community’, the main digital labour platforms most frequently used by freelancers in Algeria specifically are Upwork, Fiverr, Freelancer, Freehali and Khemesset. A brief overview of these is provided below.

**Upwork:** provides services in development and IT, AI services, design and creative, sales and marketing, admin and customer support, and other (writing and translation, finance and accounting, engineering and architecture, HR and training, and legal). Many Algerian freelancers use this platform. The types of work/specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform include translation, transcription, graphic design, architect design, brand design, audio and video

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41 [https://www.upwork.com/](https://www.upwork.com/)
editing, copy writing, content writing, web design and development, social media development and management, and data entry.

- **Fiverr**: The types of work-specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform include graphic design, photo-shop, photography, data entry, python, photo editing, translation, writing, web design and development, consulting, and marketing.

- **Freelancer** provides services in more than 1,800 fields (e.g. website designs, translation, python, photo-shop, finance, legal, marketing, e-commerce, programming, writing, etc.). The types of work-specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform include branding, graphic design, writing, 3D, web design and activities, translation, data entry, architectural design.

- **Truelancer** offers the following services: IT and programming, graphic design and multimedia, writing content, data entry and admin, finance and accounting, sales and marketing, customer support and service, social, SEO and SEM, mobile application, others, music and audio. More than 300 Algerian freelancers use the Truelancer platform. The types of work-specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform include logo design, graphic design, content writers, translation, data entry, programming, fitness...

- **Guru**: provides services in the following domains: programming and software development, writing and translation, design and art, administrative and secretarial, sales and marketing, engineering and architecture, business and finance, education and training, and legal. Around 3,250 Algerian freelancers are registered on Guru, offering 4,887 freelance services (although, as illustrated above, only a small share have ever conducted tasks secured through this platform). The types of work-specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform are: programming and software development (560 freelancers); design and art (738 freelancers); writing and translation (1,409 freelancers); administrative and secretarial (104 freelancers); business and finance (78 freelancers); sales and marketing (103 freelancers); engineering and architecture (182 freelancers); legal (28 freelancers); education and training (43 freelancers); and ‘other’ (243 freelancers).

- **PeoplePerHour** provides services in the following fields: technology and programming, writing and translation, design, digital marketing, video, photo and image, business, music and audio, marketing, branding and sale, social media. Around 570 Algerian freelancers are registered on this platform. The types of work-specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform include technology and programming, web design and development, writing and translation, design, architect design, graphic design, business consulting, marketing strategy, digital marketing photo-shop, social media development and management, data scientist, and music and video editing.

- **Hubstaff Talent** offers services in the following domains: development, marketing and sales, design and multimedia, writing and content, data base and IT, admin, and business consulting. Around 50 freelancers in Algeria are registered on this platform. The types of work-specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform include social media marketing and management, video editing, digital marketing, web development, programming, graphic design, translation, writing, administration, consulting, and data entry.

- **Dribbble.com** is an online platform for designers. It allows freelancers to provide services in animation, branding, illustration, mobile, print, product design, typography and web design. This platform does not allow freelancers to be searched for by country.

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42 [https://fiverr.com/](https://fiverr.com/)
43 [https://www.fr.freelancer.com/](https://www.fr.freelancer.com/)
44 [https://www.truelancer.com/](https://www.truelancer.com/)
45 [https://www.guru.com](https://www.guru.com)
46 [https://www.guru.com/d/freelancers/l/algeria/](https://www.guru.com/d/freelancers/l/algeria/)
47 [https://www.peopleperhour.com/about](https://www.peopleperhour.com/about)
48 [https://talent.hubstaff.com/](https://talent.hubstaff.com/)
49 [https://dribbble.com/](https://dribbble.com/)
- DesignCrowd provides the following services: graphic design services, logo and branding, web design services, print design services, graphic design services, product and merchandise design services, art and illustration. The types of work/specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform are in the popular categories of logo design, T-shirt design, web design, photoshop, graphic design, flyer design, banner design, PowerPoint, Facebook design, icon design, etc.

In addition to the international, English-language platforms presented above, local and regional freelance marketplaces are also popular among freelancers in Algeria, indicating the popularity of this type of work. Some of the most notable regional/local platforms are the following:

- Freehali: a well-known digital platform based in Algeria that enables Algerian entrepreneurs, enterprises and agencies to hire freelancers at lower prices and without any commitment. Freehali platform is designed for providers of the following services: business and consulting, graphics and design, programming and computing, marketing and publicity, writing and translation, image and video, and music and audio. The business model for this platform creates value by facilitating negotiations between suppliers and clients and defining working conditions with the model 'Efreeha in 3 steps', a form of algorithmic management that is used to assign, monitor and evaluate work. In the first step, the client posts a request with the budget that he/she can afford; in the second step, he/she checks out the existing offers of freelancers, along with their prices and rankings; finally, the client orders the service. Freehali ensures that the money is not transferred to the freelancer until the client has approved and expressed satisfaction with the service received.

- Shoghlonline: an Arabic language digital-based business founded in 2015 to provide job opportunities via the Internet. The site brings freelancers looking for job opportunities together with businesses and project owners looking for professional freelancers to implement and manage their work remotely. According to the Shoghlonline website, the platform has recruited around 7,000 registered freelancers, and provides services in eight main fields: writing and translation, programming and IT, design and creativity, multimedia, digital marketing, support and administration, e-learning, and consulting. The platform's business model is to facilitate negotiations between suppliers and clients, determining working conditions through four steps: submitting a request and receiving offers from specialised freelancers; contacting the appropriate freelancer to discuss the details of work and terms in advance; receiving and reviewing the work until the client is satisfied that his/her request has been met; and finally, paying for the work through the online payment gateway of the platform. In total, 275 freelancers in Algeria use this platform. The types of work/specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria do on this platform include writing, consulting, fashion design, content writing, translation, graphic design, web development, data entry, architect design, and photoshop.

- Ureed: an online marketplace that connects employers from around the world with vetted and certified freelance talents across all professional fields. The platform employs more than 5,000 people working remotely from across 10 countries, and its network of freelancers exceeds 100,000 professionals and spans nearly 207 countries. Ureed has been used by more than 8,000 companies globally. The platform provides services in three main categories: general skills (e.g. content creation, social media marketing, web programming, etc); software engineering (e.g. software localisation, education translation, business translation, etc); and design (e.g. logo design, label design, typography, etc). The business model for the platform focuses on three steps.: A client begins by posting a new project on the platform and specifying the skills and experience it requires from a prospective freelancer. The client then sets the project’s budget in advance, and assigns the date and time by which he/she wishes to receive the work. The second step in the process is to choose an appropriate freelancer by browsing through profiles submitted by vetted freelancers and assigning a freelancer(s) to get the project done. The third step is to review the completed work, before making payment via the secure platform. Around 100 freelancers in Algeria work via this
platform. The types of work/specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform include teaching, content writing, translation, brand design, graphic design, web development, Photoshop, architect, editing, music and audio production, and data analytics.

- **Khamsat**: an Arab platform providing an online market for small services. Launched in 2010, it was subsequently acquired by the company Hsoub Limited. The platform provides a wide range of services including business services, programming and software development, digital marketing, online learning, video conception, design, transcriptions, writing and translation, lifestyle and other services. The platform's business model focuses on sellers (freelancers who provide the services) and buyers of those services, each of whom needs to create an account in order to buy or sell their respective service(s). The platform does not allow freelancers to be searched for by country, but as a widely known Arab platform it is likely to host freelancers from Algeria.

- **TasmeemME**: the first-ever Arabic language platform covering the region, founded in 2009 and located in Jordan. The platform is dedicated to promoting and empowering Arab creative talents, and offers full- or part-time remote working opportunities, as well as self-employment opportunities. It began by offering part-time and full-time jobs and freelance opportunities for designers, including high school and university graduates, and stay-at-home mums. In 2014, the website expanded to provide learning (in addition to job offers), and it has launched an online market. The platform currently has 270,620 registered freelancers (designers), 6,067 calls for jobs, and 232,545 subscribers in learning courses. It provides services in various fields such as architectural design, website and logo design, graphic design, photography, animation, translation, and drawing. The business model of TasmeemME focuses on giving clients (individuals and companies) the opportunity to search browse a gallery of designers’ work or the choose from a list of designers. It provides space for an online market, job posts, learning courses, and blogs. The platform provides information relating to its use, privacy, intellectual propriety, etc. in order to facilitate operations between freelancers and clients. Since it is an Arabic platform, it is likely to be used by many freelancers in Algeria, but it is impossible to provide accurate statistics due to the number of repeated and multiple freelancer accounts on the site. In addition, some freelancers do not include their skills/services on their profile. The types of work/specific services carried out by freelancers in Algeria on this platform include fashion design and art, graphic design, translation, drawing, web design, architecture, Photoshop, video production and editing, and writing.

### Attractiveness of online work

The factors that influence the popularity (or lack thereof) of online work, both on and off platforms, are almost the same as those that motivate online workers, such as the availability of job opportunities; the attractiveness of foreign markets; the value of foreign currency; earning additional income; social reasons, especially for women (e.g. stay-at-home moms); and flexible working hours.

Based on an analysis of some of the platforms active in Algeria and interviews with freelancers, online workers’ profiles appear to vary depending on the job in question and the workers’ motivations. Most users are young (aged 18–38), and include both male and female Algerians. They are interested in online work and motivated by a number of factors such as:

- **Earning additional money outside of their regular jobs, for those who treat the online work as a side job (a so-called ‘side hustle’) in the short term;**
- **Making a living with online work as a primary job in the long term;**
- **A preference (among some freelancers) for being self-employed and working under their own terms and conditions;**
- **Situations in which online work is the only job opportunity that saves freelancers from unemployment;**

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54. [https://khamsat.com/](https://khamsat.com/)
55. [https://www.tasmeemme.com/](https://www.tasmeemme.com/)
• For women, working from home provides an opportunity to take care of their family, to work according to flexible schedule, or to avoid uncomfortable work conditions (e.g. travelling);

• Attractiveness of the foreign market and the foreign currency;

• Online work can provide various opportunities for skills development and continuous learning for freelancers with various levels of expertise; this depends on the capabilities of the platform, competition among freelancers, and client demand.

According to interviews with freelancers, many factors prevent access to online freelancing work for those in Algeria. These are:

• Lack or absence of a legal framework: the state is in the process of developing various laws and procedures with regard to online forms of work.

• Weak digital or soft skills and high competition: according to the representatives of the ‘Freelancers community’ Algerian Facebook group, freelancers need to learn the digital skills necessary to upgrade their work to compete, as well as certain soft skills such as negotiation and self-branding to attract clients, especially on the Upwork platform.

• Lack of trust in online products: some people in Algerian still have reservations about online products, less awareness about online opportunities, or preferences for traditional ways of working.

• Poor or unstable wages: according to the ‘Freelancers community’ Facebook group, working online can be unstable and offer poor wages (e.g. working on the Fiverr platform, which makes this platform suitable for beginners in freelancing).

• Less security for online activities: freelancers can be exploited in many ways, and therefore come up with ideas to protect themselves. For example, freelancers in the design field tend to place a logo or watermark on their final designs so that the client cannot use it until they have been paid. Once payment is received, this mark will then be removed. These techniques are known among freelance designers as a means of protecting themselves and guaranteeing payment.

**Online work occupations and worker profiles**

As noted in the discussion of platforms used by freelancers in Algeria, these workers engage in various types of work and occupations. The data collected for this study from Guru, Freelancer and PeoplePerHour reveal an uneven distribution of occupations among online platform workers in Algeria (see Figure 4 below). The predominant occupation is creative and multimedia, comprising 57% of all workers. The second most popular occupation is software development and technology, which accounts for 27% of workers. The remaining professions, in descending order, include writing and translation, professional services, clerical and data entry, and lastly, sales and marketing support.
According to interviews conducted for this study, most freelancers in Algeria are young. Although both genders are represented on online platforms, work on online labour platforms in Algeria is mostly male-dominated. Analysis of automatically collected data reveals that men from Algeria were over seven times as likely to engage in work on three selected platforms, compared with women. Gender distribution also varied between occupations (see Figure 5 below). While there is a slightly higher representation of women in writing and translation, with men outnumbering women by several times in the other five occupations listed.

Interviews, together with the information collected from the freelancers’ Facebook group show that freelancers differ in their levels of education (secondary/vocational/tertiary), and qualifications (formal/non-formal, etc.). Some are overqualified, while others are underqualified for the work they carry.
out online. This depends on the level of skills required to do the task, and the worker’ motivations. Many freelancers are students or those who have dropped out of school or university to do freelancing rather than a traditional job. They also include unemployed graduates and those who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Working conditions**

According to the interviews, there are generally both positive and negative aspects to online freelancing working conditions. While these involve flexibility with regard to working hours and location, they come with uncertainty regarding the market and its risks (clients and wages) and self-employment status.

Freelancers’ needs and motivations can make online work a long-term or a short-term activity, a primary or a side job. Based on interviews, most freelancers start online work as a side job and then sometimes develop it into a primary job. Furthermore, online work is likely to be a full-time job in certain service sectors such as teaching, marketing infographics, design, computing, translation, managing social media pages and accounts, writing, and most web activities.

The working conditions, career prospects and in-work skills development opportunities provided by online work can differ between types of online work (on and off platform), platforms, sectors/activities, and the motivations of freelancers. For example, according to the interviews with freelancers and the Facebook group ‘Freelancers community’, Upwork is the best platform with regard to reliable clients with better wages, as well as better opportunities for skills development and continuous learning. Working on Upwork can be challenging for freelancers, who need to learn the digital skills necessary to upgrade their work in order to compete, as well as certain soft skills (e.g. negotiation and self-branding) in order to attract clients who can choose from a highly skilled pool of freelancers. On the other hand, Fiverr and Khamsat offer low wages that are seen as more suitable for freelance beginners with no experience. These platforms represent a good first opportunity for skills development, particularly in relation to presentation and communication skills. While these platform help freelance beginners to present their work, establish contact with clients, and discover the world of freelancing, they do not offer solid future perspectives due to the limited skills needed and poor remuneration.

Remuneration also varies by the type of work conducted. The highest hourly wages requested by online platform workers in Algeria were in sales and marketing (USD 24.27), while the lowest were observed in creative and multimedia (USD 16.00) as well as writing and translation (USD 16.71). Notably, there is a gender disparity in hourly pay, with women demanding higher wages than men. Algerian women on average requested USD 17.35 per hour, while men requested USD 17.06. This difference can be explained by the overrepresentation of men in creative and multimedia, which is the most frequent and the lowest-paid occupation.

*Figure 6. Hourly rates of active online platform workers by occupation (USD)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Hourly Rate (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and data entry</td>
<td>17.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative and multimedia</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional services</td>
<td>18.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and marketing support</td>
<td>24.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software development and technology</td>
<td>19.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing and translation</td>
<td>16.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PPMI, based on data from Freelancer, Guru and PeoplePerHour collected in March 2023.
Despite the differences in pay rates, the hourly wages offered on online labour platforms are significantly higher than the local average hourly wage in Algeria. According to Numbeo, the average net hourly pay in Algeria in March 2023 was USD 1.66. This amount is around ten and a half times less than the average hourly wage on online labour platforms (USD 17.36). It is important to note that these figures are not directly comparable, as the hourly rates requested online may differ from what workers ultimately receive, and platform earnings are extremely irregular and may often include a substantial amount of unpaid work. Nevertheless, these data indicate that online platform work presents a significant income-generating opportunity for workers in Algeria.

According to interviews conducted for this study, with regard to career prospects, online work can motivate freelancers to learn certain soft skills (e.g. negotiation, persuasion, self-branding, etc.) in addition to their technical/primary skills. These soft skills can help them to convince clients to choose their offering. Freelancers who work in competitive markets or on competitive platforms such as Upwork focus on continuous learning to stay in competition. In the words of one blog aimed at freelance workers, ‘Although freelancing is witnessed and experienced as an effective way to earn a good lifestyle and build a better career, it has posed a few threats to the work-life balance unless the freelancers implement the right strategies to gain a work-life balance’. Meanwhile, as noted by one of the freelancers interviewed for this study, ‘it still has an unpredictable future and no retirement plan like traditional jobs’.

On the other hand, carrying out certain freelance activities online often involves repetitive tasks, limiting a freelancer’s opportunities to enhance their skills or advance their career within the same job or platform. Unless they proactively pursue self-promotion and acquire new skills, their options for transitioning to different tasks within the same platform or exploring new markets may be limited. This differs from traditional employment, in which there are typically more avenues for learning and professional growth within a single organisation. On the other hand, the pay for some online jobs may surpass that of traditional ones. However, it differs between platforms and activities; for example, it is recognised among the freelancers in Algeria that Fiverr offers relatively lower wages compared with Upwork, which provides better clients and wages.

With regard to common contractual arrangements and working relations, online workers, both on and off digital labour platforms, often engage in informal work without a contract, and are mostly not protected by labour laws or social security systems. These working relationships may be concluded via email and verbal agreements in cases where the work is small-scale or short-term. Informal relationships may exist within a freelancer’s network, and are often based on recommendations or referrals, as stated by an interviewee working outside of digital labour platforms. However, some freelancers working away from platforms are self-employed, meaning they can be registered in a commercial register, protected by labour laws, and covered by the National Social Security Fund for Non-Employees (CASNOS). In such working situations, they can arrange their work on the basis of a contract.

The informal nature of online work is a common feature for those working both on and off digital labour platforms. This is why work on digital labour platforms has led to the creation of business models that allow protected working relationships between clients and freelancers. Indeed, clients who are interested in working with freelancers can use other types of contracts, especially in cases of large-scale work or medium- or long-term contracts (e.g. a task-based contract, or a project contract for long-term). In addition, freelancers can look for agency or subcontracting contracts to secure their working relationship with important clients.

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On-location platform work

On-location platform work in Algeria is visible, both in the media and in public discourse. Recently, Algerian company Yassir (see below) managed to raise USD 150 million in funding from American investors to expand its presence in Africa and Europe. This is the highest-value funding round in North Africa, making it one of the most valuable companies in Africa and the Middle East. Yassir is currently developing its presence as an on-location work platform in many cities across Algeria and ‘serves as a real driving force for the technological ecosystem in Algeria and a model for rapid growth potential in our country and in Africa’. Moreover, the start-up Temtem (see also below) received attention from Algeria’s Minister in charge of the Knowledge Economy and Startups in 2021 for being the first Algerian company to propose a service of intermediation for the diaspora, generating foreign currency inflows for Algeria.

Besides these platforms, workers in Algeria use many platforms, both small and large, to carry out on-location tasks and earn income. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has especially aided the growth of on-location platforms, as people avoided restaurants and public transportation. These trends are further presented in the section below.

Prevalence of on-location platform work

While there are no precise statistics on the prevalence of on-location platform work in Algeria, the evidence collected shows that such activities are popular in several segments of activities. These include, primarily, ride-hailing and food delivery services. An overview of the main on-location platforms is provided below:

- **Yassir** is the most well-known transportation application and on-location platform in Algeria. It is a start-up founded in 2017 by Algerians. The platform has now expanded to a further six countries besides Algeria: Germany, Canada, France, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia. It has also developed other services: food delivery and e-commerce. Clients on Yassir come from all segments of society.

  Yassir’s business model involves a structure that requires it to hold a copy of a user’s driver’s license and other documents (file of registration), to check vehicles, to provide training for drivers, and to connect customers and drivers through its digital application, which rates drivers. Yassir, like many similar platforms, focuses on an economy of scale whereby platforms allow better pricing of the service through digitalisation. The application controls how and when work is carried out, as well as the conditions and terms of service (types of vehicle/equipment used, the sequencing of tasks, control over access to customers). Continuous monitoring is carried out via the app which, as a minimum, collects current data on a driver’s location and working time and speed, accepted and declined tasks, user comments and ratings, as well as offline times. The platform involves both positive and negative incentives, including ratings by customers, temporary blocks on using the application, demand-based pay and pricing, and bonuses for rapid task completion.

  Yassir divides its clients into two segments – professionals and regular people – to which it provides the following range of services:
  - **Yassir Business:** professional transportation services offered for companies and their collaborators; and

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59 ElwataniaTV (2022). Minister Yacine Walid congratulates Yassir Company (In Arabic), available at: [TV elwataniatv.dz](elwataniatv.dz)


61 https://yassir.com/partenaire/

62 https://yassir.com/business/
- Yassir Teleconsultation, a service providing online medical advice and information, which was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Yassir Express, a food and shopping delivery service.

**Heetch**: (or Heetch El Djazair) is a French start-up founded in April 2013. The app was developed during the rise of the sharing economy. By 2019, Heetch was available in nine cities across France (Paris, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Strasbourg, Nantes, Bordeaux and Nice), as well as in Belgium (Brussels) and Morocco (Casablanca and Marrakech). In April of that year, Heetch announced its launch in Ivory Coast, with the intention of expanding rapidly to other countries in Africa. In July 2019, Heetch launched its activities in Algeria after concluding a partnership with a local entrepreneur to create a local company, and for a better understanding of the local market, culture and challenges.

Under Heetch’s business model, all drivers receive training upon registration, both on how to use the application and on the etiquette necessary to maintain a quality relationship with passengers. Heetch teams have in-person meetings with all drivers to validate all of the mandatory driving documents as well as the quality of their vehicles, which must be in good condition and no more than eight years old. The clients of this service are individuals and enterprises.

**Temtem**: a ride-hailing service launched in Algeria in 2018 that provides its services to individuals and enterprises. Temtem’s business model involves a recruitment and training application for partners/drivers (Temtem partenaire). The platform offers the partners exclusive discounts on Temtem usage, car insurance, after-sales service from car manufacturers, benefits for their families, and more.

In 2020, the start-up launched an application, Temtem One (the diaspora app), as an intermediate service. This service is destined for Algerian diaspora who were unable to travel for several months during the COVID-19 pandemic due to border closures. To meet the need for support and mutual assistance towards their families in Algeria, the app includes various options for e-commerce and home delivery, healthcare services, home repairs and payment services tailored to the diaspora. This comprehensive, all-in-one app caters to their basic daily needs.

**Jumia**: the leader in e-commerce and distribution in Algeria, launched in Algeria in 2018. The Jumia Food division, which has expanded its services to include convenience stores, is now present in seven Algerian cities, with a total of 650 partner restaurants. This online commerce brand experienced growth of over 40% in the last quarter of 2022. Its services is provided across the whole community.

**FoodBeeper**: a meal and grocery delivery solution, established in 2017 and available through a user-friendly mobile app. Orders are made via the app by navigating various categories, placing an
order and tracking its progress. Service is provided across the whole community in many cities across Algeria.

**Attractiveness of on-location platform work**

Interviews and desk research conducted for this study in Algeria reveal several the factors that affect the popularity (or lack thereof) of on-location platform work:

- **Availability of job opportunities:** like online freelancing, on-location platform work can provide a side or primary job for many unemployed people or those looking to support themselves.
- **Value of commission and remuneration:** the percentage commission or wages paid play an important role in the popularity of on-location platforms.
- **Flexibility of working hours and location:** as with online freelancing, on-location platforms can provide flexibility with regard to working hours, but flexibility may be limited with regard to location, according to the regulation of the market. This is particularly important for those with caring responsibilities, primarily women.
- **Trust and security:** clients tend to develop greater trust and security with on-location platforms compared with off platform services.
- **Job opportunities and skills development:** on-location platform work can provide low entry barrier work, but provide no opportunities for skills development and continuous learning.

**On-location platform work occupations and worker profiles**

The on-location platforms active in Algeria mostly provide transportation services (on-location ride-hailing e.g. Yassir, Heetch, temtem One, Yallah Go) and food delivery (e.g. FoodBeeper). Unfortunately, no statistics are available regarding these platforms, but a large number of Algerians generally use such applications.

The majority of workers on on-location platforms in Algeria are Algerian young men, especially in transportation and delivery services. Workers possess various levels of education (secondary/vocational/tertiary) and qualifications (formal/non-formal, etc.); some of them are overqualified for the work they carry out (such as taxi drivers on Yassir), but they engage in this work because they need extra money in addition to their regular jobs. Some of them are unemployed young university graduates, and this is the only job they have been able to find – especially due to the reduction in public employment opportunities caused by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other workers may find on-location employment opportunities beneficial only in the short term because they involve low skilled jobs that will not allow them to improve their skills and do not contribute to their future perspectives.

Facebook and Instagram are the popular social media in Algeria, and most on-location platforms operating in the country have pages on these to promote their business and announce employment opportunities to those potentially seeking work via on-location labour platforms. Aside from this, people can learn about on-location platform work on the internet from websites, platforms, forums, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter or influencers. Alternatively, they may learn about them from their connections: personal recommendations, word-of-mouth, etc. Most people working on-location platforms are recruited for a short time.
Working conditions

Based on the opinions of Yassir workers interviewed for this study, in addition to this work being a low-skilled job that limits chances to upgrade their skills and expand their career perspectives, the income from platform work is extremely low, severely limiting their possibilities to sustain themselves and their families. They believe that these platforms only prioritise clients, and do not provide good remuneration or social protection for workers (drivers) – unlike traditional jobs, in which they feel safer.

In the experience of some drivers, informality is common within on-location platform work. According to the Yassir drivers, they sign a contract for a specific duration, along with fulfilling other arrangements (online registration and submitting copies of drivers’ documents, which are kept as a file of registration, and then undertaking training and inspection of their car). According to these drivers, such procedures primarily aim to protect clients and provide them with details of their transportation services. In general, the workers feel they are not protected by the law. Even given the presence of the Yassir platform, which has an international investor, the ride-hailing markets in Algeria remains characterised by informality. Only ‘official’ taxi services are protected by law, as opposed to informal drivers who are common and yet are not covered by the law.

On-location platforms focus on economies of scale, which means providing services for which there is high demand at a lower price. To meet this demand, they recruit as many employees as possible (e.g. drivers and food delivery couriers). Unfortunately, while these employment opportunities are aimed at low-skilled workers, this is not always the case among those who work on these platforms. The drivers outlined the top skills that workers must have for this kind of job (driver and delivery services): punctuality, time management, communication skills, and self-marketing.

Current regulation, policies and strategic approaches

To respond to the challenges of emerging digital economy and accompanying new forms of work, Algerian government devised several important strategic approaches. These strategic approaches related to digitalisation and labour market and employment are reflected in:

- The establishment of the Ministry of Digitalisation and Statistics, which demonstrates the government's recognition of the importance of digital transformation.
- The establishment of the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-enterprises, which has helped in formulating relevant new laws and measures.
- The implementation of measures to promote digitalisation, including the launch of the government portal for digitalised public services.
- Efforts to address changing labour demand through the promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and the creation of start-ups.

Labour market, employment and skills development

Various legislation, labour market and skills development policies and measures have been developed in response to the emergence of new forms of work.

On 28 March 2021, the Bank of Algeria approved a draft regulation amending and supplementing Regulation N° 07-01 of 3 February 2007, which pertains to the rules applicable to current transactions with foreign countries and foreign currency accounts. The amendments made are part of a comprehensive approach to updating the regulatory framework undertaken by the Bank of Algeria within its jurisdiction. These changes are in line with the country’s new impetus to boost non-hydrocarbon exports, particularly those related to the knowledge economy, and the desire to position start-ups as key players in the revival of the national economy. The measures introduced allow exporters full access to their export earnings held in foreign currency accounts for their business needs. In addition, they exempt exports of digital services, as well as services provided by start-ups and non-trading professionals, from the obligation of bank domiciliation formalities. New modifications introduced to foreign exchange regulations also apply to stakeholders in the field of digital and online services in foreign trade, as well as non-trading professionals, with the goal of integrating them into a financial inclusion approach.75

To improve Algeria’s business climate, labour market and employment, on 24 July 2022 the country’s government adopted a new Investment Law (No 22-18),76 which provides investors with various benefits, protections, and legislative stability. In the same context, a ‘Start-up Label’ granting tax benefits to eligible companies have been launched by the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-enterprises, along with an online platform dedicated to startups.77 The government has also created the Algerian Start-up Fund (ASF)78 to provide funding to selected start-ups through the ASF evaluation committee. Recently, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-enterprises, in response to online and platform work and the need for digital skills development, initiated the Law on self-entrepreneurs, which was adopted by parliament and signed by the president on 19 December 2022, before being published in three executive decrees in the official journal N°37 on 4 June 2023.79

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75 Algérie Presse Service (2021c). Les exportations de services numériques et des startups dispensées de la domiciliation bancaire, available at: https://www.aps.dz/ economie/119801-les-exportations-de-services-numeriques-et-des-startups-dispensees-de-la-domiciliation-bancaire
76 Loi n° 22-18 du 25 Dhout El Hidja 1443 correspondant au 24 juillet 2022 relative à l’investissement.
77 Online platform dedicated to startups: https://startup.dz/
78 Algerian Start-up Fund https://asf.dz/
The first executive decree addresses the organisation and operation of the National Agency for Self-Entrepreneurs. This agency is largely responsible for the following:

- Setting up, maintaining and updating the National Register of Self-Entrepreneurs;
- Maintaining and managing all processes of the electronic platform registration;
- Supporting, controlling, and monitoring the activities of self-entrepreneurs; and
- Updating the list of activities eligible for the status of the self-entrepreneur.

The second executive decree concerns the list of activities eligible for self-entrepreneur status and the procedures for registration in the National Register of Self-Entrepreneurs. This list of activities includes profitable activities carried out by individuals on an individual basis. The list of activities is organised into seven domains: consultancy, expertise, and training; digital services and related activities; home services; personal services; leisure and recreational services; business services; cultural, communication and audiovisual services.

The third executive decree focuses on the template for the self-entrepreneur card. The front of this card template mentions the 'Democratic and Popular Algerian Republic', and includes a QR code, as well as a photo and information about the self-entrepreneur. The reverse side of the template features the name of the National Agency for Self-Entrepreneurs, with a space dedicated to its logo, along with information about the use of the card, and the agency's website. The self-entrepreneur card is produced electronically in accordance with the applicable technical standards in this matter.

With regard to the creation of new ventures, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security presented an act (Law No 22-22 of 18 December 2022) aimed at supplementing the provisions of Regulation (No06-03 of 15 July 2006) on the general status of the public service that allows the public sector employees to take one year of unpaid leave (renewable once) to try out venture creation once during their career. Similarly, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has laid down policies to motivate entrepreneurship, such as: providing the ‘Diploma-start-up’ as a new certificate for students who initiate a start-up project. This aims to motivate the creation of entrepreneurship houses and incubators among Algerian universities and research centres, etc.

These measures in relation to start-ups, incubators, the Start-up Label, the funding of start-ups, and so on, are also considered relevant to the challenges faced especially by youth, unemployed, university graduates, men and women. To target NEETs and school-to-work transition, Algeria launched new measures in February 2022. These include the provision of unemployment benefits to individuals aged 19–40 via a digital platform. Initially, the amount of unemployment allowance was 13,000 DZD (approximately 87 EUR). This was subsequently increased to 15,000 DZD (approximately 100 EUR) in December 2022. Furthermore, unemployed people who receive unemployment benefits are called in to vocational schools for professional training to learn new work skills and to increase their chances of gaining a job.

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86 Algérie Presse Service (2023b), Formation des chômeurs et partenariat économique dans les wilayas du centre, available at: https://www.aps.dz/societe/tag/Ch%C3%B4mage
Since November 2011, the minimum monthly wage in Algeria has remained stable at 18,000 DZD (approximately 122 EUR). However, in April 2021, the government increased the basic rate of pay to 20,000 DZD\(^87\) (around 135 EUR). Unfortunately, freelancers are not covered by this law if they do not carry out regulated job or activity. However, they can benefit from unemployment benefits (15,000 DZD), since they are considered unemployed under this law. This measure could discourage some freelancers – especially women – from looking for a job.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated relevant policy measures and approaches and provided the Algerian government with a new horizon on which to focus on in the coming knowledge-based era. The implementation of existing policies is still ongoing, and it cannot yet be determined if these will be successful – although the minister of Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-enterprises recently announced that 63% of 624 start-ups given the ‘Start-up Label’ were established between 2020 and 2022.\(^88\) Meanwhile, the director of the Algerian Institute of Intellectual Property (INAPI) mentioned that since the creation of the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-enterprises, the importance of innovation has increased, and the number of patent applications has increased from 296 in 2019 to 360 at the beginning of 2022. These developments show that Algeria is preparing an ecosystem and business climate for investments, start-ups and online work.

**Digitalisation**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Algerian government has launched several policy approaches and measures, starting with its acceleration of the plan to digitalise administration (e-government, e-payment, etc). These efforts have come as part of the implementation of the country’s digital transformation programme, particularly in administrations and public services, with the widening of the use ICT, a focus on bringing the administration closer to citizens, as well as the improvement of governance in the economic sector.

Policy approaches and measures relating to digitalisation and digital skills are as follows:

- Creation of the Ministry of Digitalisation and Statistics.\(^89\) this ministry was established in December 2020 under Act n° 20-363,\(^90\) which defines its responsibilities. These include: supporting the digital transformation in order to improve the quality of public services; promoting the competitiveness of national economic operators through digital means; and ensuring the establishment of an enabling environment for the implementation of electronic governance, in consultation with stakeholders. In addition, Act n° 20-364\(^91\) addresses the organisation of the central administration of the Ministry of Digitalisation and Statistics.

- E-governance and administration: on 7 December 2022, Algeria’s digital transformation process was accelerated with the launch of the government portal\(^92\) for digitalised public services. This contains over 300 digitalised public services from 29 ministerial departments,\(^93\) as well as the investors’ platform,\(^94\) with the aim of bringing the administration closer to citizens and the business sector by providing quality services.\(^95\) Another example is the establishment by the Ministry of Commerce of a

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\(^87\) Décret présidentiel No 21-137 du Chaâbane 1442 correspondant au 7 Avril 2021 fixant le salaire national minimum garanti.


\(^89\) Website of the Ministry of Digitalisation and Statistics, available at: https://mns.gov.dz/

\(^90\) Décret exécutif n° 20-363 du 19 Rabie Ethani 1442 correspondant au 5 décembre 2020 fixant les attributions du ministre de la numérisation et des statistiques.

\(^91\) Décret exécutif n° 20-364 du 19 Rabie Ethani 1442 correspondant au 5 décembre 2020 portant organisation de l’administration centrale du ministère de la numérisation et des statistiques.

\(^92\) Portal for digitalised public services, available at: www.bawabatic.dz


\(^94\) Platform of the investor, available at: https://aapi.dz/plateforme-numerique-de-linvestisseur/

digital platform for online registration in the trade register, aimed specifically at young entrepreneurs. In 2021, more than 3,000 individuals obtained their mobile trade registrations via this platform.96

- E-payment and banking sector: e-payment existed in Algeria prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but witnessed a ‘qualitative leap’ in 2020 due to the pandemic, which encouraged the use of this type of online financial transactions.97 Algeria has invested in the modernisation of information and payment systems to improve the quality of banking services. At the same time, public banks have made efforts over recent years to open branches abroad, particularly in Europe and Africa, in order to become closer to the diaspora and the business community. Furthermore, numerous activities have been carried out to modernise and increase the density of networks and payment systems through the digitalisation.98 These measures target migrants and foreign entrepreneurs.

- Remote work: since the COVID-19 crisis, provisions covering remote work for permanent employees have been laid down within the framework of executive Decree No. 20-69 of 21 March 2020, Article 9.99

- Education and training: policies have been introduced to initiate and then develop measures and regulations in the field of education, teaching and training online (such as the use of e-learning platform Moodle) that are aimed mainly at youth and workers within the sector. Similarly, Algeria has provided access to an international platform (Coursera)100 to promote e-learning.

- ICT infrastructure and digital skills: the state has invested in technical infrastructure, increasing coverage and ensuring affordable internet access in order to develop digital skills among all groups of society and to accelerate the digitalisation process. Algeria has encouraged hackathons, innovation and digital start-ups competitions to motivate young people to innovate, learn digital skills and create start-ups.

The level of success achieved by these measures can be seen in the significant progress made in indicators relating to the digitalisation of public services, which has resulted in Algeria's ranking moving from the category of countries with medium capacity (Category C) in 2020 to the ranks of countries with significant capacity and qualification (‘capacité et qualification considérées) (Category B) in 2022.101

As mentioned in the points above, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on policy measures and approaches in Algeria. All of the measures listed have been implemented since 2020. The pandemic has provided the government with an opportunity to prioritise key areas in the context of the knowledge economy and to launch multiple initiatives to improve the country’s business environment and promote digital transformation.

According to the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TTI), Algeria has made notable advances in connectivity and infrastructure over the past four years. The country now boasts nationwide high-speed Internet access and a growing number of mobile phone users. Algeria's score in this regard surpasses the global average. The uptake and use of e-learning platforms for education, remote work and online work in Algeria is therefore expected to increase.

100 This was a one-time initiative during the lock down under COVID-19.
Policy implications

Our research shows that the new forms of work and platform work emerged and developed in Algeria even prior to the existence of relevant labour regulations. The COVID-19 pandemic has given greater importance to these types of work. The working conditions, career prospects and in-work skills development opportunities in online work can differ between types of online work, platforms, sectors/activities and the motivations of freelancers. While online work can motivate workers to learn soft skills (e.g. negotiation, persuasion, self-branding, etc.), on-location employment may be found beneficial in the short term only, and is often seen as a low-skilled job with little chance of improving workers’ skills.

Challenges and opportunities of the current situation

Opportunities related to online and on-location platform work in the current situation in Algeria can be summarised as follows:

- Algeria has launched several policies and measures to engage with the knowledge economy, starting with a focus on digital transformation (e-government, e-administration and e-payment), start-ups, entrepreneurship and innovation industry, large investments in infrastructure, etc. These changes will contribute to building the online and on-location platforms ecosystem;
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic, online education, learning and training have been initiated and supported to contribute to the development of skills and human capital policies, and to help the population become more familiar with the knowledge economy. These efforts will help in providing and developing digital skills-based training and job creation on both online and on-location platforms;
- Online and on-location platform work represent a real opportunity, especially for young people in Algeria, which could save them from unemployment and create value for them – although in case of on-location platform work, this value may be in the short term only;
- If workers choose online work as a primary job, they can achieve good incomes and enhance their learning capabilities; on-location platform work, meanwhile, may not be as attractive as a long-term career choice;
- Some freelancers who are earning well through freelancing online are not thinking about migration. This cannot be said of those engaged in on-location platform work, which does not bring as much income to workers;
- Online work could present a real opportunity to combat brain drain if the ecosystem is prepared to invest in this kind of endeavour; meanwhile, on-location platform work could serve as supplementary income source or an initial job opportunity for students or recent graduates to begin their careers, potentially preventing them from migration if they create their own on-location platform work business.

The challenges that might face online and on-location platform work in the current situation can be summarised as follows:

- Both online and on-location platform work can be challenging for some people, and expose them to certain risks and social vulnerabilities (e.g. a low level of pay or not getting paid at all; adverse effect on the work-life balance; no retirement plan, etc.);
- Viewed mostly as a side job for many people, online and on-location platforms are still not a career choice in many fields due to unstable and poor incomes, a nascent legal framework, and a limited e-payment and banking system;
- Some freelancers are considering migration abroad due to difficulties with Algeria’s banking system; although this may change with the recent Law on self-entrepreneurs described earlier, which was established in June 2023;
Freelancers may require some time to accept or adapt to the new legal frameworks, as any change can encounter some resistance.

**Gaps in the existing strategic and policy approaches**

The main gaps in the existing strategic and policy approaches in Algeria are as follows:

- Algeria is working on many strategies and policies at the same time, which could lead to the lack of a clear vision to meet the needs of stakeholders in the ecosystem;
- There is a current lack of training capabilities and there is a mismatch between skills development and companies’ needs.

**Implications/possible measures for regulation**

In terms of implications and possible measures to take advantage of the opportunities offered by online and on-location platform work, the Algerian government could prioritise the following policy interventions:

- Improving the quality of ICT infrastructure, increasing internet access and speed;
- Increasing access to international payment systems, which have a crucial effect on online and platform workers in Algeria;
- Strengthening the legal framework for online and on-location platform work in order to ensure social protection for online workers and to facilitate more digital and on-location activities;
- Monitoring and evaluating the application of the newly adopted laws;
- Addressing greater technological and intelligence security;
- Promoting new forms of work among unemployed people, NEETs and women (to counter the current extreme degree of female inactivity in the Algerian labour market), and equipping them with the adequate skills needed for these jobs. In particular, online work holds significant potential to empower women by offering them flexible work that can be adjusted to their responsibilities at home;
- Considering promotional and skills enhancement initiatives with regard to online and on-location platform work, as these types of work have the potential to address challenges linked to brain drain and the outflow of the country’s youth;
- Facilitating educational and training programmes/courses related to digital skills that should be included at universities and vocational centres;
- Building capabilities and investing in multidisciplinary youth training and education programmes related to online and on-location platforms, while encouraging collaboration and synergistic actions between different ministries and international agencies;\(^{102}\)
- Supporting the new measures of higher education that involve the creation of career development centres to provide career training, guidance and counselling for youth, orienting them towards freelancing, online and on-location platforms.
- Supporting the existing ecosystem of innovation, start-ups, entrepreneurship and freelancing through the implementation of more policies and infrastructures that will foster a positive attitude towards online and on-location platforms, and facilitate freelance businesses.
- Encouraging universities and vocational training centres to collaborate closely with companies in understanding their current and future skills requirements, particularly in the areas of digital skills and online/on-location activities. Such a collaboration would help to design curricula that align with

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\(^{102}\) In Algeria, many synergistic programmes have been successful in collaborating with international agencies such as the ILO. It would be interesting to develop such a programme in relation to online and on-location platform work.
industry demands and which minimise the mismatch between industry needs and academic skills development in Algeria.
Summary

In line with its commitment to diversification, the Algerian economy is now orienting itself towards the knowledge economy, fostering entrepreneurship, innovation and start-ups. The acceleration of digital transformation and the implementation of new laws, especially those that relate to the self-entrepreneur, will motivate the population – in particular, the younger generation – to explore freelance activities and engage in online and on-location platform work.

Online work, both on and off digital platforms, has expanded in Algeria, especially among young people (men and women), who tend to work within conditions defined by the platforms or their clients, mostly without formal contracts or social protection. The allure of online work appears to lie in its potential for lucrative incomes and valuable foreign currency, while Algeria’s e-payment and banking systems represent notable barriers to entry into the business of online work.

On-location platform work has been growing in Algeria, increasing in prominence in the media and in public discourse. The majority of workers engaged in on-location platform work are men who work under contractual arrangements, yet their satisfaction with these arrangements remains low. Notably, the attraction of on-location platform work comes from relatively easy earnings through commission and remunerations, given the relatively low levels of skill required. However, insufficient long-term pay and limited opportunities for skills development are major disadvantages to this type of work.

Some important regulations, policies and strategic approaches to these new forms of employment in Algeria include the establishment of the Ministry of Digitalisation and Statistics, the Algerian Start-up Fund, and the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-enterprises. These bodies have played a major role in digital transformation and promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and start-ups as a mean of preparing the ecosystem for these new forms of employment. The establishment of new regulations and policies benefitting online and on-location platform work, such as the Law on self-entrepreneurs and bank localisation, were among the interesting results of the country’s strategy of economy diversification.

The key policy implications for Algeria of online and on-location platform work revolve around bolstering the current ecosystem for entrepreneurship, innovation, start-ups and freelancing by promoting collaboration and synergistic efforts among all stakeholders. This can be achieved through the implementation of appropriate policies and infrastructures. Moreover, enhancing the capabilities of universities and vocational training centres will cultivate a positive outlook, provide guidance, and offer counselling to individuals engaging with online and on-location platform work. These endeavours will play a vital role in advancing skills development and human capital policies, and facilitating freelancing businesses, ultimately fostering job creation within the context of the knowledge economy.

With regard to possible measures to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities provided by online and on-location platforms, Algerian policymakers could initiate the monitoring and evaluation of the recently implemented regulations and policies. In addition, it is necessary to address technology and intelligence security concerns in order to facilitate more digital and on-location platform activities. Furthermore, enhancing the legal framework for online and on-location platform work could extend social protection to workers.
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## List of interviewees

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
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<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Agency of employment</td>
<td>Senior administrator</td>
<td>3 April 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mohamed Yacine</td>
<td>Action Learning Institute <a href="mailto:mohamed.yacine@wial-dz.com">mohamed.yacine@wial-dz.com</a></td>
<td>Expert in employment and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>5 April 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scander Soufi</td>
<td>ILO office for Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia <a href="https://www.ilo.org/africa/about-us/offices/algiers/lang--fr/index.htm">https://www.ilo.org/africa/about-us/offices/algiers/lang--fr/index.htm</a></td>
<td>Head of various projects relating to employment, Expert</td>
<td>5 April 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online freelancer</td>
<td>Freelancer Online and on phone</td>
<td>Digital marketer, Founder of Dz Looking platform</td>
<td>7 April 2023</td>
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<td>Off platform freelancer</td>
<td>Female freelancer with a PhD in Management</td>
<td>Freelancing in copy writing, translation</td>
<td>29 May 2023</td>
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