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Arab Foundations Forum



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ELEVATING PHILANTHROPY

MENA Climate Philanthropy Ecosystem Pre-Mapping

Research report

August 2025

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Preface

Climate action has been a key tenet of civil society work in the Arab region for decades, even if it wasn't always labelled 'climate action'. Nature conservation, food and water security, and access to clean and sustainable energy were some of the most prominent topics concerning environmental organizations in the region because of its well-established vulnerability to the adverse consequences of the climate crisis. That said, the region has experienced growing momentum for climate action from the proliferation of grassroots interventions to the increase of climate philanthropy funding, and the recognition of the need for coordinated policies and actions to address the climate crisis, exemplified in the hosting of two CoPs in the region. Different stakeholders are engaging with different domains of work to address the ever-expanding effects of the climate crisis on the region. However, there isn't enough data on the modalities of climate action and key stakeholders in the region, resulting in siloed approaches and efforts, as well as diluted impact stemming from uncoordinated action and fragmentation of resources.

These challenges compelled the Arab Foundations Forum (AFF) to conduct a mapping exercise to make sense of the current climate funding landscape in the region. By engaging with questions such as who is doing and funding what and how, and what is needed for the pursuit of holistic, multidisciplinary climate action carried out by connected stakeholders across the region, the mapping serves as a starting point to answering these questions and proposing strategies and actions to grow a climate philanthropy ecosystem that is well-informed, well-connected, and well-equipped to tackle the climate crisis.

At AFF, we are committed to supporting the advancement of the climate philanthropy ecosystem in the region through knowledge production, facilitation of spaces for exchange of experiences, formation of connections amongst funders and with implementing organizations, and nurturing collaborations between philanthropy organizations and representatives of other climate funding streams to pool resources for increased efficacy.

With gratitude,



Naila Farouky

CEO, Arab Foundations Forum

Acknowledgements

This mapping came into being because of the generosity and dedication of nineteen philanthropy organizations, funders, and implementing organizations from Egypt, Jordan, KSA, Morocco, Palestine, and the UAE. They have shared deep and meaningful insights that helped inform the outcomes of this mapping.

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Finally, we would like to extend our special thanks to our partners at the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) for their direction, unwavering support, and enthusiasm for this mapping.

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Executive summary

The MENA region is one of the most vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis, facing severe impacts from rising temperatures, sea level rise, extreme weather, flooding, prolonged droughts, and human displacement. These climate shocks are already disrupting lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems across the region.

Despite this, MENA remains underprepared to manage the accelerating climate crisis. A key challenge is the lack of flexible, long-term funding for adaptation and resilience. Most international climate finance is loan-based and focused on mitigation, adding to national debt burdens¹ while leaving critical adaptation needs unmet. Additionally, the lack of data on a sectoral, demographic, social, and geographical basis serves to widen the gap between climate action and the worsening impacts of the climate crisis. Furthermore, government and donor investments tend to follow top-down approaches, favoring large-scale energy projects over initiatives that directly support vulnerable communities.

Against this backdrop, the need to step up adaptation efforts and build stronger climate resilience in the MENA region suggests

a stronger role for Arab philanthropies in addressing the climate crisis and shaping relevant policies and grassroots efforts.

Global climate action has advanced through growing philanthropic engagement, marked by more funders, increased grantees, stronger networks, and a threefold rise in foundation funding since 2015². In addition, the private philanthropy ecosystem has evolved new forms of engagement with climate actions, such as the International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change, the Adaptation and Resilience Collaborative for Funders (ARC), and public-private-philanthropic partnerships (4Ps), such as Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA). These different modalities have helped better organize and pool resources to deepen the impact of climate funding.

¹ Obeid, Jessica, and Alice Gower. "Mind the Gap: Highlighting MENA's Climate Finance Challenge." SRMG Think. (December 2023). <https://www.srmgthink.com/index.php/highlighting-menas-climate-finance-challenge#:~:text=MENA%27s%20largest%20source%20of%20climate,CIF%20and%20GEF%3A%20%241.7%20billion.>

² Mountford, Helen. "How philanthropy is accelerating transformative climate solutions". ClimateWorks Foundation. (February 2024). <https://www.climateworks.org/blog/how-philanthropy-is-accelerating-transformative-climate-solutions/>

Climate philanthropy has recently started gaining traction in the MENA region, boosted by the hosting of two COPs that spurred pledges from national and regional organizations aiming to drive collective action. Sustaining this momentum requires continued ecosystem building. At the same time, increasing volatility in international funding and shifting development priorities adds a layer of urgency to advancing Arab climate philanthropy. Now more than ever, it

is paramount to secure and facilitate access to local and regional funding that is dedicated to supporting climate action informed by the region's climate challenges and needs.

Seeking to better inform climate action, this mapping study attempts to find answers from within the current philanthropy ecosystem and from the organizations active in this space by answering the following key questions:

Who are the main local, regional, and global funders of climate action, and what are their funding priorities and intervention strategies?

What are the funding gaps on a thematic and geographical basis?

What are the philanthropy support organizations and networks in the climate philanthropy ecosystem? And what is their role in supporting climate action in the region?

What are the opportunities and gaps for collaboration in the climate funding ecosystem?

To balance breadth and depth, the mapping focuses on three MENA sub-regions and two countries in each—Egypt and Morocco in North Africa, Jordan and Lebanon in the Levant, and Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Gulf. The goal was to reflect varied philanthropic ecosystems, thematic funding priorities, and climate challenges across these contexts.

By providing sub-regional and country-level insights into the roles, priorities, and interventions of climate philanthropy in the region, this report aims to bridge the data gap and strengthen collective, holistic engagement across the sector.



A Snapshot of MENA's Climate Philanthropy Funding Trends and Approaches

- **MENA funders' geographical coverage.** The mapping shows uneven coverage of MENA countries by climate philanthropy organizations. **Lebanon** and **Morocco** lead with **eight** organizations each, followed by **Egypt** and **Tunisia** (**five** each), **Palestine** and **Yemen** (**four**), and **Jordan**, **Syria**, and **Saudi Arabia** (**three**). **Iraq** and **Sudan** are covered by **two** organizations each, while **Algeria**, **Libya**, and **Somalia** have just **one** each.
- **Operational modalities of MENA funders.** The mapping elaborated on three main operational modalities among MENA climate funders. It revealed that **five** of the 17 organizations that responded to this question focus on grant-making, **six** focus on execution, and another **six** use a hybrid approach combining both grant-making and execution.
- **Key implementation strategies of MENA funders.** MENA philanthropic actors are increasingly supporting civil society and community-based climate responses. Most of the **19** mapped organizations use multiple implementation strategies, with **11** deploying **two or more**. Community-based and grassroots support was most common with **14** responses, followed by research and knowledge creation, and advocacy and campaigning, which received **10** responses each.

- **Climate priorities of MENA funders.** As far as climate priorities in the region go, **biodiversity and ecosystems conservation**, **water and air pollution**, and **agriculture/agroecology** were tied in first place, receiving nine responses each. Closely following them were **climate resilience and emergency response planning**, receiving **eight** responses, as well as **food security and sovereignty** and **climate change, migration, and conflict**, both receiving **seven** responses. **Green jobs and skills development**, along with **climate change and public health**, both received **six** responses. Trailing behind was **early warning systems and weather forecasting**, receiving only **two** responses.



Advancing the Climate Philanthropy Ecosystem in the MENA Region

- **Role of philanthropy support organizations and civil society networks in advancing climate philanthropy.** As the climate crisis intensifies, examining the role played by the philanthropy support ecosystem (PSE) in strengthening and facilitating collaboration is vital to enabling accelerated and effective climate action. Philanthropy support organizations (PSOs) help strengthen philanthropy by building capacity, capability, connections, and credibility through activities including generating data and research, facilitating knowledge sharing and learning, catalyzing joint policy action, and supporting other ecosystem-building initiatives.
- **Challenges and gaps in the ecosystem for climate philanthropy in the MENA region.** An examination of the climate philanthropy ecosystem in MENA reveals both promising momentum and critical gaps. The most prominent neglected areas of intervention and key challenges are funding gaps, knowledge production, operational and infrastructural challenges, and policy and regulatory environments.
- **Funding gaps and limited trust-based giving practices.** A key gap is the lack of **flexible, long-term funding** that enables organizations to experiment, adapt, and grow, crucial for sustained adaptation and resilience efforts, which are often led by smaller, under-resourced civil society groups. Conventional, fragmented funding and the absence of collective funding approaches only worsen this challenge.
 - Another funding gap is that **current structures are often donor-driven** and don't align with the needs of local communities and grassroots organizations, reflecting a lack of trust between donors and civil society. There are also **funding disparities across geography and themes**. Lebanon and Morocco receive the most coverage, while other countries receive descending coverage rates. Thematic funding favors 'familiar' issues such as agriculture/agroecology, water and air pollution, and biodiversity and ecosystems conservation, leaving other critical climate priorities underfunded

- **Operational and infrastructure challenges.** The mapping revealed critical operational and infrastructure challenges in MENA's climate philanthropy ecosystem, largely **due to its relative nascency**. Most local funders are still starting or building their climate efforts, focusing on direct implementation and tangible community-level outcomes. Moreover, the lack of infrastructure support organizations in the region forces many philanthropy organizations to assume multiple modalities of work that sometimes intersect with the scope of infrastructure support organizations, limiting ecosystem growth. Additionally, operational constraints hinder the **scalability of successful pilot programs**, as there is insufficient infrastructure to replicate or adapt them regionally. Many initiatives also operate in silos, causing duplication and inefficient resource use.
- **Knowledge production and awareness.** The ecosystem faces chronic underinvestment in locally relevant knowledge. Climate research often excludes traditional knowledge and community priorities and is frequently inaccessible—hidden behind paywalls, in foreign languages, or presented in technical formats that don't resonate with decision-makers or local communities.
- **Policy and regulatory environments.** Fragmented and lax policies limit philanthropic opportunities to drive systemic change, discouraging sustained investment in policy advocacy and governance reform across the region. Moreover, the overuse of the term 'climate change' dilutes urgency, leaving governments insufficiently motivated to adopt resilience-focused actions.

Lack of coordination and shared infrastructure limits the sector's ability to scale impact, optimize resources, and address complex, cross-cutting issues effectively.



The Way Forward: Strategic Opportunities for Philanthropic Investment

Building on the pre-mapping findings, the proposed way forward includes developing capacities and communication around key philanthropic climate priorities; creating long-term, flexible funding models and giving practices in collaboration with grassroots organizations; advocating for stronger climate policies; and fostering a regional climate philanthropy ecosystem aligned with resilience

and localized approaches. Additionally, a comprehensive, action-oriented mapping of the MENA climate philanthropy ecosystem is needed to address geographic, thematic, and infrastructure support gaps. This will guide longer-term efforts, including researching emerging climate priorities, expanding philanthropic reach, and strengthening ecosystem support across the region.



01

Introduction and Background

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The Effects of the Climate Crisis on the Region



The MENA region is one of the most vulnerable to the climate crisis. Rising temperatures, sea level rise, extreme precipitation, flooding, coastal erosion, extended drought, and human displacement—the cascading effects continue to hit human lives and livelihoods and the natural environment across the region. The massive flooding in Libya in 2023, Jordan in 2022, and Sudan in 2020, as well as wildfires in Lebanon in 2020, consecutive droughts in Somalia and other extreme weather events serve as telling examples of the disastrous impact of the climate crisis.

Yet, the region is unprepared to navigate the consequences of a changing climate. MENA remains significantly underfunded, with striking thematic, cross-regional and in-country disparities. As of November 2023, the region was receiving only 6.6% of total global climate financing from the biggest three climate funds³, of which 78% was solely earmarked for North African countries. Additionally, most international climate funding is directed towards mitigation and comes in the form of loans, adding pressure to MENA's overall debt issues⁴. Fragile and conflict-affected countries

³ The Climate Investment Funds (CIF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

⁴ Obeid and Gower. "Mind the Gap". <https://www.srmgthink.com/index.php/highlighting-menas-climate-finance-challenge#:~:text=MENA%27s%20largest%20source%20of%20climate,CIF%20and%20GEF%3A%20%241.7%20billion>

receive little or no climate finance⁵. The result is a sizable gap in much-needed adaptation funding and resilience building for communities.

While geopolitical issues play a large part in the mismatch between international funding flows and regional priorities, another factor is the existing data vacuum around the sectoral, demographic, social, and geographical impacts of the climate crisis in MENA. This lack of data serves to widen the gap between climate action and the accelerating climate crisis.

Addressing the climate mitigation and adaptation needs of the region is primarily the responsibility of governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, and the private sector. However, so far, most investments have happened in a top-down manner, with large-scale energy projects disproportionately funded at the expense of other areas that are vital to alleviating the climate impact on disadvantaged communities, including water conservation and food security⁶. This underscores the need for more focus on adaptation, along with bottom-up investment in climate action interventions derived from local and national needs.



⁵ Cooper, Rachel. "Donor Support for Climate Change in the Middle East and North Africa". K4D Helpdesk Report. Institute of Development Studies. (2020). https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles/report/Donor_Support_for_Climate_Change_Initiatives_in_the_Middle_East_and_North_Africa/26427925?file=48076804

⁶ Watson, Charlene, Liane Schalatek, and Aurélien Evéquoz. Climate Finance Regional Briefing: Middle East and North Africa. ODI and Heinrich Böll Stiftung. (2022). https://climatefundsupdate.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CFF9-MENA_2021.pdf

Unlocking Philanthropy's Catalytic Power to Address the Climate Crisis

Against this backdrop, Arab philanthropies have the opportunity to take on a stronger role in addressing the negative effects of the climate crisis and shaping policies and grassroots efforts that aim to accelerate adaptation efforts and build up climate resilience in the MENA region. Philanthropy is closest to the communities that are hardest hit by climate impacts and is well-positioned to support them in addressing climate challenges guided by social justice, inclusion, and equity objectives.

While philanthropic engagement on climate issues is a relatively nascent phenomenon, there is growing evidence of the catalytic and impactful role philanthropy plays in helping communities withstand shocks and adapt to climate change. Additionally, there is an added layer of urgency to advance Arab climate philanthropy in light of the growing volatility of the international funding landscape and shifting priorities of development cooperation agencies. Now more than ever, it is essential to secure and facilitate access to local and regional funding that is dedicated to supporting

climate action informed by the region's specific climate challenges and needs.

Global climate action has benefited from the mobilization of philanthropy organizations, as is evident from the engagement of a growing number of funders with climate action, the increase in the number of grantees and the formation of communities amongst them, and the tripling of foundation funding since 2015⁷. That being said, philanthropy can and should be more active in closing climate financing gaps. In 2023, philanthropic giving for climate action was an estimated \$885 billion, making up just 1.1% to 1.8% of total giving⁸.

Philanthropy's ability to catalyze funding towards holistic and systemic solutions, and to advance collective action and cross-disciplinary approaches, cannot be overestimated. There are many ways in which private philanthropic giving is stepping in and up to address the climate crisis. **Philanthropy for Climate**—hosted by WINGS, the only global network of philanthropy support and

development organizations—is a global movement of foundations committed to taking urgent action on the effects climate change. It comprises the International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change, as well as national philanthropy commitments, and, as of the writing of this report, includes 909 foundations across six continents that have already committed to act on climate. Another example is the **Adaptation and Resilience Collaborative for Funders (ARC)**, currently run by ClimateWorks, a climate-focused philanthropy support organization. ARC is a coalition of approximately 60 foundations

with different regional, thematic, and sectoral priorities, who are interested in scaling action on adaptation, particularly in the Global South, and addressing the climate crisis through learning, dialogue, coordination, and action. A third modality of climate philanthropy action⁹ is **Giving to Amplify Earth Action (GAEA)**, founded by the World Economic Forum. GAEA convenes, incubates, scales, and mainstreams public-private-philanthropic partnerships (4Ps) to build a community of impact multipliers for climate and nature capable of creating solutions for systemic transformation and ensuring a more sustainable future¹⁰.



⁷ Mountford. "How philanthropy is accelerating transformative climate solutions". <https://www.climateworks.org/blog/how-philanthropy-is-accelerating-transformative-climate-solutions/>

⁸ Uy, Marilou, and Brandon Carter. "How Philanthropy Can Boost Adaptation Finance in Developing Countries". World Resources Institute. (March 2025). <https://www.wri.org/insights/philanthropy-adaptation-finance-developing-countries>

⁹ Roeyer, Hannah, Jessica Hitt, Tanisha Reddy, and Megan Turnlund. Foundation Funding for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience. ClimateWorks Global Intelligence. (November 2024). <https://content.climateworks.org/progress-on-foundation-funding-for-climate-change-adaptation-and-resilience>

¹⁰ GAEA. "About GAEA". <https://initiatives.weforum.org/giving-to-amplify-earth-action/about>

The growing momentum of global climate philanthropy action found its way to the MENA region fairly recently. The hosting of two COPs in the region—in Egypt in 2022 and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2023—mobilized the sector, with various national and regional organizations spearheading notable climate philanthropy pledges that seek to galvanize collective action and stimulate accelerated responses from the sector.



Sustaining this momentum requires continued and consistent ecosystem-building efforts. To that end, an empirical understanding of where funding flows, to which climate causes, and from whom, as well as which organizations are working on growing, strengthening, and organizing climate philanthropy in the region, is necessary to inform decision-making. With the exception of some research efforts that estimate global funding flows into climate causes in the region, there is little aggregate and disaggregated data on the size of international and regional philanthropic funding allocated to climate causes in MENA. These sizable knowledge gaps and the fragmentation of publicly available data

highlight the need for this research mapping, in order to enable more impactful and collective climate solutions in the region. Similarly, key to catalyzing climate philanthropy in and from the region is a comprehensive understanding of the philanthropic support ecosystem¹¹ and infrastructure that currently exist around this work, along with the gaps that need to be addressed to strengthen them.

This mapping study attempts to examine the current philanthropy ecosystem and the organizations active in this space and better inform climate action by answering the following key questions:

¹¹ The philanthropy support ecosystem (PSE) is the community of interacting organizations and activities that assist and enable philanthropy to realize its potential. The PSE includes a diverse range of actors such as networks, associations, foundations, research institutions, giving movements, platforms, advocates, and other philanthropy support organizations (PSOs). Read more about building ecosystems here: <https://buildingthepse.wingsweb.org/>

Who are the main local, regional, and international funders of climate action, and what are their funding priorities and intervention strategies?

What are the funding gaps on a thematic and geographical basis?

Which philanthropy support organizations and networks comprise the climate philanthropy ecosystem, and what are their roles in helping drive climate action in the region?

What are the opportunities and obstacles impacting collaboration in the climate funding ecosystem?



The mapping covers climate philanthropy in three sub-regions that comprise the MENA region: North Africa, the Levant, and the Gulf, capturing national, regional, and international philanthropy foundations and funders. Focusing on two countries from each sub-region, the report aims to capture the breadth and depth of philanthropic ecosystems, thematic funding areas, and diverse climate-related challenges. The focus countries are Egypt and Morocco in North Africa, Jordan and Lebanon in the Levant, and Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the Gulf.

By offering deeper insights into the role, priorities, and programmatic interventions of climate philanthropy in MENA on a sub-regional and country level, the mapping aims to bridge the data gap while shedding light on the various ways the climate philanthropy ecosystem can enable more holistic, deeper, and collective engagement from the sector and beyond.

Moving forward, this report will use the term 'climate philanthropy' in an attempt to contextualize and conceptualize philanthropic engagement on climate change. Based on adaptations from global definitions of climate action and consultations with specialists in the field, this report adopts the following definition for climate philanthropy: The grant-making practices, strategies, policies, and initiatives undertaken by the philanthropic sector to address both the causes and impacts of climate change. It involves actions that not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as decarbonization, but also build the resilience of communities and marginalized groups and prepare them for the challenges posed by a changing climate. Climate philanthropy includes support to mitigation, adaptation, emergency response planning and recovery, innovations, policy reforms, and other climate actions that can help in the building of climate-resilient communities.



02

Mapping Methodology

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The Selection Criteria for the Mapped Organizations

This pre-mapping has identified a total of 45 organizations, of which 25 are philanthropic organizations and 20 are philanthropic support organizations (PSOs). The primary criterion for the identification of funders was their self-identification as climate funders. In other words, organizations would either have an exclusive climate focus or climate is part of a multi-thematic focus and is explicitly stated as so. The adoption of the self-identification criteria—in contrast to including organizations that did not identify as climate funders but did engage in climate-related activity—was consistent with the scope of the research

to map key local, regional, and international funders of climate action in the philanthropy ecosystem. For a smaller subset of organizations that did not explicitly self-identify as having a climate portfolio, a climate lens was adopted for specific projects and interventions.

Furthermore, another criterion adopted by the research was thematic alignment with the international funding architecture on climate. This has entailed the analysis and clustering of the climate thematic priorities based on their contribution to climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, and loss and damage.



Participatory Research Approach

From the onset of this mapping project, a participatory research approach and data validation process were adopted. Key to the participatory approach and the validation process was the formation of a Steering Committee for this project, comprised of four members, representing different climate philanthropy stakeholders, as follows:

- Mohamed Kamal – Executive Director, Greenish Foundation
- Laila Hosny and Mays Hegab – Sawiris Foundation for Social Development
- Cherine El Hakim – Regional Philanthropy Lead, HSBC MENAT
- Anna Maria Geluk – Program Manager, Porticus

Organized with the purpose of refining the conceptualization and calibration of the project, the first phase of consultations with the Committee centered on refining the methodology and the scope of the research to ensure that all project activities would contribute towards achieving the project's overarching goal. The consultations included organizing a group meeting for the Steering Committee members. Secondly, one-on-one consultations with each member were organized to solicit input for the mapping research. Thirdly, the preliminary research

findings were presented to the Steering Committee members and AFF's Arab Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change Working Group with the aim of validating the findings and inviting feedback from its members.

Furthermore, the research mapping followed a mixed-methods approach based on desk research and a primary data collection exercise conducted over the course of nine months.

Desk Research

The desk research phase tapped into the growing body of literature on climate change, climate philanthropy, and the philanthropy support ecosystem. A thorough review of documents, reports, articles, organization websites, and data on climate philanthropy practices in the region and in the wider Global South guided the refinement of the research questions, informed the research assumptions, and narrowed down on key issues and gaps that need further exploration. The desk research proved instrumental in identifying the different climate thematic priorities of funders operating in the region and the various foundations and philanthropic organizations supporting climate causes.

The desk research mapped 26 national, regional, and international organizations engaged in climate action. These organizations cover a wide array of operational modalities, such as funding climate action (either as international donors or as philanthropic foundations), executing climate interventions on local, national, and regional levels, offering infrastructure support services like networking and knowledge production, or a combination of one or more of the aforementioned modalities.

Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection for this project involved holding interview consultations and sharing an online questionnaire with a purposeful sample of foundations, intermediary funds, non-profit organizations, infrastructure support organizations, climate networks, and environmental specialists. The interviews and online questionnaire yielded a total of 19 responses. See Annex I for the list of interviewees and questionnaire respondents, and see Annex II for the questionnaire/interview guide used for primary data collection.

Methodological Limitations

Access to climate philanthropy organizations, philanthropy support organizations, and relevant civil society networks in Morocco was more limited than in the other mapped countries due to the country's use of French as the second language and the absence of French speakers on the research team.



03

A Snapshot of MENA's Climate Philanthropy Funding Trends and Approaches

The mapped organizations shed light on the key trends emerging within the sphere of climate philanthropy. This section will focus on the mapped organizations' geographical coverage of the region, operational modalities, implementation strategies, and climate priorities.

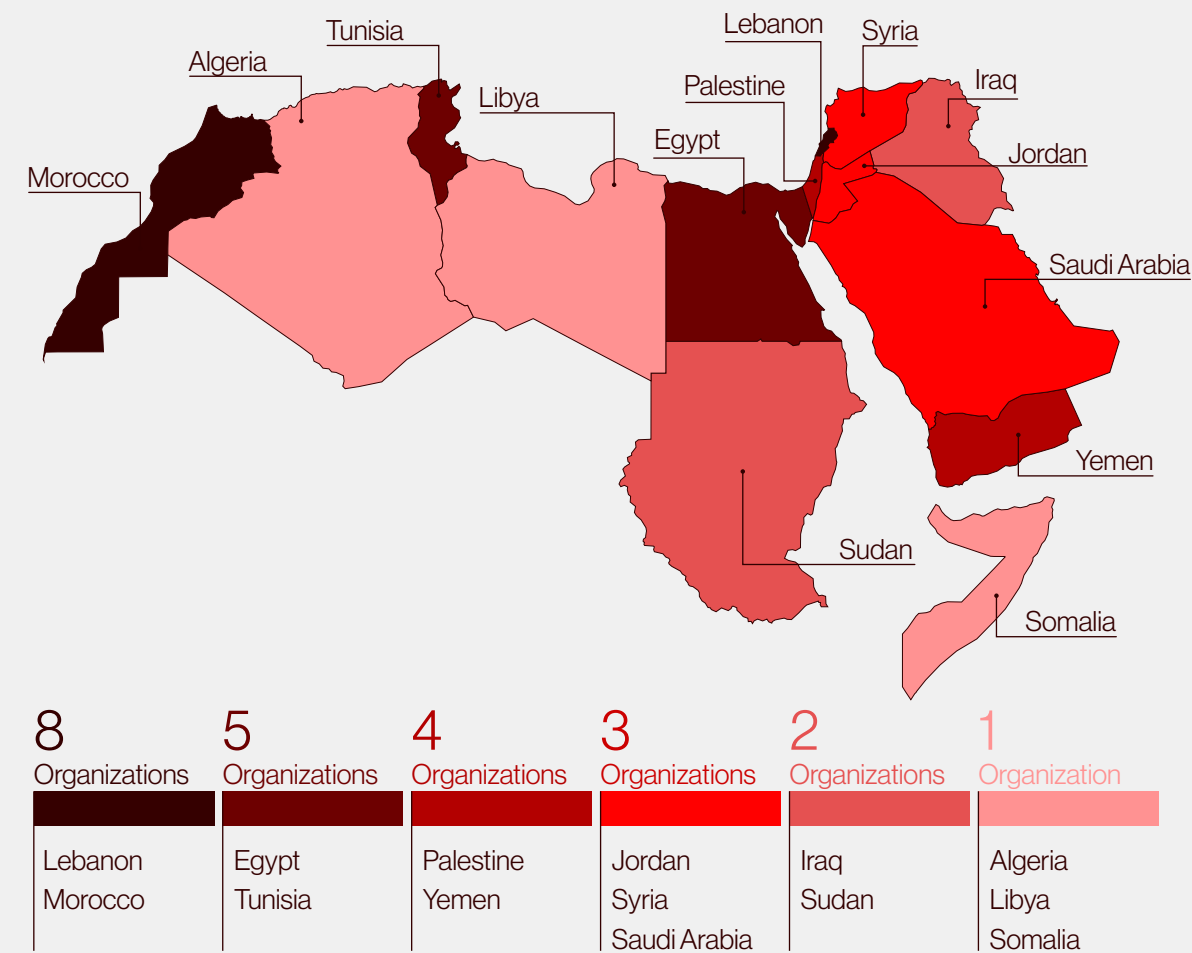
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1. Geographical Coverage of MENA Funders

The mapping revealed somewhat uneven country coverage by MENA climate philanthropy organizations. At the higher end of the spectrum, **Lebanon** and **Morocco** are covered by **eight** organizations each, followed by **Egypt** and **Tunisia**, which are covered by **five** organizations each.

The middle is occupied by **Palestine** and **Yemen**, covered by **four** organizations each, and then **Jordan**, **Syria**, and **Saudi Arabia**, each covered by **three** organizations. Finally, at the lower end are **Iraq** and **Sudan**, covered by **two** organizations each, and **Algeria**, **Libya**, and **Somalia**, which are covered by **one** organization each.

Figure 1:
Country coverage of regional and international philanthropies



2. Operational Modalities of MENA Funders

The mapping elaborated on the different operational modalities deployed by MENA funders to engage in climate action. **Five** out of the **17** organizations that responded to this question selected **grant-making** as their operational modality, while six organizations selected **execution** as their operational modality. Also, **six** out of **17** organizations selected **hybrid (a mix of grant-making and execution)** as their operational modality.

Figure 2:
Operational modalities of mapped organizations

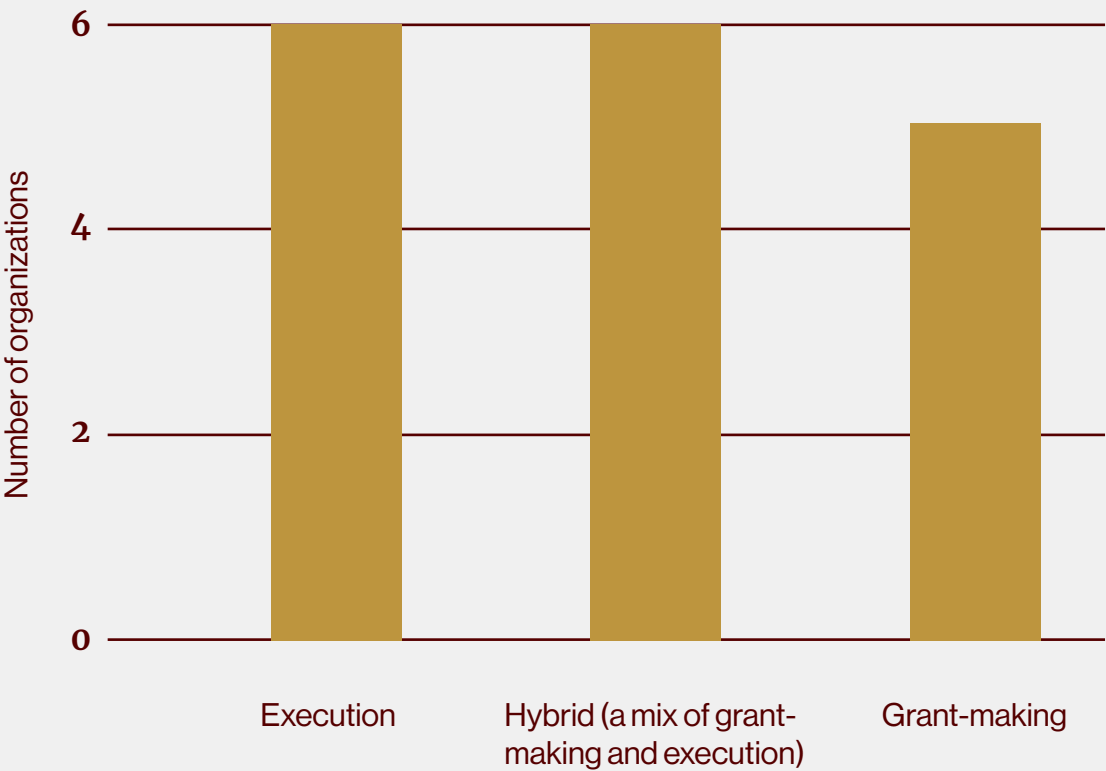


Table 1, below, illustrates how the mapped organizations self-identified when it came to their operational modality(ies), based on primary and desk research. Table 2 highlights the philanthropy support organizations and civil society organizations that offer infrastructure support for climate philanthropy in the region.

Table 1:

Funders and re-granting organizations

Grant-making	Execution	Hybrid ¹² & Re-Granting Organizations
■ Alwaleed Philanthropies ■ Asfari Foundation ■ Drosos Foundation ■ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung ■ Gates Foundation ■ Heinrich Böll Foundation ■ King Khalid Foundation ■ Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund ■ Porticus ■ Robert Bosch Stiftung ■ Sigrid Rausing Trust ■ WHO Foundation ■ Zayed International Foundation for the Environment	■ Ba'a Foundation ■ Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Development ■ Makhzoumi Foundation ■ Mohammed VI for the Protection of the Environment ■ René Moawad Foundation	■ Care Egypt Foundation* ■ Community Jameel ■ Edge Funders* ■ Global Greengrants Fund* ■ HSBC MENAT ■ Sawiris Foundation for Social Development ■ Youth Climate Justice Fund

Note: The starred organizations (*) indicate that they act as philanthropy support organizations (PSOs) in addition to their hybrid modality of work.

¹² A mix of grant-making and execution.

The above categorizations were determined through each organization's self-identification of the primary function they serve as a foundation in the mapped sub-regions. It is worth noting that, when viewed through an ecosystem lens, there is a notable diversity of functions even within these three primary categories. Many of the grant-makers are intermediaries, as both fundraisers and grant-makers, and many also play a philanthropy support role to fill a critical infrastructural gap. One example from Egypt is Greenish Foundation. It is primarily an executing foundation but also provides an ecosystem-building function by hosting Sustainable Network Egypt, an informal network of environmental CSOs, social enterprises, and environmentalists. It does this because there is no other suitable infrastructure body that currently exists to fill this gap in the country.

Table 2:

Philanthropy support organizations and civil society networks

■ Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA) ■ Arab Foundations Forum (AFF) ■ Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN) ■ Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) ■ Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) ■ Asian Venture Philanthropy Network	■ Climate Action Network (CAN) - Arab World (AW) ■ Climate Action Network (CAN) Jordan¹³ ■ Circle MENA ■ Greenish Foundation ■ Impatience Earth ■ Jibal ■ Jordan Environment Society ■ Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)	Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G) ■ OECD netFWD ■ Réseau des Associations de la Réserve de Biosphère Arganeraie (RARBA) ■ SharaKa for Inclusive Climate Action ■ Taghyeer ■ Tahammul
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The prevalence of execution and hybrid operating modalities is a known feature of the philanthropic sector in the MENA region. By extension, the climate philanthropy ecosystem underscores the saliency of the organizations concerning their engagement with climate action. The scale of the climate crisis and the inability of governmental, private sector, and multilateral stakeholders to address its drivers and impacts, coupled with the insufficiency of funds available in the region for climate action—as mentioned in the introduction—mean that the organizations in the region have to scramble to fill in the gaps pertaining to financing, implementing climate action, and, in some cases, offering infrastructure support services such as networking, research, and consultancies. This further blurs the boundaries between the different modalities a given organization can assume.

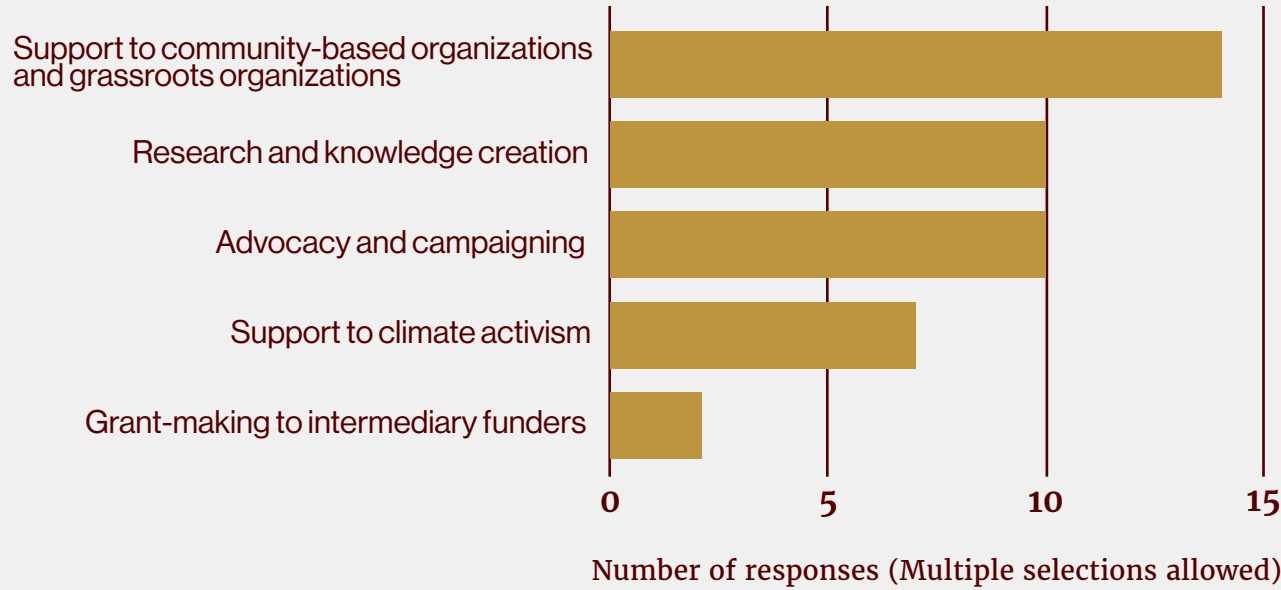
¹³ CAN Jordan is not affiliated with Climate Action Network International or Climate Action Network (CAN) Arab World (AW).

3. Key Implementation Strategies of MENA Funders

Philanthropic actors in the MENA region are increasingly focused on supporting civil society and community-based responses to climate change. That being said, the majority of the mapped organizations tend to employ multiple implementation strategies for climate funding, with **11** out of the **19** organizations for which primary data was collected reporting that they deploy **two or more** implementation strategies. In the case of the Moroccan Alliance

for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD), **five** implementation strategies are in place to fund climate action. As for the strategies themselves, supporting community-based and grassroots organizations was among the most prevalent with **14** responses, followed closely by supporting research and knowledge creation, and advocacy and campaigning, each getting **10** responses.

Figure 3:
Intervention strategies for climate funding



Below is a breakdown of the different strategies and their adoption by the mapped organizations:

3.1. Financial and Non-Financial Support to Community-Based and Grassroots Organizations

- **Global Greengrants Fund (GGF)** provides seed grants to grassroots environmental initiatives.
- **Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund** enhances conservation at the local level.
- **WHO Foundation** focuses on communities in the Global South, mainly the Arab region.

3.2. Research and Knowledge Creation

- **Community Jameel** establishes centers of excellence at educational institutions.
- **HSBC MENAT** partners with the American University in Cairo (AUC) for research centers and geographic information systems (GIS) for analysis.
- **APN** conducts research, multi-actor consultations, and fact-finding missions.

3.3. Advocacy and Campaigning

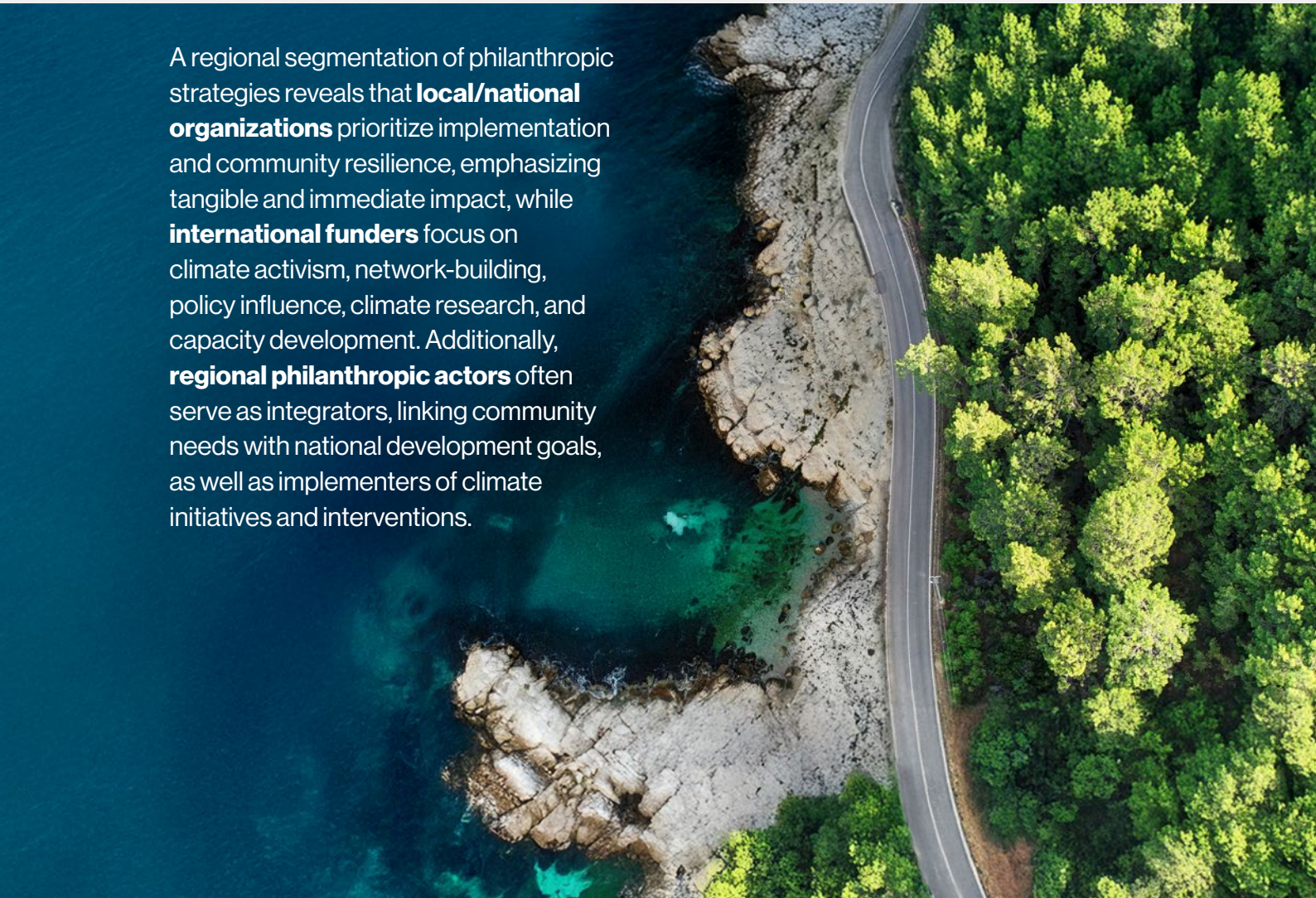
- **CAN Arab World** organizes campaigns on just transition and public awareness.
- The **Jordan Environment Society** focuses on training and capacity development.
- **Taghyeer** centers on education and raising awareness through initiatives like We Love Reading.

3.4. Support for Climate Activism

- **Asfari Foundation** supports climate justice initiatives.
- **GGF** supports climate activism alongside grassroots organizations.
- **CAN Arab World** engages in renewable energy advocacy.

3.5. Grant-making to Intermediary Funders

- **HSBC MENAT** provides mentorship and other assistance rather than fiscal sponsorship.
- **WHO Foundation** re-grants funds to the World Health Organization (WHO).
- **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)** engages in grant-making to intermediaries.



A regional segmentation of philanthropic strategies reveals that **local/national organizations** prioritize implementation and community resilience, emphasizing tangible and immediate impact, while **international funders** focus on climate activism, network-building, policy influence, climate research, and capacity development. Additionally, **regional philanthropic actors** often serve as integrators, linking community needs with national development goals, as well as implementers of climate initiatives and interventions.

4. Climate Action Priorities of MENA Funders

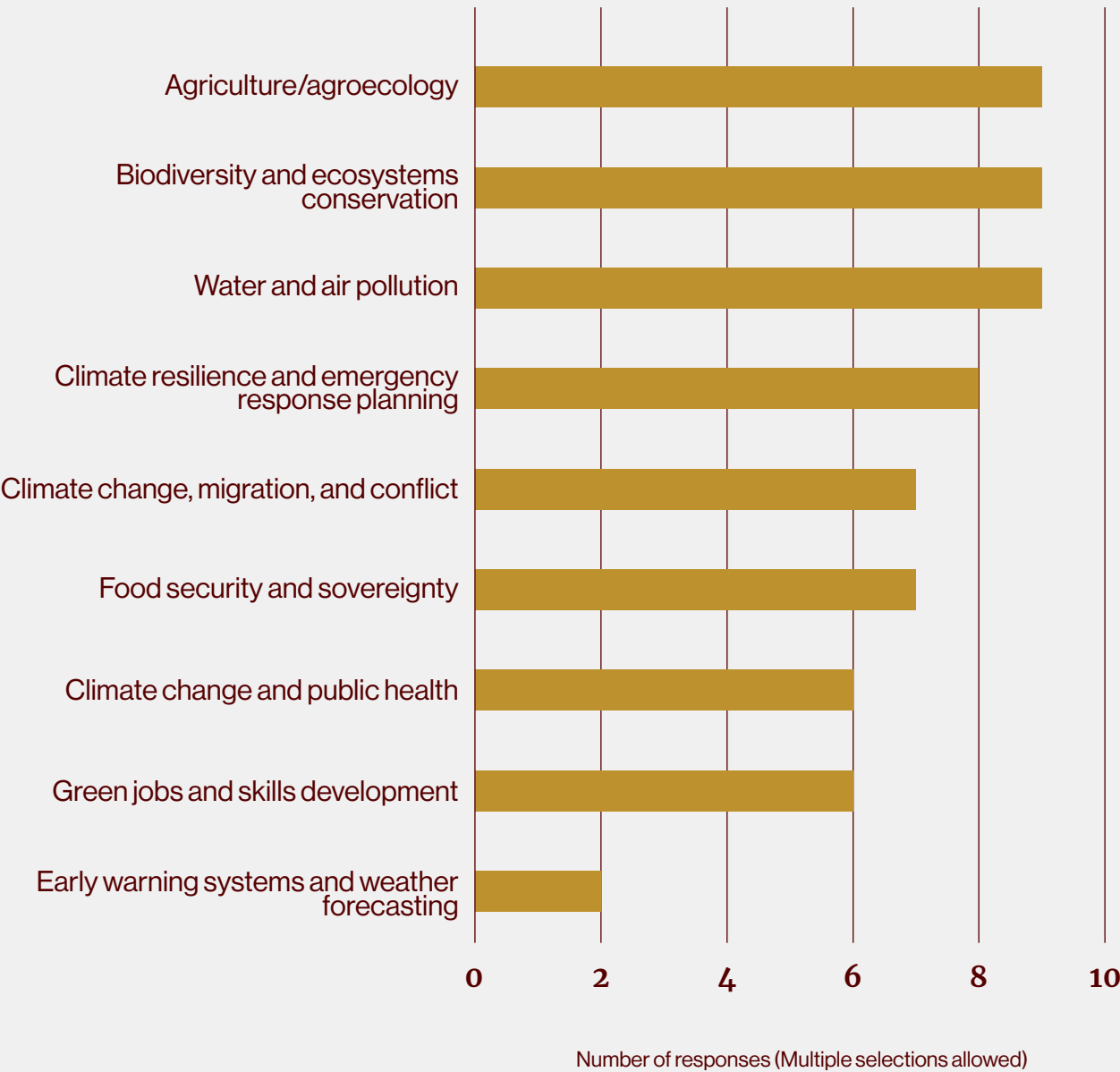
This section maps organizations according to their climate priorities. It outlines and defines these priorities, infers strategic areas for philanthropic engagement from the collected data, and offers examples of current initiatives supported or implemented by the focus organizations. The survey showed **biodiversity and ecosystems conservation, water and air pollution, and agriculture/agroecology** tied in first place, with each considered a climate priority by **nine** organizations. Close behind is

climate resilience and emergency response planning, receiving **eight** responses, and then **food security and sovereignty** and climate change, migration, and conflict, both of which received seven responses. Green jobs and skills development, along with **climate change and public health**, received **six** responses each. Trailing behind was **early warning systems and weather forecasting**, with only **two** responses¹⁴.



¹⁴ A wider net had to be cast for some of the climate priorities — particularly food security and sovereignty and agriculture/agroecology — to get a better sense of the work carried out within these domains and to what extent they are skewed towards either resilient and regenerative approaches and practices or patching up existing structures, such as industrial agriculture, that perpetuate dependency and ecological strife.

Figure 4
Climate priorities for funders



It is worth noting that the analysis combined some of the climate priorities, such as emergency response planning and early warning systems, due to their highly interconnected nature.

Below is a breakdown of each climate priority, key areas for philanthropic engagement that were derived from the research findings, and the interventions undertaken by funders in the MENA region under that priority.

4.1. Strengthening Food Security and Advancing Food Sovereignty

4.1.1. Climate Change and Food Systems

Ensuring food security entails more than securing access to adequate nutrition—it requires the development of sustainable, climate-resilient agricultural systems that are not dependent on external markets. The MENA region currently imports over half of its food supply, rendering it highly vulnerable to climate-induced and other disruptions in global trade¹⁵.

Food sovereignty emphasizes the capacity of local communities and nations to define their own agricultural and food policies¹⁶. This approach prioritizes reducing import dependencies through sustainable agricultural practices, enhancing domestic food production, and preserving indigenous knowledge systems.

4.1.2. Key Areas for Philanthropic Engagement

Food Trade Vulnerability: Disruptions in international supply chains—exacerbated by geopolitical conflicts and climate-induced extreme weather events—underscore the urgency of strengthening local food systems by supporting local farming¹⁷ and investing in seed sovereignty and the creation of local seed banks.

Global Supply and Demand Dynamics: Increasing global demand for staple crops, coupled with declining agricultural yields due to climate variability, necessitates policy and investment shifts towards climate-resilient agriculture¹⁸. Funders can support research and pilot programs that develop and scale regionally appropriate, drought-resistant crops¹⁹.

¹⁵ The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. Food and Agriculture Organization. (2023). <https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2023/en>

¹⁶ The Nyéléni Declaration. La Via Campesina. (1996). <https://viacampesina.org/en/declaration-of-nyeleni/>

¹⁷ Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024: Financing the Transformation of Agrifood Systems for Food Security and Nutrition. FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and ESCWA. Cairo. (2024). <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd3550en>

¹⁸ IPCC Sixth Assessment Report: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. IPCC. (2022). <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

¹⁹ Thornton, Philip, Eva Wollenberg, and Laura Cramer. Livestock and Climate Change: Outlook for a More Sustainable and Equitable Future. CGIAR. (2021). <https://cgispace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/4be0748e-f685-428d-9ff8-70355a54ae4b/content>

Nutritional Security: Rising temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns negatively affect crop quality and essential nutrient content, increasing the risk of malnutrition²⁰. Philanthropy can support initiatives that integrate nutrition-sensitive agriculture with climate adaptation.

4.1.3. Food Security/Sovereignty Funding in the MENA Region

The mapping revealed that **seven** out of the **19** organizations that provided primary data support and/or implement interventions related to food security and sovereignty. International funders that operate in the region and focus on this theme include **Community Jameel** and **Porticus**. Regionally, there is **GGF** through its **MENA Advisory Board**, **CAN Arab World**, and the **Arab Group for the Protection of Nature**. On the national level, there is Lebanon's **Jibal** and the **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)**.

Desk research revealed that the **Gates Foundation** also supports food security²¹ interventions and **Heinrich Böll Foundation** interventions center on food sovereignty²².



²⁰ Smith, Matthew R. and Samuel S. Myers. Impact of Anthropogenic CO₂ Emissions on Global Human Nutrition. Nature Climate Change. (2018). <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0253-3>

²¹ The 1996 World Food Summit defined food security as when “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. It also outlined four dimensions for food security: physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, food utilization, and stability of the aforementioned dimensions over time. For more information, see <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/d6a62a38-8a5a-45fc-8137-af6edf5765c4/content/x0262e.htm>

²² Food sovereignty centers “the needs and aspirations of food producers, distributors, and consumers at the heart of food systems and policies”, instead of the demands of markets and corporations. Accordingly, La Via Campesina—an international movement of peasants, landless workers, Indigenous people, pastoralists, fishers, migrant farmers, small and medium-sized farmers, rural women, and peasant youth—defines food sovereignty as follows: The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. For more information, see <https://viacampesina.org/en/what-is-food-sovereignty/>

Below is further elaboration on some of the key issues these funders work on within the realm of food security and sovereignty²³:

Food Trade Vulnerability

- **Community Jameel** created the Jameel Index for Food Trade and Vulnerability to study climate change impacts on food security and trade, projecting global food demand and supply balance under future scenarios.
- The **Gates Foundation**²⁴ focuses on supporting long-term, climate-smart agriculture systems, development, research, and innovation to build resilience to climate shocks in the future. In MENA, using pooled funding and partnerships with development funds and private philanthropy in the region, support goes to smallholder farmers across the region to help them grow more crops and build resilient food systems.

Global Food Supply and Demand

- **The Abdul Latif Jameel Water & Food Systems Lab (J-WAFS Lab)** at MIT (funded by Community Jameel) assesses food security challenges caused by climate change and provides research grants for food systems.
- Under the food sovereignty program, the **Arab Group for the Protection of Nature** organizes research, multi-actor consultations, and fact-finding missions with the aim of bringing regional priorities to the global food security agenda. It also seeks to strengthen local food systems through its support to farmers' livelihoods and the advancement of smallholder agriculture that is geared to local consumption.

Nutrition

- **Jameel Observatory**, which brings together the expertise of Community Jameel and four other organizations, partners with UNICEF to produce childhood wasting estimates accounting for climate impact and seasonality.

Livestock Research

- **Jameel Observatory**, based at the International Livestock Research Institute in Nairobi, Kenya, focuses on supporting vulnerable pastoralist communities in East Africa to be more resilient to environmental shocks affecting food security.

²³ The pre-mapping recognizes the important nuances that distinguish between food security and sovereignty, particularly the added value of reinforcing the agency of food producers and consumers and stressing the nature of methods that should be deployed to attain food sovereignty. That being said, the region still has a way to go towards recognizing these nuances and shifting to the more equitable and sustainable aspiration of food sovereignty. Consequently, the pre-mapping had to cast a wider net to include any philanthropy organizations that have food-centric interventions.

²⁴ It is worth noting that the Gates Foundation has been previously criticized for promoting business interests in the name of tackling food security through their work with AGRA and pushing for the use of corporate seeds and technological solutions that actually harm small farmers and have adverse consequences for food security. For more information, see <https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Reclaim-the-UN.pdf>



4.2. Advancing Climate-Resilient Agriculture and Agroecology

4.2.1. The Role of Agricultural Innovation

Agriculture remains a principal source of livelihood for rural communities across the MENA region. However, the sector is highly vulnerable to climate change, with increasing desertification, soil salinization, and erratic precipitation patterns negatively impacting productivity²⁵.

Agroecology presents a sustainable approach by integrating ecological principles into agricultural practices. Techniques such as crop diversification, organic fertilization, and precision irrigation enhance soil fertility, reduce water consumption, and improve adaptation to climate-related stressors²⁶.

4.2.2. Key Areas for Philanthropic Engagement

Adoption of Agroecology as the Antithesis of Industrial Agriculture: Intensive farming and the industrialization of agriculture are major contributors to soil degradation, flooding, and biodiversity collapse, among other challenges that affect global food systems²⁷. Agroecology, defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as a “holistic and integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agriculture and food systems”, can provide a pathway for more equitable and resilient agricultural systems that engage simultaneously with food, livelihoods, health, and management of natural resources through a multisystem approach, instead of a siloed approach that isolates food production, distribution, consumption, and natural resources from each other²⁸.

²⁵ Global Land Outlook. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Bonn. (2024). <https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/overview>

²⁶ Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems That Enhance Food Security and Nutrition. FAO - HLPE. (2019). <https://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf>

²⁷ An Agro-Ecological Europe: A Desirable, Credible Option to Address Food and Environmental Challenges. IDDRI. (2018). https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Publications/Catalogue%20iddri/D%C3%A9cryptage/201809-IB1018-TYFAEN_0.pdf

²⁸ Agroecology Knowledge Hub. Food and Agriculture Organization. <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/overview/en/>

Livestock Resilience: Higher temperatures and diminishing water resources pose significant threats to livestock health and productivity²⁹. Supporting interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange on climate-smart and traditional agricultural practices is critical to advancing resilient food systems. Philanthropy can play a pivotal role in funding regional research centers and scaling community-led innovation.

Agricultural Innovation: The development and scaling of climate-smart technologies are critical to sustaining food production in arid conditions³⁰.

Livelihood Resilience: Strengthening the adaptive capacity of rural populations is imperative for economic stability³¹. Livelihood resilience in farming is the ability of

agricultural communities to absorb, adapt to, and recover from climate-related shocks such as droughts, floods, heatwaves, and crop failures. It involves safeguarding essential resources while centering community resilience as a framework of engagement.

Technology Transfer and Community-Led Innovation: Investments in locally-led innovation systems and mechanisms for technology transfer are essential to build capacities in the region³². An important example that is worth investing in and replicating is the work done by Access Agriculture, which facilitates farmer-to-farmer learning on agroecological practices by creating educational videos on planting different crops, livestock health, and sustainable land management³³.



²⁹ Ibid, Thornton, P. et al. Livestock and Climate Change. CGIAR. (2021).

³⁰ Climate-Smart Agriculture. World Bank. (2024). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climate-smart-agriculture>

³¹ Rural Development Report: Transforming Food Systems for Rural Prosperity. IFAD. (2021). <https://www.ifad.org/en/w/publications/rural-development-report-2021>

³² Antoniol, Emilio, and Margherita Ferrari. “From Crisis to a Sustainable Future: Processes of Technology Transfer from Europe to the MENA Region.” *TECHNE: Journal of Technology for Architecture and Environment*, (22), 55–62. (2021). <https://doi.org/10.36253/techne-10564>

³³ Welcome to Access Agriculture. Access Agriculture. <https://www.accessagriculture.org/>

4.2.3. Agriculture/Agroecology Funding in the MENA Region

The mapping revealed that **nine** out of **19** organizations which provided primary data and **two** for which secondary data was collected support and/or implement interventions related to agriculture/agroecology. Globally, there is **Community Jameel**, **GGF**, and **Porticus**. Supporting and executing agroecology interventions regionally are the **Asfari Foundation**, **GGF** through its **MENA Advisory Board**, **CAN Arab World**, the **Arab Group for the Protection of Nature**, and **HSBC MENAT**. On the national level, there are Lebanon's **Jibal** and **Makhzoumi Foundation**, along with the **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)**, and the **Réseau des Associations de la Réserve de Biosphère Arganeraie (RARBA)**.

The desk research also revealed that **Drosos Foundation**, **Gates Foundation**, **Heinrich Böll Foundation**, and **CARE Egypt Foundation** also support agroecology interventions.

The following is further elaboration on some of the key issues these funders and executing organizations work on within the realm of agriculture and agroecology:

- **CARE Egypt Foundation's** Climate Smart Agriculture for Life project (CSA4L) supports the adoption of low-cost adaptation techniques (e.g., improving soil drainage, the use of crop alternatives, climate-smart irrigation techniques, etc.) to help farmers mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.
- **Drosos Foundation's** support to the Plant Your Farm project by Association Tunisienne de Permaculture (Tunisia) has created 50 permaculture farms that advance sustainable agricultural practices and are managed by unemployed youth.
- **HSBC MENAT** supports a Climate-Smart Agri-Hub at AUC, utilizing GIS analysis capabilities to help restore mangrove ecosystems.
- **RARBA** in Morocco focuses on training farmers on nature-based solutions to develop sustainable organic agricultural practices.
- **Porticus'** Regenerative Agriculture program supports a fair transition to sustainable food systems in Lebanon, Egypt, and Tunisia.



4.3. Addressing Water and Air Pollution

4.3.1. The Water Crisis in MENA

The MENA region is the most water-scarce in the world, and climate change is exacerbating this crisis. Nearly all countries in the region are projected to face extreme water stress by 2050³⁴.

Water Pollution

Water pollution involves the contamination of freshwater sources by pollutants—anything from unusual algae growth to sewage overflow due to flooding—a problem that is exacerbated by the climate crisis. Given that water is a rapidly diminishing resource in MENA, managing the quality of any source of water that remains is of paramount importance³⁵.

Access to Potable Water: While water desalination is common in the region, it is an energy-intensive process, stressing the need for more sustainable water management practices to ensure widespread access to clean water.

Air Pollution

Air pollution remains a serious public health issue, driven by factors such as fossil fuel consumption, industrial emissions, and natural occurrences like desert dust storms. The MENA region's heavy energy use and high

carbon footprint, fueled by a dependency on fossil fuels, further exacerbate this problem. The resulting poor air quality has far-reaching health implications and impacts both mitigation and adaptation strategies. Adopting cleaner energy sources is one way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which, in turn, helps decrease air pollution.

Decarbonization

Decarbonization focuses on reducing pollution by eliminating or reducing carbon dioxide emissions from energy production, industrial processes, transport, agriculture, and more. In addition to carbon dioxide, other greenhouse gases, such as methane and nitrous oxide, also contribute significantly to air pollution and global warming. Recognizing all greenhouse gases as pollutants is an important step in developing integrated strategies that address both public health and climate mitigation.

³⁴ Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas. World Resources Institute. (2020). <https://www.wri.org/applications/aqueduct/water-risk-atlas/>

³⁵ Moving Towards Water Security in the Arab Region. ESCWA. (2021). <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/moving-towards-water-security-arab-region>

Public Transportation: Investing in efficient public transportation systems can significantly reduce air pollution and lower carbon emissions—a critical consideration for rapidly growing cities like Cairo, Riyadh, and Dubai³⁶.

Emission Reductions and Clean Energy: Investment in clean energy transitions, sustainable agriculture, and methane reduction can also play a key role in cutting greenhouse gas emissions, especially in regions where policy frameworks and public funding remain limited.

4.3.2. Key Areas for Philanthropic Engagement

Access to Potable Water: Support the development of water-efficient infrastructure, including smart irrigation systems, community-managed water networks, and nature-based solutions for water conservation. Beyond conventional technologies like desalination and wastewater treatment, sustainable water management should also draw from traditional knowledge systems. Supporting local research and implementation of these solutions can enhance water security while preserving cultural heritage and environmental resilience.

Reducing Air Pollution: Emissions, including greenhouse gases, and natural dust storms contribute to severe air pollution. With the findings of the mapping underscoring the limited philanthropic engagement in advancing responsible business practices, philanthropic support can help steer focus away from high-emission industries by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in adopting low-emission alternatives. Support for knowledge exchange and research on mainstreaming

environmental and biodiversity goals throughout private sector operations, while also enhancing capabilities to track and measure environmental and biodiversity performance, is a key gap to be filled. Interventions can range from promoting the ESG (environmental, social, and governance) framework to supporting public and non-motorized transport to promoting sustainable development of urban green spaces.

Philanthropies can also support civil society and research institutions in advocating for stronger air quality regulations, building real-time monitoring systems, and enhancing government accountability. There are opportunities for supporting projects that address emissions as well as build stronger community resilience. For example, by addressing desertification through support for land restoration and sustainable land management practices, philanthropies not only help spread climate-resilient agriculture but also boost critical strategies for reducing emissions and airborne pollutants, therefore improving air quality.

³⁶ Daito, Nobuhiko, Dahlia Lotayef, and Arturo Ardila-Gomez. “Reducing Air Pollution in Greater Cairo Involves Switching from Private Vehicles to Improved Public Transport”. World Bank. (2021). <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/arabvoices/reducing-air-pollution-greater-cairo-involves-switching-private-vehicles-improved-public>

4.3.3. Water and Air Pollution Funding in the MENA Region

The mapping revealed that **nine** out of **19** organizations support and/or implement interventions related to water and air pollution. **Community Jameel** and the **Global Greengrants Fund** are examples of international funders supporting decarbonization and sustainable water management practices in MENA. Regionally, **Tahammul**, a digital platform from Mercy Corps and Coin for Change, and **CAN Arab World** address water and air pollution. On the national level, there is **CAN Jordan**, **Sawiris Foundation** in Egypt, Lebanon’s **Jibal**, the **Jordan Environment Society**, and the **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)**.

Desk research also revealed that the **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)**, the **René Moawad Foundation**, the **Makhzoumi Foundation**, and KSA’s **King Khalid Foundation** support interventions addressing water and air pollution.

Below is further elaboration on some of the key issues these funders work on within the realm of water and air pollution:

Access to Potable Water

- **Sawiris Foundation’s** Water is Life initiative provides access to safe, filtered drinking water to communities vulnerable to water scarcity and/or water-related diseases, with impact evaluation to identify behavioral preferences.
- **CAN Jordan** embeds greywater treatment and reuse within public buildings and urban settings, such as mosques in Jordan, to showcase sustainable water management practices in two of its projects.
- **Community Jameel’s Jameel Observatory-CREWSnet**, a project focusing on water security through improving access to potable water by using rain harvesting and desalination, is currently in Bangladesh and looking to expand to Sudan.

Reducing Air Pollution

- **Global Greengrants Fund’s** support to solar power solutions for circular economy entrepreneurs in Lebanon and advancing zero carbon-emitting local transportation solutions in Egypt is an

- example of decarbonization interventions by intermediary funders.
- **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung’s** Climate and Energy project MENA supports civil society advocacy for a transition to renewable energy in the region that would tap into the potential of solar and wind energy. FES supports the training of partners and civil society organizations in climate diplomacy and brings them together with governments. The project also supports research and policy advising in the energy and climate change sector and works on local solutions for adaptation and energy efficiency.
 - **King Khalid Foundation’s** Green Grants initiative fosters job creation and supports entrepreneurs interested in working in the renewables, climate, and related sectors in the KSA. In response to the low number of local organizations working in the green sector, the Green Grants initiative will prepare companies, non-profits, and individuals to address the impact of climate on their livelihoods and sectors, as well as to contribute to the nexus between climate, nature, poverty, economy, and development.

4.4.Conserving Biodiversity and Protecting Ecosystems

The MENA region boasts a variety of unique ecosystems, from wetlands and deserts to coral reefs. However, these environments are increasingly threatened by climate change and human activities. Effective conservation efforts must focus on restoring natural habitats, protecting endangered species, and promoting sustainable land management practices³⁷.

Ecosystem protection and carbon sequestration can entwine environmental strategies aimed at preserving natural ecosystems while simultaneously capturing and storing carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere to mitigate climate change. One such example is rehabilitating mangroves.

4.4.1. Key Areas for Philanthropic Engagement

Ecosystem Restoration: Investment in community-led restoration initiatives that draw on traditional ecological knowledge is vital to reversing land degradation in arid and semi-arid regions.

Biodiversity Monitoring: Strengthening regional biodiversity data collection and monitoring systems is necessary to inform targeted, evidence-based conservation strategies.

Environmental Education: Funding conservation education and awareness programs is key to fostering a culture of

stewardship, especially among youth and rural communities.

Policy and Legal Advocacy: Supporting efforts to strengthen environmental regulations and integrate biodiversity into climate policy frameworks is critical for long-term impact.

Protected Areas Management: Enhancing the protection and management of national parks and nature preserves is crucial, including support for infrastructure, staffing, and local engagement.

³⁷ Walker, Kira. "MENA's Biodiversity Shrinking Under Pressure of Climate Change". Nature Middle East. (December 2022). <https://www.natureasia.com/en/nmiddleeast/article/10.1038/nmiddleeast.2022.79>

4.4.2. Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation Funding in the MENA Region

The mapping revealed that **nine** out of **19** organizations for which primary data was collected support and/or implement interventions related to biodiversity and ecosystems conservation. International funders such as the **Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund** and the **Global Greengrants Fund** support biodiversity and ecosystems conservation causes in the region. Regional-level funders and philanthropy support organizations working in this space include the **Asfari Foundation**, the **Arab Group for the Protection of Nature**, **CAN Arab World**, and **HSBC MENAT**, as well as the **Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection**, the **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)**, and **RARBA in Morocco**.

The desk research also revealed that **Alwaleed Philanthropies** and the **Sigrid Rausing Trust** support biodiversity and ecosystems conservation interventions in the region.

Below is further elaboration on some of the key issues these funders and support organizations work on within the realm of biodiversity and ecosystems conservation:

- **Alwaleed Philanthropies'** Atlai project is an AI-driven platform that documents and raises awareness of deforestation activities to support global efforts to combat deforestation. Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Saudi Vision 2030, it aggregates historical data on deforestation by country, offering on-demand, easy-to-digest reports in seven languages at no cost.
- The **Asfari Foundation** runs two grant-making programs — Challenge for Social Innovation and Tabadol — that support social entrepreneurs in the Levant sub-region to adopt nature-based solutions and a climate justice lens in their interventions.
- **The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund** supports biodiversity and nature conservation to help mitigate climate change through the maintenance of intact, functioning ecosystems that can serve as carbon sinks.
- **HSBC MENAT** implements nature-based solutions for climate resilience across the region, beginning with the Nature-based Solutions for Climate, Biodiversity, and People project in the UAE.



4.5. Strengthening Early Warning Systems and Disaster Preparedness

4.5.1. Prediction and Alert Systems

Early warning systems are essential tools for predicting climate-related disasters, such as heatwaves, droughts, and floods, and for allowing communities and governments to prepare accordingly. Expanding these systems throughout MENA, particularly in vulnerable coastal and desert areas, is critical for mitigating potential losses³⁸.

4.5.2. Key Areas for Philanthropic Engagement

Localized Forecasting Technology: Supporting the development and distribution of community-accessible climate forecasting tools is essential to help individuals anticipate and respond to extreme weather events.

Disaster Preparedness Systems: Investment in early warning systems, such as forest/flood watch platforms, and disaster response plans that have strong community engagement components is critical to building community resilience by anticipating climate-related risks and protecting vulnerable ecosystems and communities.

4.5.3. Early Warning Systems and Weather Forecasting Funding in the MENA

The mapping revealed that **three** out of **19** organizations support and/or implement interventions related to early warning systems and weather forecasting. They are **Community Jameel**, **Mercy Corps**, and **GGF** through its **MENA Advisory Board**.

Below is further elaboration on some of the key issues these funders work on within the realm of early warning systems and weather forecasting:

- **Community Jameel's** Jameel Observatory, currently operating in Bangladesh with BRAC and planning expansion to Sudan, provides climate forecasting technology directly to individuals to demonstrate how extreme climate conditions can impact their lives.

³⁸ Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction. UNDRR. (2022). <https://www.undrr.org/publication/global-assessment-report-disaster-risk-reduction-2022>

- In Lebanon, **GGF**, through its **MENA Advisory Board**, supported the development of a forest watch system with fire prevention plans.
- **Mercy Corps** and **Coin for Change's** Tahammul platform implements the Building Communities' Food Resilience program in collaboration with local stakeholders, working to increase vulnerable communities' resilience against heat waves and floods, as well as empower communities to grapple with future climate challenges.

4.6. Climate Change, Migration, and Conflict

Climate change is emerging as a significant driver of displacement and conflict within the MENA region. Water shortages, agricultural decline, and extreme heat contribute to forced migration and regional instability. These dynamics underscore the importance of integrating climate adaptation into broader peacebuilding efforts³⁹.

4.6.1. Key Areas for Philanthropic Engagement

Climate-Resilient Livelihoods: Supporting the development of livelihoods that can withstand climate shocks is vital for mitigating forced displacement.

Fair Water Management: Promoting regional cooperation on water management through programs that fosters trust and data-sharing to ensure fair access to water helps prevent disputes over scarcity from escalating into open conflict.

Climate-Migration Data: Invest in research on climate-migration dynamics to better target interventions and ensure the benefits reach everyone who needs them.



³⁹ Norman, Kelsey, Ana Martín Gil, and Robert Baron. "The Climate Change-Conflict-Displacement Nexus in the MENA Region". Baker Institute for Public Policy. (May 2024). <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/research/climate-change-conflict-displacement-nexus-mena-region>

4.6.2. Climate Change, Migration, and Conflict Funding in the MENA Region

The mapping revealed that **six** out of **19** organizations support and/or implement interventions related to climate change, migration, and conflict. International funders such as **Community Jameel** and **Global Greengrants Fund** support the climate change and conflict nexus, while on the regional level, there is **CAN Arab World**. Nationally, **CAN Jordan**, the **Jordan Environment Society**, and the **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)** also address this nexus.

The desk research also revealed that **Robert Bosch Stiftung** supports interventions engaging with the climate change and conflict nexus.

Below is further elaboration on some of the key issues these funders work on within the realm of climate change, migration, and conflict:

- **Community Jameel** focuses on climate change, migration, and conflict through initiatives like JI-RISE (real-time intelligence support to emergencies), a digital initiative providing real-time intelligence support to agencies delivering humanitarian response for malnourished populations and those with diseases in conflict zones. JI-RISE will initially support agencies responding to crises in Gaza and Sudan.
- **Robert Bosch Stiftung**’s program Conflict, Climate Change, and Environment in the Middle East, executed by the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI), advances research and learning on local-level solutions to the climate crisis in conflict contexts. Between 2022 and 2024, four individual projects in three countries — Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen — were funded.

4.7. Climate Change and Public Health

Rising temperatures, water scarcity, and pollution have profound implications for public health. Climate change exacerbates health risks by increasing the incidence of heat-related illnesses, respiratory conditions, and malnutrition⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ “Climate Change and Health: Framework for Action 2017–2021”. WHO. (2017). <https://www.emro.who.int/about-who/rc64-presentations/climate-change-and-health-a-framework-for-action.html>

4.7.1. Key Areas for Philanthropic Engagement

Disease Spread and Management: Support research into monitoring, preventing, and responding to the transmission of diseases, particularly those influenced or intensified by environmental and climate-related factors.

Mental Health: Philanthropy can support strategies aimed at addressing the psychological and emotional impacts of climate change, such as eco-anxiety, trauma from climate disasters, and stress linked to displacement or livelihood loss. These interventions recognize mental well-being as a critical component of community resilience.

4.7.2. Climate Change and Health Funding in the MENA Region

The mapping revealed that **six** out of **19** organizations support and/or implement interventions related to climate change and public health. They are **Community Jameel**, **WHO Foundation**, **Global Greengrants Fund**, **CAN Jordan**, the **Jordan Environment Society**, and the **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)**.

Below is further elaboration on some of the key issues these funders work on within the realm of climate change and public health:

Spread of Diseases

- The **Abdul Latif Jameel Institute (JI) for Disease and Emergency Analytics**, founded by **Community Jameel** and Imperial College London brings together

researchers from multiple disciplines to utilize expertise in data analytics to help combat disease threats worldwide. JI’s climate change work focuses on *tuberculosis*, which is significantly affected by climate change.

- **WHO Foundation** is working to establish a Climate and Health Innovation Resilience Hub in the UAE for water safety and food security in the region.

Mental Health

- **Community Jameel’s Jameel Arts & Health Lab**, with WHO, looks at evidence of using arts to tackle mental health issues related to climate change.

4.8. Promoting Green Jobs and Workforce Development

The transition to a sustainable economy hinges on the creation of green jobs—employment opportunities that support environmental conservation and renewable energy. Investing in sustainable agriculture and climate-resilient infrastructure not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also helps cultivate a workforce equipped to address emerging climate challenges. A low-carbon economy can generate sustainable jobs in the renewable energy, climate adaptation, and circular economy sectors⁴¹.

4.8.1. Key Areas for Philanthropic Engagement

Green Expertise: Capacity development for green energy technicians and water professionals is crucial for building an economy that can quickly adapt to climate impacts.

Climate-Focused Investing: Support businesses that integrate climate awareness and action into their operations, along with impact investments.

Vocational Training: Philanthropy can support the development of practical skills training that aligns with sustainability.

4.8.2. Green Jobs and Skill-Development Funding in the MENA region

The mapping revealed that **six** out of **19** organizations support and/or implement interventions related to green jobs and skills development. They are **Sawiris Foundation, Greenish Foundation, HSBC MENAT, GGF** through its **MENA Advisory Board, Taghyeer**, and **Réseau des Associations de la Réserve de Biosphère Arganeraie (RARBA)**.

Below is further elaboration on some of the key issues these funders work on within the realm of green jobs and skills development:

Employment Opportunities

- In Morocco, **GGF**, through its **MENA Advisory Board**, supported a neighborhood association to develop training for youth to teach them how to recycle plastic waste in the community and generate income by selling it to factories.

⁴¹ World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with Jobs. International Labour Organization. (2018). <https://webapps.ilo.org/weso-greening/#Intro-1>

- **HSBC MENAT** and Ashoka, a global network of changemakers, organized a Green Skills Innovation Challenge in 2021 to ensure a just transition, focusing on job development in agriculture and transportation.

Training Programs

- **Sawiris Foundation** offers education and training on green building, eco-tourism, and sustainable hotel management through its TVET institutions.
- **Greenish Foundation** and **Taghyeer** implement various climate education

interventions. **Greenish Foundation** created a series of free manuals in Arabic and English on different climate priorities—such as clean energy, public health, and biodiversity—to provide environmental education and skills to Egyptian youth.

Taghyeer's We Love Reading campaign integrates themes such as environmental protection and conservation in its books to raise readers' awareness of these issues.

- **RARBA** in Morocco focuses on training farmers on nature-based solutions to develop sustainable organic agriculture.



04

Advancing the Climate Philanthropy Ecosystem in the MENA Region

Addressing the scale of the climate crisis in the MENA region and globally requires collective action from the philanthropic sector. We need a stronger, more connected, and better-resourced philanthropy support ecosystem if we wish to unlock robust and impactful philanthropic engagement within the climate action priorities highlighted above.

The next part of this mapping study aims to understand the existing landscape of national, regional, and global philanthropy support organizations (PSOs) working to catalyze climate philanthropy from the subregions of North Africa, the Levant, and the Gulf. It also categorizes these PSOs according to the 4Cs framework—capacity, capability, connection, and credibility—to evaluate the professional support to philanthropy in the region and identify opportunities for this ecosystem to be strengthened.

- | | |
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1. Role of Philanthropy Support Organizations and Civil Society Networks in Advancing Climate Philanthropy

There is growing evidence of the pivotal roles that PSOs and the philanthropy support ecosystem (PSE) play in expanding sector connectivity, innovation, reach, and impact. In the context of an intensifying climate crisis, examining the ways in which the PSE strengthens and facilitates collaboration was considered a priority to enable accelerated and effective climate action. This study has adopted the WINGS definition and taxonomy of PSOs and PSEs. Sometimes referred to as ‘intermediary’ or ‘infrastructure’ organizations, PSOs are entities that provide a variety of services to support and strengthen philanthropy in a region or around a theme. A PSE is the community of interacting organizations, functions, and activities that assists and enables the achievement of philanthropy’s potential by nurturing its capacity, capabilities, connections, and credibility (4Cs).

As previously underscored, one of the overarching findings from the primary data collection for this mapping is that there is not enough collaboration happening in the sector,

with several actors pointing out the ‘siloed’ approach and the ‘fragmented’ nature of the ecosystem. As such, digging deeper into the role of PSOs and the PSE in supporting climate philanthropy and the existing gaps that hinder collaboration was key to the research. Interviewees were asked whether they are engaged in any national, regional, or international climate-related networks or platforms and how this experience has helped support their engagement on climate issues. It is noteworthy that with the exception of two organizations (OECD netFWD and CAN Arab World), there was little repetition of the names of PSOs identified by the respondents, despite some of them working in the same thematic area. One possible explanation for this is the fact that climate philanthropy is a nascent field, and many of the PSOs supporting it are either newly founded or only recently turned their focus to the issue of climate change. Another factor could be the barriers to entry faced by some organizations, such as financial hurdles—high membership costs, for example—restrictive eligibility criteria,

insufficient resources dedicated to collective engagement, or others.

Nonetheless, the mapping unearthed a diverse array of PSOs that are either partially or fully supporting climate philanthropy, ranging from organizations adopting a niche climate cause (e.g. flood management, climate adaptation research, climate and health) to organizations addressing broader environmental issues that intersect with climate (e.g. agroecology, food security, biodiversity conservation) and those addressing climate as a cross-cutting theme (e.g. climate and youth).

The PSOs identified play a key role in building up philanthropy’s capacity, capability, connections, and credibility. Some of the ways they do this include generating data and research, facilitating knowledge sharing and learning, and catalyzing joint policy action in COPs and other multilateral fora, as well as supporting other ecosystem-building initiatives.

There are three main takeaways regarding the role of the mapped PSOs that support climate philanthropy and the nature of their philanthropic engagement:

- PSOs exclusively focused on climate action are nascent and few, with even fewer regional and national PSOs prioritizing the philanthropy and climate nexus. It is noteworthy that most climate interventions by PSOs mapped here have been initiated over the past five years only.
- There is a cluster of national and regional environmental networks and platforms that support non-profit organizations’ engagement and activism on climate issues, with some of them operating for over a decade now. Nonetheless, the mapping has shown that philanthropic engagement in those networks tends to be more in a funding capacity, with little indication of their engagement in other ways. This points to a weak connection between philanthropy and the climate movement, and further insights into why this tends to be the case are warranted.
- There is a dearth of multi-stakeholder engagement platforms focused on climate change. For instance, there are few platforms that bring together philanthropy with development stakeholders such as governments, bilateral and multilateral development institutions, and others on the regional level that can advance systems-level and multi-sectoral solutions to the climate crisis.



Table 3:

PSOs and civil society networks supporting climate causes by geographic scope and type of intervention

Grant-making	Year of Foundation	Geographic scope	Type of Intervention
Arab Foundations Forum (AFF)	2006	Regional	Networking and network building Advocacy Research and knowledge creation
Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)	2003	Regional	Support for CBOs and grassroots organizations Advocacy and campaigning Research and knowledge creation
Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)	1990	Regional	Advocacy and campaigning Climate activism Research and knowledge creation Capacity development
Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA)	2022	Global	Networking and network building Research and knowledge Capacity development
Circle MENA	2022	Regional	Research and knowledge creation
Global Green Grants - MENA Advisory Board	2024	Regional	Grant-making to CBOs and grassroots organizations

Greenish Foundation	2017	National	Fiscal sponsorship Advocacy and campaigning Climate activism Research and knowledge creation
Impatience Earth	2020	Global	Capacity development Research and knowledge sharing
Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)	NA	National	Grantmaking Advocacy Climate activism Research and knowledge creation
OECD's Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD)	2012	Global	Networking and network building Research and knowledge sharing Advocacy
SharaKa – For Inclusive Climate Action	2023	Regional	Networking and network building Funding
Tahammul	2023	Regional	Advocacy and campaigning Research and knowledge creation
Youth Climate Justice Fund	2018	Global	Grant-making to grassroots organizations Capacity development

The following subsections categorize the mapped PSOs and civil society networks according to their geographic scope and areas of focus. It concludes with an analysis of the current support of climate philanthropy infrastructure in the MENA region, according to the 4Cs framework.

1.1. Geographic Scope of PSOs

Of the PSOs mapped in this study, two have a national scope, seven focus regionally, and four are global in scope.

While the study only focused on six countries from the MENA region, this does not make it any less significant that only two of the mapped PSOs have a specific national focus: **Greenish Foundation** in Egypt and the **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)**. Further research might be needed at the national level across the region to get a better understanding of nationally focused PSOs. Ecosystems are more resilient when sufficient infrastructure exists at the local level, especially in the MENA region, where landscapes, languages,

economies, and politics vary greatly from country to country.

At the regional level, six out of seven are organizations that emerged from the region, with the Global Greengrants Fund – MENA Advisory Board being the exception. This shows a strong commitment to regionally led support of the philanthropic ecosystem.

Lastly, the four global organizations working in the region that were mapped through this study, while unique in their approach and focus, are united in their commitment to building the capacities and capabilities of the field.

1.2. Thematic and Geographic Networks and Associations

Thematic networks and associations that directly intersect with climate issues and either already play a role or have the potential to support climate funders in the region include **OECD's Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD)**, the **Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA)**, and the **Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G)** at the global level; the **Arab Foundations Forum (AFF)**, the **Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)**, and the **Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)** at the regional level; and the **Jordan Environment Society** and **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and**

Sustainable Development (AMCDD), among others, on the national level.

On the *global* level, organizations like the **OECD's Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD)**—an international platform that brings together philanthropic leaders working on diverse socio-economic development issues—hosts the Health and Climate Working Group. Chaired by Foundation S – the Sanofi Collective and the WHO Foundation, the Working Group focuses on philanthropy's contribution to strengthening healthcare provision, response, and systems in developing countries on the

frontlines of the climate crisis. Ecosystem-building interventions by netFWD include providing a networking and convening space for the sharing of ideas and learning, organizing joint research activities, and advocacy support by amplifying the collective voice of philanthropy in multilateral fora. One example of the platform's networking efforts is the panel it convened in collaboration with Community Jameel titled 'How foundations and policy makers can act together to tackle the climate emergency'. The panel was part of OECD netFWD's annual meeting themed 'Addressing the climate emergency—what role for philanthropy ahead of COP28?'. The annual event invited OECD experts and senior representatives of foundations to talk about key challenges emerging as a result of the climate crisis and how philanthropy engages with said challenges, contemplate the outcomes of COP27 from the viewpoint of developing countries, and map the intersections of climate mitigation and adaptation with OECD netFWD's efforts across health, education, and gender equality⁴².

The **Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA)** is a membership-based organization bringing together funders, researchers, and

practitioners to advance action-oriented research that informs adaptation solutions and reduces risks from climate change. With funding and partnerships with governments⁴³, IDRC and philanthropy (the Gates Foundation and the Climate Emergency Collaboration Group), ARA implements ecosystem-building interventions. These include co-creating knowledge through a consultative process involving multi-stakeholders (community members, researchers, funders, practitioners and policy makers), advancing peer-to-peer networks for learning and sharing, and engaging in research-based advocacy at the annual Conference of the Parties (COP), providing submissions on the Global Stock Take and contributing to the knowledge base of loss and damage.

The **Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G)** is a global pledging movement that aims to drive greater action towards ending malnutrition and helping ensure everyone, everywhere can reach their full potential. According to the N4G website, "the N4G delivers much-needed action on policy and financing commitments to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2—Ending Hunger in All its Forms—which is an underlying driver of 12 of the 17 SDGs."

⁴² "How Foundations and Policy Makers Can Act Together to Tackle the Climate Emergency. OECD netFWD. (March 2023). <https://www.communityjameel.org/events/netfwd-how-foundation-and-policy-makers-can-act-together-to-tackle-the-climate-emergency>

⁴³ UK and Australia

On the *regional* level, the **Arab Foundations Forum (AFF)**—a hub for knowledge sharing, capacity development, and networking for its members and partners—hosts the Arab Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change, the regional chapter of the global Philanthropy For Climate movement spearheaded by Philea – Philanthropy Europe Association and WINGS. This work stream is a coalition-building and advocacy platform that seeks to advance philanthropic engagement in climate action in places where engagement has been low, and support collaborative responses and collective action by the sector. Climate is also one of AFF’s thematic program areas, under which the organization has put together knowledge exchange webinars to advance learning and sharing data on climate action.

With a focus on food sovereignty and nature protection, the **Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)** mobilizes individual and collective civil society efforts to protect nature and food sovereignty in war-torn contexts—namely Jordan and Palestine—through rehabilitating and building the resilience of environmental, agricultural, and food systems. APN’s ecosystem-building interventions are centered on research and advocacy support. In its food sovereignty program, APN supports small-scale farmers and small-scale income-generating projects that cater to local consumption and improve livelihoods. Its Revive Gaza’s Farmland project and tree planting program in Jordan serve to reduce the rate of desertification and support small-scale agriculture. Under its food sovereignty program, APN organizes research, multi-actor consultations, and fact-finding missions with the aim of bringing regional priorities to the global food security agenda.

The **Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)** is a membership network for Arab CSOs focused on environmental and sustainable development challenges. Climate-related themes and projects supported by RAED include: biodiversity restoration, water resource management, solid waste management, drought adaptation and resilience, renewable energy and climate security, and climate and displacement, among others. Ecosystem-building interventions include data and knowledge sharing; environmental awareness raising among CSOs; training and capacity-building programs; facilitating engagement between RAED’s membership, government, and the League of Arab States; fundraising for the implementation of joint projects; and advancing membership commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including the Paris Agreement and COPs.

An example of a *national* association is the **Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)**, considered the largest platform of associations and association networks working in the fields of environment and sustainable development in Morocco. The AMCDD is positioned as a national reference network, representative of NGOs and networks of national, regional, and local associations. It supports dialogue, advocacy, and lobbying at the national and international levels in sustainable development, adaptation, and climate mitigation. From food security and sovereignty to climate and conflict, AMCDD addresses the full range of climate-related themes. Its ecosystem-building interventions include support to local CSOs, climate activism, advocacy, and research and knowledge creation.

1.3. Intermediary and Joint Funds

The **Global Greengrants Fund (GGF)** through its **MENA Advisory Board** is another intermediary organization that supports community-based organizations and grassroots groups in the region through seed grants⁴⁴, while also supporting activism on diverse climate themes such as water and air pollution, biodiversity and ecosystems conservation, climate resilience and emergency response planning, the climate and conflict nexus, and climate and public health.

Other intermediary organizations that mobilize and facilitate access to climate funding in the region by providing small grants to grassroots youth organizations include the **Youth Climate Justice Fund (YCJF)**, at the global level, as well as national-level organizations providing fiscal sponsorship,

such as the **Greenish Foundation**. With the MENA region as the third-largest recipient of its grant-making activities at 11.4 percent, the YCJF adopts a trust-based giving approach to support grassroots youth groups and community-rooted climate justice initiatives in the region. The Fund also supports peer-to-peer learning to teach young people essential skills needed for the climate justice movement. Greenish Foundation is an Egyptian intermediary non-profit organization that works at the intersection of public health, environment, and climate. Ecosystem-building interventions by Greenish Foundation include research and knowledge creation, advocacy, capacity development, networking, and fiscal sponsorship support to community-based organizations and grassroots groups.

1.4. Advocacy Platforms and Networks

There are a number of regional civil society collaborative networks and advocacy platforms exclusively focused on climate action. These play an important role in convening and mobilizing the sector on the national, regional, and global level, focusing on climate-related forums with the overarching purpose of influencing the climate agenda. National- and regional-level advocacy platforms and networks include the Climate Action Network (CAN) Jordan, and CAN Arab World (CAN AW).

A regional node to Climate Action Network (CAN) International, **CAN Arab World** is a membership network of Arab civil society organizations that primarily convenes dialogues, and supports capacity development, advocacy efforts, and the representation of its members in climate fora. For instance, one of its work streams involves creating a space for dialogue between civil society and government. Supported by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation, CAN Arab World advances climate themes such as

⁴⁴ USD \$5,000

food security and sovereignty, agriculture, water and air pollution, biodiversity and ecosystems conservation, climate emergency, climate change and conflict, climate justice, and renewable energy. Ecosystem-building interventions include grant-making support to CBOs and grassroots organizations, climate activism, public awareness and advocacy campaigning, as well as research and knowledge creation. For example, CAN AW has executed projects supporting local communities to adopt sustainable agricultural and agroecological practices and has also supported public awareness campaigns on the effects of the climate crisis on public health and food sovereignty.

Based in Amman, the **Climate Action Network Jordan** (not affiliated with CAN International or CAN – Arab World), works to tackle climate change by bringing forth major societal changes through establishing and building partnerships between local communities, businesses, government, and public bodies to shift towards a sustainable society and cities with a lens of inclusion of the most disadvantaged. Climate-related themes and projects include climate adaptation, resilient Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) through the adoption and promotion of greywater systems, circular economy, food security, the water and agriculture nexus, and nature-based solutions. Since its formation, Climate Action Network Jordan has campaigned and lobbied for the inclusion of climate actions in the Jordanian government's policies and plans. Ecosystem-building interventions include support to grant-making, climate activism, advocacy and campaigning, and research and knowledge creation. Climate Action Network Jordan aims to influence climate-related policies while enabling collaboration on regional projects for climate resilience and justice.



1.5. Academic Research Institutions and Knowledge Networks

There is also a smaller subset of regional organizations supporting climate-related research activities and knowledge production, which includes the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) and the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN).

Under its environmental politics program, **Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)**—an intermediary regional research grant-making organization—supports environmental and climate change activism through research and analysis of the climate change and conflict nexus, while paying close attention to showcasing local initiatives that are rooted in communities and ecosystem-building approaches. In partnership with the Robert Bosch Stiftung, ARI has supported four individual research projects to address the challenges of climate change in conflicts at a local level in Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.

Additionally, the **Arab Group for the Protection of Nature** has also produced a series of publications on food security, climate, migration, and the conflict nexus.

1.6. Media, Knowledge, and Data-Sharing Platforms

Media and knowledge-sharing platforms that have a climate focus on the regional level include Circle MENA and Tahammul.

Circle MENA—a partnership between Philanthropy Age and the Pearl Initiative, supported by the Gates Foundation—adopts climate philanthropy as one of five key thematic focus areas. Knowledge-sharing activities by Circle MENA include spotlighting insights and experiences from leading philanthropists and foundations tackling climate change.

Spearheaded by Coin for Change in partnership with Mercy Corps Jordan in 2024 **Tahammul** is a regional platform dedicated to fostering collaboration and aligning priorities among various stakeholders working on climate resilience. Based on comprehensive stakeholder mapping and connection, the initiative aims to identify and link various organizations and entities involved in climate resilience efforts. Climate themes adopted by Tahammul include: food security and sovereignty, water and air pollution, climate resilience and emergency response planning, and peacebuilding.

In 2023, Hivos, in partnership with Internews, the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI), and Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), launched **SharaKa for Inclusive Climate Action**. SharaKa was a two-year multi-stakeholder project that linked up CSOs working for climate justice in the MENA region with media to produce accessible, fact-based information on the local climate situation for the wider public. SharaKa utilized an intersectional climate justice approach and worked closely with local climate CSOs, natural resource defenders (NRDs), and independent media outlets, prioritizing the needs and voices of those disproportionately affected by climate change, such as women, young people, displaced communities, and other marginalized groups. Another SharaKa intervention was its Emergency Operational Grants, small grants offered to media organizations impacted and/or at risk due to sudden disruption caused by ongoing conflicts and sociopolitical tensions, as well as those reporting on climate justice issues.



1.7. Consulting and Advisory PSOs

Impatience Earth (IE) is a consultancy firm funded by large climate foundations that acts as facilitator and relationship broker, offering pro bono advice to philanthropists and philanthropic organizations looking to make donations to climate-related causes and supporting their learning on climate issues. Facilitating access to knowledge on grant-making practices in climate philanthropy, while helping identify good practices in addressing the climate crisis and adapting them to the local context, is one of IE’s key interventions. As a member of AFF’s Arab Philanthropy

Climate Commitment Working Group, IE worked with AFF towards the end of 2023 to organize a series of capacity development workshops to help philanthropies in the MENA region integrate a climate lens in their work. The workshops covered topics such as the just transition, the agriculture sector, youth activism on climate, policy frameworks, and climate security, among others.

Framing Climate Philanthropy Ecosystem Support According to the 4Cs Framework

This mapping applies a climate lens to the 4Cs framework to evaluate professional support to philanthropy:

Figure 5
Climate priorities for funders

Capacity refers to generating financial, human, and infrastructure resources to develop climate philanthropy.	Capability refers to building climate-specific skills, knowledge, and expertise of philanthropies.
Connection refers to building relationships, including through convening, networking, peer-learning, and sharing platforms for philanthropies around themes of climate action.	Credibility refers to building reputation, recognition, and influence of philanthropy as a driver and partner for climate action.

The 4Cs framework serves as a lens to understand the ways in which different actors contribute to strengthening the philanthropic ecosystem, whether by building knowledge and skills, enabling collaboration, enhancing infrastructure, or fostering trust and legitimacy. By evaluating PSOs through the four key functions (Capacity, Capability, Connection, and Credibility), insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the ecosystem come to the forefront.

Table 4 assigns the 4Cs to the mapped PSOs and civil society networks in the MENA region:

Table 4:
PSOs and civil society networks supporting climate causes by geographic scope and type of intervention

Name	Function			
	Capacity	Capability	Connection	Credibility
Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA)	✔	✔	–	–
Arab Foundations Forum (AFF)	✔	✔	✔	✔
Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)	✔	✔	–	–
Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)	✔	✔	✔	–
Circle MENA	–	✔	–	✔
Global Greengrants Fund - MENA Advisory Board	✔	✔	–	–
Greenish Foundation	✔	✔	–	–
Impatience Earth	✔	✔	–	–
Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)	✔	✔	✔	–
OECD's Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD)	–	✔	✔	✔
SharaKa for Inclusive Climate Action	✔	–	✔	–
Tahammul	✔	–	✔	–
Youth Climate Justice Fund	✔	✔	✔	✔

While the organizations listed in Table 4 are established actors of the philanthropic ecosystem in MENA, it is important to note that not all of them, nor all of the organizations mapped for this report, can be considered PSOs.⁴⁵ Organizations such as CAN Arab World, Climate Action Network Jordan, Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G), the Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA), the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN), the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), and the Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD) play significant roles in the civil society and climate action ecosystems but do not primarily support philanthropy. Rather, their inclusion in this mapping reflects their intersecting activities with philanthropic actors, particularly through advocacy, community development, and bridge-building to grassroots communities. Clarifying their positioning within the ecosystem and facilitating intentional collaboration with PSOs could strengthen the overall coherence and impact of climate philanthropic infrastructure in MENA. Their alignment with the 4Cs framework should be interpreted with this distinction in mind.

Among the organizations in Table 4, the most consistently represented function is **Capacity**. **Eleven** out of the 13 organizations work to generate additional resources — be they

financial, human, or infrastructural — to support and strengthen the impact of philanthropy on the climate crisis in MENA. This common focus reflects a shared recognition that building and unlocking additional resources for philanthropic actors is foundational to a strong sector.

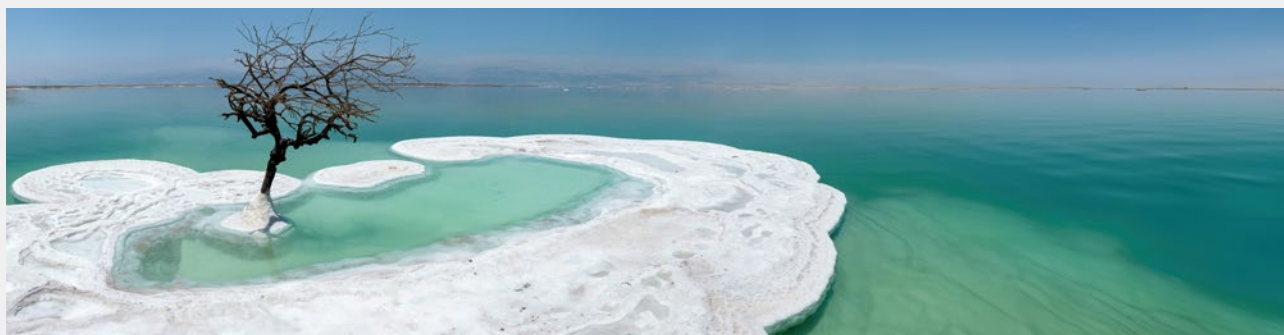
Capability is also well represented. **Eleven** organizations perform activities that build philanthropy's climate skills, knowledge, and expertise. These include developing knowledge platforms, conducting research, creating communities of practice, supporting the development of organizational/ programmatic strategies, and providing monitoring and evaluation criteria.

Connection, defined as the facilitation of relationships, collaborations, and network-building, is undertaken by **seven** organizations. For example, the **Arab Foundations Forum (AFF)** plays a central convening role across the MENA region. While connection-building is visible across several actors, its distribution is uneven when considering geographic scope. Neither of the two national organizations performs a connection function, while regional and global organizations tend to emphasize this role more explicitly. Further insights should be gathered on the relationship between national PSOs and their motivation to drive connections within the sector.

⁴⁵ Philanthropy support organizations (PSOs), sometimes referred to as 'infrastructure' or 'intermediary' organizations, include entities that provide a variety of services to support and strengthen philanthropy in a region or around a theme. PSOs usually do not directly fund or implement philanthropic programs themselves but rather provide services to support those that do. That said, some philanthropic funders do provide ecosystem support services too, so the distinction is not always clear cut.

The most underrepresented function across the mapped PSOs is **Credibility**. Only **four** perform a function that relates to building trust in, and enhancing the reputation of, the philanthropic sector. Of those, only **Circle MENA** and the **Arab Foundations Forum (AFF)** operate at a regional level, truly building the credibility of MENA climate philanthropies. They do this through building public awareness on the role of philanthropy, working with other sectors to demonstrate the partnership value of philanthropy, and influencing policy around the enabling environment for philanthropy. The other **two** PSOs that fall under Credibility are global in scope. In the current data set, no national PSO fulfills a credibility function, suggesting potential vulnerability for the climate philanthropy ecosystem in MENA, where public understanding of and trust in climate philanthropy may be either underdeveloped or deprioritized.

The philanthropy support ecosystem is robust as it relates to developing the capacity and capability of philanthropy in the regions included in this study. However, given the climate focus of some of these PSOs is relatively new, there are limitations to the extent of climate capacity and capability that is being built by these organizations, and more work is likely needed to deepen and strengthen these functions in the ecosystem.



There are fewer organizations building connections in the ecosystem, despite significant evidence for the power of a well-connected philanthropic ecosystem. Investing in platforms that foster connections within the regional philanthropic sector, and also between sectors, can streamline learning, break down silos, and catalyze collaboration, ultimately leading to increased impact and credibility of the sector.

When it comes to building credibility, there is a significant gap that should be addressed, one that presents both a risk and an opportunity. Without sufficient attention to transparency, trust, and legitimacy, the sector may struggle to maintain civic space, particularly in contexts where climate philanthropy is politically sensitive or poorly understood. However, targeted investments in credibility — such as support for data transparency, shared metrics, and public accountability initiatives — could significantly enhance the sector's influence and social license.

While this analysis provides a high-level assessment of the health of the philanthropic ecosystem in the target subregions, the collective development of a roadmap for action, which begins with deepening and broadening the scope of this analysis and addressing the opportunities and gaps identified, is recommended.

2. Challenges and Gaps in the Ecosystem for Climate Philanthropy in the MENA Region

An examination of the climate philanthropy ecosystem in MENA reveals both promising momentum and critical gaps. The accelerating pace and intensity of the climate crisis present an urgent and complex challenge for the region. Climate-related risks, ranging from water scarcity to food insecurity and climate-induced migration, demand holistic and well-coordinated responses. Philanthropic organizations are uniquely positioned to catalyze systemic change, foster innovation,

and bridge critical funding and capacity gaps by supporting climate resilience, advancing localized knowledge production, and enabling cross-sectoral collaboration. This section draws on ecosystem mapping and primary data from across the region to highlight neglected areas of intervention and key challenges, namely funding gaps, knowledge production, operational and infrastructural challenges, and policy and regulatory environments.

2.1. Funding Gaps and Limited Trust-Based Giving Practices

One of the most persistent gaps is the absence of flexible, long-term funding models that allow organizations to experiment, adapt, and grow. This constraint is particularly detrimental to adaptation and resilience work, which requires sustained programming and engagement over time and is often led by smaller, under-resourced civil society organizations. This challenge is exacerbated by funders resorting to conventional, fragmented funding approaches and the absence of collective funding approaches.

Another issue is that current funding structures are usually dictated by funders and do not always resonate with local communities and grassroots organizations' needs and contextual realities. This indicates an embedded lack of trust between donors and implementing civil society organizations.

Other examples of funding gaps in the region include geographical and thematic disparities. The geographical disparities were established in the MENA funders' geographical coverage

section, which showed the stark difference in coverage rates between Lebanon and Morocco at the highest end and Algeria, Libya, and Somalia at the lowest. As for thematic disparities in funding, the climate action priorities section highlighted the high coverage rates for ‘familiar’ issues, such as agriculture/agroecology, water and air pollution, and biodiversity and ecosystems conservation. However, other climate action priorities received lower coverage rates, including transportation, responsible business, and youth engagement. A particularly significant gap is the pressing need for investment in the climate-security-conflict nexus—a domain where climate vulnerabilities exacerbate existing fragilities and where early philanthropic engagement could have disproportionate benefits for peace and stability. Yet, few funders in the region currently have the mandates or risk tolerance to work at these intersections.

2.2. Operational and Infrastructure Challenges

The mapping revealed that the ecosystem currently faces critical operational and infrastructure challenges. A key contributing factor is the relative nascency of climate philanthropy in the region, which gradually started to pick up momentum after Egypt and the United Arab Emirates hosted COP27 and COP28, respectively, as previously mentioned. This nascency can be better understood by considering the spectrum of engagement with climate action and where the mapped organizations fall on it.

Figure 5

Spectrum of engagement with climate action



The mapping indicated that most local and national funders are either getting started or building momentum concerning their climate action, focusing on direct implementation and tangible outcomes at the community level. Global funders are either mainstreaming climate action or assuming leadership roles in engaging with the climate crisis, focusing on research, advocacy,

and policy reform. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the nascency of the climate philanthropy ecosystem in the region is mirrored in the lack of infrastructure support organizations in the region. Philanthropy organizations tend to assume multiple modalities of work that sometimes intersect with the scope of infrastructure support organizations, as opposed to having climate-focused philanthropy support organizations dedicated to offering the needed support services for the ecosystem to grow. The nascent nature of the field, along with the disparities between philanthropy organizations’ engagement with climate action, creates a valuable yet fragmented mosaic of activities that can be difficult to communicate, replicate, and scale.

A closely related challenge is the cultural context and language barriers that impede collaboration across national borders. The use of either French or English as primary languages for communicating with international partners creates anglophone and francophone

silos. This is further exacerbated by the varied local dialects used across the region, limiting mainstreaming efforts.

Furthermore, operational constraints also limit the scalability of promising interventions across the region. Even where successful pilot programs exist, there is little infrastructure to support their replication or adaptation to new geographies. Coordination platforms, data-sharing systems, and logistical support remain underdeveloped, and the absence of ecosystem enablers—such as intermediary organizations, technical hubs, or peer learning networks—prevents the diffusion of innovation. At the same time, many initiatives operate in silos, leading to duplicated efforts and inefficient allocation of resources.

In conclusion, the current lack of coordination and shared infrastructure limits the sector’s potential to scale impact, optimize available resources, and respond holistically to cross-cutting issues such as migration, conflict, and food systems.



2.3. Knowledge Production and Awareness

The ecosystem suffers from a chronic underinvestment in knowledge production tailored to local cultural and ecological contexts. Research on climate impacts and solutions in the region is often framed through external lenses, with little integration of traditional knowledge systems, traditional practices, or community-defined priorities. Where knowledge does exist, it is frequently inaccessible—locked behind academic paywalls, published in foreign languages, or presented in technical formats that do not resonate with decision-makers or local

communities. Language is also an important variable that affects knowledge production geared towards climate action in the region. Insufficient knowledge production in Arabic and local dialects further excludes local and traditional knowledge and practices concerning climate action and leads to overreliance on translation of foreign language resources, namely, those in English or French. This lack of locally relevant, actionable data hampers evidence-based policymaking and diminishes opportunities for learning and replication across the region.

2.4. Policy and Regulatory Environments

Institutional barriers further compound the aforementioned challenges. In many countries, policy and regulatory environments around climate action are either weak or inconsistently enforced. Governments may lack clear climate mandates or implementation strategies, and where national commitments do exist, there are often few accountability mechanisms in place to monitor progress or encourage participation from civil society. It is also worth noting that the proliferation of the term 'climate change' undercuts the severity and urgency of the climate crisis and its impacts on the region, meaning that governments

aren't sufficiently compelled to pursue climate resilience-centered policies and actions. This shortcoming is mirrored by what's happening at the international level, where different UN agencies haven't sufficiently integrated climate action into their work, and the UN Security Council did not articulate and adopt clear terminology describing the climate crisis and its consequences. These fragmented and lax policy landscapes leave philanthropic actors without clear entry points for influencing systems change and discourage sustained investment in policy advocacy and governance reform.



05

The Way Forward: Strategic Opportunities for Philanthropic Investment

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In light of the gaps and challenges discussed in the previous section, there are clear opportunities for philanthropic leadership to build a more connected, informed, and resilient climate ecosystem in the MENA region. The key takeaways from the pre-mapping are the insufficiency of the available resources to advance the climate philanthropy ecosystem in the region and propel philanthropic organizations into a leadership position when it comes to addressing the causes and impacts of the climate crisis, coupled with the fragmentation of its actors and subsequent, siloed operations. These challenges are exacerbated by the lack of infrastructure support for the philanthropy ecosystem in the region, with a need for clear and diverse modalities of support for climate philanthropy organizations to help them come together for cohesive and sustainable climate action.

Inspired by the pre-mapping findings, the proposed way forward includes recommendations to start addressing the gaps, challenges, and opportunities that emerged during the pre-mapping exercise. These include developing capacities and communicating the key areas for philanthropic engagement across the different climate priorities; developing long-term, flexible funding models and giving practices in collaboration with grassroots organizations; advocating for clearer and stronger climate-centric policies and regulatory frameworks; and fostering a climate philanthropy ecosystem in the region—and its infrastructure support organizations—in consonance with the tenets of climate resilience, localized approaches, and regenerative practices.

Parallely, the way forward also includes a full, action-oriented mapping of the climate philanthropy ecosystem in the MENA region to fill in the geographic, thematic, and infrastructure support gaps unearthed by the pre-mapping, and to accordingly inform longer-term domains of work, such as investing in researching emergent climate priorities, increasing the geographical coverage of philanthropy organizations in the region, and advancing climate philanthropy ecosystem support in the region.

1. Recommendations for Engagement with Pre-Mapping Findings

Progress on addressing the climate crisis in the MENA region is limited by the lack of flexible, long-term funding models that are crucial to enable organizations to innovate, adjust, and scale their efforts. This is especially harmful to adaptation and resilience initiatives, which demand long-term commitment and are frequently driven by smaller, resource-constrained civil society groups. Accordingly, the climate philanthropy ecosystem is well-positioned to support climate action on the

ground, provided that climate philanthropy organizations—along with infrastructure support organizations—work to strengthen networks and alliances; adopt localized approaches and collaborative giving practices; invest in knowledge production, capacity development, and ecosystem support; and, finally, advocate for stronger and more transparent policy and regulatory frameworks. Below are recommendations for how to achieve this:

1.1. Strengthening Networks and Alliances

The MENA region urgently needs to invest in different modalities of networks, alliances, and coalitions that bring together funders and facilitate the consolidation of resources to finance climate action. One way of doing so is to sponsor existing PSOs⁴⁶ in the region (mentioned in Section III) to convene and/or grow existing informal coordination platforms that bring together climate-aligned organization such as **a funders table**, as well as more formal mechanisms, such as **a pooled**

climate fund, to co-create collective funding models that integrate national, private, and blended financial resources. A pooled fund would be able to fill in gaps in national funding and create synergy across the region⁴⁷. A third example of nurturing stronger networks and alliances would be co-creating **platforms that support cross-sector and cross-border collaborations**, including partnerships formed at landmark events such as COPs.

⁴⁶ Examples of PSOs from the MENA region that could convene or support informal networks include the Arab Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change (APCCC) Working Group, the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), and Circle MENA.

⁴⁷ UN Inter-Agency Climate and Environment Pooled Funds. United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. (2023). https://mptf.undp.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-11/mptfo_climate_finance_brief_2023.pdf

1.2. Resilient, Localized, and Participatory Funding Approaches

There is also the growing need, and subsequently an opportunity, to recalibrate climate strategies within the region away from siloed funding approaches—those that narrowly focus on mitigation, adaptation, or loss and damage as separate streams, following the structure adopted under the UNFCCC. Instead, there is a growing call for a more holistic, community-based approach centered on climate resilience. **Climate resilience**, which is inclusive of climate justice, refers to the capacity of individuals, communities, and ecosystems to anticipate, reduce, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of the climate crisis while maintaining essential functions and identity.

Philanthropy is also well-positioned to support the **localization of climate action** by funding grassroots and community-based organizations with deep contextual knowledge. Place-based approaches, such as agroecology, traditional land stewardship, and

nature-based water solutions, offer models for sustainable adaptation that are not only effective but culturally resonant.

The adoption of climate resilience and localization of climate action as key approaches to inform climate philanthropy necessitates reimagining funding models and giving practices, in collaboration with grassroots and community-based organizations rooted in local knowledge and practices. Re-imagined funding models can take the form of direct financing of the organizations to support their existence and operations, as well as their projects. Patient capital⁴⁸ is another example of long-term financing of climate actions and solutions to ensure steady progression of work and results, as opposed to organizations rushing to implement short-term projects that are tailored to fit funders' criteria instead of actual community needs and challenges.

1.3. Knowledge Production, Capacity Development, and Ecosystem Support

Knowledge production, capacity development, and ecosystem support are critical areas for investment due to the significant role they could play in furthering climate action in the region.

⁴⁸ "Think Long-Term, Act Sustainably: The Transformative Power of Patient Capital". Medium. (June 2024). <https://cosmicgold.medium.com/think-long-term-act-sustainably-the-transformative-power-of-patient-capital-41c06ec5e9af>

As elaborated upon in the gaps section, **knowledge production** on climate action from the region, for the region, is essential. Climate philanthropy organizations are well-positioned to endow research institutes, programs, and projects that capture—in Arabic and local dialects—evidence-based approaches of CSOs and climate activists, in addition to the traditional practices of local communities that adopt an ecological outlook when engaging with their land and surrounding environment(s), as opposed to an anthropocentric one. Other research efforts that ought to be supported and encouraged are benchmarking climate actions in the region against climate actions across different contexts and regions, and researching scalable climate solutions and models within and beyond MENA and funding their contextual translation and replication. Closely related to this recommendation is financing regional knowledge hubs and digital platforms, which can support the dissemination of research reports, toolkits, and other knowledge products, facilitate the transfer of impactful climate solutions, and encourage cross-boundary, peer-to-peer learning.

Many civil society actors in the region lack the technical, institutional, or operational **capacity** to access climate finance, implement large-scale programs, or influence policy processes. Philanthropic investments in mentorship and training, alongside organizational development, can help bridge these gaps and foster the emergence of a new generation of climate leaders.

When it comes to **ecosystem support**, climate philanthropy organizations are well-positioned to facilitate the co-creation of ecosystem support structures, such as convenors, incubators, and intermediaries that could build connectivity and resilience across the sector. Moreover, the 4Cs analysis could inform how to sustain the momentum of philanthropy support organizations and civil society networks in offering services centered on capacity and capability to climate philanthropy organizations. Those insights could also be used to spark interest in connection and credibility-focused services that could help pave the way for more thematic and funding collaborations, and position climate philanthropy organizations as leaders and key players in propelling climate action forward in the region.

1.4. Cross-Sector Policy Engagement

There is a need to invest in strategic policy engagement that includes a broader and more representative set of stakeholders. This means going beyond elite policy circles to include youth, frontline communities, Indigenous/local community groups, and scientists in shaping climate frameworks and responses.

Philanthropy can play a convening role in facilitating inclusive dialogues, supporting independent think tanks, and funding applied policy research labs that connect high-level commitments with locally grounded frameworks for climate justice and community-based adaptation.

2. Implementation of a Full, Action-Oriented Ecosystem Mapping

A full mapping of the MENA region's climate philanthropy ecosystem would address the gaps identified, as well as attain more nuanced insights concerning some of the issues raised in the pre-mapping exercise, as follows:

- **Geography gaps.** To overcome the linguistic barriers encountered in the pre-mapping, a full mapping within and beyond the previously targeted subregions should be conducted by a multilingual team of researchers that can operate in Arabic, English, and French. Additionally, a full mapping with greater geographic coverage would help form a more complex picture of the gaps in the geographic coverage of climate philanthropy organizations and the reasons behind said gaps, as well as identify terroir-based climate challenges that can inform philanthropic giving and encourage multi-stakeholder, cross-boundary collaborations.
- **Thematic gaps and nuances.** Conducting the full mapping with a stronger understanding of the climate priorities in the region will help inform deeper questions that can engage with under-researched, emergent climate priorities, such as the climate-migration-conflict nexus and the intersections between the climate crisis and public health challenges. Furthermore, the initial scan of the region's climate priorities would help probe some of the priorities and focus on funders, PSOs, and civil society organizations and networks that support resilience-centric climate actions, as well as regenerative, localized, and community-driven actions. Examples of these nuances would include mapping organizations engaged with food sovereignty versus food security and agroecology versus greenwashed industrial agriculture.
- **Stakeholder gaps and nuances.** Conducting the full mapping would expand the list of focus organizations—both philanthropy and infrastructure support—due to the increased geographic scope and, more importantly, would include organizations that do not identify as supporting climate action but do support work on different climate priorities. This will expand the impact of collaborative structures that are central to a vibrant ecosystem.

The full mapping would also contribute to informing several domains of work, such as climate priorities research, geographic coverage priorities, and the co-creation of networks, communities of practice, and more advanced modalities of multi-stakeholder collaborations, such as funding collaboratives, and public-private-philanthropy partnerships driven by grassroots and localized insights on climate action.

By addressing critical gaps and leveraging opportunities, climate philanthropy can contribute to the development of a vibrant and equitable ecosystem for climate action in the MENA region—one that is community-led, knowledge-rich, and strategically aligned with the region's broader development aspirations.



ANNEX

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ANNEX I: List of Participating Organizations in Primary Data Collection

Egypt

- Greenish Foundation
- Sawiris Foundation for Social Development

Jordan

- Climate Action Network (CAN) Jordan
- Jordan Environment Society
- Taghyeer – Jordan
- Tahammul | Mercy Corps Jordan and Coin for Change - Jordan

Lebanon

- Jibal

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

- Community Jameel

Morocco

- Moroccan Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Development (AMCDD)
- Réseau des Associations de la Réserve de Biosphère Arganeraie (RARBA)

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund

Regional

- The Arab Group for the Protection of Nature
- The Asfari Foundation
- Climate Action Network (CAN) Arab World
- Global Greengrants Fund – MENA Advisory Board
- HSBC MENAT

International

- Impatience Earth
- Porticus
- WHO Foundation

ANNEX II: Questionnaire and Interview Guide Used for Primary Data Collection

Basic information

- Email
- Name of organization

Modalities of work and climate priorities

- Can you describe your operational modality?
 - Grant-making
 - Execution
 - Hybrid (a mix of grant-making and execution)
- Do you provide fiscal sponsorship to partners? Or any other type of support?
 - Yes
 - No
- What are your current climate priorities?
 - Food security and sovereignty
 - Agriculture/agroecology
 - Water and air pollution
 - Biodiversity and ecosystems conservation
 - Early warning systems and weather forecasting
 - Climate resilience and emergency response planning
 - Climate change, migration, and conflict
 - Climate change and public health
 - Other
- Can you please provide an example of one or two of your key programs/ interventions in this space?
- What is your intervention strategy for climate funding?
 - Support for community-based organizations and grassroots groups
 - Support for climate activism
 - Grant-making to intermediary funders
 - Advocacy and campaigning
 - Research and knowledge creation
 - Other

Reflections on the climate philanthropy ecosystem in the MENA region

- Where do you think the biggest climate funding gap exists that the philanthropic sector can help fill?
- Are you engaged in any national, regional, or international climate-related networks or platforms? Can you tell us more about this experience and how it has helped support your engagement on climate issues?
- What philanthropy ecosystem opportunities and challenges do you see that can enable or disable more collaborative climate action from the sector?
- Can you identify any local partner organizations that you think demonstrate good practice in climate philanthropy?
- Can you identify any national partner organizations that you think demonstrate good practice in climate philanthropy?
- Can you identify any regional partner organizations that you think demonstrate good practice in climate philanthropy?
- Can you identify any international partner organizations that you think demonstrate good practice in climate philanthropy?



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