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# Foundation funding for climate change adaptation and resilience 2025

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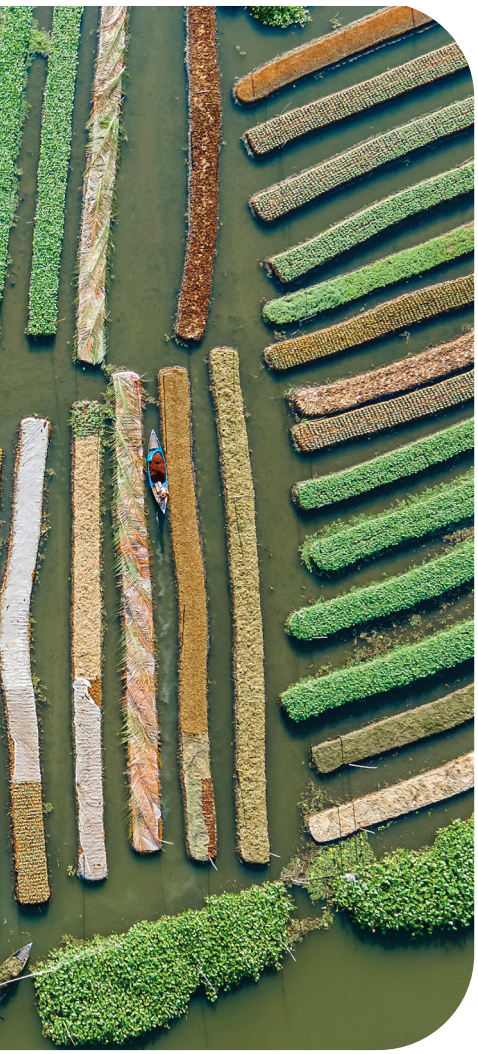
# Introduction



The climate crisis is no longer a distant threat — it is a present-day reality. In 2024, global temperatures reached the 1.5° C threshold for the first time, and the pace and intensity of climate impacts continue to accelerate. People around the world are already facing escalating climate impacts like deadly heatwaves, floods, and droughts, which are exacerbating public health crises, displacing communities, disrupting food systems, threatening livelihoods, and eroding economic security. Even if mitigation efforts are successful, climate impacts are already here and will accelerate before they can stabilize later this century — raising the urgency for investing at scale in adaptation and resilience.

Communities on the frontlines of climate impacts are already adapting out of necessity. In Bangladesh's flood-prone South, for example, farmers are reviving generations-old knowledge to adapt by building floating gardens, constructed on buoyant layers of water hyacinth and compost, that enable harvests even when farmlands are submerged. Meanwhile, in Somalia, where communities have faced worsening drought conditions since 2024, the Somali Red Crescent Society delivered anticipatory cash assistance and early warning messages for at-risk communities. Additionally, the Norwegian Refugee Council, supported by the Somalia Humanitarian Fund, improved access to water, hygiene, and sanitation services for more than 200,000 people, providing significant relief even with relatively small funding pools.

These examples highlight both the importance of locally led adaptation solutions and the limits of current support. Globally, adaptation remains one of the most underfunded areas of climate action overall. Today, less than 10% of global climate finance is directed toward adaptation, and only a fraction of that reaches local communities. According to a 2024 UNEP report, developing countries face an annual shortfall of up to $359 billion between adaptation needs and financing flows, and recent cuts to public sector development funding are widening this gap, leaving frontline communities with fewer resources even as climate impacts intensify.

# Momentum for philanthropic action on adaptation and resilience

Given the urgent need for funding and action, philanthropy has a crucial role to play in advancing adaptation and resilience efforts. In addition, for philanthropic funders, elevating adaptation and resilience as a key strategic and funding priority is critical for safeguarding progress on other key priority areas, such as health, food security, and economic development.

Recent philanthropic commitments have helped build momentum on adaptation and resilience. In December 2023 at COP28, a group of leading philanthropic funders signed a pledge to accelerate adaptation funding. That group has grown into the Adaptation and Resilience Collaborative for Funders (ARC), now comprising more than 70 foundations working to improve alignment, transparency, and philanthropic impact. Also in 2023, four major philanthropies announced the launch of the U.S. Philanthropic Coalition for Climate Resilience, a commitment to scale investments in community resilience in the United States. And in August 2025, a group of foundations established a USD $50 million Adaptation & Resilience Fund to support locally led solutions that strengthen resilience in low- and middle-income geographies against climate risks such as extreme heat, floods, and drought.

These efforts highlight a growing community of funders committed to shared learning and expanding investment in adaptation and resilience. Despite this momentum, philanthropy must meet the moment with greater ambition and investment. The stakes are rising — but so is the shared capacity to meet them.

## ABOUT THE REPORT

In 2024, ClimateWorks conducted a first-of-its-kind effort to track philanthropic adaptation funding flows by conducting a qualitative baseline survey of 40 foundations. This offered an initial snapshot of the field and highlighted the need for greater visibility into trends in philanthropic funding.

Building on those insights, this 2025 report analyzed more detailed information from 40 participating foundations. As with ClimateWorks' longstanding work on funding trends in climate change mitigation philanthropy, this adaptation landscape applies a sectoral and regional tagging assessment (see the appendix) that offers a more holistic view of philanthropic investments.

While this report is not a comprehensive landscape of all philanthropic funding for adaptation and resilience, it is an important step in building transparency, deeper visibility, and sharper alignment across the field. Future iterations of this work will continue to broaden participation among diverse global funders.

# Foundation funding trends

Foundation funding for adaptation totaled an estimated $870 million in 2024, which represents around a 10% increase year over year compared to 2023 and an overall increase of 120% since 2021 (Figure 1).

ClimateWorks' previous analysis in 2024 suggested that foundation funding for adaptation was in the range of $600 million to $700 million in 2023, with around $650 million to $700 million expected in 2024. A more detailed and comprehensive analysis in 2025 shows higher totals than those estimates. Updated estimates indicate that funding reached at least $790 million in 2023 and $870 million in 2024.

The trajectory is clear: foundation funding for adaptation has more than doubled since 2021, with the largest increase occurring between 2022 and 2023, followed by steady gains in 2024. The estimated 2024 totals are likely to further increase as foundations finalize their reporting cycles and additional data are integrated into the landscape.

Additionally, more funders are giving to adaptation- and resilience-related causes. Between 2021 and 2024, the number of foundations making adaptation- and resilience-related grants increased by 55% among those included in this landscape. This trend signals both rising funder interest in adaptation and resilience and the potential for a broader, more diverse ecosystem of funders in the years ahead.

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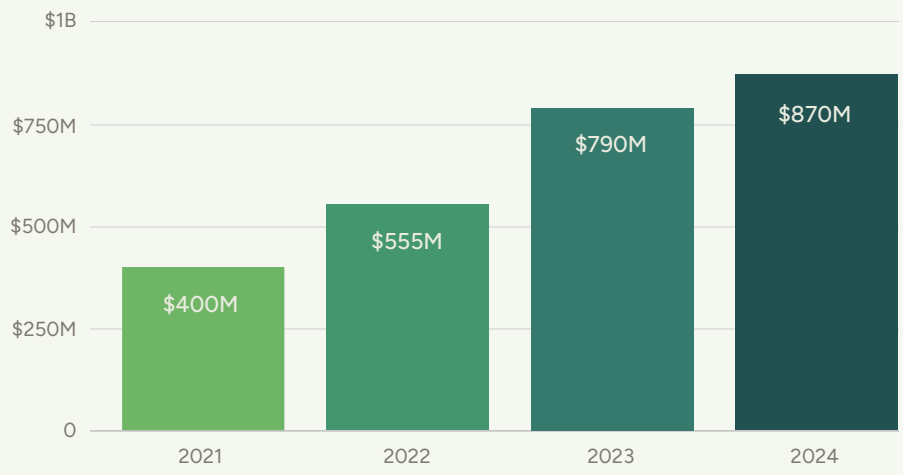
**Figure 1: Foundation funding (USD) for climate change adaptation, 2021 to 2024**

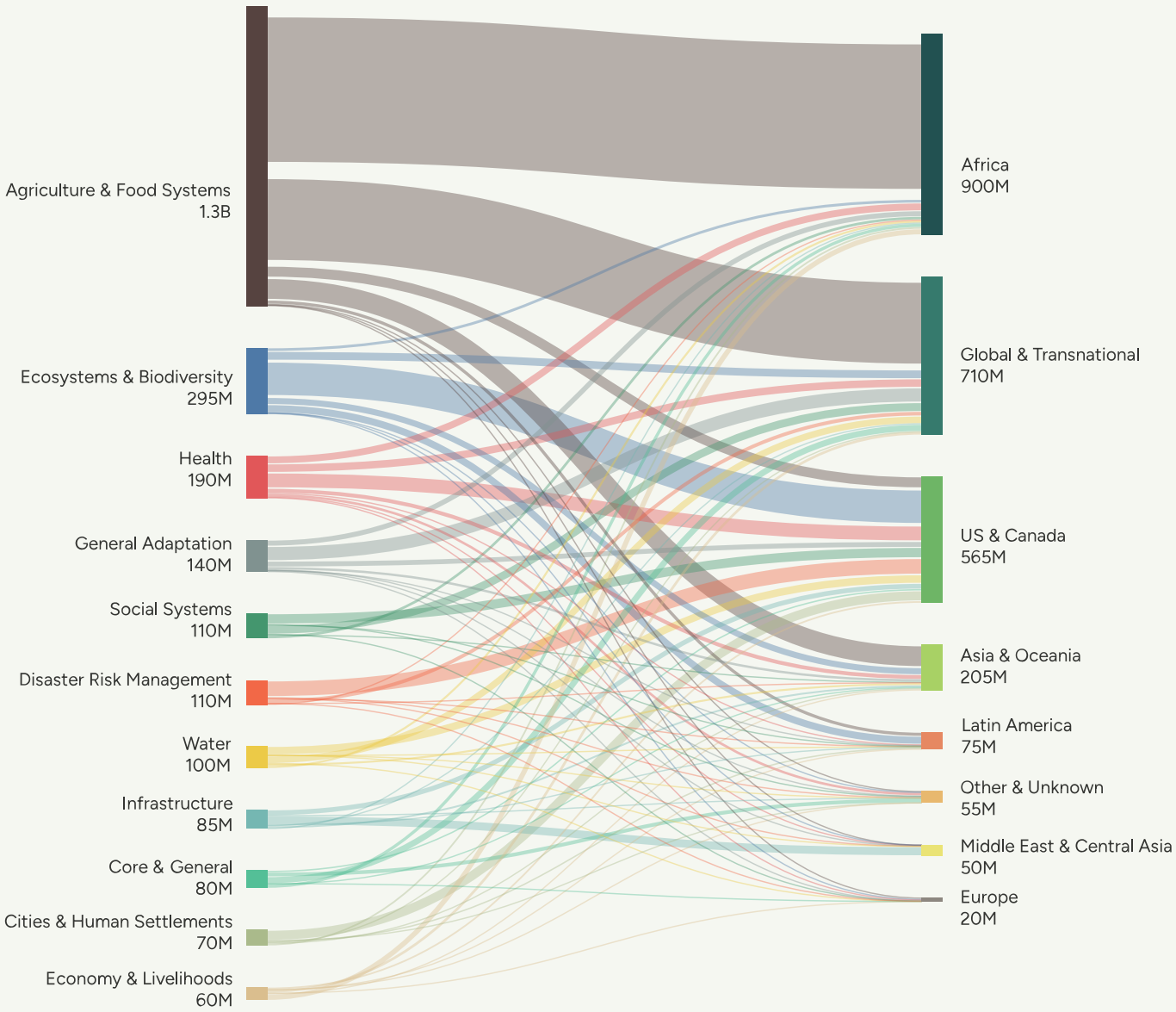


# Foundation funding trends by sector and geography

ClimateWorks has developed a global adaptation taxonomy for philanthropy that aligns with frameworks used by multilateral organizations and other experts. The taxonomy includes 10 sectoral categories and seven geographic designations. The geographic designations mirror those developed for ClimateWorks' reports on funding trends in climate change mitigation philanthropy. Additional details on the methodology and taxonomy are available in the appendix.

Using this global adaptation taxonomy, ClimateWorks analyzed foundation funding flows across sectors and geographies from 2021 to 2024 (Figure 2). While the analysis is not a comprehensive global landscape, the data provide a window into funding gaps and opportunities to scale support in the areas of most critical need.

**Figure 2: Known foundation funding (USD) for adaptation to sectors and geographies, 2021 to 2024**



# Most and least funded sectors and geographies

The three sectors that received the most foundation funding on average from 2021 to 2024 were agriculture and food systems; ecosystems and biodiversity; and health (Figure 3). Within agriculture and food systems, focus areas include climate-smart agriculture, resilient fishing and agriculture, and food security and nutrition — issues at the intersection of climate impacts and human well-being. Even for the sectors that received the most funding, investment remains well short of the need.

By contrast, disaster risk management and infrastructure received the least foundation funding on average from 2021 to 2024. Both sectors are foundational for adaptation: Disaster risk management helps communities prepare for and reduce the impacts of ever-worsening extreme weather events, and infrastructure determines whether societies can withstand and recover from climate shocks. These areas will always require significant public investment; however, philanthropy still has a critical role to play, such as seeding innovative pilots that unlock larger flows of public finance.

From 2021 to 2024, $710 million (28%) in total tracked foundation funding for adaptation and resilience went toward efforts that were global or transnational in scope. During this same period, the largest share of funding directed toward a single region went to efforts in Africa, followed by the United States and Canada. Meanwhile, all of Asia and Oceania received less than 10% of total funding, despite being home to more than half of the world's population.

Given the significant gap in overall adaptation finance needs, all geographies and sectors face significant gaps in philanthropic funding — even those currently receiving the most.

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**Figure 3. Top-funded sectors for foundation funding to adaptation and resilience, 2021 to 2024**

# Spotlights

SPOTLIGHT ONE

## Adaptation and resilience in Latin America

Latin American countries are facing intensifying climate change and extreme weather, which underscores the urgent need for progress on adaptation and resilience. In 2024, for example, drought-induced wildfires swept across Bolivia's eastern Chiquitanía region — forcing families to flee their homes, confront food shortages, face long-term health risks, and experience the destruction of their agricultural livelihoods. Meanwhile, in northern Colombia, Indigenous Wayuu migrants found their compact dwellings submerged as erratic storms and floods battered informal settlements in the winter of 2024.

Adaptation and resilience efforts in Latin America are significantly underfunded. Between 2021 and 2024, less than 3% of overall foundation funding for adaptation went to Latin America. Although half of that funding went to ecosystems and biodiversity, more is still needed given the critical importance of Latin America's vast rainforests and watersheds to global climate stability. Meanwhile, community-critical sectors such as health, disaster risk reduction, and water have been overlooked, leaving the needs of frontline communities severely under-resourced.

Brazil is a focal point for global climate action as the host of the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) and a steward of the Amazon, the world's largest carbon sink. However, a recent study from the Instituto Clima e Sociedade highlights significant gaps in climate mitigation and adaptation funding to Brazil. Around 80% of tracked climate finance (both philanthropic and development assistance) has gone to the Amazon biome, although more funding is still needed. Meanwhile, other critical regions and urban centers that face severe vulnerabilities to climate impacts remain neglected.

Philanthropy has supported locally led and community-based adaptation projects in Brazil that provide both ecological and social benefits. Conheça a Conexsus works alongside community enterprises to preserve and protect Brazilian forests while strengthening local livelihoods by providing microgrants and technical assistance to community enterprises building their businesses. Their efforts spotlight the catalytic role of philanthropy, in that relatively small amounts of money can shift incentives so producers can earn dignified livelihoods from forest-positive value chains instead of turning to extractive alternatives. Meanwhile, Fundo Casa Socioambiental provides philanthropic resources directly to grassroots groups across Brazil and Latin America by supporting projects on water security, disaster risk reduction, and ecosystem restoration. Through flexible, small-scale grants, Casa enables frontline organizations to implement locally grounded adaptation strategies that larger funders cannot easily reach.

These examples illustrate the types of investments that remain scarce in the region: those that deliver both ecological and human benefits and strengthen local, community-based adaptation.

SPOTLIGHT TWO

# Philanthropic foundations and adaptation funding

Foundations with diverse strategies and missions are sharpening their focus on adaptation and resilience. The rationale is clear: without resilient systems, climate shocks could undo existing progress in priority areas like health, food security, and poverty reduction.

**The Gates Foundation**, best known for its work on health and development, has committed $1.4 billion between 2022 and 2025 to help smallholder farmers adapt to climate stressors. This work is tightly linked to the foundation's long-standing focus on food security and agricultural development. However, it has been reframed through a resilience lens, with funding directed toward climate-resilient crops, digital innovations, and helping farmers withstand unpredictable rainfall and rising temperatures. By anchoring adaptation in its agricultural strategy, the foundation is demonstrating how climate resilience is fundamental to sustaining gains in poverty alleviation and nutrition. The Gates Foundation is also supporting efforts to tackle climate-sensitive diseases (including malaria and cholera) and to better understand and address the impact of extreme heat on women, newborn, and child health in low and middle-income countries.

**The Rockefeller Foundation** is a charitable organization that leverages advances in power, health, food, and finance to ensure everyone has good jobs, good food, good health, and more at a time when climate change's effects are taking lives and undermining livelihoods. This includes a $100 million commitment to reach 100 million children with regenerative school meals, an investment of $20 million for Invest in Our Future to accelerate climate-smart infrastructure development in the United States, and ongoing work to develop health systems that protect people from the dangers of extreme heat. In 2021, the Rockefeller Foundation made the biggest bet in its 112-year history, awarding $500 million to help launch the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet. The alliance's energy projects over the last four years will provide 10 million people with new and improved energy access, support over 2 million jobs, and avert 18 million tons of current and future $CO_2$ emissions.

**The India Climate Collaborative (ICC)** represents an emerging model that brings together domestic philanthropies and relevant actors to build a homegrown ecosystem for climate action. Adaptation remains a central priority, with resources channelled toward local solutions and digital public goods — from diagnostic tools that assess water stress at the village or watershed level, to data platforms tracking disaster losses, climate risks, and agroecological transitions. By investing in evidence generation, open data systems, and collaborative tools that help identify systemic adaptation gaps, the ICC demonstrates how mobilizing Indian capital and leadership can strengthen regional resilience and scale effective adaptation strategies.

Taken together, these examples reveal that foundations with different missions and approaches are converging on adaptation as a shared imperative. Their strategies demonstrate ways to integrate adaptation and resilience into existing priorities, rather than creating siloed workstreams.

# Conclusion

Families in flood-prone cities, farmers struggling with drought, and people facing intensifying heat and health emergencies are already living with the consequences of climate change. These challenges will only grow even more severe with any further delays or backsliding on climate mitigation. Together, these realities are a defining test of our time, and underscore that adaptation and resilience are critical for communities working to withstand and thrive amid escalating climate impacts.

This landscape effort highlights that philanthropic investment in adaptation and resilience is growing year over year, and that field-wide collaboration is accelerating. Funders are not only increasing their commitments but also weaving adaptation into a broader range of strategies and committing to climate resilience as a strategic imperative for long-term impact.

Nonetheless, the immense funding needs for adaptation and resilience efforts continue to dwarf the scale and level of philanthropic action. The next several years will bring both greater pressure and opportunity for philanthropic leadership.

Ultimately, philanthropy has a unique and critical role to play. It can seed innovation, test emerging solutions, and support communities whose voices and needs are often overlooked. Philanthropy can also encourage adaptation finance to reach locally led institutions, ensuring resources reach the frontline communities closest to the challenges and solutions.

In parallel, philanthropy can build confidence and momentum for larger-scale investments from governments, the private sector, and multilateral institutions by supporting narratives grounded in strong data and evidence and by supporting efforts that demonstrate real potential for opportunity and growth. It can also catalyze larger capital flows through mechanisms that de-risk investments and demonstrate what is possible. Leaning into these strengths can help solidify adaptation as an essential dimension of philanthropy's broader portfolio for investment and impact.

Climate impacts cut across every portfolio and priority that philanthropy engages with, from maternal health to food security, and from renewable energy siting to economic opportunity. To safeguard these investments, philanthropy should embed climate-informed strategies throughout its work, ensuring they are resilient to both current and future impacts.

Now is the moment for philanthropy to act with more funding, adaptation and resilience strategies integrated across portfolio areas, and deeper learning and engagement. With bold action, philanthropy can help scale transformative, on-the-ground solutions and build a future where communities can thrive for generations to come.

## Actionable opportunities for funders

### 1

#### Expand and integrate adaptation investments

Embed a climate resilience lens across existing strategies — from health and food security to infrastructure and finance — and direct adaptation investments where climate risks are highest.

### 2

#### Connect and learn with other funders

Participate in initiatives like the Adaptation & Resilience Collaborative for Funders (ARC) to learn, share insights, and catalyze greater adaptation investment.

### 3

#### Deepen collective insight

Help improve visibility across the philanthropy community and unlock insights into adaptation. Foundations or intermediaries can participate in the growth of this funding landscape by reaching out to ClimateWorks at adaptation@climateworks.org

# Appendix

## About the Adaptation and Resilience Collaborative for Funders (ARC)

At COP28 in Dubai, ClimateWorks Foundation and other leading funders launched a Call to Action to accelerate work on climate change adaptation. This report is a critical step to transparently and regularly share progress. Building on this effort, ClimateWorks has been working alongside other philanthropic organizations that are interested in scaling action on adaptation. ClimateWorks and other leading funders now run the Adaptation and Resilience Collaborative for Funders (ARC), a group of approximately 70 foundations of varying sizes and scopes that engage in shared learning to advance philanthropy's role in addressing the risks and impacts of climate change through dialogue and action.

If you are a funder interested in learning about ARC, please contact us at adaptation@climateworks.org.

## About ClimateWorks Foundation

ClimateWorks Foundation is a catalyst for accelerating climate progress, driving bold solutions that benefit people and the planet. We connect funders and implementing organizations worldwide to identify and scale transformative solutions across sectors and geographies, achieving faster, greater impact together. Since 2008, ClimateWorks has granted over $2 billion to more than 850 grantees across 50 countries, working with over 80 funders.

Learn more at www.climateworks.org.

## Methodology

This report provides a first-of-its-kind view of philanthropic funding flows to climate change adaptation and resilience efforts. It builds on a 2023 baseline survey and reflects data from more than 40 foundations that contributed information through direct participation.

The analysis reflects real-time foundation giving based on grant information from more than 40 leading climate foundations through publicly available materials and other sources that reflect trends as they are reported. In addition, we use publicly available materials from foundation websites and tax disclosure forms, as well as data collected by partners, to further contextualize the landscape.

Measures are taken to avoid double-counting. Analysis reflects annual payments, and whenever grant duration is unavailable, it is assumed to be one year, and the full commitment amount is shown in the first year. Numbers are revisited as new data are added to the dataset, so they may vary between editions or other A&R funding landscape outputs. Numbers under $3 million were rounded to the nearest $100,000, numbers under $30 million were rounded to the nearest $1 million, and numbers above $30 million were rounded to the nearest $5 million.

The information in this report was last updated in September 2025. It represents the largest known collection of A&R philanthropic funding to date and reflects a significant share of the overall landscape. While it does not capture every philanthropic dollar globally, it offers a robust view of the field and is designed to reflect where the majority of adaptation-specific funding is currently going. We anticipate expanding the scope and geographic representation of the landscape in the future, especially by increasing participation from foundations based in the global majority and institutions funding locally led efforts.

## A&R Funding Taxonomy

To meaningfully analyze funding flows, all grants were tagged using a newly developed adaptation and resilience taxonomy tailored to the needs of the philanthropic ecosystem. The taxonomy was developed to reflect global philanthropic strategies and to align with existing frameworks used by multilateral organizations, philanthropy, and organizations in the field. The taxonomy includes 15 parent categories and other child categories capturing interventions. The development of the taxonomy included extensive reviews of existing taxonomies across sectors and institutions (e.g., the Sharm El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda, UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, ASAP Adaptation Solutions Taxonomy, CAKE sectoral taxonomy, Tailwind Taxonomy for Climate Adaptation and Resilience Activities), incorporation of the 2023 adaptation survey frameworks, iterative testing using real-world grant data provided by ARC participants, and multiple rounds of internal and subject-matter expert feedback. Grant data submitted were reviewed and tagged through team assessment of data content to determine definitional qualification, primary field tagging, and cross-cutting tags when applicable.

The A&R taxonomy development is an ongoing effort designed to evolve with the field itself. Future iterations of this report will be reflective of clearer definitions, more consistent data formatting, and a broader set of contributors. The taxonomy itself will continue to evolve based on how it performs in practice and as more foundations engage with adaptation strategies in diverse ways.

## Figure 4. Taxonomy: Sectors and Strategies

| | |
|---|---|
| Ecosystems & Biodiversity | This category includes work on marine and coastal, terrestrial, and freshwater ecosystems; biodiversity and wildlife; forestry and land management; and other ecosystem-based adaptation. |
| Infrastructure | This category includes work on resilient buildings, energy systems, and transportation; and nature-based (green) and other resilient hard (grey) infrastructure. |
| Agriculture & Food Systems | This category includes work on climate-smart agriculture, resilient fishing and aquaculture, food security and nutrition, resilient supply chains, and other activities focused on food systems and agricultural adaptation. |
| Health | This category includes work on public health services, disease management, pollution and environmental health, and other resilient health and healthcare services activities. |
| Disaster Risk Management | This category includes work on disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action, disaster response, post-disaster recovery, and other disaster risk reduction and management activities. |
| Economy & Livelihoods | This category includes work on workforce and enterprise development, labor, poverty, livelihoods, industry, tourism and recreation, and other activities focused on economic resilience. |
| Social Systems | This category includes work on migration and resettlement, peace and security, equity and justice, cultural and natural heritage, and other activities focused on communities and social systems. |
| Water | This category includes work on water resources management, resilient water infrastructure, resilient sanitation and hygiene, and other activities focused on resilient water systems. |
| Cities & Human Settlements | This category includes work on urban planning and management, community-based adaptation, and other activities focused on resilient cities and human settlements. |
| Core & General | This category includes core funding and work that is adaptation and resilience-focused without identifiable information. |
| General Adaptation | This category includes general or cross-cutting adaptation work. |

## Table 1. Regional taxonomy

| Region | Description |
|---|---|
| **Africa** | This region includes all subregions within Africa.<br>Countries: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Western Sahara, Zambia, and Zimbabwe |
| **Europe** | This region includes all of Europe, both EU and non-EU countries.<br>Countries: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Vatican City |
| **Middle East & Central Asia** | This region includes Russia and countries in the Middle East and Central Asia.<br>Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Georgia, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Yemen |
| **Asia & Oceania** | This region includes countries in Asia and Oceania other than China, India, and Indonesia, which, due to historical funding patterns and emissions levels, are broken out as stand-alone regions in the data.<br>Countries: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vietnam |
| **Latin America** | This region includes the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America, excluding Brazil, which, due to historical funding patterns and emissions levels, is broken out as a stand-alone region in the data.<br>Countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela |
| **U.S. & Canada** | This region includes the United States and Canada. |
| **Global** | This region represents funding with a global or transnational focus, work occurring in countries included in multiple regions, or both. |
| **Other/Unknown** | This region represents funding for which the region is unknown. |

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