



Regional Agroecology Funds in West and Eastern Africa



AGROECOLOGY
FUND

African Agroecology Funds: Decentralized and Trust-Based Philanthropy



The Regional Agroecology Funds in West and Eastern Africa are financing mechanisms and facilitate learning exchanges to support agroecology networks and organizations which form the core of Africa's agroecology movements.

The purposes of the Funds are to:

- Offer donors a simple way to fund grassroots organizations, networks, and emerging enterprises that are critical to scaling agroecology up and out across Africa.
- Ensure that organizations representing Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth receive sufficient support to advance agroecology and uphold their rights.
- Support grantee organizations in monitoring their progress against their sought outcomes.
- Contribute to regional learning, and to knowledge generation and exchange, to deepen grassroots evidence for agroecology, and to adjust and improve strategies for scaling up agroecology.



Why Regional Funds?

Establishing regional agroecology funds in West and Eastern Africa is central to the Agroecology Fund's strategy to strengthen agroecology movements and deepen their territorial impacts.

The strategy is relevant to any donor whose theory of change embraces the power of community-based change processes.

The scaling up and out of agroecology is premised on the active leadership of diverse grassroots actors, actors that donor organizations often face challenges in supporting. Regional funds give bilateral and multilateral agencies, as well as private philanthropists, an opportunity to jointly fund inclusive and rights-based initiatives rooted in agroecology principles that support impacts as diverse as food security, food sovereignty, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience. Regional funds are also operating in the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico (Fondo Agroecológico para la Península de Yucatán FAPY) and in India (the Bharat Agroecology Fund - BAF).

The unique value proposition of the regional funds is their participatory approach to grantmaking and knowledge co-creation, based on the Agroecology Fund's approach globally. The grantmaking process is led by locally-embedded advisors, with separate boards in West and Eastern Africa. The two regional funds will also act as facilitators of learning communities through which grantees can share strategies, as well as document and present the impacts of their work on the ground, thus contributing to a global body of evidence for agroecology (building on the Agroecology Fund's Grassroots Evidence for Agroecology Initiative). Learning communities are core to our approach to participatory and trust-based monitoring and evaluation.



West and Eastern Africa Contexts: Opportunities and Threats

Across Africa, agroecology has become a vast movement, growing on the evidence that the Green Revolution for Africa, with its heavily funded promotion of monocultures, commercial seeds and synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, has failed to help Africa's families and its smallholder farmers flourish. As soil degradation deepens, poverty, malnutrition and outmigration accelerate.

African creativity is abundant. Proven agroforestry techniques such as farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) have been essential to recover soils and biodiversity in the Sahel. **Youth and women-led agroecological enterprises anchor a growing network of small businesses built around strengthened local markets.**

Donors can support grassroots processes already underway to solve Africa's pressing food system challenges. For example, farmer field schools and powerful women's networks across the regions, some affiliated with research institutes, are experimenting with reviving Indigenous plant varieties and other regenerative practices to make the region's agriculture more productive and climate resilient. In work supported by the Agroecology Fund's Grassroots Evidence for Agroecology Initiative, farmer networks are documenting their evidence and deploying creative communications strategies to influence strategic audiences. **Peer-to-peer sharing of local knowledge is a foundation of an agroecological renaissance.**

And yet, perverse incentives and policies that undermine Africa's soils, diets and food sovereignty persist through subsidies, trade regimes and opaque public budgets. Grassroots advocacy has been successful in pushing forward national agroecology and climate plans, resisting land grabs and encouraging municipal leadership to open up accessible agroecology markets. **Africa's agroecology movements collaborate with diverse food systems actors and are critical changemakers. They need our support!!**



Regional Funds Anchored in African Institutions and Advisors

To manage the West and Eastern Africa Regional Agroecology Funds, the Agroecology Fund has initiated a partnership with TrustAfrica. TrustAfrica brings to the table an excellent administrative capacity to oversee the grant process, as well as valuable insights and linkages with local grassroots organizations, networks, and movements. Funding recommendations will be made by expert, on-the-ground advisors from the region who are embedded in local agroecology movements. Representation by women, Indigenous People and youth will be core to the Fund's governance. Resources will be extended not only to established non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and legalized civil society organizations, but also to informal cooperatives, collective associations, and social enterprises. Such grassroots bodies are in most cases underfunded, yet they are essential to scale agroecology up and out.

With an eye towards collaboration across sectors, the Funds will be guided by a landscape analysis of: a) funding streams and programs for agroecology offered by diverse donor agencies; and, b) civil society organizations and public programs working towards agroecological solutions to pressing nutrition, climate and human rights challenges.

Advisors and donors to the Regional Agroecology Funds in West and Eastern Africa will craft grantmaking priorities and establish the structure and governance of the fund to prominently elevate the active leadership of grassroots organizations and networks.



Africa Regional Fund Advisors

WEST AFRICA

Batamaka Somé

Batamaka Somé is an anthropologist, farm entrepreneur, and research consultant based in Burkina Faso. He serves as the West Africa Regional Representative for the McKnight Foundation's Global Collaboration for Resilient Food Systems. With over 20 years of experience in agriculture, gender, and rural development, he has worked on food systems, nutrition security, and climate adaptation among pastoralists. Dr. Some previously held senior roles with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the UN World Food Programme and has consulted for USAID, UNDP, ILRI, Mercy Corps, AWARD, Root Capital, and KIT. Before his philanthropy work, he spent sixteen years teaching. He holds degrees from the University of Ouagadougou and a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Ibironke Olubamise

Ibironke Olubamise is the pioneer National Coordinator of the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) in Nigeria, implemented by UNDP. She manages one of the largest SGP country programmes globally, providing strategic oversight, coordinating governance structures, and guiding country strategies across GEF phases. With over 30 years of experience in conservation, environmental management, and grant administration, she has supported 150+ civil society organizations to implement 220 projects in 240 communities across 30 states. A Chevening Scholar and LEAD Fellow, she previously held senior leadership roles at the Nigerian Conservation Foundation and coordinated Nigeria's Community-Based REDD+ Programme.



Jeanne Zoundjhehpon

Jeanne Zoundjhehpon is an independent scientist and long-time advocate for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation in West Africa. Over several decades, she has collaborated with civil society organizations on projects including GMO assessment and regulation, and supervised research on the sexual reproduction of yams in Benin's agroecological zones. A founding member of JINUKUN and COPAGEN, she has contributed to regional networks promoting sustainable biodiversity use. In 2023, Jeanne published *YAM, WORTHY PLANT WITH PLURAL FUTURE*, sharing over 30 years of research on African yam genetic resources. She continues to advance biodiversity science and sustainable practices across West Africa.



Dr. Seyni Bodo Bachirou

Dr. Seyni Bodo Bachirou is an agro-eco-pedologist and lecturer-researcher at Boubakar Bâ University of Tillabéri, specializing in territorial agroecology. He holds a joint PhD in soil science and agro-pedology from the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne and Abdou Moumouni University of Niamey. With over a decade of experience, his work focuses on agroecology, soil heterogeneity, land degradation and restoration, soil carbon and water dynamics, and circular bio-nutrient systems through organic waste valorisation. He co-coordinates the AgrOW project, funded by the McKnight Foundation, and supports national agroecology strategies in Niger. He also founded Initiative Pour l'Arbre, a civic movement promoting agroecology and environmental resilience.



EAST AFRICA

Marie Laure Mpeck

Marie-Laure Mpeck Nyemeck is the UNDP/Small Grants Programme Regional Technical Advisor for Africa, supporting 40 countries across the continent, and also serves as the Land Management Programme Advisor for the SGP. She brings over 25 years of experience in natural resources management for sustainable development, working in partnership with civil society organizations, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and governments. Previously, she worked with the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). Marie-Laure holds a Ph.D. in Natural Resources Management (Agroforestry and Tree Domestication) from the University of Yaoundé I.



Mutizwa Mukute

Mutizwa Mukute is a consultant, researcher, and evaluator with over 34 years of experience addressing social-ecological challenges and opportunities. He has led participatory action research, change-oriented evaluations, and policy initiatives across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, focusing on agrifood systems, natural resources, biodiversity, sustainable cities, climate change, and governance. He has consulted for the International Science Council, UNESCO, FAO, Adaptation Fund, Climate Investment Funds, Global Environment Facility, Oxfam, the Oak Foundation, and the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa. Mutizwa serves as Co-Chair of the Prolinnova Oversight Group, Regional Advisor to the Agroecology Fund's Eastern Africa Regional Fund, and Executive Board Secretary of the International Society for Cultural-Historical Activity Research (ISCAR). He holds a PhD in Environmental Education from Rhodes University, South Africa.



Sylvia Kuria

Sylvia Kuria is a Kenyan smallholder organic farmer, entrepreneur, and advocate for community empowerment with over 15 years of experience. Starting on a half-acre family plot, she expanded to 15 acres while deepening her commitment to sustainable farming. In 2016, she founded Sylvia's Basket, delivering fresh organic produce to households, later operating a retail shop, and in 2024 establishing an aggregation hub that now partners with 50+ farmers and supplies over five tons of organic produce monthly. Passionate about knowledge-sharing, Sylvia trains farmers in organic practices and market access, empowering them to transition successfully to sustainable livelihoods.



Milka Chepkorir

Milka Chepkorir is an Indigenous woman from the Sengwer community of Cherang'any Hills, Kenya, dedicated to defending her community's ancestral lands in the Embobut and Kabolet forests. She advocates for Indigenous land rights, gender inclusion, and cultural preservation, working with women and elders to safeguard knowledge and traditions through initiatives like a community cultural centre. Milka coordinates the "Defending Territories of Life" program for Africa at the ICCA Consortium and previously led Community Land Action NOW! (CLAN). She is actively engaged in international policy processes advancing Indigenous Peoples' rights to land, resources, clean water, and a healthy environment.



Kevin Teopista AKOYI (PhD)

Kevin Teopista has a PhD in Bio-Science Engineering (Agricultural and Development economics). She is an agricultural economist with over 30 years of experience across Africa, Asia, and Latin America in agricultural and rural development. She has worked in government, academia, and NGOs on research, programme design, and implementation, with a strong focus on smallholder farmers. Her expertise spans food security, value chain development, organisational strengthening, and food systems transformation, with an emphasis on gender, sustainability, and agroecology in the context of climate change. Kevin has also led research and policy analysis on food systems and sustainable development, contributing to national and international efforts to advance equitable policies for smallholder farmers.



The Agroecology Fund's Track Record in Africa

In 2025, the Agroecology Fund supported grassroots organizations' work in agroecology across Africa through EARAF and WARAF, awarding a total of **\$1,419,300** across **34 grants**.

Region	# Grants	Amount
EARAF (East Africa)	17	\$689,300
WARAF (West Africa)	17	\$730,000
Subtotal	34	\$1,419,300





About the Agroecology Fund

The Agroecology Fund is a multi-donor fund supporting agroecological practices and policies. We work at the intersection of food sovereignty, biodiversity conservation, and climate justice to support food producers, researchers, and movement builders working across the globe to strengthen agroecology-based food systems.

In 2025, the Agroecology Fund awarded 101 medium-term grants through its global grantmaking program, including 27 renewals and 74 new collaboratives. An additional 35 small grants were made, while the regional funds awarded 106 grants. The total 2025 grantmaking budget reached \$14.2 million, representing a 14.2% increase compared to 2024. The top five recipient countries were India, Mexico, Brazil, Kenya, and Cameroon. Of the medium-term grants, 24% supported initiatives led by women, Indigenous Peoples, or youth-led organisations, and 90% of FAPY's funding supported Indigenous Peoples' initiatives.





Join the Movement

Promoting agroecology as a solution to global and regional food insecurity, poverty, biodiversity loss, soil and water degradation, and other problems linked to climate change requires a powerful network of allies.

Many donors miss out on the opportunity to support the rich innovations and creativity of front-line agroecology organizations and networks scaling up agroecology across West and Eastern Africa. Generous donors have seed funded both the West and Eastern Africa Regional Agroecology Funds. **We seek to further capitalize the funds so that we can support the remarkable array of agroecology work underway across Africa. Restricted funds are welcome to either Fund.**

If you are interested in becoming involved in the Regional Agroecology Funds in West and Eastern Africa, please email us:

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