

SOUTH
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NORTH

ANNUAL
REPORT
2025

SOUTH SOUTH NORTH

SouthSouthNorth (SSN) is a non-profit organisation that advances transformative climate-resilient development in the Global South by strengthening resilient systems, enabling inclusive finance, mobilising knowledge, and supporting multi-level governance.

This annual report covers the period January 2025 to January 2026.

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A WORD FROM THE DIRECTORS

This Annual Report is a first for SouthSouthNorth (SSN) and changes the manner of how we think and talk about our work. With the release of our [2025–2030 Strategy](#), this report is not just a catalogue of the past year, but a work in progress across the sector to bring the account of what we do and how we do it.

The year is analysed in an environment of growing uncertainty. The global consensus that has, at times, underpinned climate action looks more brittle, even as the urgency of the challenge becomes clearer. Under such conditions, the importance of steady grounded work is crucial. We have continued to build climate-resilient development in the Global South that is tangible, based on partnership, and focused on questions of equity and justice.

Within the organisation, 2025 has also been a year of change internally. As many of the established programmes are nearing completion and new areas of work emerge, we have been cognisant of the need to deepen the organisation. It has resulted in more clearly defined alignment with our strategy, clearer methodologies when exploring new possibilities and further investment into systems and processes that enable our ability to deliver. These are not theoretical enhancements but are real changes required to keep SSN working and relevant in an environment undergoing transformation.

A recurring trend becomes clear throughout our work. Much of what we do sits at the intersection of various actors and systems—bridging policy with implementation, linking finance to frontline experience, translating knowledge into action. This intermediary position is not always obvious, but it is very significant. It demands we move across hierarchies, represent competing viewpoints, and make certain that the perspectives, concerns and needs of those who are hardest put by climate change are not lost when decisions are taken.

At the heart of this work is collaboration. Experience tells us that the outcomes are most powerful when there is clarity of purpose and mutual accountability, and trust is established and sustained. We have therefore become more purposeful about what we engage in—where we spend our time, with whom we convene, how we organise, and where we contribute. This is not a matter of doing more, it is about doing what matters with more intention.

We also know that the organisation needs to be able to keep up with the ambition of our work. The advances that we achieved this year in building and strengthening our internal skills and our internal capability, including people, systems and ways of working, all make us more prepared for the future. Organisational resilience is not optional here in a world where volatility will be expected to continue.

In the meantime, this report is the output of a faithful group whose members and partners deal with complexity in the best and most professional way possible. For these, as an organisation, the credibility and impact of our work is retained.

There is a clear plan going forward. The context will change, and we need to adjust to it. What should not change is our intent: to advance climate-resilient pathways focused on development; and to do so in a way that is practical, collaborative and attuned to the realities of the Global South.

Sincerely,

The Directors of SouthSouthNorth



JOSH OGADA



SHEHNAAZ MOOSA



ROBI REDDA



CARL WESSELINK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SSN advances transformative climate-resilient development in the Global South by working across interconnected systems of resilience, finance, knowledge, and governance. In 2025, the organisation translated its 2025–2030 Strategy into practice, strengthening its role as an intermediary that connects global ambition with locally grounded action and supports more equitable and effective climate responses.

Operating across 45 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, through 27 active programmes, SSN managed more than ZAR¹ 580 million (approximately EUR 29 million, GBP 25 million, or USD 34 million) in 2025. SSN continued to mobilise and manage substantial financial and technical resources, working with a wide network of partners to deliver impact at scale. This reach reflects not only the organisation’s footprint, but also its ability to navigate complex systems and align diverse actors around shared climate and development objectives.

Across its work, SSN contributed to strengthening resilient social and ecological systems by supporting approaches that deliver tangible benefits for people, livelihoods, and ecosystems. This included enabling more context-responsive solutions, strengthening local capacities to respond to climate risks, and contributing to policy and practice environments that better recognise the interconnected nature of social and ecological resilience. The result is a growing body of evidence and experience showing how locally grounded action can inform and influence wider systems.

In the area of climate finance, SSN contributed to shaping more inclusive and responsive financial systems while improving the ability of local actors to access and use resources effectively. Through its intermediary role, the organisation helped bridge the gap between global finance and frontline needs, supporting more equitable flows of funding and strengthening the systems, relationships, and capacities required to sustain climate action over time. This has contributed to stronger alignment between financial mechanisms and the realities of climate vulnerability and development priorities in the Global South.

SSN also strengthened capabilities, innovation, and knowledge systems by ensuring that evidence is not only generated, but applied. By facilitating learning, exchange, and collaboration across contexts, the organisation supported governments, practitioners, and communities to make more informed decisions and adopt more effective approaches. This has helped to embed knowledge within systems and institutions, increasing their ability to respond to evolving climate challenges.

1 All financial values in this report are presented in South African Rand (ZAR), the currency of SSN’s home country. Given SSN’s global partnerships, adopting any single external currency could imply unintended alignment in a complex and shifting geopolitical context. Using ZAR reflects a neutral, consistent reporting approach, while also aligning with SSN’s commitment to centring Global South perspectives and leadership.

In advancing inclusive multi-level governance, SSN contributed to more connected and representative decision-making processes. By linking local experience with national and global platforms, and by supporting the participation of a wider range of actors, the organisation helped ensure that climate decisions are better informed by diverse perspectives and grounded realities. This has strengthened the credibility, accountability, and effectiveness of governance processes, particularly in amplifying the voice and agency of the Global South in multilateral spaces.

Across all these areas, SSN's value lies in its ability to work across boundaries, connecting systems that are often fragmented. Its approach enables policy, finance, knowledge, and implementation to reinforce one another, creating conditions for more coherent and sustained impact.

The year also marked a period of organisational strengthening and transition. SSN invested in its internal systems, structures, and ways of working to improve coherence, alignment, and effectiveness, while actively positioning itself for a changing funding and geopolitical landscape. This has laid the foundation for a more resilient and adaptive organisation, capable of sustaining and scaling its impact.

Overall, 2025 reflects an organisation that is not only delivering results, but also strengthening the systems that underpin long-term change. By bridging global and local dynamics, mobilising resources, and supporting inclusive and context-responsive approaches, SSN continues to contribute to a more just and climate-resilient future.



Photo credit - Nina Pretorius, SSN (AfCAP programme), Kenya ©

OUR STORY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

HISTORY AND ORIGINS

Dr. Hélène Connor, a French economist and Founder of HELIO International became SSN's Director of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

Emilio La Rovere, a Brazilian Academic at COPPE Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, became one of SSN's Technical Directors.

Steve Thorne, a South African engineer and researcher at the University of Cape Town, became one of SSN's Technical Directors.

Stefan Raubenheimer, a South African with a background in legal and development facilitation skills, was nominated SSN's CEO.

Prof. Ogunlade Davidson, co-chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Mitigation Working Group, became chair of the board.

SSN emerged at a formative moment in the evolution of global climate policy. In late 1999, during an intersessional meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn, Hélène Connor, Emilio La Rovere, Steve Thorne, and Stefan Raubenheimer came together around a shared challenge: As the [Clean Development Mechanism \(CDM\)](#) under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol was still being negotiated, they questioned how climate projects in developing countries could be assessed not only for emissions reductions, but also for their contribution to sustainable development.

Commissioned by HELIO International, Steve and Emilio developed a [set of criteria and indicators](#) to evaluate these contributions and presented them at a UNFCCC side event. The idea resonated. With support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the concept moved from theory to practice, and SSN was founded as a civil society partnership reflecting a “South–South–North” climate and development paradigm.

SSN brought together institutions across Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia to test real projects on the ground. Early work focused on mitigation, later expanding into adaptation, technology and capacity development across Southern Africa. Flagship initiatives included the [Kuyasa project](#), the first CDM project registered in Africa and the first Gold Standard project globally.

By the end of the 2000s, SSN had evolved into a trusted partner in climate and development, working with governments, multilateral institutions and foundations. From a single meeting in Bonn, SSN grew into an organisation committed to ensuring that climate action delivers meaningful, equitable and lasting development outcomes in the Global South.

WHY “SOUTHSOUTHNORTH”?

The name reflects a deliberate shift in how climate and development cooperation was understood at the time of the organisation’s founding. It signalled a move away from traditional “North–South” models, emphasising instead the value of collaboration, learning and innovation originating in the Global South, shared across Southern contexts, and then engaging the North as a partner rather than a driver. The name captures a core belief that effective climate solutions are rooted in local realities, strengthened through South–South exchange, and amplified through equitable global cooperation.

STRATEGY 2025–2030 IN FOCUS

Last year, 25 years after its founding, SSN published its first organisational [strategy](#), focused on defining our organisational vision, mission and strategic objectives for 2025–2030.¹

As part of our strategy for the current five-year cycle, we are focusing on four impact areas, which work together to enable climate-resilient development:

1. Resilient social and ecological systems in a changing climate.
2. Transformed financial systems that facilitate appropriate and inclusive access to finance.
3. Strengthened capabilities through innovation, learning and leveraging diverse knowledge systems.
4. Inclusive multi-level governance that reflects the interests and meaningful contributions of those in the Global South.

“ **SouthSouthNorth (SSN) envisions a just and resilient world where people and ecosystems can thrive. In support of this vision, our mission is to accelerate transformative climate-resilient development in the Global South. For SSN, justice underpins truly transformative change, cutting across all our efforts to shape a resilient future.** ”

— SSN’s Strategy 2025–2030

Flourishing social and ecological systems are the foundation of sustainable livelihoods, climate protection, and the well-being of people and nature. Building these systems requires transforming how finance flows, especially to reach those who need it most on the frontlines of the climate crisis, and leveraging our collective and diverse capabilities, innovation and knowledge within inclusive governance systems where no one is left behind.

¹ The summary image of SSN’s Theory of Change is available in the Appendices.

THIS ANNUAL REPORT

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Following the publication of SSN's first organisational strategy in 2025, this inaugural annual report represents the next step in articulating and consolidating SSN's work, impact and strategic direction. Its purpose is to communicate key achievements, organisational learnings and emerging insights from the past year to our partners, funders and stakeholders, strengthening transparency, accountability and confidence in our approaches. Highlighting our capabilities, ways of working and core values reinforces partnerships and builds a shared understanding of how SSN delivers impact. Internally, the report provides a structured reflection on the year's work, enabling SSN personnel to assess alignment with SSN's strategy, identify opportunities for improvement and ensure that future initiatives continue to advance organisational goals.

To support this reflection, the report draws on evidence from SSN's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes. In 2025, programmes operated within individual MEL frameworks shaped by donor requirements, partner preferences and programme-specific needs. To improve coherence and promote cross-programme learning, SSN initiated the development of a centralised organisational MEL framework, aligning data collection with our Strategy 2025-2030. As a result, the findings in this report combine programme-level insights with a consolidated view of organisational performance, offering a solid foundation for reflection and future planning.

SETTING THE SCENE

The 2025 reporting period unfolded in a global context marked by increasing fragmentation in the political, societal and economic consensus on climate action. As alliances shifted and pathways for collective action became more complex, SSN's work of building relationships, influencing systems, and driving change became more intentional. Against this backdrop, SSN's core impact areas remained both constant and increasingly urgent, guiding our efforts to advance just and transformative climate-resilient development.

At the same time, 2025 represented a period of transition and renewal for SSN. With several long-standing programmes approaching completion in 2026, and a rapidly evolving funding and geopolitical landscape, the organisation took deliberate steps to reposition itself. By strengthening internal systems, sharpening strategic alignment, and fostering greater organisational coherence, SSN laid the foundation for a more diversified, resilient and unified portfolio—one that enables us to navigate uncertainty while continuing to deliver meaningful impact across the Global South.

OUR WORK IN 2025

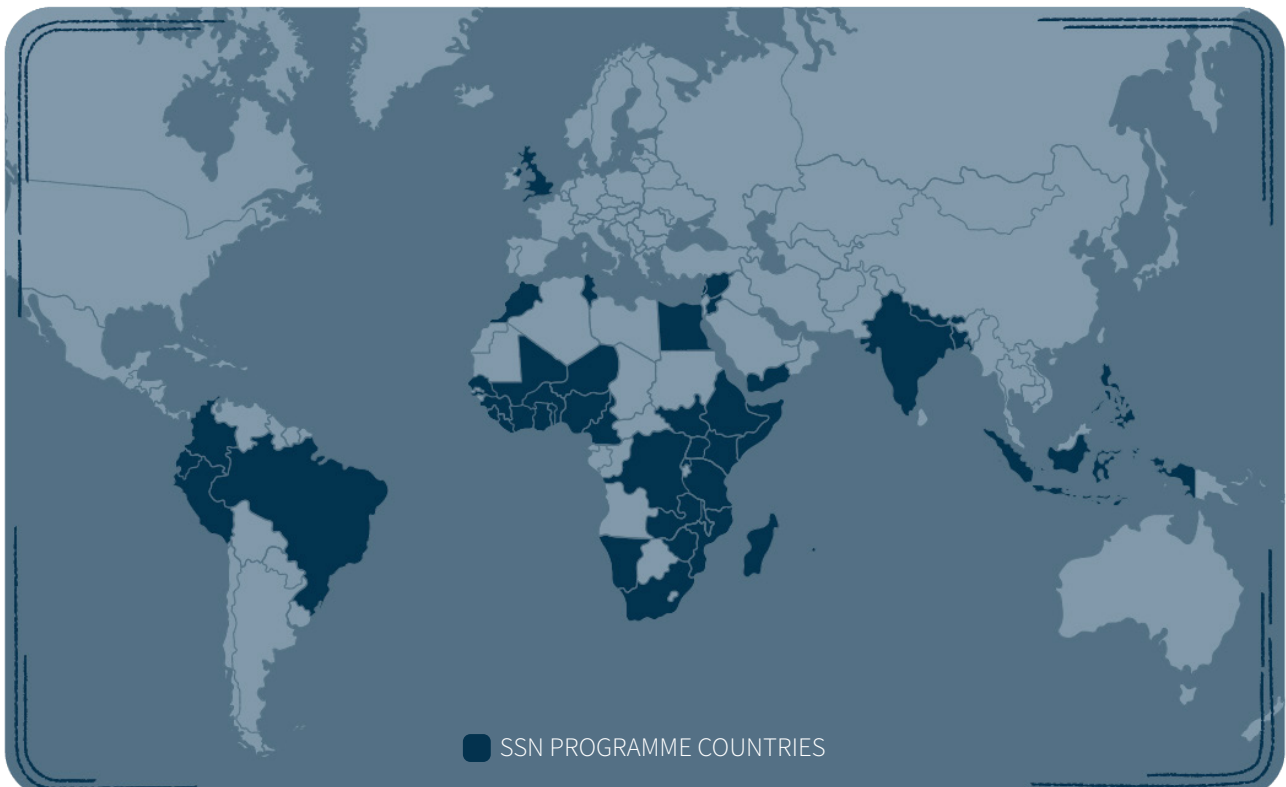
2025 AT A GLANCE

HIGH-LEVEL NUMBERS

27ACTIVE
PROGRAMMES**45**COUNTRIES
ENGAGED**35+**PROGRAMME
DELIVERY
PARTNERS**580+ MILLION**TOTAL VALUE IN ZAR MANAGED BY
SSN FOR ALL PROGRAMMES ACTIVE
IN 2025 (CURRENT PHASES ONLY)

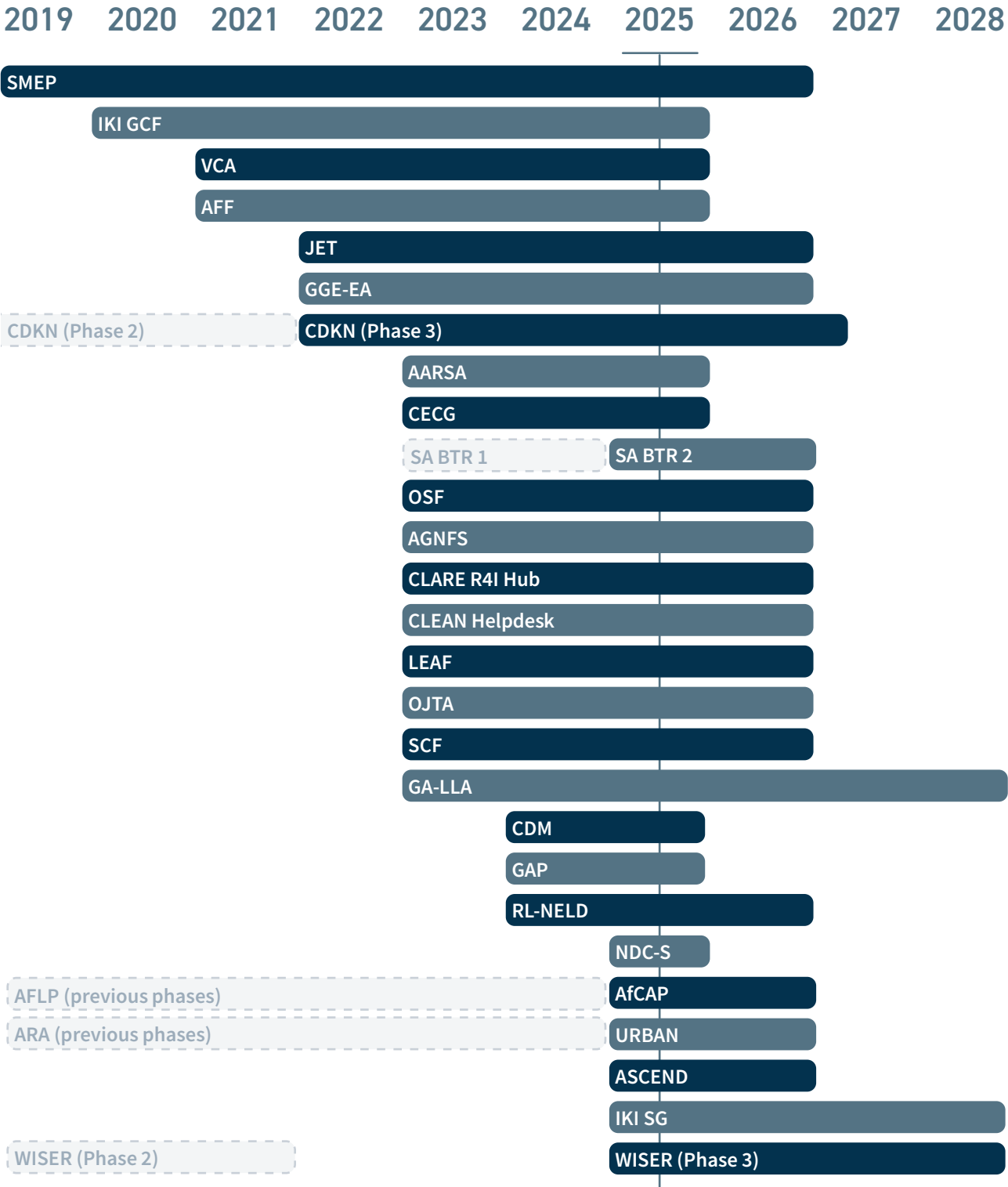
GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT

In 2025, SSN advanced its work across multiple regions and contexts through our programmes, showcasing SSN's role as a bridge between global frameworks and local realities. This geographic diversity enabled cross-regional learning and the advancement of context-specific climate solutions.



TIMELINE OF ACTIVE PROGRAMMES

This timeline provides an overview of active programmes in 2025, all contributing to both SSN's immediate outcomes and longer-term strategic objectives. Where relevant, previous phases of the programme are also shown. Detailed programme information, including full programme names, funders, and total values, is available in the Appendices.



PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

These flagship programmes showcase SSN's strategic approach in 2025, varying in scope and focus, but each contributing strategically to one or more of SSN's four impact areas. The boxes below highlight the total value managed directly by SSN over the current phase of these flagship programmes (as shown on the timeline).

African Climate Action Partnership (AfCAP)

ZAR 9.5 Million | United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) with Windward Fund (for the RICE CoP); formerly funded by National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

AfCAP is a pan-African partnership advancing low-emission, climate-resilient development by connecting governments, civil society, and the private sector across 40 countries through peer learning, knowledge exchange, and capacity strengthening.

Featured mechanism: Facilitating linkages through Communities of Practice (CoPs), e.g. supporting capacities in the livestock sector for evidence-based climate targets, and measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV).

Aligning Financial Flows with the Paris Agreement in Africa (AFF)

ZAR 18.9 Million | BMU International Climate Initiative (IKI)

AFF supports African countries to align financial systems and investment flows with low-emission, climate-resilient development to align with Article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement.

Featured mechanism: Research, convening high-level technical dialogues with senior African negotiators, policymakers, climate fund representatives, development banks, and civil society leaders, and directly informing policy and finance decision-making at the UNFCCC meetings and negotiations.

ARA Unlocking Resilience through Bottom-up Action-research and Multi-Scalar Networks (URBAN)

ZAR 3.3 Million | UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

URBAN strengthens climate resilience in rapidly urbanising cities across Africa and Asia by combining locally led action-research, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and scalable urban solutions.

Featured mechanism: Urban Labs, locally led co-creation spaces that bring together communities, governments, and researchers to collaboratively design, test, and scale context-specific climate resilience solutions in cities.

Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)

ZAR 170 Million | International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA)

CDKN supports locally led, financed, and ecosystem-based responses to climate change across Africa, Asia, and Latin America through knowledge brokering, capability strengthening, and financial support.

Featured mechanism: Five Knowledge-to-Action (K2A) grants of USD 150,000 each that mobilise local and Indigenous knowledge for community-led and ecosystem-based adaptation empowering diverse groups—especially women, youth and Indigenous People.

Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CLARE) Research for Impact (R4I) Hub

ZAR 72 Million | UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

The CLARE R4I Hub, hosted by SSN, helps turn climate adaptation research into action through cross-project coordination, capability strengthening, knowledge brokering, and the amplification of evidence in policy and decision-making processes.

Featured mechanism: Opportunities Fund, which distributed USD 1 million across 22 demand-led opportunities in Africa and Asia-Pacific, enabling the uptake of existing research to inform science-based decision-making.

Climate, Environment, and Nature (CLEAN) Helpdesk

ZAR 84 Million | UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), with support from Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)

The CLEAN Helpdesk provides on-demand technical assistance to UK government officials on climate, environment and nature integration in ODA policy and programming.

Featured mechanism: *Demand-led technical assistance deployed rapidly to country offices and central teams, with 96% of users reporting they would integrate CLEAN's advice directly into their programme design.*

Generating Ambition for Locally Led Adaptation (GA-LLA)

ZAR 12.7 Million | IIED/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA)

The GA-LLA programme aims to align climate finance and policy with LLA Principles by strengthening local actors' capabilities, building trust through radical partnerships, and implementing accountability processes.

Featured mechanism: *Unique workshops bringing together financial institutions, local community representatives, and development practitioners to incorporate local priorities into adaptation investments (e.g. Bridging the Gap and Finance on the Frontlines workshops).*

Green Accountability Platform (GAP)

ZAR 5.2 Million | Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) Trust Fund

GAP helps communities and civil society in Africa, Latin America and South Asia hold decision-makers accountable for climate commitments by strengthening transparency, participation, and oversight in climate finance and policy processes.

Featured mechanism: *Community of Practice (CoP) convened and facilitated by SSN to connect civil society organisations across regions, enabling peer learning, shared accountability strategies, and collective action.*

Adaptation Assessments in the LEAF programme countries (LEAF)

ZAR 1 Million | African Development Bank (AfDB)

The LEAF Framework aims to unlock access to finance and local currency debt by derisking private-sector investments to grow Distributed and Decentralised Renewable Energy (DRE) businesses, such as solar home systems, green mini-grids, and commercial and industrial solutions.

Featured mechanism: *Adaptation Impact Assessment framework developed by SSN and Perspectives Climate Group to identify and quantify the climate adaptation benefits of DRE projects and inform future investment and project design.*

Nationally Determined Contributions Support (NDC-S)

ZAR 0.4 Million | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

The NDC-S programme supported the South African government throughout the public consultations that culminated in its revised national NDC, as required under the Paris Agreement.

Featured mechanism: Direct contribution to 'Section 6: Support and means of implementation as provided for in Articles 9, 10 and 11 of the Paris Agreement' of the NDC, aiding in clarifying South Africa's needs regarding finance, technology, capacity building, and institutional readiness for implementation.

Operationalising a Just Transition in Africa (OJTA)

ZAR 9 Million | International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

OJTA supports the operationalisation of just energy transitions by generating evidence, building practitioner capabilities, and informing climate finance and decision-making processes that integrate equity, inclusion, and justice considerations.

Featured mechanism: Developing the first African-centred and publicly accessible evidence database on just transitions, which compiles literature related to just transitions on the continent for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.

South Africa Biennial Transparency Report (SA BTR)

ZAR 9.7 Million | United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The SA BTR programme provides technical, strategic, and coordination support to the South African government to strengthen national transparency systems and produce credible BTRs that meet the country's commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Featured mechanism: Support to SA government officials, including capacity building, provision of technical guidance and consultant support services to meet UNFCCC reporting requirements and Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding requests.

Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution (SMEP)

ZAR 36.6 Million | UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), with UNCTAD

SMEP funds several pilot and research projects that address the environmental and human health impacts of the manufacturing sector in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Featured mechanism: Rigorous procurement process and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) structures, supporting a total of 27 pilot interventions through grant funding, capability strengthening, and amplification of results to scale projects and inform policy development.

Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA)

ZAR 76 Million | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA)

VCA strengthens climate justice by supporting civil society, grassroots organisations, and marginalised communities across Africa, Latin America, and Asia to influence climate policy, finance, and solutions through locally led action and coalition-building.

Featured mechanism: Next Level Grant Facility (NLGF), which provided 522 flexible grants (totalling over EUR 1.4 million), allowing communities and local allies to identify priorities and define solutions to climate change based on their local needs and insights.

2025 IMPACTS

In 2025, SSN translated its Strategy 2025–2030 into action across local, national, and international levels, advancing its four impact areas—resilient social and ecological systems, fair and accessible climate finance, strengthened capabilities, and inclusive multi-level governance. The following sections underscore progress across our four impact areas and highlight illustrative case studies that show immediate outcomes and early signals of longer-term impact, demonstrating how SSN’s combination of research, dialogue, partnership, and locally led action accelerates climate solutions, strengthens institutions, and channels resources to where they can make a measurable difference.

IMPACT AREA 1: RESILIENT SOCIAL & ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

Across our portfolio, SSN has played a pivotal role in fostering resilient social and ecological systems amidst a changing climate, in line with our organisational vision and long-term outcome framework. In 2025, this included supporting the creation of enabling conditions for resilience while generating tangible benefits for people, livelihoods, and ecosystems.



At the systemic level, SSN helped strengthen climate- and nature-positive resilience policies and practices by actively contributing to global, regional and local discussions across sectors such as agriculture, water, biodiversity and climate change. Through programmes including GAP, CDKN and SMEP, we engaged directly in official processes at the UNFCCC [subsidiary body meetings](#) and [Conference of the Parties \(COP\)](#), the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\) subsidiary body meetings](#), and the [UN Oceans Conference](#). This ensured that evidence and lessons derived from our programmes and partners informed wider discourse shaping national targets, plans and implementation strategies. In this manner, we supported the development of policy environments that recognise contextual complexities, leverage diverse knowledge systems and enable actions responsive to local realities—all of which are critical for building resilient social and ecological systems.

At a more localised scale, SSN provided support to governments, communities, and other key actors in implementing resilience initiatives that address both climate vulnerability and development priorities. Through initiatives such as GGE-EA, LEAF and OJTA, progress was made in advancing universal energy access in Africa, evaluating the adaptation benefits of distributed and decentralised renewable energy, fostering enabling environments for governments to action, and exploring what a just energy transition could look like in contexts where unintended consequences, such as job losses linked to the shift away from carbon-intensive energy generation, must be anticipated and addressed.

Through programmes such as the CLEAN Helpdesk, OJTA and NDC-S, SSN also delivered technical assistance and research support to governments in the UK and Africa to integrate climate, environmental and nature considerations into policy and programming. Importantly, this support embedded gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) as fundamental elements to just and inclusive resilience-building efforts, thereby enhancing alignment of resilience measures with differentiated needs and lived realities of marginalised groups.

Beyond government processes, SSN supported organisations and communities to adopt viable solutions and implementation models with more direct social and ecological benefits. Through CDKN, CLARE R4I Hub, OJTA, SMEP, URBAN and VCA, we combined knowledge and innovation brokering, capability strengthening, and grant funding to help actors test, refine and scale context-relevant responses. These programmes demonstrated that locally grounded climate action can deliver tangible improvements on the ground while also generating the evidence needed to influence wider policy, finance and practice.

The results were also measurable:

- Through CDKN, SSN supported ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) initiatives that strengthened environmental resilience alongside community livelihoods: 1,912 people benefited from improved river basin management and safer deltas, 237.98 hectares of agricultural land were restored or conserved, and four innovations were adopted to support healthier and more sustainable food systems.
- Across the SMEP portfolio, innovations supported by SSN delivered significant environmental outcomes in 2025, including 1,132 tonnes of textile waste recycled, 150 tonnes of plastic waste diverted, and 1,550 tonnes of organic waste kept out of landfill, open-air burning and the environment. Additionally, SMEP identified 10 and developed three new technology-based solutions to address key sustainability and pollution issues, and supported 16 successful pilot projects and/or field tests that provided proof of technical and commercial viability.
- Through the VCA alliance, locally led initiatives addressed climate-smart agriculture, ecosystem restoration, water security and disaster preparedness. By the end of the programme period, 779 locally led climate solutions had been implemented, reaching more than 2 million people and affecting over 450,000 hectares of land.

Taken together, these examples show how SSN contributes to resilient social and ecological systems by linking policy influence, implementation support and locally led innovation. In 2025, our work helped create stronger enabling conditions for resilience while also demonstrating concrete gains for people, livelihoods and ecosystems.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Strengthening Forest-Dependent Communities and Ecosystems in the Amazon

The CLEAN Helpdesk's technical assistance (TA) was instrumental in designing the six-year Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities (AMCAT) programme. The TA helped shape the programme to be participatory and inclusive, co-designed with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and supporting forest protection and sustainable livelihoods across the Amazon basin. In this way, a £28,650 initiative shaped a flagship multi-country programme. This illustrates how focused technical input can influence large-scale programmes to deliver more resilient, community-centred social and ecological outcomes.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Advancing Low-Carbon, Water-Resilient Industrial Systems

With SMEP's support, the [Textile Wastewater Management](#) project pilot with Fakir Knitwear in Bangladesh is demonstrating how advanced treatment technologies, including ultrafiltration and reverse osmosis, can reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water use, and chemical dependency in the textile sector. Over seven years, the approach is estimated to enable 50% water reuse, save 756,000 m³ of groundwater, and avoid 78,583 tCO₂e emissions. As the textile sector contributes over 12% of Bangladesh's national GHG emissions and 8.2% of electricity use, scaling such solutions can drive widespread decarbonisation and boost sectoral competitiveness.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Strengthening Community-Led Urban Water Stewardship

In India, URBAN enabled women and communities to move from passive participants to active stewards of urban water systems by building their capacity to generate and use climate-relevant evidence. Through participatory research and engagement with municipal systems, communities helped identify 88 water bodies—many previously unrecorded—while establishing local monitoring structures and contributing to more inclusive urban governance. This demonstrates how strengthening local agency, can drive more inclusive, accountable, and sustainable approaches to urban climate adaptation and ecological management.

IMPACT AREA 2: FINANCE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS

Finance remains a core enabler of climate action, shaping the scope, effectiveness, and equity of adaptation and mitigation efforts. In 2025, SSN focused on advancing more inclusive climate finance discourse, systems and access pathways, working across policy, practice and knowledge platforms. Across our portfolio, we shared technical insights through expert presentations, dialogues and policy briefs, and convened spaces for constructive engagement among policymakers, financiers, experts and local actors.



A major focus area in 2025 was scaling adaptation finance through high-level engagement and knowledge mobilisation. In January, SSN was invited by the [Group of 20 \(G20\)](#) Sustainable Finance Working Group to share insights on the challenges and opportunities of scaling adaptation finance through National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). In September, SSN was also invited to publish an [official policy brief](#) for the South African think tank initiative, [T20](#), which informs the country's G20 presidency. The brief called for adaptation-inclusive transition plans, strengthened capacity in climate-vulnerable countries, and monitoring and disclosure approaches aligned with emerging global standards. Through these engagements, SSN helped position adaptation finance more centrally within South Africa's G20 agenda and wider global climate finance discussions.

SSN's expertise was also sought by the Network of Central Banks and Supervisors for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) Task Force on Adaptation, particularly on scaling adaptation finance in Africa in ways that align with Article 2.1(c) of the [Paris Agreement](#). Our contribution emphasised that adaptation must be recognised as a systemic financial risk issue, that just transition metrics and stronger safeguards matter for real-world impact, and that taxonomies and broader financial architectures need reform if they are to support resilient and equitable development. These inputs directly informed recommendations under discussion by the Task Force and helped shape early thinking on climate-sensitive risk management in Africa.

Through the AFF programme, SSN also supported African policymakers in UNFCCC discourse and negotiations on climate finance, both ahead of and during formal negotiation processes. In March and September, we contributed directly to the first and second Sharm el-Sheikh Dialogues under Article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement. For the first Dialogue, we helped frame the agenda and discussions on Articles 2.1(c) and 9. For the second, the co-chairs invited SSN to deliver an [expert presentation](#) showing how Article 2.1(c) could guide finance towards resilient and equitable development in Africa, while highlighting persistent gaps in adaptation finance and just transitions. These inputs fed into the co-chairs' report to the 7th Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 7) and the wider deliberations leading into

COP 30, helping to ensure that African priorities were reflected more clearly in evolving international finance debates. Early signals indicate that this work strengthened national negotiating positions and increased the visibility of adaptation priorities in global dialogues.

In June and October, SSN collaborated with [South Africa's Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment \(DFFE\)](#) to host [high-level technical dialogues](#) on climate finance. These dialogues brought together African policymakers, experts and financial institutions to interrogate Articles 2.1(c) and 9, the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), and wider finance system reform. They also helped consolidate African priorities ahead of COP 30, including shared definitions, negotiation inputs, governance recommendations and capacity-strengthening priorities. Drawing on the [second dialogue](#), SSN also delivered a virtual briefing during a [Global Strategic Communications Council \(GSCC\)](#) media session in Nairobi, helping journalists report more accurately on Article 2.1(c) in the lead-up to COP 30.

[At SB 62 in June](#), SSN ran a breakout session within the negotiation space on financial sector capacity, elevating African perspectives on adaptation finance and institutional preparedness. We also co-hosted an official side event through the GAP programme on lessons from civil society in strengthening climate finance transparency and accountability, creating a platform for civil society and climate-affected communities, particularly in the Global South, to influence funding decisions.

SSN also convened more accessible and practice-oriented spaces beyond formal negotiations. Ahead of the [Finance in Common Summit](#) in February, for example, [SSN and partners hosted a unique event](#) that brought together financial institutions, development finance organisations, local community representatives and development practitioners through GA-LLA to examine how public development bank financing for adaptation can better reflect local priorities and leadership. At [CBA 19 in May](#), SSN and partners used forum theatre to engage participants in addressing bottlenecks in adaptation finance, linking the discussion to the [Baku to Belém Roadmap](#) and the Climate and Development Ministerial (C&DM) goal on easing access to climate finance.

Beyond influencing systems, SSN continued to channel resources directly to local organisations through on-granting, combined with capability strengthening and knowledge brokering. This is a substantive intermediary role rather than a purely administrative one: SSN helps bridge the gap between finance and frontline action by enabling locally led organisations to access, absorb and use resources more effectively, while also strengthening the relationships, systems and leadership needed for sustained climate action.

254

grantees
supported

THROUGH ARA,
CDKN, CLARE R4I,
OJTA, SMEP & VCA

IMPACT IN ACTION

Unlocking Climate Finance for Distributed Renewable Energy

Through the LEAF programme, SSN supported the development of an Adaptation Impact Assessment and MEL framework to help unlock finance for Distributed and Decentralised Renewable Energy (DRE) in Africa. By improving how adaptation benefits are identified, measured, and integrated into project design, this work provides a critical foundation for institutions such as the African Development Bank and Green Climate Fund to de-risk investments and scale financing for DRE solutions.

IMPACT AREA 3: CAPABILITIES, INNOVATION & KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge brokering remains one of SSN's distinctive capabilities and is central to programmes such as CDKN and the CLARE R4I Hub. More broadly, however, capabilities, innovation and knowledge run across our entire portfolio. In 2025, SSN worked to strengthen capabilities through innovation, learning and the mobilisation of diverse knowledge systems, recognising that transformative climate-resilient development depends not only on generating evidence, but on ensuring that evidence is actionable, accessible and shaped by those closest to climate realities.



DIRECTLY BY SSN

62

knowledge
products
produced

50

events
delivered

26

capacity
strengthening
activities hosted

THROUGH PARTNERS

532

knowledge
products
produced

139

events
supported

46

capacity
strengthening
activities supported

THROUGH
AFCAP (RICE COP),
AFF,
ARA,
CDKN,
CLARE R4I,
CLEAN Helpdesk,
GA-LLA,
GAP,
OJTA,
SMEP &
VCA

This was reflected in both scale and substance. During 2025, SSN produced 62 knowledge products, delivered 50 events, and hosted 26 capability-strengthening activities. These outputs mattered not as ends in themselves, but because they helped key actors use knowledge, evidence and learning to inform policy, practice and decision-making.

SSN's knowledge products included reports, policy briefs, infographics, articles, training modules, videos, toolkits, models and other resources designed to meet different climate information needs. Through OJTA, for example, SSN developed the first [African-centred evidence database on just transitions](#), compiling literature from across the continent. Together with our other research outputs and policy briefs, this repository strengthened Africa-led research, policy engagement and knowledge exchange on just energy transitions, reinforcing the principle that Africa's low-carbon development pathways must be grounded in equity, inclusion and justice, and responsive to diverse socioeconomic contexts and development priorities.

SSN also recognises that live engagement is often essential for active exchange, consultation and problem-solving. While some of these convenings are highlighted under other impact areas because of their influence on resilience or finance, they also formed a critical part of SSN's capability-strengthening and knowledge brokering work in 2025.

For example, a [cross-regional peer-to-peer exchange between Nepal and Kenya](#)—facilitated by CDKN Asia and Africa—has gave Nepalese national and local government actors insight into Kenya's inclusive and devolved approach to climate finance. After seeing LLA financing first hand, Nepalese city officials showed interest in co-financing CDKN's knowledge-to-action (K2A) project from municipal budgets.

Similarly, the CLARE R4I Hub's series of sessions at Adaptation Futures 2025 convened researchers, practitioners and policymakers to share evidence and approaches for socially inclusive and locally grounded adaptation. These engagements created a space to co-develop insights and showcase innovative methods, including co-creation labs and arts-based approaches, helping strengthen the uptake of research into practice and influence how adaptation is understood and implemented across contexts.

SSN also supported learning around emerging climate challenges. Through RL-NELD, we worked with community-based grantee partners across Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo to facilitate peer learning, technical exchange and collective reflection on non-economic loss and damage, including impacts on cultural heritage, biodiversity, traditional knowledge and community wellbeing. By documenting these experiences and enabling cross-regional learning, SSN helped ensure that community knowledge informs emerging international discussions on loss and damage.

Capability strengthening was equally important in SSN's support to public institutions in both the Global South and the Global North.

Following SSN's support for South Africa's first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) in December 2024, our work in 2025 focused on strengthening institutional readiness, reinforcing national reporting processes and laying the foundation for future reporting cycles. This support helped position South Africa to sustain and deepen its climate reporting capacity over time rather than treating the first BTR as a one-off milestone.

At the same time, through the CLEAN Helpdesk, SSN provided technical assistance to UK government officials on climate, environment and nature issues. One of the clearest indicators of value in this programme was the sustained and repeated demand for support, demonstrating trust in SSN's ability to provide timely, credible and policy-relevant expertise across a wide range of thematic issues.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Translating Knowledge into Inclusive Climate Action

In Kenya, SSN, through the CDKN programme, worked with [Muungano wa Wanavijiji](#) to apply knowledge brokering tools that improved how communities engage in flood response and urban planning. This included more strategic stakeholder mapping, clearer communication of community priorities, and stronger facilitation of participatory processes—enabling informal settlement residents to engage more effectively with authorities and shape locally relevant adaptation actions. This illustrates how strengthening knowledge brokering capabilities can translate evidence into more inclusive, locally led climate action and improved decision-making outcomes.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Turning Adaptation Knowledge into Practical Action

The [Rajkot–Nairobi heat health exchange](#), supported through the CLARE R4I Opportunities Fund, brought senior government officials from Kenya and India together to learn from Rajkot's experience in implementing urban heat health prevention measures and to inform the development of locally grounded heat action planning in Nairobi. SSN also used global platforms such as Adaptation Futures 2025 to share these lessons more widely and to showcase practical tools such as CLARE's co-creation labs infographic, which distils programme learning on inclusive, transdisciplinary approaches to adaptation.

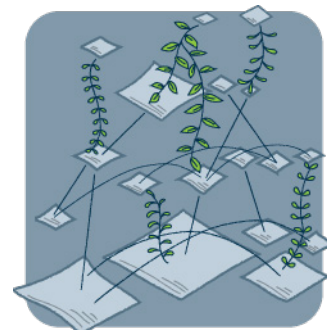
IMPACT IN ACTION

Knowledge and Capability for Scaled Energy Access

GGE-EA went beyond knowledge sharing alone: it helped equip decision-makers and practitioners with practical tools, peer learning opportunities, and applied insights to improve mini-grid planning, governance, and long-term sustainability. This included translating technical learning into accessible guidance for governments and sector actors on economic and financial analysis, network design and maintenance, regulation, governance, private sector partnerships, and productive use of energy.

IMPACT AREA 4: MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Climate decision-making increasingly occurs across interconnected levels, from communities and local government to national institutions and international negotiations. In 2025, SSN contributed to more inclusive multi-level governance by strengthening processes that connect these scales and by supporting the participation of actors whose perspectives are too often excluded from climate and resilience decision-making.



A central part of this work was supporting more inclusive and participatory governance processes. Through programmes such as VCA, SSN worked with civil society organisations, grassroots movements and advocacy networks to advance locally led and community-informed climate action, helping local and community-level voices engage more effectively in wider policy and decision-making processes.

SSN also supported governance innovations that improve transparency and accountability. Through initiatives such as GAP, implemented in partnership with civil society organisations and supported by the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA), SSN helped create stronger conditions for public participation and oversight in climate and development processes, reinforcing the principle that inclusive governance is not only about representation, but also about accountability and responsiveness.

At the same time, SSN helped connect community experience to emerging global policy debates. Through RL-NELD, we worked with community-based grantee partners to surface lived experience and local knowledge on non-economic loss and damage and bring those insights into broader regional and international conversations.

Through URBAN, SSN used the Urban Labs approach to create locally led, co-creative spaces in which communities, governments and researchers could jointly design and test climate solutions.

These labs functioned not only as innovation platforms, but also as governance spaces where inclusive planning, collaboration and advocacy could take shape within the realities of specific urban contexts.

On the other hand, through programmes such as AfCAP, AFF, NDC-S, OJTA, and SA BTR, SSN also supported African governments to bring the voice of the Global South into multilateral discussions. For example, through NDC-S, SSN engaged with peers from more than 50 countries at the Global NDC Conference in Berlin, contributing to shared understanding of emerging practice on investment-ready NDCs, innovative finance instruments, and the alignment of climate goals with national development priorities. This kind of engagement helps strengthen governance by linking national planning processes to wider peer learning and international exchange.

At COP 30, the DFFE Deputy Director-General specifically recognised SSN's role in supporting South Africa's UNFCCC reporting. This showed how SSN's support in helping with technical inputs, coordinating activities, and working with partners made a real difference. It confirmed that SSN's role as an intermediary, supporting the effective and efficient delivery of Global Environment Facility (GEF) funds in a predictable and timely manner, is instrumental to ensuring the prompt submission of reports to the UNFCCC by developing country government. In doing so, SSN's work helps strengthen the credibility, visibility, and confidence of developing countries in multilateral processes, reinforcing their ability to participate meaningfully and assert their positions in global climate governance spaces.

These initiatives show how SSN strengthens multi-level governance by linking community organisations, civil society, governments and international platforms, making climate decision-making more inclusive, accountable and better aligned with the interests, knowledge and leadership of actors in the Global South.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Strengthening inclusive governance through structured participation

SSN and its partners supported 130 locally led initiatives through VCA in 2025. We facilitated multi-stakeholder forums where civil society voices influenced decisions on policies related to land rights, climate finance, gender equality, and social inclusion. These forums created formal entry points for historically excluded groups to engage with public institutions and decision-makers. This translated into tangible governance outcomes: VCA contributed to influencing national and local policies, plans, and laws, in countries such as Brazil, Kenya, and Zambia. Importantly, these processes embedded civil society perspectives into formal governance systems, signalling a shift towards more inclusive, participatory, and locally grounded climate governance.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN 2025

CROSS-CUTTING LESSONS AND INNOVATIONS

PARTNERSHIPS

Through SSN's work in 2025, it became evident once again that effective partnerships are essential to making a significant impact. SSN's approach increasingly emphasises partnerships as a strategic pathway, where shared purpose, equity, and trust guide collaboration and outcomes. Our view on the partnership continuum is depicted below, with SSN striving for radical partnerships, which involves revisiting the fundamental essence of what constitutes a genuine partnership.

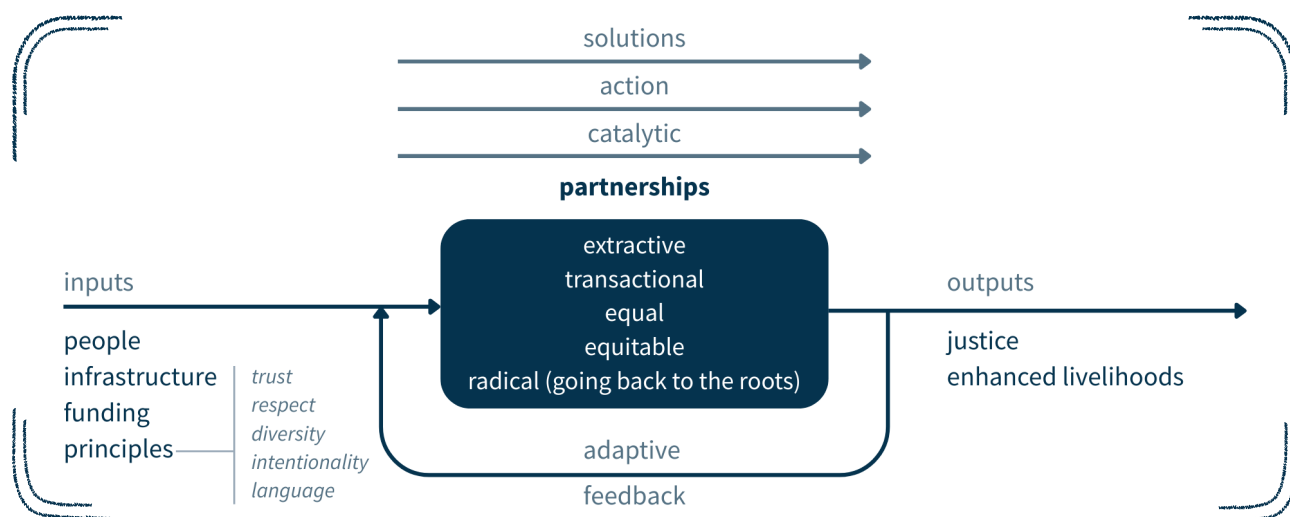


Image: Depiction of how SSN sees partnerships as a process rather than an endpoint

Our experience across all of our programmes, projects and generally as an organisation, has been that solid partnerships rely on aligning core values, effectively managing power dynamics, and nurturing trust over time. In practice, this meant investing in relationship-building, clarifying roles, and encouraging shared decision-making. Teams reported that these efforts enabled more coordinated action, clearer communication, and faster resolution of challenges.

It is through building trust that SSN has strengthened its role over the last year in helping convene the right actors, enabling collaboration that is greater than the sum of its parts, and leveraging its institutional credibility to bridge between grassroots partners, larger institutions and funders. Early signals of impact include improved alignment between community needs and programme delivery, stronger engagement of local partners in strategic decision-making, and greater consistency in multi-stakeholder initiatives.

In this way, partnerships become both the means and the pathway through which more equitable and impactful climate and development action can be achieved.

GESI

Recognising the importance of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, SSN strengthened the integration of GESI across all of its programmes and embedded this practice into its institutional framework in 2025. This move shifted GESI from a reporting requirement to a practical, actionable perspective that informs programme design, implementation, and monitoring.

In 2025, a core SSN team, comprising members from various programmes, brought together their experience and expertise to develop a dedicated GESI tool and spectrum for programmes to move towards more GESI-transformative practices. Early application of this tool continues to highlight inclusion gaps, inform adjustments in engagement strategies, and provide teams with a clearer understanding of how to integrate justice-oriented practices into their work.

As SSN advances further into its strategic period, we continue to foster a culture of reflection, inclusion, and justice-oriented practices. For instance, we ensure that GESI is seamlessly integrated as meaningful part of SSN's climate action work. Although full outcomes are still emerging, these steps are already contributing to more inclusive programme approaches and equitable participation across partner networks.

ON-GRANTING

As outlined in the Impact Areas section, SSN undertakes on-granting by providing grants to grassroots organisations, smaller institutions, pilot projects, researchers and others. This function aligns with our role as an intermediary organisation that bridges international, national, and local climate actors to facilitate the mobilisation and more efficient channelling of funding. This mechanism has proven essential when directing resources to local organisations, especially when accompanied by capability strengthening and knowledge brokering efforts, to advance Southern leadership and organisational development.

Building on our years of experience in on-granting (both through current and legacy programmes), in 2025, SSN actively reflected and consolidated our programme learnings to better understand the lessons, barriers and enablers associated with grant-making, accompaniment, and partnership dynamics, and clarified our positioning and value as a Global South intermediary operating within complex climate finance ecosystems. This reflection surfaced practical challenges, including varying partner capacities, administrative complexity, and the time required to cultivate trust. In response, SSN has actively worked to refine its processes, offering tailored support and clearer guidance to partners.

By formally institutionalising these learnings, we ensure that the organisation builds on past experience to improve the efficiency and impact of future programmes and initiatives. SSN's flexible approaches to capability strengthening, adaptive management, and knowledge brokering position it as an important interlocutor. These strengths enable SSN to add significant value beyond disbursement, particularly in fostering equitable partnerships, shifting power imbalances, and supporting organisations that are closest to communities and most responsive to local realities.

STRENGTHENING THE ORGANISATION TO DELIVER OUR STRATEGY

Following the publication of SSN's Strategy 2025–2030, the organisation adopted its Organisational Framework for FY25/26 to guide how our strategy would be implemented internally during its first full year. While our strategy sets out what SSN seeks to achieve, the Organisational Framework focuses on how the organisation must evolve to deliver on those ambitions in a coherent, sustainable, and accountable way. During the year, the Framework provided a structured approach to set out clearer outcomes for SSN's shared-service Hubs—Knowledge Management and Communications, Delivery and Operations, Finance, Human Resources, Headquarters, and Contracts, Compliance and Risk Management—aligning their work more explicitly with organisational strategy and collective impact.

This alignment has already strengthened coordination across Hubs, clarified responsibilities, and improved the visibility of shared goals, laying the foundation for more deliberate and measurable organisational performance.

To support delivery, the Framework introduced quarterly objective-setting and review processes, enabling the organisation to prioritise work in response to emerging opportunities and constraints. A structured set of criteria was also applied to new programme development, ensuring that prospective work aligned with SSN's strategic priorities, capacity, financial sustainability, and partnership principles.

These processes now increasingly reinforcing accountability while allowing teams the flexibility to respond to dynamic programme and partner needs, improving decision-making speed and reducing misalignment between strategic intent and operational execution.

Importantly, the FY25/26 Organisational Framework was designed as the first in a series of iterative frameworks running through to 2030. This phased approach allows SSN to embed learning year-on-year, progressively strengthening organisational systems, improving coordination across teams, and building a more resilient institutional platform from which to deliver its mission.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT GEARED FOR IMPACT

In 2025, SSN's external engagement plan centred on a deliberate shift from COP-centric, programme-led participation toward strategy-led, organisation-wide engagement, using the new 2025–2030 Strategy to guide where, why, and how SSN engages externally. Engagement was increasingly selective and intentional, prioritising forums, bilaterals, and convenings where SSN's collective knowledge and thematic strengths could meaningfully influence agendas or inform learning, rather than default visibility or attendance. This marked a step towards the intention to speak with one organisational voice, consolidating programme insights into coherent thematic messages, and treating external engagement as a critical vehicle for both influence and institutional learning. This enabled the organisation to focus its efforts where its contributions could drive measurable outcomes and deepen its strategic influence.

Aligning with the external engagement plan, SSN's Climate Colloquium 2025: Shaping Partnerships for Transformative Climate-Resilient Development event brought together funders, government and multilateral representatives, civil society organisation (CSO) leaders, and technical collaborators for two days of grounded sense-making, shared learning, and co-creation at SSN's Cape Town offices. The Colloquium 2025 marked a significant milestone for SSN, providing a critical space to reconnect, mark SSN's 25-year journey, and reflect on a decade since the Paris Agreement.



Photos: Snapshots of SSN's Climate Colloquium at 55 Salt River Road, Cape Town, in October 2025.

The Colloquium's objectives centred on deepening understanding of the evolving climate governance landscape, co-creating pathways for future work—particularly around resilient systems, finance access, innovation, and multi-level governance—and strengthening relationships with existing and new partners. Through plenaries, showcases, and break-out sessions, the gathering enabled grounded sense-making, relationship-building, and alignment on shared priorities for transformative climate-resilient development across the Global South.

The Colloquium also fit into SSN's plan to position our office space at 55 Salt River Road, Cape Town, not only as an operational workspace, but as a convening platform for strategic dialogue, radical partnership-building, and shared learning to advance the organisation's 2030 vision and mission.

To further embed this role, SSN invested its own resources in transforming the ground floor into the SSN Knowledge Lab: a flexible, multi-use space designed to advance SSN's impact area on Capabilities, Innovation, and Knowledge, which became operational in January 2026. A joint Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Cape Town's African [Synthesis Centre for Climate Change, Environment and Development \(ASCEND\)](#) and the [African Climate and Development Initiative \(ACDI\)](#) positions the Knowledge Lab as a shared platform for knowledge synthesis, collaboration, and capacity strengthening. This partnership reinforces SSN's strategic shift towards innovation brokering and knowledge-to-action.



Photo: SSN's newly developed Knowledge Lab at 55 Salt River Road, Cape Town—built for collaboration.

IMPROVED SYSTEMS, PROCESSES AND WAYS OF WORKING

In 2025, SSN made significant investments in strengthening the systems, processes, and digital infrastructure that underpin effective collaboration, learning, and delivery across the organisation.

- **Digital Transformation and Consolidation:** A cornerstone of 2025 was the consolidation of SSN's systems and platforms to provide a more integrated digital environment for all staff. Significant progress was made in mapping SSN's data systems, laying the groundwork for improved reporting, learning, and decision-making. Additional investments were also made to ensure that our hardware is geared to support a more secure on-premise and cloud-based IT environment.
- **Exploring Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):** During 2025, SSN undertook structured explorations of AI to better understand its potential to support staff, focusing on practical use cases as well as ethical considerations, limitations, and risks. This learning informed the development of an AI Readiness Plan, which set out a values-aligned approach to adoption, emphasising responsible use, transparency, and human accountability.
- **Streamlining Opportunity Responses:** A major organisational milestone in 2025 was the redesign of how SSN responds to opportunities and bids to explicitly align funding pursuits with the organisation's strategic priorities, clarifying not only which opportunities SSN should pursue, but also which it should decline. By embedding strategic alignment into everyday practice, the revised process reduced critical-person dependencies, improved cross-hub collaboration, and ensured greater continuity between proposal development and programme delivery.

With these foundations firmly in place, SSN enters 2026 positioned for an important levelling-up of systems and processes. The focus will shift from large-scale transition toward refinement, integration, and innovation.

FINANCIAL POSITION AND STEWARDSHIP

In the context of a tightening global development funding environment, SSN consciously prioritised innovation, efficiency, and resource optimisation in 2025.

SSN entered the reporting period in a position of financial stability, underpinned by strong governance, disciplined financial management, and active oversight by the Board and Finance team. Throughout the year, the organisation maintained a clear focus on aligning programme delivery, staffing, and operational costs with available resources, ensuring that commitments were responsibly managed within the parameters of donor-funded income streams.

SSN continues to operate in a predominantly project-funded environment, with financial planning closely linked to programme lifecycles and donor requirements. This necessitates careful and regular reforecasting, particularly in relation to staff time allocations and the timing of programme transitions. During the year, the organisation strengthened its internal coordination to better anticipate and manage these dynamics, reducing exposure to unfunded commitments and improving overall financial predictability.

Macroeconomic factors, including currency volatility, required ongoing attention and adjustment. In response, SSN maintained a prudent approach to budgeting and expenditure, with regular reviews to ensure that programme resources remained sufficient to deliver agreed outcomes while safeguarding organisational sustainability.

SSN was negatively affected by the US Administration's decision to largely dismantle the US Agency for International Development. Whilst the impact of this was contained due to the relatively smaller quantity of funding that traced back to the US Government commitments, it did remind the organisation that fiscal sustainability needed to be at the forefront of our planning into the second half of the decade.

Alongside this, SSN continued to invest in improving the maturity of its financial systems and processes, strengthening accountability to funders and partners while supporting more informed strategic decision-making internally.

While the organisation does not yet benefit from significant unrestricted income or reserves, the reporting period reflected steady progress toward greater financial resilience. Looking ahead, diversifying income streams, improving funding predictability, and reducing structural dependency on short-term project funding remain important strategic priorities for SSN.



Photo credit - Roy Bouwer, SSN (AfCAP programme), Kenya ©

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND WELLBEING

SSN introduced a redesigned performance review system to strengthen fairness, transparency, and professional development across the organisation. Performance reviews were formally linked to Employee Development Plans (EDPs), which were used as a core mechanism for supporting individual growth and capability building across the organisation, strengthening SSN's development-oriented performance culture. Additionally, SSN provided a structured People Management and Leadership training for line managers, recognising the growing complexity of SSN's teams, programmes, and operating environment, and the need for consistent, people-centred leadership practices.

In 2025, SSN employed 107 staff members. It was a year of programme transition for SSN, with several programmes reaching completion while new initiatives entered inception and early delivery phases. These shifts required careful management to ensure continuity of work, responsible programme closure, and the effective reassignment of staff to new roles and programmes.

As programmes concluded and new ones commenced, staff were reassigned in line with organisational priorities and capacity needs, enabling SSN to retain institutional knowledge while responding flexibly to a changing portfolio of work. These transitions reflected SSN's maturing organisational systems and its commitment to managing change in a way that supports both delivery quality and staff wellbeing.



Photo credit - Tiffany Chalmers, SSN (VCA programme), Zambia ©

GOVERNANCE, RISK AND COMPLIANCE

SSN is duly constituted and registered in South Africa and operates in accordance with its founding documents and approved governance instruments. The organisation is overseen by an active Board of Directors, supported by management under a clear framework of delegated authority. In 2025, the Board also took the decision to establish additional oversight in the form of non-executive directors to form an external Governance Board to whom Executive Directors are accountable. SSN is in the process of establishing the legal and governance frameworks to enact on this decision.

During 2025, key organisational policies covering financial management, procurement, safeguarding, and the reporting of concerns were in place and implemented, and work continued to strengthen policies, training, and reporting mechanisms. SSN also introduced an updated Travel Policy and associated procedures in 2025, reducing ambiguity for staff while reinforcing accountability and consistency in travel-related decision-making.

Additionally, all required statutory and regulatory filings were completed, and no material compliance breaches, contractual disputes, legal proceedings, safeguarding or data protection breaches were reported during the year.

LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

In a context defined by complex delivery environments and rapidly evolving climate and development agendas, SSN recognises that its impact depends not only on what it does externally, but on how it learns, reflects, and adapts internally:



Photo: SSN staff actively engaging with our Strategy 2025–2030, showcasing SSN's commitment to bringing everyone along and aligning around a shared vision.

- **Brown Bags as a Core Learning Mechanism:** In 2025, our "Brown Bag" sharing sessions included learnings from programmes, insights from external partners, technical updates (e.g. on topics such as the UN processes), and legal perspectives (e.g. relevant updates and insights regarding the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on Climate Change).
- **Internal Newsletter and Knowledge Consolidation:** Complementing live learning spaces, SSN's internal newsletter continued playing a critical role in consolidating and sharing organisational knowledge, ensuring that insights generated in specific teams or events contribute to SSN's evolving organisational narrative in an engaging way.
- **Enabling Learning Through Shared Digital Infrastructure:** In 2025, SSN further strengthened its internal learning environment through the transition to a standardised organisational communication platform, improving the flow and visibility of information across the organisation, as well as ensuring that knowledge generated by SSN staff remains accessible and actionable over time. All these efforts were taking in view of a sequenced consolidation of SSN's knowledge into repository and data lake heading into the period 2025 - 2030.
- **Community of Practice (CoP):** SSN's internal CoP became operational in 2025, providing a structured yet flexible space for peer-to-peer learning, collaboration and knowledge exchange across the organisation. Bringing together staff around shared thematic, technical and operational interests (such as on-granting, GESI, AI, and others), the CoP enables collective problem-solving, the development of shared tools and practices, and the translation of learning into SSN's programmes and partnerships. Anchored in mutual engagement, a joint learning agenda and a shared repertoire of resources, the CoP strengthens SSN's ability to connect knowledge, practice and policy while fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation across the organisation.



Photo: SSN Delivery and Operations Hub during an internal capacity strengthening workshop at SSN's headquarters.

LOOKING FORWARD

As SSN enters 2026, we do so with clarity and humility. Guided by our Strategy and strengthened organisational foundations, we recognise that the global landscape for climate action has become more complex and fragmented. Building relationships, influencing systems, and advancing just climate solutions requires patience and persistence, even as the urgency of the climate crisis intensifies.

Our impact areas remain central to our mission: resilient systems, fair and accessible climate finance, strengthened capabilities, and inclusive governance. At the same time, several of SSN's long-standing programmes will conclude in 2026, prompting a deliberate shift toward a more diversified and strategically aligned portfolio. In a context of funding uncertainty and evolving donor priorities, we are strengthening partnerships, seeking core support for key strategic priorities, and curating a resilient mix of programmes and collaborations.

Partnership will continue to guide our approach. We aim to work with organisations that share our commitment to justice, collaboration, and transformative change. Emerging challenges such as climate migration, water stress, and the fragility of development gains in a warming world demand thoughtful engagement and justice-centred narratives, which SSN will continue to help advance.

Internally, we are strengthening how we articulate impact, aligning our work across programmes, and deepening our external engagement. Our Cape Town office increasingly serves as a convening space for trusted dialogue and collaboration across the climate community, including initiatives such as the Climate Colloquium. In the year ahead, we aim to deepen our desire to cultivate a capable Southern institution facilitating transformative climate-resilient development.

For over two decades, SSN has worked through partnership and accompaniment across multiple levels of governance. We will continue to support decision-makers, strengthen participatory processes, and enable locally led climate action, while exploring deeper institutional engagement with climate funds under the UNFCCC.

Climate change remains one of the defining challenges of our time. Despite growing division and uncertainty globally, SSN remains committed to building a world of belonging, where the Earth's resources are shared fairly and where present and future generations can thrive.

We hope that you will continue in this journey with us.

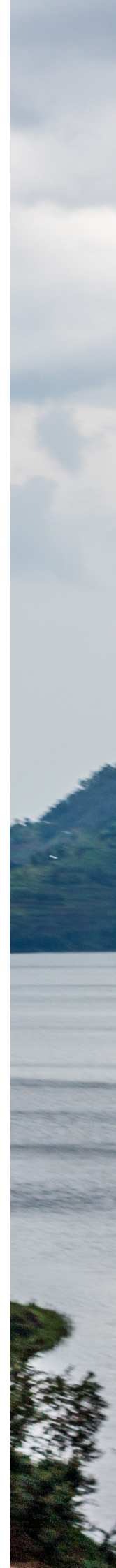




Photo credit - Julio Araujo, SSN (FCFA programme), Rwanda ©

VISION

A just and resilient world where people and ecosystems can thrive

MISSION

Accelerating transformative climate-resilient development in the Global South

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- Resilient social and ecological systems in a changing climate
- Transformed financial systems, architectures and flows that facilitate appropriate and inclusive access to finance
- Inclusive multi-level governance that reflects the interests and meaningful contributions of those in the Global South
- Strengthened capabilities through innovation, learning and leveraging diverse knowledge systems

IMPACT AREAS

- Resilient Systems**
- Finance availability and access**
- Multi-level governance**
- Capabilities, innovation and knowledge**

APPROACHES

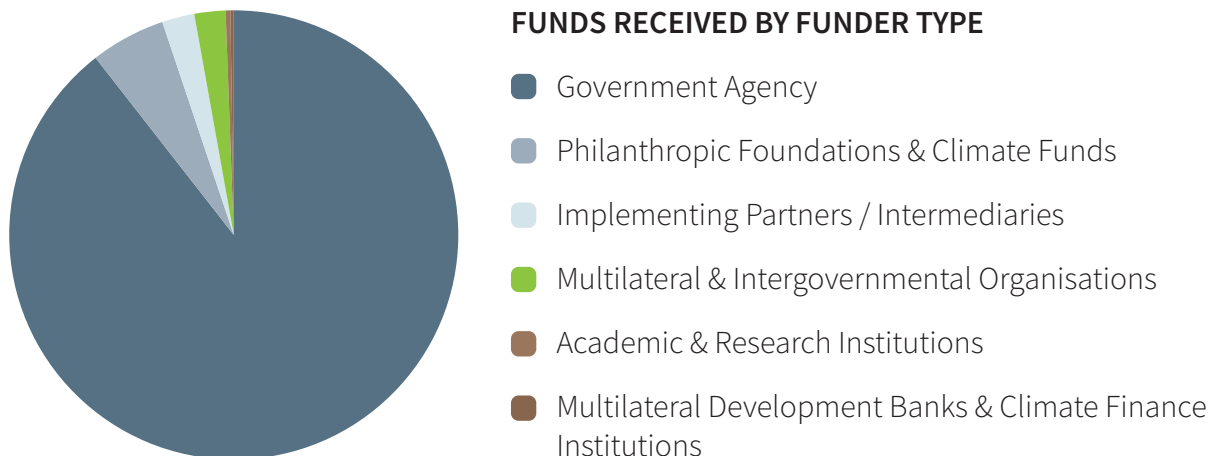
- Capability strengthening**
- Knowledge and innovation brokering**
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration and processes**
- Southern leadership**

GROUNDING IN JUSTICE

SSN'S THEORY OF CHANGE (2025-2030)

FUNDER PROFILES

Below is a summary of SSN's funding sources for all programmes active in 2025, showing that we are currently primarily funded by governments.



List of funders by type

- **Academic & Research Institutions**
 - University of Cape Town (UCT)
- **Government Agency**
 - BMU International Climate Initiative (IKI)
 - Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
 - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
 - International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
 - Met Office
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA)
 - National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)
 - UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
- **Implementing Partners / Intermediaries**
 - Carbon Trust
 - Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) Trust Fund
 - International Institute for Environment & Development (IIED)
- **Multilateral & Intergovernmental Organisations**
 - United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
 - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
 - United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- **Multilateral Development Banks & Climate Finance Institutions**
 - African Development Bank (AfDB)
 - World Bank
- **Philanthropic Foundations & Climate Funds**
 - European Climate Foundation
 - Gates Foundation
 - Open Society Foundation
 - Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
 - Wellcome Trust
 - Windward Fund

FULL PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO AND BUDGETS

Below is the full list of SSN's programmes that were active in 2025. Each block provides the programme's acronym as used by SSN, the programme's full name, the value of the portion of the programme that was managed by SSN for the current phase, and the funder(s). With regard to funding, in some cases, SSN managed the total programme value (indicated in navy blue), whereas, in other cases, SSN managed a portion of the programme's funding, with partners managing the rest (indicated in lighter teal). The blocks show only our main programmes; where additional funding was received for targeted projects under these programmes, for example, the Rice Community of Practice project under the AfCAP programme, the value in the block is a sum of the total programme value and the additional funding for the project(s).

AARSA

Accelerating Action Research for
Smallholder Agriculture Adaptation

ZAR 6 Million

Funded by Gates Foundation

AFCAP

African Climate Action Partnership

ZAR 9.5 Million

Funded by United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) with Windward Fund (for the RICE CoP); formerly funded by National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

AFF

Aligning Financial Flows with the
Paris Agreement in Africa

ZAR 18.9 Million

*Funded by BMU International Climate
Initiative (IKI)*

AGNFS

An evidence-based post-2025 climate
finance target for Africa

ZAR 8.1 Million

Funded by Gates Foundation

ARA URBAN

Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA)
Unlocking Resilience through Bottom-up
Action-research and Multi-Scalar Networks
(URBAN)

ZAR 3.3 Million

*Funded by UK Foreign, Commonwealth &
Development Office (FCDO)*

ASCEND

African Synthesis Centre for
Climate Change, Environment and
Development

ZAR 4 Million

*Funded by University of Cape Town
(UCT)*

CDKN

Climate and Development Knowledge
Network

ZAR 170 Million

*Funded by International Development
Research Centre (IDRC) and Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA)*

CDM

Climate and Development Ministerial
Secretariat 2024-2025

ZAR 0.6 Million

*Funded by International Institute for
Environment & Development (IIED)*

CECG

COP28 Engagement on Adaptation
Needs

ZAR 2.6 Million

*Funded by Rockefeller Philanthropy
Advisors*

CLARE R4I Hub

Climate Adaptation and Resilience
(CLARE) Research for Impact (R4I) Hub

ZAR 72 Million

*Funded by UK Foreign, Commonwealth &
Development Office (FCDO) and International
Development Research Centre (IDRC)*

CLEAN Helpdesk

Climate, Environment and Nature
Helpdesk

ZAR 84 Million

*Funded by UK Foreign, Commonwealth &
Development Office (FCDO), with support
from Centre for Environment, Fisheries and
Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)*

GA-LLA

Generating Ambition for Locally Led Adaptation

ZAR 12.7 Million

Funded by International Institute for Environment & Development (IIED)/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA)

IKI GCF

IKI Green Climate Fund

ZAR 14.2 Million

Funded by BMU International Climate Initiative (IKI)

GGE-EA

The Growing Government Engagement in Energy Access

ZAR 12.6 Million

Funded by UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) through the Transforming Energy Access (TEA) platform managed by Carbon Trust

GAP

Green Accountability Project

ZAR 5.2 Million

Funded by GPSA Trust Fund

IKI SG

Conserving biological diversity in South Africa through sustainable removal of invasive plants

ZAR 18 Million

Funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

JET

Financing the Just Energy Transition in Africa

ZAR 1.6 Million

Funded by European Climate Foundation

LEAF

Adaptation Assessments in the LEAF programme countries

ZAR 1 Million

Funded by African Development Bank (AfDB)

NDC-S

Nationally Determined Contributions Support

ZAR 0.4 Million

Funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

OJTA

Operationalising a Just Transition in Africa

ZAR 9 Million

Funded by International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

OSF

Loss and Damage & Adaptation Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN) Support

ZAR 5.7 Million

Funded by Open Society Foundation

RL-NELD

Regional Learning on Non-Economic Loss and Damage

ZAR 4.6 Million

Funded by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

SA BTR 1

Support to DFFE related to the 1st South African Biannual Transparency to the UNFCCC

ZAR 9.7 Million

Funded by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

SCF

Rollout of Standardized Crediting Framework in CI-Dev Program Countries

ZAR 0.3 Million

Funded by World Bank

SMEP

Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution

ZAR 36.6 Million

Funded by UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), with UNCTAD

VCA

Voices for Just Climate Action

ZAR 76 Million

Funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MoFA)

WISER (Phase 3)

Update to "A manual for co-production in African weather and climate services"

ZAR 1.25 Million

Funded by Met Office and UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

AARSA	Accelerating Action Research for Smallholder Agriculture Adaptation programme
ACDI	African Climate and Development Initiative
AfCAP	African Climate Action Partnership programme
AFF	Aligning Financial Flows with the Paris Agreement in Africa programme
AFLP	Africa LEDS Partnership programme
AGN	Africa Group of Negotiators
AGNFS	Adaptation Africa Group of Negotiators Support programme
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMCAT	Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities
ARA	Adaptation Research Alliance programme
ASCEND	African Synthesis Centre for Climate Change, Environment and Development programme
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDKN	Climate and Development Knowledge Network programme
C&DM	Climate and Development Ministerial Secretariat 2024-2025 programme
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CECG	COP28 Engagement on Adaptation Needs programme
CEFAS	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
CLARE	Climate Adaptation and Resilience
CLARE R4I Hub	CLARE Research for Impact Hub programme
CLEAN Helpdesk	Climate, Environment and Nature Helpdesk programme
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
COP	Conference of the Parties
CoP / CoPs	Community of Practice / Communities of Practice
COPPE	Alberto Luiz Coimbra Institute for Graduate Studies and Research in Engineering
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DRE	Distributed and Decentralised Renewable Energy
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FCFA	Future Climate For Africa (historical SSN programme)
G20	Group of Twenty
GA-LLA	Generating Ambition for Locally Led Adaptation programme
GAP	Green Accountability Project programme
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GGE-EA	Growing Government Engagement in Energy Access programme
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPSA	Global Partnership for Social Accountability
IDRC	International Development Research Centre

IIED	International Institute for Environment & Development
IKI	International Climate Initiative
IKI GCF	IKI Green Climate Fund programme
IKISG	IKI Small Grants programme: Conserving biological diversity in South Africa through sustainable removal of invasive plants
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JET	Financing the Just Energy Transition in Africa programme
K2A	Knowledge-to-Action
LEAF	Adaptation Assessments in the LEAF programme countries programme
LEDS	Low-Emission Development Strategies
LLA	Locally Led Adaptation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDC-S	Nationally Determined Contributions Support programme
NGFS	Network of Central Banks and Supervisors for Greening the Financial System
NLGF	Next Level Grant Facility
NREL	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
OJTA	Operationalising a Just Transition in Africa programme
OSF	Loss and Damage Support programme (in the context of SSN's current programmes)
OSF	Open Society Foundation (in the context of SSN's funders)
R4I	Research for Impact
RICE CoP	RICE Community of Practice
RL-NELD	Regional Learning on Non-Economic Loss and Damage programme
SA	South Africa / South African
SABTR	Support to DFFE related to the 1st South African Biannual Transparency to the UNFCCC programme
SB 62	62nd session of the Subsidiary Bodies
SCF	Rollout of Standardised Crediting Framework in CI-Dev Program Countries programme
SMEP	Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution programme
SSN	SouthSouthNorth
T20	Think 20
tCO₂e	tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent
TEA	Transforming Energy Access
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
URBAN	Unlocking Resilience through Bottom-up Action-research and Multi-Scalar Networks programme
USD	United States dollar
VCA	Voices for Just Climate Action programme
WISER	Update to "A manual for co-production in African weather and climate services" programme

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