

Climate Women

The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS)



Location

Low-and-middle-income countries



Target group

Women researchers and communities in low-income countries experiencing the devastating effects of climate change



Budget

\$100,000 a year (2021-2026)



SDGs

SDG 5 (target 5.5),
SDG 13 (targets 13.1 and 13.3)

Synopsis

Provide project grants to women scientists from low-income countries tackling concrete problems in climate change through collaboration and interdisciplinary research.

Program description

The application of scientific research often struggles to be relevant to real-life situations, especially in low-and-middle income countries, which in turn hinders progress. Significant improvements can be achieved when research involves local populations, and knowledge is shared within communities. UN Women reports that a quarter of economically active women globally work in agriculture, facing climate challenges and unequal burdens of care.

Launched in 2021, our partnership with The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) supports women researchers in climate action and builds on a previous collaboration (2015-2019) to bridge the North-South sustainability research divide through PhD travel grants, visiting professors, case study competitions and sustainability symposia at the TWAS General conferences.

Climate Women focuses on the implementation of sustainability science by empowering women researchers to lead concrete climate action projects with a grant of \$25,000 over three years for projects with potential to address climate change in local communities.



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Goals

- Promote gender equality by creating opportunities for women in climate action projects.
- Respond to and tackle communities' needs in line with the principles of sustainable development and focusing on those experiencing the brunt of climate change.
- Effectively transfer knowledge from scientific research to real-life scenarios for practical and tangible change under the umbrella of SDG 13: Climate Action.

Activities and milestones

- To date, 14 Grants of \$25,000 each have been awarded to teams of 2-5 women. These were announced at both the COP 27 and 28 conferences through special events at the UNESCO Pavilion.
- The Elsevier Foundation provided an online “Project Cycle Management” course in partnership with MindTheGap, (an EU funded partnership to support universities to create their own Gender Action Plans (GEP) in order to strengthen the Climate Women teams' project management capacity.
- The African Union and UNESCO hosted a special 4-day training workshop in Addis Ababa in October 2025 and convened the African Climate Women project leads, TWAS fellows, and local PhD students to maximize networking, knowledge sharing and impact. The workshop included presentations from senior climate researchers, science diplomacy experts and policymakers.
- Developed a preliminary impact assessment of the projects led by the 14 ‘Climate Women’ teams.

Looking ahead

As we move forward, the partnership will build on the momentum of the Addis workshop and ongoing capacity-building efforts to enhance collaboration, leadership, and impact measurement. By documenting preliminary results and raising the visibility of the projects' collective impact, the program aims to attract additional resources and expand opportunities for women scientists driving climate action in their communities.



“Climate resilience and capacity building in renewable energy systems is a lifetime empowerment for women and youths.”

Zviemurwi Johnny Chihambakwe

Zimbabwean industrial engineer and recipient of the Climate Women grant