ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

EfD

EfD in 2025

Welcome to EfD's Annual Report for 2025! You will find examples of activities, events, and results from our busy year. Looking back, we are proud of what we have achieved. Despite dire developments for global development aid, we are also optimistic about the future - we will continue to make a difference!

The EfD network publishes high-quality, policy-relevant research while engaging actively with policymakers and other stakeholders. It takes a long time until we may see an impact from such policy engagements. The stories we present in this report are typically the result of many years of collaboration.

"Despite dire developments for global development aid, we are also **optimistic about the future**"

Many researchers gain the trust of policymakers over time and are asked to contribute expertise in policy forums. For example, in 2025, Pham Khanh Nam, EfD Vietnam's center director, was invited to join the UN's High-Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP. Wisdom Akpalu, EfD Ghana's center director, was appointed chair of the African Union's technical committee on agriculture, rural development, water, and environment.

The introduction of the Research and Policy Engagement projects aims to strengthen the policy relevance of EfD's Sida-funded multi-country research projects. Ideally, the research questions are the result of a co-creation process between policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders.

EfD's Global Hub has worked closely with the centers to strengthen the collaborative research programs. The aim is to increase collaboration across borders to fully benefit from the advantages of being an international network. We present our collaborative programs and their prioritized research areas in this report.

With scarce financial resources, it is more important than ever to evaluate and communicate the findings of different development interventions. In the report, you can read about some of our projects that look at agricultural innovations and renewable energy projects.

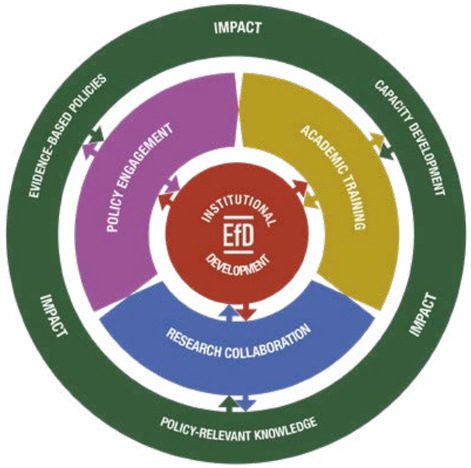
In 2025, we took our support on gender research in environmental and development economics further by onboarding a gender research expert who provides advice to the network.

The Inclusive Green Economy in Practice program (IGE), which develops capacity among civil servants in Eastern Africa, has taken an important step to ensure sustained impacts beyond the program's duration by creating one regional and five national secretariats.

Enjoy!

ANDERS EKBOM
Interim Director

This report follows the structure of the EfD Impact Model to showcase how our different operations combined contribute to changes in policies and practices.



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EfD Researcher Innocencia John conducting field work.
Photo: EfD Tanzania.

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ABOUT EfD

Environment for Development (EfD) is a global network of research centers specializing in environmental and development economics. Our mission is to provide scholars with a research environment that fosters innovation and impactful solutions.

EfD supports research centers in leading academic institutions in eleven locations in the Global South. These centers run graduate academic programs and engage in high-quality policy-relevant research and collaborate with key stakeholders and policymakers.

EfD's global reach and ability to combine teaching, training, research, and policy engagement are what sets us apart.

EfD collaborates in international research groups on critical topics such as sustainable energy transition, climate policies, sustainable consumption and production, marine resources, and natural capital. We've also forged partnerships with academic institutions in the Global North.

In East Africa, we run a capacity-building program for policymakers on policies aimed at an inclusive green economy.

The network is coordinated by the EfD Global Hub, based at the School of Business, Economics, and Law at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

EfD is primarily supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). All EfD centers receive external funding for research and policy work from several sources.

"EfD's **global reach** and ability to combine teaching, training, research, and policy engagement are what sets us apart"

Participants in EfD's Annual Meeting 2025. Photo: Aclovius Kamanyonga.

IT'S TIME TO **CORRECT THE MAP**

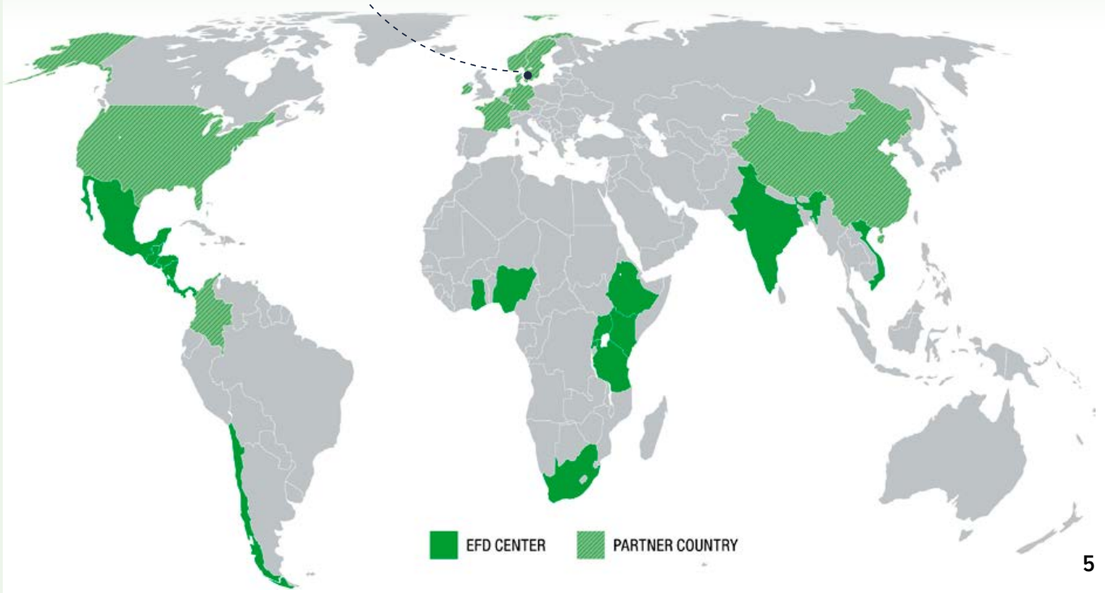
■ EfD uses a world map in our visual communication as a complement to our logotype. For over 450 years, most of the world has used a map that shows a significant distortion of the sizes and relationships between continents. The so-called Mercator map from the 16th century makes Africa look much too small, whereas the regions closer to the poles look too large.

The Mercator map isn't just about misrepresenting the size of the Global South — it's also about power and significance.

The *Correct the Map Campaign* urges the world to correct the map by adopting the *Equal Earth projection*, which more accurately reflects the true size of Africa.

EfD decided in 2025 to consequently use the Equal Earth Map.

EfD's Global Hub, based at the School of Business, Economics, and Law at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.



Coal power company in China. Photo: Shutterstock

RESEARCH HELPED SHAPE CHINA'S
ENVIRONMENTAL DISCLOSURE REFORM

In recent years, China has taken important steps to improve environmental governance. One of the most notable reforms is the nationwide rollout of corporate environmental information disclosure. Behind this shift lies a combination of policy evolution, institutional momentum, and a body of research that helped inform and support the process.

EfD Researchers Bing Zhang, Jintao Xu, and co-author Liu Mengdi have conducted research on the effects of environmental disclosure for many years, combined with extensive engagement with policymakers. They were recognized with the 2025 EfD Policy Impact Award. Their work has contributed valuable insights into how transparency can enhance accountability in environmental governance.

60 percent drop in violations

The research began with a practical question: *Can making pollution data public improve environmental outcomes?* To explore this, they conducted a series of large-scale randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and field experiments across China. These studies were designed to understand how different actors – citizens, firms, NGOs, and government agencies – respond to environmental information when it's made accessible.

"First, we found that **bottom-up accountability** occurs when the public has access to environmental information," explains Bing Zhang.

The visibility of the public's engagement is also important: One experiment found that public complaints posted on social media led to a 60% drop in pollution violations, while private complaints through official hotlines had a limited impact. This visibility also shifted the focus from favoring the growth potential of firms to addressing environmental protection.

NGOs play important role

Another study examined how NGOs used disclosed data to pressure firms. When NGOs signaled their intent to publicize violations, firms improved compliance, suggesting that, in addition to regulatory pressure, reputational concerns also also matter. This form of **horizontal accountability**, where civil society complements formal regulation, proved particularly effective in regions with weaker capacity to enforce regulations.

The study also showed that firms with political connections were more concerned about the reputational damage, while those with fewer political ties were instead more sensitive to following the regulations.

"This finding suggests that pressure from NGOs can be a complement to formal regulations," says Bing Zhang.

Streamlining central and local enforcement

A third strand of research focused on **top-down accountability**, that is, disclosing how well local governments complied with central mandates. The researchers observed substantial improvement in transparency, suggesting that the central government can leverage NGOs' monitoring to enhance environmental control while reducing its own monitoring costs.

Combined, all these findings show that transparency is a powerful environmental policy instrument in decentralized political systems.

From findings to frameworks

The researchers impact extended beyond academia. Through long-term and in-depth engagement with China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), the team submitted influential policy recommendations, participated in high-level policy conferences, and drafted key regulatory documents.

Their report, *Assessment and Institutional Research on Environmental Information Disclosure by Listed Companies*, was officially recognized by the MEE and helped inform the development of several landmark policies. These included the 2021 *Management Measures for the Legal Disclosure of Enterprise Environmental Information*, which expanded the scope of regulated entities, standardized reporting formats, and introduced a centralized disclosure platform.

This reform was driven by interacting factors, such as the State Council's push for "modern environmental governance," international ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) norms, and financial sector demands for transparency. The researchers' work aligned with these broader trends and provided empirical support for policy choices.

Extensive implementation

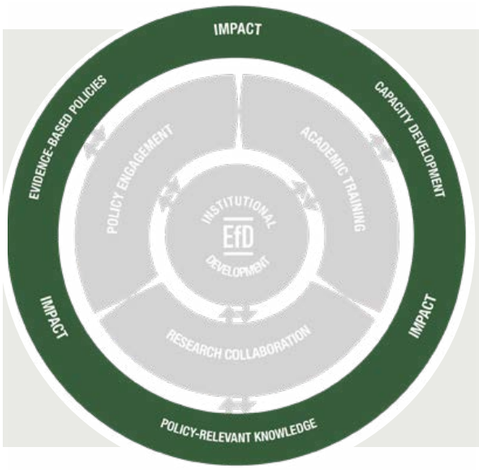
Today, over 80,000 enterprises and institutions in China are required to disclose environmental information. Each province operates its own platform for environmental information, but the systems are harmonized, allowing for cross-regional access and comparisons. Enterprises report annually, and those with real-time monitoring systems share pollution data continuously.

"The reform has improved oversight efficiency, supported green finance initiatives, and encouraged industries to self-regulate. Environmental data is now integrated into financial credit systems and supply chain evaluations," says Bing Zhang.

By the end of 2023, nearly all of China's 337 prefecture-level cities had disclosed enterprise lists for environmental reporting, with many achieving full compliance and demonstrating the reform's broad reach and feasibility.

Read more

Footnote: This project and the research that supports it were conducted while China was still an EfD center.



EfD´S IMPACT

EfD aims at contributing to locally grounded, evidence-based policymaking that benefits people and the environment. We do this by conducting high-quality, policy-relevant research, training the current and next generation of decision-makers, and actively engaging with policymakers and other stakeholders.

EfD Tanzania researcher Innocencia John conducting fieldwork for her studies on indigenous crops. Photo: EfD Tanzania.

ELEVATING **INDIGENOUS CROPS** IN **POLICY AND PRACTICE**

EfD Tanzania researcher Dr. Innocensia John has, for years, focused on indigenous crops and their role in nutrition, climate adaptation, and economic empowerment for smallholder farmers. She has worked closely with policymakers, farmer groups, and other stakeholders and has received international recognition for her work.

Still, several obstacles remain before indigenous crops become widely consumed.

Indigenous crops, also called orphan or neglected crops, are traditional plants consumed as part of local diets. Since the 1960s, Tanzania's government and farmers have focused mainly on conventional crops such as coffee, cashew nuts, and maize, that often have better market potential, increasing farmers' incomes and exports. As a result, many farmers have switched crops and indigenous crops have partially fallen into obscurity.

However, these crops offer major benefits. Her research shows that indigenous crops support crop diversification, which improves soil health and strengthens farmers' food security. Crops like cowpea, pigeon pea, sorghum, baobab, and cassava are resilient to climate change, tolerating wide variations in temperature and rainfall. They are also rich in essential nutrients.

"One problem is that there is very little demand. Many people are not familiar with these crops, and you don't find them in big supermarkets," says Innocensia John. She stresses the need for awareness campaigns to inform both producers and consumers.

Cassava is an example of indigenous crops in eastern Africa. Photo: Pexels.

From side event to center stage

Her long-term efforts — research, meetings with decision-makers, and outreach to farmers — led to her receiving the Top Agri-Food Pioneers award for her significant impact on agriculture and food systems. Her work highlights the importance of indigenous crops for food and nutrition security, climate adaptation, and agricultural diversification, offering practical advice on extension services, seed policies, and school feeding programs.

She has also raised awareness nationally. At the Annual Agricultural Policy Conference in 2023, she presented her research to hundreds of local and international participants, including ministries and NGOs.

"I felt there was a lot of interest," she says.

When invited again the following year, she gained more opportunities to speak with ministers and even held a side-event on indigenous crops. In 2025, indigenous fish, insects, and crops constituted one of the conference's three main thematic areas.

David Nyange

Professor David Nyange, Executive Director of ASPIRES (Agricultural Sector Policy and Institutional Reforms Strengthening) Tanzania says she has significantly helped bring indigenous crops to the attention of policymakers. After the 2025 conference, the Tanzanian Presidential Agricultural Delivery Council requested policy briefs on indigenous crops.

Sees strong potential

Innocensia also engages directly with farmers and agencies. She convinced COPRA (Cereals and Other Produce Regulatory Authority) to include indigenous crops in their seed systems. She meets with farmer groups to explain the benefits of these crops.

"Most farmers are women, but men often decide on crop choices. We developed a tool showing how indigenous crops can improve food security, helping women convince their husbands," she explains.

There are still barriers. Market infrastructure is limited, demand is low, and some crops are considered less tasty. Knowledge about them and their benefits remains limited. Yet, she sees strong potential for value addition. Cowpeas, for example, can be eaten as vegetables, processed into flour for snacks, or used dried in stews.

Read more

*Researchers from EfD Uganda have developed the **Model for Natural Capital Policy Assessment (**MONCAP), an Excel-based macroeconomic tool designed to help government agencies account for forests, wetlands, biodiversity, and water resources when planning for economic growth. The model allows users to test policy scenarios and assess impacts on GDP, employment, water access, and ecological outcomes. For example, if Uganda aims for 20% GDP growth, MONCAP can estimate how much water and natural resources would be required.*

EfD UGANDA HELPS GOVERNMENT

INTEGRATE NATURAL CAPITAL INTO ECONOMIC PLANNING

The tool was created in close collaboration with the Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministry of Finance, National Planning Authority, National Forestry Authority, National Environment Management Authority, National Water and Sewerage Corporation, and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, whose data underpin the model. This broad engagement supports more harmonized policy-making across sectors.

Expand tenfold

MONCAP arrives at a critical time. Uganda aims to expand its GDP tenfold—from USD 50 billion to 500 billion by 2040—while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2030. At the same time, the country faces rapid population growth and increasing climate impacts. Modeling based on UBOS data shows that wood stock declined sharply from 169 million tons in 1990 to 69 million tons in 2015, while demand rose from 17 to 49 million tons, posing risks to livelihoods and long-term economic stability.

Helps justify investments

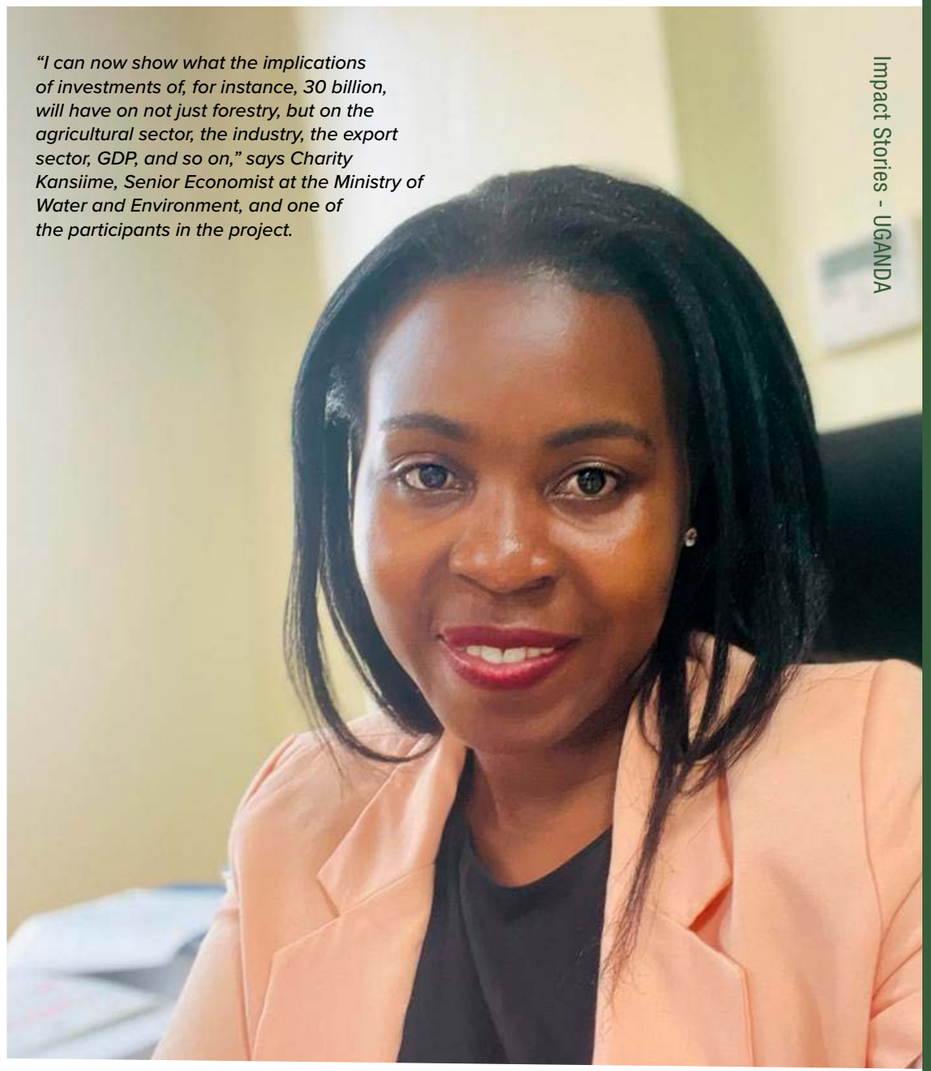
Government officials from participating ministries received about seven days of training to use MONCAP for policy simulations and scenario analysis. Senior Economist Charity Kansiime notes that the tool helps justify investments by showing their ripple effects across sectors such as forestry, agriculture, industry, and exports. She also highlights broader societal benefits, such as tourism and improved climate resilience.

A key success factor has been strong cross-ministry collaboration, which has built new connections and strengthened capacity for natural capital accounting. EfD Uganda researchers describe the project as both challenging and rewarding, positioning the center as a hub for macroeconomic modelling and Natural Capital Accounting, NCA, in Africa and attracting interest from potential partners and funders. The EfD research team included Edward Bbaale, Peter Babyenda, John Sseruyange, and Nick Kilimani. The project was funded by GIZ.

Read more

Simulation tools

MONCAP is a SAM-based (Social Accounting Matrix) simulation tool. A SAM describes the structure of economic flows across sectors and institutions, while a CGE (Computable General Equilibrium) model additionally captures behavioral and price adjustments in response to policy change. The biggest value of a SAM lies in supporting scenario analysis, policy learning, and institutional capacity-building, rather than providing standalone causal estimates of policy effects.



"I can now show what the implications of investments of, for instance, 30 billion, will have on not just forestry, but on the agricultural sector, the industry, the export sector, GDP, and so on," says Charity Kansiime, Senior Economist at the Ministry of Water and Environment, and one of the participants in the project.

The model was developed in close collaboration with several Ugandan ministries. Photo: EfD Uganda.

Teaching farmers beehive management.
Photo: EbA LAC.

RURAL LATIN AMERICA: **SCALING UP CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

Can climate adaptation take root in public planning, local finance, and community action simultaneously? Across three Latin American countries, a program is showing that ecosystem-based adaptation can move from concept to practice—creating lasting benefits for rural people and landscapes.

The Scaling-up *Ecosystem-based Adaptation Measures in Rural Latin America* (EbA LAC) program has worked from 2020 to 2025 to turn that vision into practice in Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Ecuador. By linking governments, financial institutions, indigenous organizations, and rural communities, the EfD Central America and Mexico (EfD CAM) program has shown how ecosystem-based adaptation measures can strengthen climate resilience while improving planning, finance, and livelihoods.

EbA LAC builds on scientific evidence from earlier research, including the CASCADE project, which demonstrated that ecosystem-based approaches can help vulnerable smallholder farmers adapt to climate change. As a key initiative of EfD CAM, EbA LAC applies these insights and expands them in new settings. EfD researchers active in this program are Dr. Arlene López-Sampson and Eduardo Pacay.

Strengthening institutions and local planning

A central goal of the program has been to embed EbA into planning and decision-making, so climate action can continue beyond individual projects. EbA LAC contributed to its integration into seven plans and policy instruments, helping local and subnational actors move from broad commitments to concrete measures.

"By developing a plan that incorporates a cross-cutting climate lens, we can guide public investment in rural territories more effectively, strengthen local capacities, and boost the rural economy," said Ricardo Quesada, Executive President of the Institute for Rural Development.

From evidence to action on the ground

The program has also delivered measurable results in rural landscapes and communities. EbA LAC improved conservation and sustainable management in more than 15,000 hectares of priority landscapes and directly supported more than 22,000 people in adapting to climate change.

EbA LAC also provides seed funding and technical support for ecosystem-based adaptation actions. With this support, small rural producers have improved their infrastructure, developed composting systems, reduced their use of agrochemicals, and explored tourism potential.

Capacity building has been another major pillar. More than 2,200 people, including rural producers, community leaders, and institutional actors, strengthened their skills through training, networks, and technical processes. A regional e-learning course helped professionals from the financial and insurance sectors design climate-resilient financial instruments, while a training-of-trainers course equipped professionals from local governments, conservation areas, and rural development agencies to scale EbA in their territories.

Mobilizing finance for resilience

EbA LAC also showed that scaling adaptation requires financing, not only technical knowledge. To date, the program has trained financial institutions and helped catalyze more than EUR 3.5 million in public and private capital across its interventions.

In Costa Rica, 65 entrepreneurs received seed capital, and three green credit lines were established to support climate-resilient rural enterprises. In Ecuador, more than 650 people now benefit from eight community savings banks, which strengthen financial preparedness and resilience to climate-related shocks.

"It helped us break down barriers," said Daniel Vega, a farmer. "For rural producers like us, it's hard to access technology and markets, but this program opened doors."

Building a pathway beyond the project

As EbA LAC approaches the end of its implementation period, the program is consolidating evidence, partnerships, and local capacities to support long-term sustainability. Collaborative workshops and stakeholder dialogues across the region have helped identify priorities and outline roadmaps for continuing these processes beyond the life of the project.

By combining scientific evidence, institutional engagement, local capacity building, and innovative finance, EbA LAC has shown that ecosystem-based adaptation is not only a viable climate strategy but also a practical pathway for rural development in Latin America.

Read more

EbA LAC is funded by Germany's BMUV through IKI, led by GIZ, and implemented in partnership with IUCN and CATIE (host institution of EfD Central America and Mexico).

Discussions with people from the rural communities of Manabí, Ecuador.
Photo: EbA LAC.

Impact Stories - RURAL LATIN AMERICA

Kanishka Kacker shows one of the articles from Dainik Bhaskar. Photo: Selfie by Kanishka Kacker.

RESEARCHERS AND MEDIA JOINED FORCES TO

RAISE AIR POLLUTION AWARENESS IN INDIA

In northern India, where air pollution is a growing health crisis, researchers in collaboration with journalists have investigated a way to raise awareness by putting science in the hands of the public through media.

The project, *Clearing the Air: The Impact of Local Media on Public Understanding of Air Quality*, was led by EfD India researcher Kanishka Kacker and Martin Mattsson of the National University of Singapore. They partnered with *Dainik Bhaskar,* one of India's largest regional-language newspaper networks, to publish a series of editorials in Hindi across two cities: Gwalior and Indore. Dainik Bhaskar has an average issue readership of 15 million, according to the *Top 10 Hindi Newspapers in India 2025 – Most Popular List*.

"Outside Delhi, many people don't even realize how bad the air is," said Kanishka Kacker.

"The entire northern plains are equally polluted, but the awareness isn't there. There are signs in Delhi informing about the levels of air pollution, but most other cities don't have that, and you often can't feel how bad the air is."

> "Outside Delhi, many people don't even realize **how bad** the air is"

Editorials that educate and empower

Over the course of a month, the newspaper ran editorials three times a week in collaboration with the researchers, each week focusing on a different theme: air quality levels, health impacts, pollution sources, and practical solutions. The articles were designed to be accessible, using bullet points, graphs, and local language storytelling.

"As a responsible newspaper, our role goes beyond reporting. We strive to spark conversations that matter," explained Satish Singh, State Editor for Madhya Pradesh at *Dainik Bhaskar.*

"Through this editorial initiative, we wanted to highlight that air pollution isn't just a metro-city crisis. Cities like Bhopal, Gwalior, and Indore also face similar challenges. By bringing such issues to the forefront, our goal is not just to inform but to empower the public and encourage them to take action at their level and hold policymakers accountable," he said.

The researchers worked closely with the newspaper's editorial team to translate academic findings into actionable messages. Surveys conducted before and after the campaign showed a clear increase in public understanding. In cities where the editorials were published, the number of people correctly identifying indoor air quality risks rose from just over one-third to nearly half.

The surveys were conducted with a QR code printed in the newspaper and received 1,027 respondents.

From awareness to action

The campaign didn't just inform; it also encouraged action. Readers learned how to protect themselves with masks and air purifiers and were advised to report harmful practices, such as burning garbage. The team also explored ideas like citizen helplines and community-level engagement to push for cleaner air.

While the project didn't directly change policy, it demonstrated how media can spark bottom-up demand for environmental action.

What's next: Fighting air pollution in schools

Building on the encouraging results of the study, Kanishka Kacker, EfD colleagues and associates, are now expanding their work on information/awareness as a tool to reduce air pollution problems. New research targets school children in public schools and has generated results that seriously question new Indian policies promoting air purifiers in schools. (See page 39).

Read more

"IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY"

*Follow-up questions answered by **Kamesh Dhakar**, a resident of the city of Gwalior in the state of Madhya Pradesh.*

What made you decide to scan the QR code and take part in the survey?
"I felt a sense of responsibility towards society and the environment, so I participated."

When you read the newspaper article series, was there anything that changed the way you think about air pollution?
"Yes, I realized that pollution is not just the government's responsibility — it's everyone's."

Did the articles inspire you to do anything differently in your daily life or in your community?
"Yes, I've started using less plastic and encouraging others to be more aware too."

What will you remember most from the articles?
"The idea that even a small change can be the beginning of a big improvement."

From the left: EfD Researcher Adrián Saldarriaga-Isaza, National University of Colombia, and from the Río Man gold mine in Caucasia, Colombia: Cintya Cataño, administrative assistant, Darío Garcés, mine owner, and A. Meneses, engineer. Photo: Andrés Zaramaa

EfD RESEARCHERS HELP LAY OUT
SUSTAINABLE ROADMAP FOR COLOMBIAN MINING

The mining industry is vital for Colombia's economy but is linked to major environmental and social challenges. EfD Colombia researchers have worked closely with the government and stakeholders for years to develop a simulation tool to address these issues and to contribute to the national mining development plan.

Around 250,000 people work directly in mining, with about one million depending on it indirectly. It generates major export revenues—coal, gold, copper, and nickel—and demand for other minerals is increasing with the green transition.

The mining industry has problems

However, the sector faces serious hurdles: illegal mining, regulatory uncertainty, complex licensing, pollution, deforestation, land conflicts, and weak infrastructure. EfD researchers Santiago Arango-Aramburo, Clara Villegas-Palacio, and Carlos Saldarriaga-Isaza have studied the industry for many years. Together with colleagues from the National University of Colombia, they have collaborated closely with the Mining and Energy Planning Unit (UPME) to address these challenges.

Maria Carolina Obando Vargas at UPME highlights the importance of effective communication between researchers and policymakers. She notes that methodological rigor must align with operational realities.

> "The collaboration between academia and government has produced **longlasting impacts**"

Simulation tool for analysis

The first phase of the collaboration involved developing a simulation tool to explore how different policy interventions affect the environment, employment, pollution, tax revenues, and other factors. The model, covering 17 strategic minerals, combines sectoral data, expert input, secondary sources, and literature-based assumptions, projecting development pathways through 2040. Obando Vargas says the tool has been essential for strategic analysis, emphasizing the need for high-quality data and careful handling of technical complexity.

"We had weekly and bi-weekly meetings with UPME staff for more than a year," says Santiago Arango- Aramburo. Multi-stakeholder workshops involving policymakers, academic experts, mining representatives, environmental and social leaders, and local communities helped build a shared understanding of future challenges and opportunities.

Next step: National plan

The second phase involved contributing to the 2024–2035 National Mining Development Plan (PNDM), where the simulation tool supported prioritization. The PNDM is a comprehensive planning instrument developed with broad stakeholder participation and aims to help the Ministry of Mines and Energy achieve the goals of the National Development Plan.

The plan is now in the process of being adopted through an administrative act, which will provide the legal basis for implementation and monitoring. Key elements of the researchers' work—simulation results, scenario analysis, and strategic recommendations—were incorporated into the official policy document, including sustainability assessments, social and environmental considerations, and pathways for critical minerals.

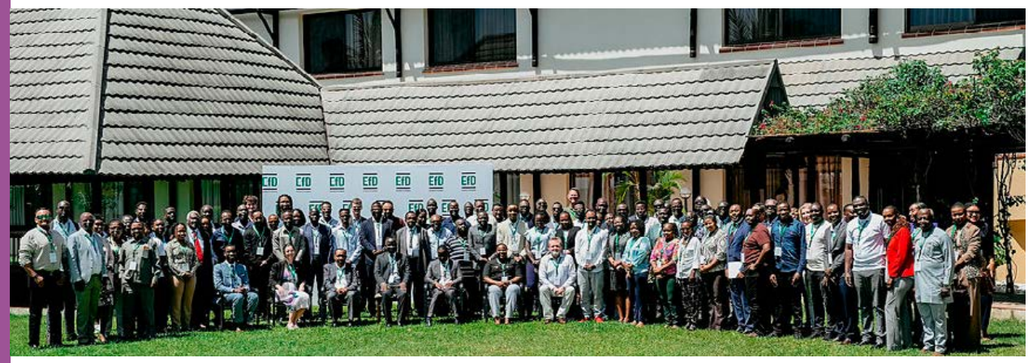
Lasting results

The collaboration between academia and government has produced longlasting impacts beyond the tool and the plan. It strengthened institutional capacity in advanced policy analysis, systems thinking, and participatory modeling.

It also helped integrate sustainability and inclusion into mining planning, such as considering the role of critical minerals in renewable energy, trade-offs between mining and agriculture, and alignment with territorial development needs. Emphasis on district-level planning and social dialogue contributed to more inclusive policy design.

Read more

Footnote: This project and the research that supports it were conducted while Colombia was still an EfD center.



120 civil servants and researchers participated in EfD's Policy Day 2025. Photo: Aclovius Kamanyonga.

EfD'S POLICY DAY 2025:

SOLUTIONS FOR RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE **AGRICULTURE**

The Policy Day brought together 120 participants - policymakers from Eastern Africa, researchers, and practitioners - to explore pathways for building resilient and sustainable agriculture in Eastern Africa. The event took place in connection with EfD's Annual Meeting and generated fruitful discussions and knowledge sharing.

Finding solutions for climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture is among the most urgent challenges for Africa. Agriculture is both highly vulnerable to climate change and a major contributor to it. Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) aims to simultaneously increase agricultural productivity, enhance resilience, and reduce emissions.

"Tanzania's 2050 vision plan places agriculture at the heart of national growth through resilience, innovation, and partnerships and aims to modernize farming, boost productivity, and empower women and youth," said Pastory Ndalahwa from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Dr. Innocencia John, EfD Tanzania, talked about building resilient and sustainable agriculture by integrating indigenous crops into climate-smart agriculture. She highlighted research that shows that traditional crops can boost yields, nutrition, and resilience while cutting emissions.

The event featured group discussions on three different themes: Climate-smart agriculture & environmental stewardship; Green finance, carbon markets and fiscal Incentives; and Inclusive agri-economies & livelihoods.

A panel discussion synthesized the key issues, the opportunities, and actionable recommendations from all the sessions. Professor Edwin Muchapondwa, EfD South Africa, summarized the group discussions in five key takeaways from the discussions:

1 Agriculture as an ecosystem
Research shows that integrated approaches—linking crops, livestock, and forestry—lead to higher productivity and greater resilience to climate shocks.

2 Start with what works locally
Indigenous crops are naturally resilient. When local knowledge is combined with scientific innovations – such as drought-tolerant varieties or precision irrigation—the results are powerful: increased yields, improved climate resilience, and reduced emissions.

3 Institutions more important than technology
Farmers are more likely to adopt new practices when they have access to reliable information, effective extension services, fair markets, and financial support.

4 Green finance and carbon markets
While these mechanisms can fund sustainable agriculture and land restoration, they must ensure equitable benefit-sharing and be rooted in strong local ownership and monitoring systems.

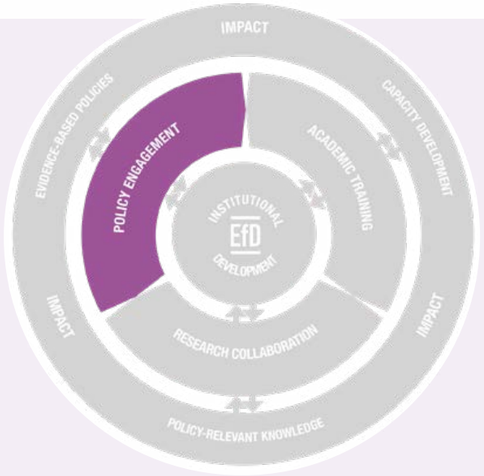
5 No resilience without inclusion Research shows that empowering women and youth in agriculture leads to better outcomes in productivity, innovation, and food security. Policies that support land rights for women, access to finance for youth, and skills development can deliver measurable benefits.

WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS THINK:

Netsanet Tesfaye Tujo, Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland Areas, Ethiopia.
"With so many people from different countries with different experiences and knowledge, we really learned a lot about Climate-Smart Agriculture in an East African context."

Lindokuhle Njozela, University of Cape Town.
"There are some challenges that we have in common and others that are country-specific. This kind of cross-country learning is unique."

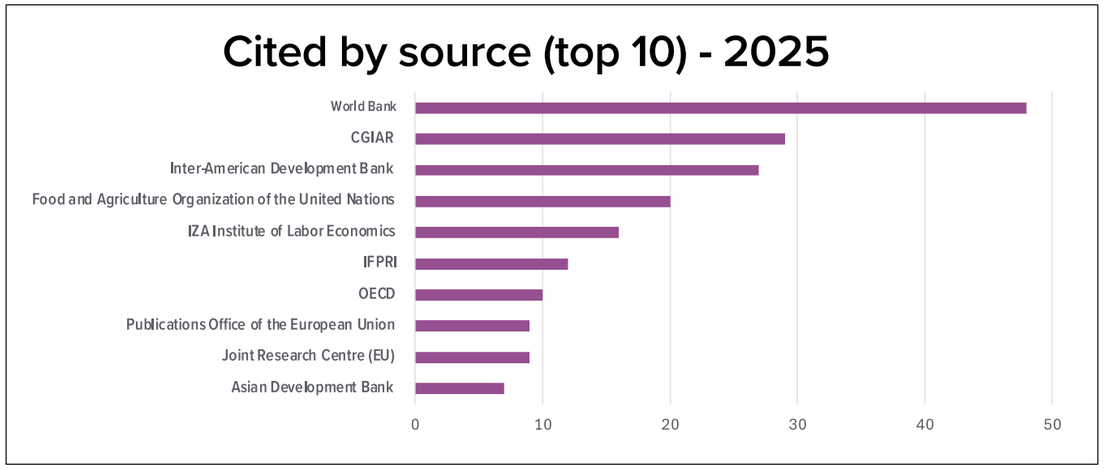
Hamis Simba, Economic Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Tanzania.
"There were many good ideas presented and a huge knowledge exchange. We talked about tools, equipment, and finance solutions to reduce emissions, and how to link policies with the community."



EfD'S POLICY ENGAGEMENT

The researchers at EfD are conducting policy-relevant research aimed at supporting the energy transition, facilitating adaptation to climate change and promoting the sustainable management of our natural capital in an inclusive and gender sensitive manner.

Key to achieving these objectives is our active engagement with policymakers and stakeholders. The robust local networks of EfD centers with government agencies and other organizations constitute EfD's greatest asset, which can be leveraged at the regional and international levels in collaboration with our partners.



EfD RESEARCH IS CITED IN **POLICY DOCUMENTS**

EfD used, for the first time this year, the Overton tool to measure the policy impact of EfD publications. We searched policy articles citing research publications by the EfD center researchers.

Publications from the period 2020-2025 were used as input. Results: The total policy citations obtained to date were 1642. These are unique citations in policy documents.

The total number of policy documents that cited EfD articles to date was 1230.

Around 25% of the publications by the EfD center researchers have at least one citation in a policy document.

The policy documents were published by 243 policy sources.

In 2025, the total number of policy citations was 335. The bar graph above shows the number of policy citations for the top 10 policy sources in 2025. The source that cited EfD the most in 2025 was the World Bank, with 48 citations.

Top three publications cited in 2025

- *The Impact of Temperature on Productivity and Labor Supply: Evidence from Indian Manufacturing, Journal of Political Economy*, 2021 (26 times)
- *Diverse values of nature for sustainability, Nature*, 2023 (18 times).
- *The role of Indigenous peoples and local communities in effective and equitable conservation, Ecology and Society*, 2021 (15 times).

1642
... unique citations in policy documents between 2020–2025

335
... number of policy citations in 2025

48
... times that the World Bank cited publications that included EfD center researchers in 2025

Some of the 26 authors who have contributed to the Policy Engagement Handbook. Photo: Aclovius Kamanyonga.

LAUNCHED IN 2025:
HANDBOOK FOR RESEARCHERS

It took over two years and involved 26 authors from across the EfD network. It was officially launched at EfD's Annual Meeting 2025: a practical handbook for researchers who want to ensure that their research is used to inform policies and practices.

An important feature of this handbook is its strong focus on the Global South. It addresses challenges specific to low- and middle-income countries, such as limited funding, institutional instability, and uneven access to policymaking spaces. It offers practical tools and examples from EfD centers across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

"Researchers will find the handbook to be a clear and useful roadmap for making their work policy-relevant, especially in the contexts of the Global South," says Hoa Le Dang, EfD Vietnam, one of the co-authors.

The handbook is open-access and can be viewed and downloaded from the EfD website. Along with the handbook, there is an AI-powered chatbot where researchers can ask questions on topics covered in the handbook, in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Kiswahili, and several other languages.

The development of the handbook has been coordinated by staff at EfD's Global Hub at the University of Gothenburg, with contributions from researchers in EfD's global network.

ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

Title: *Bridging the Research–Policy Gap for Sustainable Development: A Handbook for Policy Engagement and Impact in the Global South*.
Authors: 25 researchers and policy experts from 13 countries. **Publisher:** Environment for Development (EfD), University of Gothenburg.

EfD Policy Impact Award encourages researchers' policy engagement

The EfD Policy Impact Award was presented for the fourth time at the EfD Annual Meeting in Dar es Salaam in October 2025.

It was presented by Dr. Claudine Uwera, Senior Strategic Advisor of the Office of the Prime Minister, Rwanda, and a member of the evaluation committee, and EfD Policy Engagement Director Daniel Slunge, to two runners-up who received a certificate of excellence and one winner.

Winners of the EfD Policy Impact Award were **Bing Zhang**, **Liu Mengdi**, and **Jintao Xu** for *Corporate environmental information disclosure and public participation in China*. See story p. 6!

Excerpt from the motivation: They receive the award for their pioneering research on corporate environmental information disclosure and its impact on governance in China.

The runners-up who received certificates of excellence were:

Le Thanh Loan, **Tran Duc Luan**, and **Phung Ngoc Trieu** for their work *Bridging research and policy for climate-smart rice farming: Laser land leveling in Vietnam* and **Martin Visser** and **Jane Turpie** for *Natural capital accounting for enhanced environmental-economic decision-making in* South Africa.

INCLUSIVE GREEN ECONOMY PROGRAM:

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

In 2025, the Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) program continued to strengthen capacity among civil servants across eastern Africa through workshops, training sessions, and growing peer learning networks. The year began with stakeholder workshops in Ethiopia and Rwanda, focusing on social inclusion and energy efficiency reforms.

A major event was the cross-country workshop in Addis Ababa in March, where fellows from all participating countries shared progress on their Transformation Initiatives (a challenge-based process they conduct together with local researchers).

Throughout the year, the new 2025/2026 cohort participated in training sessions on IGE fundamentals, national systems for IGE, social inclusion, policy instruments, and climate-smart agriculture. July and August marked national forums with stakeholders in all participating countries, each concluding with the graduation of the 2024/2025 fellows.

The regional IGEP Forum in Dar es Salaam in October brought alumni and current fellows together to participate in EfD's Policy Day. They also established a regional secretariat—an important step toward long-term collaboration.

"All parts of the program are important, but what really stands out is how much the participants learn from each other. The network itself has become one of our strongest tools for change," says Policy Engagement Coordinator Anna Mellin, who is part of the organizing team.

Monthly meetings and national alumni gatherings continued to sustain momentum, ensuring ongoing dialogue and support across the region.

> "What really stands out is **how much** the participants learn from each other"

IGE Fellows and support teams. Photo: EfD.

THE IGE MODEL

The IGE program is a collaborative model for civil servants and researchers to learn about an Inclusive Green Economy in practice by combining applied research, stakeholder engagement, organizational change management, innovative thinking, and policy development.

Jane Jerop Atuta, Economist at the State Department for Economic Planning in Kenya.
"The IGE Program gave me a completely new approach to policymaking. We've often developed well-intentioned policies, but the IGE program emphasized the importance of social acceptance."

"Now, when reviewing a policy, the first question is 'Have stakeholders been consulted?'

The biggest benefit of the program is, according to her, the networking. The program connected her with experts and peers across eastern Africa.

"If I need insights from Uganda or Rwanda, I know exactly who to call. That kind of access is irreplaceable."

"When a new energy policy is drafted, like on gas tax exemptions, I can now evaluate its feasibility using IGE insights, compare it to policies in other countries that succeeded or failed."

She shares IGE knowledge both formally at stakeholder forums and informally, in office discussions and while reviewing documents with colleagues.

Norbert Z. Mwitta, Tanzania's Ministry of Finance, mobilizing funding from development partners.
"Participating in the IGE program under the theme of Climate-Smart Agriculture is highly relevant for my work. It shows how CSA can be positioned in national and regional investment priorities," he says.

Currently, he is exploring financing models for projects aimed at climate-resilient infrastructure and agricultural value chains in rural areas.

This cross-sectoral and cross-country dialogue helps, according to Norbert Mwitta, dismantle silos between ministries and build strategic partnerships.

He is already applying new tools and perspectives from the IGE program in his work. He believes that the growing attention to climate-resilient agriculture presents a unique opportunity for Tanzania to unlock development finance while addressing pressing environmental and social challenges.

"I leave each session more committed to ensuring that the projects we develop and finance contribute to a climate-smart, inclusive, and sustainable future for Tanzania."

Nathan Mununuzi, Senior Environmental Officer at Uganda's Ministry of Water and Environment.
"I wanted to gain deeper insights into policy development grounded in research, and the IGE program delivered on this. Exposure to international best practices and a structured approach to policy formulation enriched my understanding."
He says that it offered hands-on approach to identifying challenges, conducting research, and drafting policy responses.

Nathan Mununuzi has integrated IGE principles into several initiatives, including a greening strategy for schools and health centers, which promotes waste management, rainwater harvesting, erosion control, and tree planting. He also contributed to drafting a regulation that requires manufacturers to manage product lifecycles responsibly.

"The IGE Program is impactful and relevant. It equips professionals with the tools to drive this agenda."

Policy Engagement

Some representatives of the IGEP regional and national secretariats. Photo: EfD

CREATING A COMMUNITY FOR
A GREENER FUTURE ACROSS EASTERN AFRICA

The Inclusive Green Economy in Practice (IGEP) network made a significant leap forward in 2025 to ensure impact beyond the program's duration. The IGE Fellows, alumni, and IGE support teams created a regional and five national secretariats as well as guidelines for the network.

Each national secretariat, made up of four to five alumni alongside local program staff, leads activities and facilitates interactions, while the regional secretariat coordinates activities among all five countries. Together, they form a growing community of practice.

The network focuses on professional development, knowledge sharing, and regional collaboration. Planned activities include online webinars, discussing the progress of their Transformation Initiatives, and continuous peer learning. These efforts support the program's broader mission to bridge the gap between research and practice and strengthen national systems for inclusive green economy.

Gilbert Uforo

For many alumni, the network is already influencing their day-to-day work. Gilbert Uforo, an environmental engineer at Tanzania's Ministry of Industry and Trade and Chair of the regional secretariat, highlights how the exchange of experiences is shaping national policy development.

"Among other things, I have gained valuable insights into energy audit practices and frameworks used to improve energy efficiency in the industrial sector. As I am currently participating in the preparation of something similar, the knowledge acquired will be instrumental in informing the development of effective and practical guidelines," he says.

"This network is a great way for all alumni to stay in touch, follow our progress, and keep learning together."

With 155 members and growing, the IGEP Network is laying the groundwork for long-term regional cooperation. Its vision is a vibrant community leading the way toward a greener, more inclusive economic development.

FINANCE MINISTRIES BETTER INFORMED ON CLIMATE CHANGE

As climate impacts has begun to affect national budgets and long-term planning, the interest of Ministries of Finance for analysis has increased significantly. Dr Sam Mugume of Uganda's Finance Ministry, co-chair of the Coalition of Ministries of Finance for Climate Action, exemplifies this shift.

"Five years ago, the Ministry of Finance in Uganda didn't have a climate finance unit, we did not do disaster risk assessments, and we were not assessing risks and opportunities as a result of climate action through macroeconomic analysis and modelling. We do all of this now, and I see similar development in other countries," he says.

As climate-related considerations are informing decisions, ministries need to balance climate with spending needs like health and education.

"You need strong justification backed with numbers. With the right arguments, people can accept higher costs, for instance, for more resilient infrastructure," Sam Mugume explains.

The coalition has developed guidance to integrate climate risks and opportunities into macroeconomic analysis and budgeting. EfD contributed insights from the Global South and took part in the Coalition's launch of the guidance in 2025.

According to Sam Mugume, capacity remains a constraint, both specialist skills and a shared understanding of climate-economy linkages across the ministry. EfD's Inclusive Green Economy Program has helped fill some of these gaps through its close collaboration with Makerere University and the Ministry of Finance. Sam Mugume is also a member of EfD Uganda's Advisory board and notes, "I see a big role for EfD in assisting central governments, like Ministries of Finance, with training and research.

Looking ahead, Sam Mugume underscores the next major challenge: mobilizing the finance required to put climate-responsive policies into practice at scale.

The Coalition of Ministries of Finance for Climate Action brings together fiscal and economic policy makers from 100 countries and launched a Global Compendium of Practice in June 2025. In February 2026 the annual deputies meeting was held in Uganda. See *financeministersforclimate.org*.

Sam Mugume Koojo, Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda. Photo by IISD/ENB | Mike Muzurakis

"With the **right arguments**, people can accept higher costs, for instance, for more resilient infrastructure"

EfD RESEARCH IN 2025

FOCUS ON DEVELOPING THE COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

The year started with the implementation of 16 EfD-funded research projects that were approved in 2024. In 2025, the allocation of the EfD research fund was restructured and awarded funds focused on projects led by the collaborative programs.

The EfD research committee approved 6 such projects in 2025. These projects start in 2026 and have a lifespan of two years. There was also a strong focus on strengthening the collaborative programs' organizations.

The EfD-funded research is organized into collaborative programs. They gather researchers from across the network, focusing on specific themes. On the following pages, we present these programs: Blue Resources for Development (BlueRforD), Climate Policies for Development (CPfD), Natural Capital Collaborative (NatCap), Sustainable Energy Transitions Initiative (SETI), and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCOPE).

FACTS AND NUMBERS

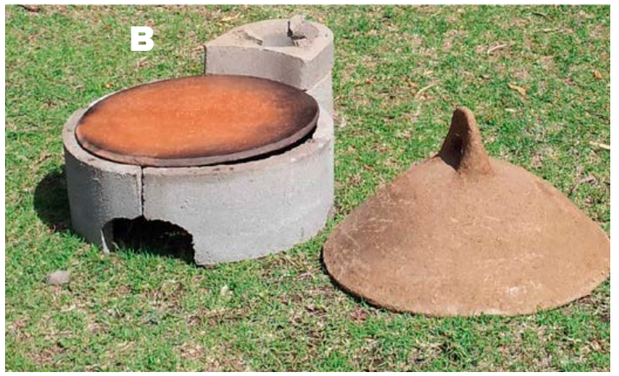
Publications: (Total number by EfD center researchers and on EfD themes)	**407**
EfD Discussion Papers:	**14**
Articles: (in international peer-reviewed journals.)	**295**

Published in leading international journals such as Science, Nature Climate Change, Nature Communications, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, Review of Economics and Statistics, World Development, and American Journal of Agricultural Economics.

These publications are not necessarily direct outputs of EfD funding, but they reflect research conducted by researchers affiliated with an EfD center.

EfD'S RESEARCH

One cornerstone at EfD is high quality, policy-relevant research. This research is instrumental in supporting evidence-based policies crucial for an inclusive and resilient economic development amidst the triple planetary crisis – climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. EfD provides unique opportunities for research collaborations, South-South as well as South-North, within its thematic collaborative programs.



A) Sensors and irrigation for climate-smart agriculture.

B) Improved Stove. Photo: EfD.

C) E vehicles. Photo: Ministry of Transport and Logistics Ethiopia

D) Indoor air pollution. Photo: Shirley Ho / Pexels

BlueRforD: ADVANCING RESEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

In 2025, the Blue Resources for Development (BlueRforD) program has sharpened its research agenda in fisheries and aquaculture, combining global policy engagement, comparative research and capacity building across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Moving ahead, the collaborative research will primarily focus on sustainable aquaculture.

EfD researchers together with UNCTAD organized a side event on sustainable aquaculture at the UN Ocean conference. Through workshops co-organized with UNDP, the World Bank, and national partners, the program helped connect research evidence to ongoing debates on sustainable marine economies and blue economy governance in Southeast Asia.

EfD Vietnam and BlueRforD played a prominent role in the international ELG (Economics, Law, and Government) 2025 conference in Ho Chi Minh City by organizing sessions on fisheries and aquaculture. A multistakeholder meeting in Ghana identified priority challenges for West African aquaculture. These outreach activities have been important in shaping a shared research agenda for the collaborative.

The team has also advanced the use of the Aquaculture Performance Indicators (API) to assess environmental, economic, and social conditions across different production systems and countries. Parallel work examined nutrient pollution, disease risks, and antibiotic overuse.

Studies also explored eco-certification, biodegradable fishing gear, and fuel subsidy reforms, as well as marine spatial planning as a tool for coordinated ocean management. Policy briefs have been produced for shrimp farming in Vietnam, tilapia production in Ghana and Nigeria, and salmon farming in Chile. EfD researchers also contributed to a World Bank report on Vietnam's marine economy.

Across these activities, BlueRforD strengthened collaboration within its international network. Cross-country team exchanges contributed to a more coordinated approach to policy-relevant research on fisheries and aquaculture.

32

Number of publications in BlueRforD's thematic area.

(These publications are produced by researchers affiliated with EfD centers, but they are not necessarily EfD-funded or the result of the collaborative work within the program.)

Hon. Emelia Arthur urges innovation, partnerships, and research to tackle Ghana's aquaculture challenges.

Ghana lays foundation for sustainable aquaculture

A national workshop in Accra, hosted by EfD Ghana and the BlueRforD program, with participation from Nigeria, has strengthened momentum for sustainable aquaculture. Bringing together researchers, farmers, officials, and industry leaders, the event addressed key challenges such as high feed costs, climate-related stress, limited technology, and gaps in local research. The prioritized research area in both countries is related to the major aquaculture species, catfish.

The Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture emphasized the need for stronger partnerships, better genetic management, and expanded production to improve food security and youth employment.

Participants proposed solutions including affordable local feed, improved breeding of the Akosombo tilapia strain, stronger farmer training, and closer collaboration across sectors. A joint research agenda was developed, focusing on genetic diversity, antibiotic resistance, mining pollution, environmental impacts, certification, and risk management.

The workshop underscored aquaculture's growing role in Ghana's food system and the need for evidence-based policies and coordinated investment.

Read more

Mussel farm. Photo: Shutterstock

Consumers want safeguards against algal bloom contamination in seafood

An EfD collaboration between Vietnam, Chile, and China examines how harmful algal blooms (HABs), intensified by climate change and pollution, threaten seafood safety and consumer welfare. It finds strong demand for testing and certification to reduce health risks. The issue is especially relevant for poorer groups in producer countries, who face higher exposure to unsafe seafood and income losses from market disruptions. The findings inform policy debates on food safety regulation, environmental monitoring, and building credible certification systems to protect livelihoods and public health.

"Understanding the demand side, particularly consumers' strong preference for food safety testing, can help shape the seafood industry toward more sustainable, transparent, and safer production," says Thong Ho, EfD Vietnam.

Read more

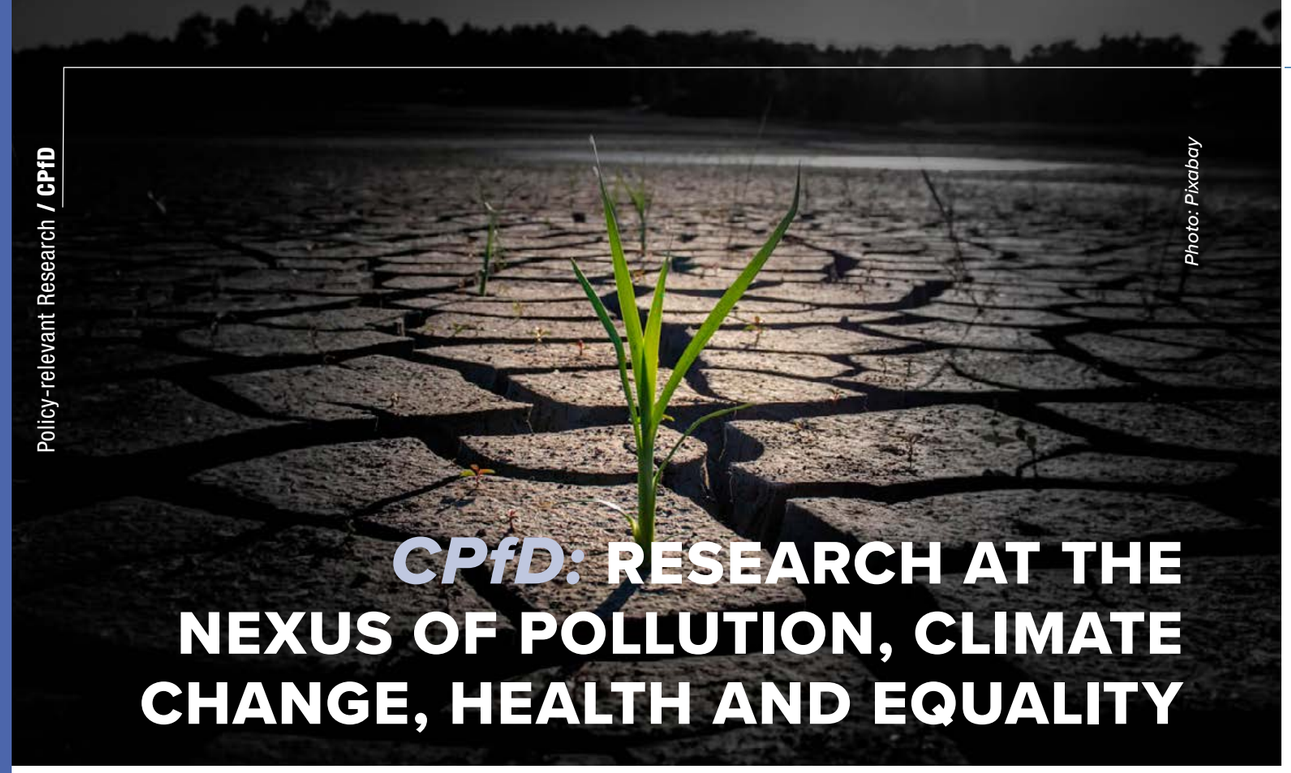


Photo: Pixabay

CPfD: RESEARCH AT THE NEXUS OF POLLUTION, CLIMATE CHANGE, HEALTH AND EQUALITY

In 2025, the Climate Policy for Development (CPfD) Collaborative expanded its research and policy engagement work across India, Africa, and other low- and middle-income countries. The year was largely focused on identifying priority climate policy areas that are complementary to emission pricing policies. Policy deliberations in India, Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania during 2025 were helped by using the Carbon Pricing Incidence Calculator (CPIC) tool, developed by EfD's partner PIK Potsdam. The tool offers clarity on the effects of carbon pricing on households and how revenues can be redistributed to support equity.

Researchers identified three focus areas for deeper investigation, including the uptake of electromobility, fuel switching from solid fuels towards cleaner sources, and energy efficiency, where policy decisions could shape future emissions. In 2025 CPfD also contributed to studies on electric cooking transitions and the feasibility of emissions pricing in India. A major effort this year was the reassessment of national parameters used by the Government of India to evaluate public investments. The work updated key economic indicators such as the social discount rate, conversion factors, and the social cost of carbon, supporting a more consistent and empirically grounded appraisal of major projects.

Policy engagement remained a core part of CPfD's activities. Additional workshops in Delhi, Bergen, and during the EfD Annual Meeting created spaces for government officials, researchers, and practitioners to discuss climate impacts and policy priorities. The 9th CECFEE Research & Policy Workshop in Srinagar, India, strengthened links with academic institutions and provided a platform for early-stage research.

The team strengthened its institutional capacity by recruiting a new postdoctoral researcher placed in EfD Nigeria and adding members to coordinate research, facilitate engagement and communication. By combining new tools, research, and strengthened collaborations, CPfD advanced its goal of supporting fair and effective climate policy across the Global South.

29

Number of publications in CPfD's thematic area:

(These publications are produced by researchers affiliated with EfD centers, but they are not necessarily EfD-funded or the result of the collaborative work within the program.)

Women carrying firewood to sell. Photo: Annie Pratt, Unsplash.

Wisdom Akpalu and Francis Atsu of EfD Ghana at the ECOWAS regional workshop. Photo: EfD Ghana.

When electricity becomes costly, families rely more on firewood

A study conducted for Malawi shows that when electricity prices go up, households often switch from electricity to firewood. This shift has direct consequences for women and girls, who are usually responsible for collecting fuel. Using Malawi's Integrated Household Panel Surveys (2010-20), the study finds that a rise in electricity prices increases both firewood use and the time women and girls spend gathering it.

The research also shows that when women have greater decision-making power in the household, families are less likely to increase their use of firewood when electricity prices rise. This suggests that empowering women can support cleaner and healthier energy choices.

The findings highlight an important policy consideration: efforts to reduce carbon emissions can unintentionally create new pressures on households if alternatives become too costly. Targeted cash transfers may help families manage higher energy prices and reduce their reliance on biomass fuels.

EfD contributes expertise to ECOWAS dialogue on carbon markets

EfD Ghana researchers took part in the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) regional workshop on establishing a West African Carbon Market Platform, held in Accra in September 2025. The meeting gathered member states, regional institutions, development partners, and technical experts to discuss a framework and roadmap for mobilizing carbon finance across West Africa.

EfD Ghana shared insights from EfD's ongoing multi-country research project on voluntary carbon markets financed by IDRC, which includes Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Morocco. The workshop enabled an exchange on how countries can design credible carbon market architectures that support climate and development goals. EfD Ghana's participation strengthened regional collaboration and ensured that emerging policy discussions draw on evidence from the broader EfD network.

NatCap: BUILDING EVIDENCE, PARTNERSHIPS, AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Crop diversification in effect in Zambia. Photo: EfD South Africa

In 2025, the Natural Capital collaborative (NatCap) amplified its ambitions to connect researchers and policymakers on the themes of water systems, forestry, agriculture, and biodiversity. NatCap helped identify governments' evidence needs and advanced collaborative research to address them.

Two major workshops, in Cape Town in May and Dar es Salaam in October, brought together researchers and policy counterparts to refine a shared agenda. NatCap also convened water-utility leaders (companies/authorities) from Accra, Nairobi, Kampala, and Dar es Salaam with EfD researchers to discuss operational challenges and research needs. The onboarding of two postdoctoral researchers placed in Tanzania and Uganda respectively further strengthened research capacity and collaboration across centers.

NatCap's impact also emerged through focused research and policy engagement. In Zambia, EfD researchers analyzed the country's electronic voucher reform for farm input subsidies. The evaluation found that the digital system encouraged more diverse cropping choices while revealing practical constraints—such as limited access to certified seed and weak markets—that reduce its effectiveness. The findings provided Zambian agencies with concrete guidance for improving program delivery.

NatCap contributed to the African Development Bank's African Economic Outlook 2025. EfD researcher Amin Karimu supported the chapter on natural capital, providing evidence for the Bank's analysis of Africa's growth prospects and resource mobilization strategies. The report is widely used by governments, development partners, and the media for policy discussions.

These achievements reflect a year in which NatCap sharpened the focus of collaborative research, aligned research more closely with policy needs, and contributed knowledge that supports more resilient and inclusive development.

146

Number of publications in NatCap's thematic areas.

(These publications are produced by researchers affiliated with EfD centers, but they are not necessarily EfD-funded or the result of the collaborative work within the program.)

Photo: Aclovius Kamanyonga.

African water utilities connected for peer learning

Water utility leaders (companies and authorities) from Accra, Nairobi, Kampala, and Dar es Salaam met for a workshop to share experiences and strengthen collaboration with researchers. This built on a decade-long, fruitful collaboration between NCWSC, Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company, and EfD. Initiated by the Water Systems Group of the Natural Capital Collaborative and held alongside the EfD Annual Meeting, the event provided an opportunity to build networks and highlight concrete issues.

"It was a very good workshop where we discussed experiences with the other water companies," said Josiah Gitu, NCWSC.

Discussions focused on billing, infrastructure financing, and operational challenges, with utilities leading the conversation. Participants highlighted shared issues such as non payment and meter functionality, which opened the door to deeper peer learning. A key insight was the need for evidence-based evaluation of current strategies, sparking interest in closer work with EfD researchers.

New funding from EfD will allow the group to reconvene over the next two years, building a community of practice and identifying opportunities to improve service delivery and financial sustainability.

Read more

Professor Amin Karimu is the EfD South Africa lead on the project. Photo: EfD South Africa.

Large grant for project on green finance for Agrifood SMEs in South Africa

EfD South Africa, together with researchers from DIIS Denmark and partners in South Africa and Zimbabwe, received a 10 million DKK grant to study green finance for Agrifood small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa. The four-year project, led by DIIS, will examine how Agrifood SMEs adapt to green financing and how this affects their growth, employment, and climate resilience.

As development finance shifts toward climate-responsive investments, the project will explore SMEs' integration into emerging green finance ecosystems and differences between formal and informal firms. It will also assess how these dynamics shape strategies for climate-resilient food systems, with implications for regional food security and employment.

The project includes funding for three PhD students and promotes knowledge exchange between UCT and DIIS. Its findings aim to guide policymakers and support sustainable growth in South Africa's agricultural sector.

Read more

Photo: Shutterstock

SCOPE: BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

In 2025, the SCOPE collaborative program brought researchers, policymakers, and practitioners together across regions, creating a shared foundation for work on plastic, electronic, and textile waste in the Global South.

In Bogotá, during the first LAERE (Latin American Association of Environmental and Resource Economists) meeting, SCOPE partners from Latin America, Africa, and Europe compared research experiences on waste generation and recycling systems. These exchanges helped identify how products reach end-of-life, who handles them, and what constraints limit circular solutions.

Policy engagement played a crucial role throughout the year. In Nairobi, local policymakers, recyclers, industry representatives, and civil society groups described the day-to-day realities of managing rapidly growing waste streams. These conversations highlighted the scale of second-hand imports, the risks faced by informal workers, and the need for better data to guide the rollout of new regulations such as extended producer responsibility.

Building on insights from the Nairobi workshop, a subsequent meeting in Wageningen transformed these discussions into a concrete research plan. Teams from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, India, Mexico, and Costa Rica agreed on methods for tracking waste flows, engaging informal workers, and examining regulatory frameworks. By the end of the meeting, SCOPE had a multi-country proposal, later approved for implementation in 2026–2027, focused on understanding textile and electronic waste challenges. Policy engagement continued later in the year in Lagos, where further discussions with policymakers, recyclers, industry representatives, and civil society groups informed the team' research agenda. SCOPE researchers also advanced work on plastic consumption in Costa Rica. By documenting the plastic embedded in a basic household consumption basket, the team made visible how everyday purchases accumulate into significant waste streams. Conducted in collaboration with UNDP Costa Rica, the study offered practical evidence to support ongoing discussions about sustainable consumption.

Across these threads, 2025 marked a year of consolidation and preparation. SCOPE strengthened its scientific foundations, deepened collaboration across countries and disciplines, and ensured that upcoming research responds directly to the priorities expressed by local partners.

32

Number of publications in SCOPEs thematic area

(These publications are produced by researchers affiliated with EfD centers, but they are not necessarily EfD-funded or the result of the collaborative work within the program.)

Meeting on textile and e-waste. Photo: Cassandra Odhiambo

Collaboration needed to turn waste pressures into circular solutions

Kenya hosted a two-day workshop where SCOPE researchers, jointly with relevant stakeholders from Africa, examined the continent's growing textile and e-waste challenges. Discussions showed how fast fashion, rising imports of secondhand clothes, and limited recycling leave large volumes of unsellable textiles accumulating in landfills and waterways. Case studies from Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria illustrated similar pressures but also emerging solutions, including upcycling initiatives and repair economies led by local artisans.

The second day focused on e-waste, much of which is processed by informal workers using unsafe methods despite its valuable recoverable materials. Participants noted that policies exist across countries but are often weakly enforced, leaving formal recyclers with limited access to waste streams.

Across both sectors, the need for reliable data, stronger regulation, and better integration of informal workers was clear. Examples from community enterprises and early regulatory reforms showed that circular approaches can generate economic and environmental benefits when supported by coordinated action.

Read more

Photo: Magda Ehler Pixabay

The real cost of everyday plastic

Recent work from SCOPE and EfD CAM reveals how household consumption and plastic pollution are deeply intertwined, while also providing insights into the wider economic impacts of plastic pollution in Costa Rica. One study finds that an average household generates 751 grams of plastic waste each month from basic goods, amounting to nearly 14,000 tons annually at the national level. Most of this material is hard to recycle and accumulates in landfills, rivers, and coastal ecosystems.

A second study highlights the economic losses linked to inadequate waste management. Marine plastic pollution alone could cost the fisheries sector USD 12–126 million between 2023 and 2050, while emissions across the plastic life cycle could add USD 172–613 million in costs. Hydropower facilities face operational losses, and beach clean-ups demand continuous resources.

These studies, financed by UNDP, make clear that everyday consumption decisions carry significant environmental and economic consequences at the national level, offering policymakers concrete grounds for action on plastic use reduction, waste management improvement, and more sustainable product design.

Read more

SETI meeting in 2025.
Photo: Olof Drakenberg

SETI: ADVANCING POLICY-RELEVANT EVIDENCE FOR ENERGY TRANSITIONS

In 2025, the Sustainable Energy Transitions Initiative (SETI) strengthened its role as an international hub for evidence-based solutions to urgent energy challenges.

A focus this year was generating comparable, policy-ready evidence across countries. SETI teams worked closely with governments, businesses, and civil society to identify priority questions and produce research that meets real-world needs. This approach guided the agenda at the 10th SETI Annual Meeting in Gothenburg, where researchers and partners focused on six areas for 2025-27: electrification; clean cooking; gender and productive use; e-mobility; ag-tech value chains; and burning plastic waste as fuel. The process helped to identify three focus areas while strengthening alignment for the coming years.

SETI's energy–waste research collaboration revealed how and why households across 26 low- and middle-income countries burn plastic waste as fuel. The findings, later highlighted in international media, expose a hidden health risk linked to energy poverty and poor waste services. The research sparked new partnerships and discussions on interventions that protect both people and the environment.

SETI researchers did impact evaluations of foundation funded investments in cold storage and solar irrigation systems in Kenya. The findings were shared with the funder and other involved and provided the entrepreneurs with evidence required to attract additional finance.

Early-career researchers, from PhD students to postdoctoral fellows, were integrated into strategic meetings, research design processes, and policy dialogues to ensure long-term, high-quality research.

The SETI collaborative had multiple engagements with different policy actors for knowledge exchange and to anchor the research agenda in energy access realities. In 2025, SETI researchers prepared a policy report, *Challenges and opportunities for implementation of inclusive sustainable energy transition policies in East Africa*. It builds on SETI's collaboration with civil servants and policy engagement specialists from five East African countries under the EfD Inclusive Green Economy program.

Across its activities, the SETI network of over 80 researchers contributes to more evidence, providing insights for governments and communities navigating the energy transition.

42

Number of publications in SETI's thematic area.

(These publications are produced by researchers affiliated with EfD centers, but they are not necessarily EfD-funded or the result of the collaborative work within the program.)

Burning plastic waste causes air pollution.
Photo: iStock.

Burning plastic for energy – common and dangerous practice

Research from EfD shows that burning plastic waste as household fuel is far more widespread in low-income communities than previously understood. Surveys in 26 countries reveal that many families rely on plastic because clean energy is too expensive, waste collection is unreliable, and burning helps reduce growing piles of trash. Evidence from countries such as Nigeria, Eswatini, Nepal, and Pakistan confirms that households—and even entire slum communities—use plastic to cook food or start fires.

But this comes with serious risks. When burned, plastic releases toxic pollutants that contaminate air, soil, and food, contributing to dangerous levels of household air pollution. Children and the elderly are especially vulnerable. Researchers highlight the urgent need for improved waste services, affordable clean energy alternatives, and better data. Their findings shift the discussion from questioning whether plastic is burned to understanding how common the practice is—and how to stop it.

Read more

Photo: DEval, Kevin Moull.

Projects for cleaner energy require better targeting

EfD and SETI researchers reviewed Germany's rural energy access programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their findings show that many projects fail to reach the poorest households, and electrification often delivers limited economic benefits.

Better targeting and price subsidies are needed to make clean energy truly accessible. The studies also find that while large-scale electrification can be costly with modest impact, standalone solar and efficient biomass cookstoves offer effective, affordable alternatives.

Read more

"When burned, plastic releases **toxic pollutants** that contaminate air, soil, and food, contributing to dangerous levels of household air pollution"

Yam growing. Photo: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

MEASURING WHAT WORKS: STRENGTHENING EVIDENCE FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

What difference do agricultural innovations make for farmers—and how can policymakers know which ones are worth scaling up? These are the questions guiding a major country study on Nigeria awarded to an EfD team.

Yonas Alem at EfD South Africa leads the evaluation of 20 years of CGIAR innovations in Nigeria in close collaboration with EfD Nigeria and partners. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is a global leader in agricultural research for development. Its innovations have contributed significantly to Nigeria's agricultural sector, introducing vitamin A-biofortified cassava, drought-tolerant maize, weather information services etc., improving food security and smallholder farmers' resilience.

In 2025 the team has completed a full stocktaking of CGIAR promoted innovations rolled out over the past two decades.

"Now we are moving to the collection of large-scale agricultural household data and, in the next step, rigorous impact evaluations of selected digital innovations. This phase of the work also includes collection of DNA fingerprinting and remote sensing data to measure the contributions of these innovations. What is unique is that we combine this long-term perspective with causal methods to understand not just what exists, but what actually delivers results for farmers," says Yonas Alem.

Close collaboration with policymakers and institutions—from agricultural agencies to regulatory bodies—aims to ensure that findings are relevant and used in practice. Many EfD researchers in Nigeria have worked extensively on agriculture.

The initiative also contributes to capacity building and has offered small research grants to African researchers (MSc students, PhD candidates, and early-career fellows) helping to sustain knowledge in the country beyond the lifecycle of the project.

"I think our team was selected because we combine strong local networks in Nigeria with solid experience in impact evaluation and policy-relevant research," says Yonas Alem, expecting an increased demand for this type of work in other countries with EfD presence.

The USD 1,9 million project is funded by the Special Panel for Impact Assessment (SPIA) and stretches over 2025-2027 with a possible extension for another three years.

RESEARCH FINDINGS CHALLENGE POLICIES FOR

PROTECTING INDIAN STUDENTS

High levels of air pollution remain a major health concern in India. In December 2025, the Delhi government decided to install air purifiers in 38,000 government schools. However, new EfD research on Delhi schools suggests that teaching students about air pollution may be a cheaper and more effective way to protect children.

Nearly 10,000 students in ten government-run schools in Delhi participated in a study comparing a high-cost solution—air purifiers—with a low-cost behavioral intervention focused on awareness raising. The results showed that having an air purifier in the classroom did not lead to significant cognitive improvements or better self-reported respiratory comfort.

In contrast, students who watched an educational video explaining how air pollution affects them and what they can do to protect themselves performed significantly better (9%) than the control group in an attention and memory test. These children also reported higher respiratory comfort than students in the air purifier group and the control group. Researchers in the EfD-funded project were surprised by the weak results for the air purifier group.

"Perhaps children who see an air purifier believe they no longer need to worry about air pollution and therefore do not take precautions to reduce exposure. This is something we are now testing in a follow-up study with external funding. So far, the pattern seems consistent: information is outperforming air purifiers," says EfD India researcher Nikita Sangwan.

Nikita Sangwan

The researchers shared their findings with policymakers and school leaders in Delhi in the fall of 2025. A new meeting with policymakers will take place later this year.

"Installing and maintaining air purifiers is resource-intensive. All schools can reduce the exposure of the students by including the informational video we provide in the curriculum," says Nikita Sangwan. Kendriya Vidyalaya Schools in the Delhi region have come on board with this initiative and will show the video to their students.

The first randomized controlled trial was carried out as a collaboration between EfD India and EfD Chile.

Indian school children. Photo: Shutterstock.

Yonas Alem teaching at a workshop in Nigeria. Photo: EfD Nigeria

WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

GROW RESEARCHERS' SKILLS

EfD's work on academic capacity building in the Global South, in 2025, reached a broad audience by offering in-person as well as online training.

Yonas Alem, EfD South Africa, visited five sub-Saharan EfD centers, met with the management, and conducted workshops to boost researchers' skills.

"Each visit included meetings with center management and research fellows to assess the research environment, highlighting what is working well and what requires improvement," says Yonas Alem.

During the center visits, the center organized research workshops where feedback was provided on ongoing research. An academic seminar was also delivered to help set direction and share good practice.

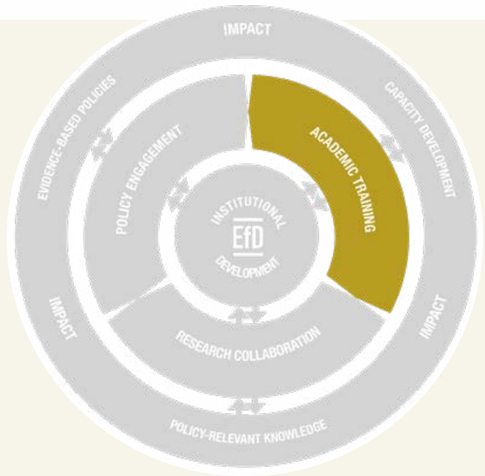
The visits and trainings were very appreciated by the centers.

"The visit has provided valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange and will contribute to strengthening EfD Ghana's research capacity," commented EfD Ghana Director Wisdom Akpalu.

Training	Date	No. of Participants
Causal Inference – RCTs (in-person), Ethiopia	April 2025	15 (men 12, women 3)
Writing Grant Proposals (in-person), Tanzania	May 2025	30 (men 17, women 13)
Academic Writing (online), Kenya	August 2025	9 (men 5, women 4)
Writing Grant Proposals (in-person), Nigeria	Sept 2025	24 (men 13, women 11)
Academic Writing (online), Uganda	August 2025	10 (6 men, 4 women)
Panel Data Econometrics (online), all centers*	August 2025	485
Causal Inference: RCTs (online) all centers*	Sept 2025	448
Writing Grant Proposals (online) all centers*	Dec. 2025	328

*Online courses inviting EfD researchers but open to anyone

A) *Seminar with Martin Chegere.* ***B)*** *The participants of the Academic Writing and Research Ethics Workshop. Photo EfD South Africa.* ***C)*** *Yonas Alem with Wisdom Akpalu, Peter Quartey, EfD Ghana team members, and graduate students at the research seminar.*



EfD'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Effective policymaking demands both the capacity and locally adapted tools to analyze and support the implementation of policies and investments crucial for transitioning towards an inclusive and resilient development trajectory.

Beyond conducting research, EfD is committed to cultivating present and future leaders and experts through comprehensive training programs for students, researchers and civil servants.

Mentors and mentees in the WinEED program. Photo: Petra Hansson.

MENTORING INITIATIVE **SUPPORTED WOMEN RESEARCHERS**

Women researchers are underrepresented in the field of economics, and they face career obstacles that their male colleagues don't.

To help level the playing field, the Women in Environmental Economics for Development (WinEED) program initiated a mentoring program aimed at women researchers who had submitted papers to EfD's Annual Meeting 2025. The response was very positive, and a similar program is planned to be implemented in 2026.

The initiative, which ran from May to October, aimed to strengthen research quality and boost confidence among women in the EfD network.

The program offered three phases of mentoring: expert review, peer review, and presentation practice. Participants could choose one, two or all three phases.

Hannah Ngugi, a junior researcher at the University of Nairobi, is one of the participants. She is very enthusiastic about the program and how it helped her improve her paper and presentation.

"My mentor, Katrina Mullan, really walked that extra mile. She helped me describe the data better, improve the modeling, and gave me alternative ways to do things, such as estimate customers' willingness to pay," she says.

Read more

Hannah Ngugi.

Sandra Aguilar-Gomez. Photo: Petra Hansson.

Gender research specialist provides support to the EfD network

Sandra Aguilar-Gomez has joined EfD as its first dedicated gender research expert, providing the network with strategic, methodological and conceptual support.

Scientific evidence shows climate change and environmental degradation affect men and women unequally. Women are also more likely to identify climate change and environmental degradation as pressing global concerns.

"In addition, environmental policies can backfire if we're not aware of gender issues," says Sandra Aguilar-Gomez.

She will conduct research with EfD's collaborative programs and support the network through workshops, a help desk, and collaboration with the WinEED initiative.

Read more

AI – increasing efficiency and managing risks

The EfD centers, as well as individual researchers and other staff, have increased their use of artificial intelligence (AI) in their daily work during 2025. This has increased efficiency in many ways, but it has also highlighted the need for more knowledge and guidelines on ethics and risks.

Eric Sterner and Viking Lindberg from the Global Hub have conducted two online trainings on AI in research, teaching, and admin support for the EfD network, with more than 200 participants.

They are also developing an EfD Code of Conduct and an EfD AI Strategy, both to be finalized and approved in 2026.

"In addition, we have provided hands-on and on-demand support on AI questions to individual researchers and invited EfD Research Fellows to engage in peer-learning activities," says Erik Sterner.

Some examples of how AI is being used within the EfD network:

- A chatbot based on the EfD Policy Engagement Handbook, which was launched in 2025, makes it possible to ask questions, get summaries, podcasts, etc., from the handbook in a great number of languages.
- Literature reviews and summaries of long documents
- Tagging and structuring of EfD research publications
- Constructing scenarios for evaluating policy instruments
- Simulations of policy impact on climate scenarios

AI-illustration of making research accessible to policymakers, stakeholders, and others.

A) University of Rwanda. Photo: Edwin Muchapondwa. B) Prof Edouard Masabanganji, Center Director, Dr Aristide Maniriho, Senior Research Coordinator, and Dr Jean Bosco Rusagara, Head of the University of Rwanda's Gikonda Campus, where EfD Rwanda is located. C) View towards university buildings in Kigali. Photo: Shutterstock

EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS FOR EFD IN ETHIOPIA, RWANDA, AND KENYA

The EfD centers are supported financially, through coaching, and through the professional support service network. The most significant Institutional developments in 2025 relate to Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Kenya.

In 2025, EfD could reap the benefits of years of preparatory work when the Research Center for Sustainable Development – EfD Ethiopia – was established at Addis Abeba University under the leadership of Hailu Elias. The center is located under the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). With this move from the Policy Studies Institute, which previously hosted EfD Ethiopia, all EfD centers are now firmly based within academic institutions. Researchers from PSI are still active members of the EfD network and have leading roles, among others in the Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) Program.

EfD has been active in Rwanda for a long time through the IGE program and a bilateral PhD program in Environmental Economics. Late in 2025, EfD and the Board of Directors of the University of Rwanda approved the creation the EfD Rwanda center, hosted at the Centre for Research in Environmental Economics, Sustainability and Policy Center in Kigali, under the of College of Business and Economy.

EfD Kenya's position as a research center was further strengthened when the University Senate approved its establishment under the Faculty of Social Sciences in December 2025.

Preparations for institutional gender dialogues at six Sub-Saharan African centers have progressed, including a call sent out to all researchers. The purpose of the dialogues (with women, men, and the leadership respectively) is to identify and address institutional barriers to women's academic advancement across. The WinEED (Women in Environmental Economics for Development) project is undertaken in collaboration with Sida's Gender Helpdesk and will generate center-specific action plans.

EFD'S INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EfD aims to elevate its centers into internationally acclaimed research environments, capable of administering graduate academic programs, conducting policy research, and fostering meaningful engagement with key stakeholders to inform policies and practices. This vision encompasses capacity development, peer learning, the cultivation of robust partnerships with domestic host institutions, and fostering greater collaboration with academic counterparts from the Global North.

EFD'S ANNUAL MEETING

TIMELY OPPORTUNITY FOR POLICY DIALOGUES

EfD Tanzania took center stage this October, hosting EfD's Annual Meeting. Dr. Martin Chegere, who stepped into the role of Center Director just over a year before that, got right into the heart of the action.

"It's an important event for our center," he says. "We showcase our research, engage with global partners, and elevate our voice on sustainability issues –nationally and internationally."

The Policy Day, held in connection to the meeting, focused this year on sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, a crucial issue for the whole African continent.

"The meeting served as a platform for dialogue between policymakers and researchers. There were very constructive discussions."

Timely opportunity to impact policies

Hosting the Annual Meeting meant that the EfD Tanzania center received national media coverage. The national television company TBC showed, for instance, interviews with EfD's Global Hub Director Gunnar Köhlin, Martin Chegere, and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam.

"Hosting EfD's Annual Meeting is also a very timely opportunity for us to have an impact on policies. The government is right now in the process of revising policies to align with the new development vision 2050."

There were also discussions with funding organizations, as well as between centers, regarding how they can collaborate to attract funding.

Contributes to national planning

Under his leadership, EfD Tanzania has continued to focus on policy-relevant research in areas such as climate-smart agriculture, energy transition, green fiscal reforms, and environmental policy instruments. The center also plays a vital role in capacity building, training students, researchers, and policymakers, and contributes directly to national planning.

As Tanzania grapples with challenges ranging from climate change and marine degradation to reliance on biomass fuels, deforestation, and rapid urbanization, Martin Chegere believes EfD's work is more relevant than ever.

Following the Annual Meeting, EfD Tanzania researchers saw a notable rise in invitations to national policy platforms and commissioned policy work, including engagements with the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Planning Commission.

EfD's Annual Meeting on October 16-19, 2025, comprised plenary sessions with keynote speakers and panel discussions, parallel sessions, workshops and meetings. Photos: Aclovius Kamanyonga

EfD's 19th Annual Meeting

It was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on October 16-19, 2025. Organized by EfD Tanzania and EfD Global Hub, the meeting comprised plenary sessions, thematic parallel sessions, and workshops.

The plenary sessions featured four keynote speakers: **Paulina Oliva, Dale Whittington, Richard Carson**, and **Precious Zikhali**, and three panel discussions.

In connection with the Annual Meeting, there was a Policy Day, a workshop for Water Utility professionals from East Africa, and a five-day training session in the Inclusive Green Economy program.

OTHER STORIES FROM 2025

A local government official provides clarifications during the discussion Photo: EfD Uganda.

COVID-19 **WORSENED** URBAN FOOD INSECURITY – WOMEN MOST AFFECTED

A study by EfD Uganda researchers has revealed stark gender differences in the impact of COVID-19 on food security among Uganda's urban poor, with female-headed households bearing the brunt of the crisis.

The findings were presented at a stakeholder dissemination meeting held in Kampala. The research focused on Kawempe Division, one of Kampala's most densely populated and low-income areas. The study showed that urban households, especially those relying on informal employment, were disproportionately affected due to low and unstable incomes.
Read more

Some of the stakeholders after the dissemination workshop.

EfD Ghana Director, Wisdom Akpalu. Photo: Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Ghana.

EfD Ghana Director chairs African Union Specialized Technical Committee

■ Wisdom Akpalu, Director of EfD Ghana and Chairman of the Fisheries Commission, has been appointed as Ghana's representative on the Bureau of the 6th Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC-ARDWE-6) of the African Union (AU), a committee that Ghana is heading.

The appointment, announced during the 6th Ordinary Session of the STC-ARDWE-6, further strengthens EfD Ghana's visibility and influence in regional policy dialogue on sustainable resource management.
Read more

New partnership with Aarhus University

■ The Environmental Social Science and Geography section (ESGO) at Aarhus University, Denmark is a new EfD partner in 2025. This collaboration will broaden EfD's scientific scope.
Read more

Researchers at the Environmental Social Science and Geography section (ESGO) at Aarhus University. Photo: ESGO.

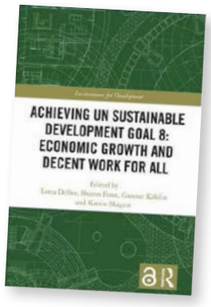
Arctic University becomes new EfD partner

■ The Norwegian College of Fishery Science (NCFS) at UiT The Arctic University of Norway became a new EfD partner in 2025. Located north of the Arctic Circle, but with a global reach, this university contributes research that is relevant worldwide.
Read more

Yajie Liu, Thuy Pham, Erik Johannesen Bakke, Claire Armstrong, Huu-Luat Do, and Ngan Le Thi Thanh.

Photo: UiT.

Book Launch: Achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal 8



■ This open-access book synthesizes research on how to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal 8, to bring societal change through sustainable economic growth and decent work for all by 2030. The International Association of Universities asked the University of Gothenburg to lead its work on SDG 8.

It also involved many universities in the EfD network. Almost 40 researchers around the world contributed to the book. In addition, EfD helped organize a side event on SDG 8 at the High-Level Political Forum in New York in 2025.
Read more

Supporting women researchers in building stronger proposals for impactful research

■ A five-day workshop at the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (UEH) brought together 18 early-career women researchers to strengthen their skills in designing competitive grant proposals. Through hands-on mentoring, practice sessions, and tailored feedback, participants refined their own research ideas and learned practical techniques for securing funding. The training, organized by UEH, EfD Vietnam, and WinEED, aimed to reduce barriers women often face in research and support their path toward leading impactful research.

Pamela Jagger provided expertise. Photo: EfD Vietnam.

Green Hydrogen. Photo: Adobe Stock.

Strategies to 'de-risk' green hydrogen investment in the Global South

■ EfD South Africa researchers collaborated with UNU-MERIT to study methods to de-risk green hydrogen investment. The team involves researchers in Brazil, Chile, China, and South Africa. They examined Chile and South Africa's green hydrogen projects and their potential risks. De-risking the investments is necessary for green hydrogen development in developing countries. They found that facilitating discussions between private and public decision-makers, subsidizing infrastructure, and international risk-sharing are important factors.
Read more

EfD researchers engaged at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference

■ Researchers from the BlueRforD program shared evidence on how sustainable aquaculture can balance economic growth, environmental protection, and social responsibility. Drawing on studies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the team emphasized the need for reliable data and inclusive management to guide national policies. Their science-based tools and comparative insights helped inform UN discussions and strengthened efforts to build more resilient blue food systems. The event also highlighted the importance of cross regional learning, showing how shared methods help countries respond to climate-related challenges in aquaculture. EfD's contributions ensured that developing country perspectives were represented in policy dialogues.
Read more

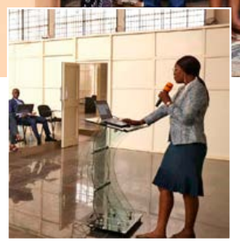
Informing the UN Secretary General

■ EfD Vietnam Center director Pham Khanh Nam is part of a team of experts advising the UN Secretary General Guterres on what measures nations should use to evaluate progress, "Beyond GDP", in the years ahead. The team of fourteen include a former chief economist of the World Bank and a Nobel laureate, and recommendations will feed into the UN General Assembly that closes in September 2026.

"The group has held dozens of working meetings, including two in-person meetings. My contribution has been to bring the perspectives from emerging economies and to help strengthen the policy relevance of the dashboard approach, especially the dual emphasis on wellbeing and planetary limits," says Pham Khanh Nam.
Read more

EfD Nigeria conducted workshop for journalists

■ The training brought together 15 participants from various media organizations. It was themed *The Role of the Media in Promoting Environmental Research* and was very well received by the participants. The training aimed to build Nigerian journalists' capacity to cover environmental issues and to enhance the relationship between journalists and EfD Nigeria to expand the center's reach. The journalists were also shown how to use EfD's website to find relevant news material, publications, and researchers to interview.
Read more



Some of the participants at the 2nd EfD Nigeria's workshop for journalists (above). Photo: EfD Nigeria.

One of the sessions at EfD Nigeria's workshop for journalists (left). Photo: EfD Nigeria

PROJECT ON **COMMUNITY-LED WATER SOLUTIONS** WINS TINKER FUNDING

Community-based drinking water federations play a critical role in coping with climatic and non-climatic threats to secure safe water in rural areas of Latin America. EfD Central America and Mexico (CAM) launched an ambitious three-year research project to strengthen these networks and provide evidence-based solutions for effective water governance in the Global South. The EfD CAM project was selected among more than 500 proposals submitted to the Tinker Foundation, a leading philanthropic organization supporting impactful initiatives in Latin America.

The project will be led by Róger Madrigal, EfD CAM Director, in collaboration with Seattle University (USA) and the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Colombia).
Read more

EfD at the Second Africa Climate Summit in Addis Ababa

■ The Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), in Ethiopia in September, was the most politically important climate event in Africa in 2025, bringing together heads of state, global partners, and researchers. It concluded with a continental agenda. EfD engaged in knowledge exchange and networking, organizing two events and participating as a panelist in a third. EfD Ethiopia hosted a side event on *Energy efficiency, electricity tariff reforms, and gender in Africa with implications for climate change*, led by EfD Ethiopia's Center Director, Hailu Elias. EfD Global Hub's Director Gunnar Köhlin led the event, *An Actionable Research Agenda for Low-Carbon Transition in Africa*.
Read more

Dr Hailu Elias.

Photo: Petra Hansson.

2025

EfD IN FIGURES

Key numbers in 2025

NUMBER OF EfD CENTERS (IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH):	NUMBER OF EfD PARTNERS (IN THE GLOBAL NORTH):	NUMBER OF COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMS:
11	**12**	**5**
(12 in 2024)	(9 in 2024)	(5 in 2024)

NUMBER OF EfD RESEARCH FELLOWS AND JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOWS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH:

263 (40 % women)

(254 in 2024) (36 % women in 2024)

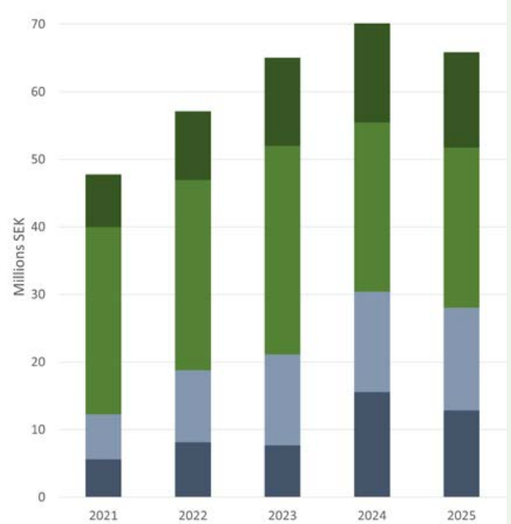
In addition, there are many domestic and international research associates and about 40 support staff—primarily part-time—in management, administration, communications, and data management.

Outreach activities organized by EfD centers in 2025

NUMBER OF ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS OR EVENTS ORGANIZED BY THE CENTERS:	NUMBER OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSES FOR CIVIL SERVICE/POLICY ACTORS:	NUMBER OF POLICY WORKSHOPS OR CONFERENCES ORGANIZED BY THE CENTERS:
56	**17**	**37**
(41 in 2024)	(32 in 2024)	(41 in 2024)

Financial overview of the EfD Network

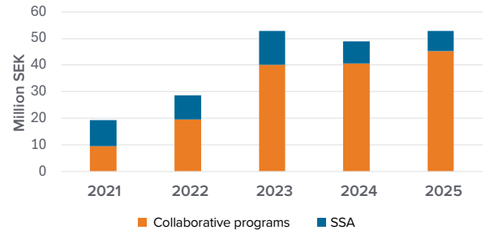
EfD Global Hub funding



The Global Hub secures funding from various sources although the main funding comes through the Sida Global Program. Other sources include IDRC and the Sida funded Inclusive Green Economy Program (Other transfers from GH to centers/partners).

External funding to EfD centers

(Centers hosting collaborative programs / Sub-Saharan Africa centers)



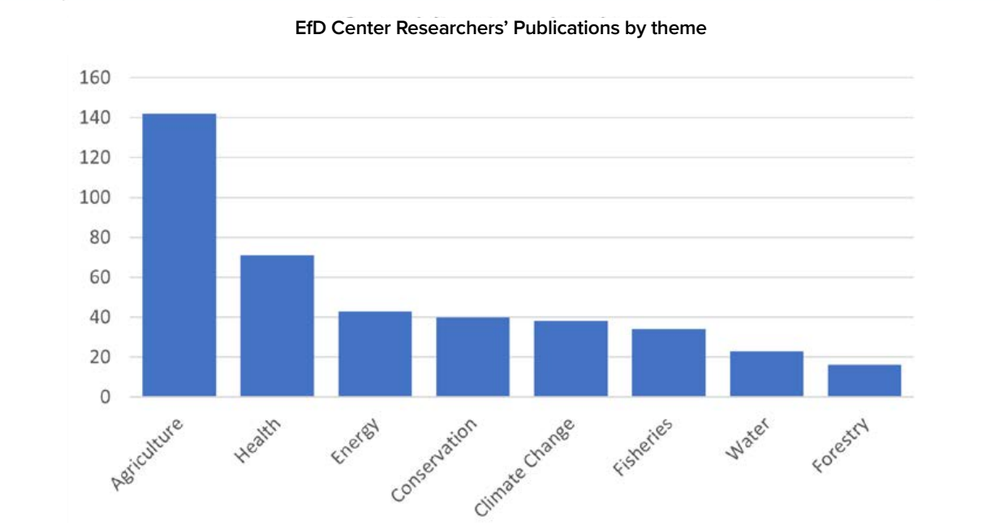
The upper, blue, stacked bar represents the external funding gathered by centers in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), including Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda, but excluding South Africa. The lower , orange, stacked bar corresponds to external funding gathered by the centers hosting collaborative programs (CPs): Central America–Mexico, Chile, India, South Africa, and Vietnam.
EfD Central America–Mexico represented 56% of the total in 2025, 75% in 2024, 56% in 2023, 26% in 2022, and 22% in 2021.

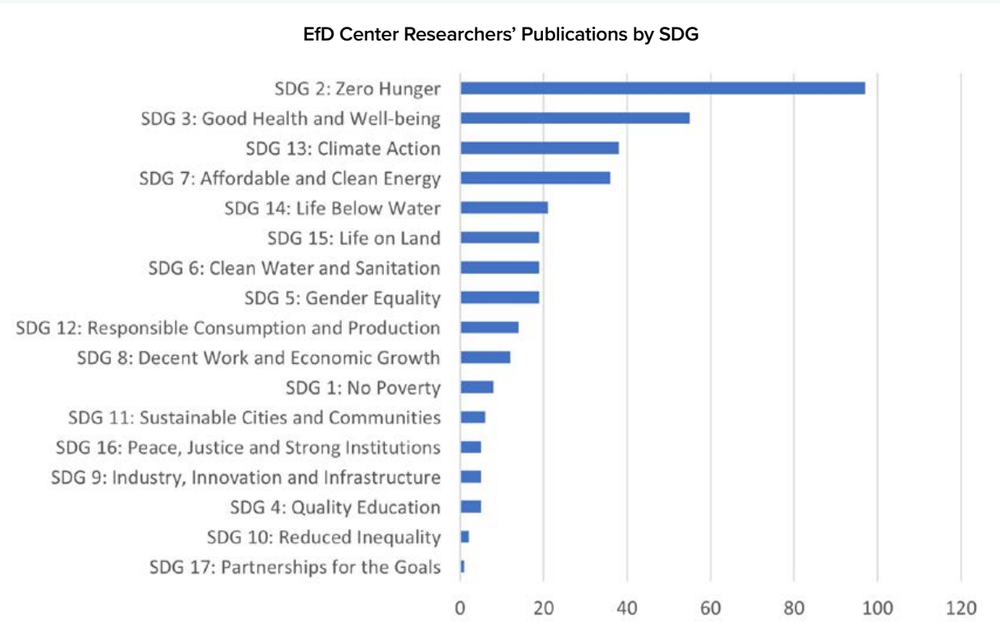
EfD Researchers Publications	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Peer Reviewed (National & international)	50	95	121	130	183	234	275	255	275	361	295
Discussion Papers (EfD & external)	18	23	14	11	17	36	54	37	13	48	27
Books/Book chapters	49	40	16	18	26	53	22	18	17	35	13
Others (newspapers, other articles, doctoral thesis, or reports)	27	17	37	14	30	35	29	49	65	80	72*

** = Total number of publications in 2025 is 407 (524 in 2024). This year's figure is lower since we have excluded publications by researchers that don't belong to EfD centers (38) and, in addition, all publications that are not strictly within our EfD themes (86 were excluded).*

RESEARCH THEMES AND SDG's

Publications by EfD center researchers and within EfD themes, they are not necessarily direct outputs of EfD funding. Publications often relate to multiple SDGs or themes; however, in these graphs, each publication is assigned to only one SDG or theme.





EfD CENTERS

EfD Central America and Mexico is hosted by the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), located in Turrialba, Costa Rica.

EfD Chile, the Research Nucleus in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics (NENRE) is hosted by the University of Concepción, Concepción, Chile.

EfD Ethiopia, the Research Center for Sustainable Development is hosted by Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

EfD Ghana, the Environment and Natural Resource Research Initiative (ENRRI) is hosted by the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana (UG), Accra, Ghana, with the collaboration of the School of Research and Graduate Studies (SRGS) at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA).

EfD India, the Center for Research on the Economics of Climate, Food, Energy and Environment (CECFEE) is hosted by the Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi, India.

EfD Kenya, the Department of Economics and Development at the University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya.

EfD Nigeria, the Resource and Environmental Policy Research Center (REPRC), is hosted by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.

EfD Rwanda, the Centre for Research in Environmental Economics, Sustainability and Policy (CREESP) is hosted by the University of Rwanda, Rwanda.
(EfD center from 2026)

EfD South Africa, the Environmental Economics Policy Research Unit (EPRU), is hosted by the School of Economics, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.

EfD Tanzania (EfDT) is hosted by the School of Economics, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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EfD Global Hub is a unit at the School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, in Sweden.

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