



2025-30 strategy

Accelerating climate
solutions, for better places
and brighter futures



Our vision and mission

Climate innovators are poised to create a fairer, greener, zero carbon future. But they won't succeed without smart policies, supportive finance and market reform.

Ashden's mission is to showcase outstanding climate solutions, and to accelerate systemic change that unleashes their transformative potential.



Our plan to power change

The work of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and community organisations – which are the heartbeat of our economies and societies – is fundamental to achieving a fairer, greener, zero carbon world.

But they need far more direct support, and far better policies and market conditions, to flourish at the speed and scale necessary to address the climate emergency.

That's why, in 2025-30, Ashden will:



Seek

out innovative, replicable and scalable climate solutions delivered by SMEs, schools and community organisations in the UK and Global South.



Connect

the people behind these organisations with each other, and with sources of support, funding and finance, to help them succeed and grow.



Promote

their solutions energetically, to create widespread awareness and support for them. In doing so we will inspire others to adopt these solutions or create new ones.

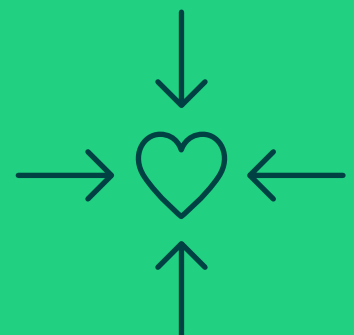


Showcase

and advocate for these solutions to decision-makers in the policy, funding and investment spaces. In doing so, we will persuade our audience to create the right societal and market conditions for these solutions and others like them to succeed – and grow to a scale that will transform our societies and economies.

The annual Ashden Awards

Through which we identify and publicise climate innovation – will remain at the heart of our approach, and play a major role in serving all four elements of our plan.



Our values

Strong values unify our work across sectors, places and communities. You'll recognise these five principles in all our activities - from awards and campaigns to programmes.

Relentless optimism



We have hope for the future and believe that a better world is within our grasp. From the stories we tell, to the programmes we build, we will light the path to a fairer, greener future.

Belief in people



We believe that visionary people, whether business innovators or local organisers, are creating and delivering the solutions we all need.

Generosity

We share our knowledge, content and connections freely and gladly, collaborating to create climate action for a fairer world.



Inclusivity

We seek out solutions that build local and global equity and inclusivity. We will help build diversity in the climate sector, starting with our own team.



Confidence in proven solutions



With an evidence-driven approach, we will accelerate proven solutions that inspire, motivate and enable others to take action.

The Ashden Awards

Showcasing trailblazing climate solutions



Winners on stage at the 2024 Ashden Awards ceremony in London.

2025 sees 25 years of Ashden Awards. Awards are the heartbeat of Ashden and the connective tissue that unifies our growing and diverse programmatic work.

Our awards model allows us to find the most exciting climate innovators in the UK and the Global South, and showcase their solutions to focused and engaged audiences. This meets a demand from investors, funders and decision-makers for compelling, evidence-based storytelling to inform their decisions.

Following a special anniversary awards celebration in 2025, we will re-launch the awards in 2026 with a fresh approach – leaner, more flexible and agile, able to respond to the rapidly changing external context and maintaining our position, always ahead of the curve.

We will invest in telling winners' stories in more depth, giving them more airtime with investors, funders and policymakers. Above all, our awards criteria and process will be a key driver of progress towards our strategic goals.

Goals one to four – our work in the UK

In 2025–30, our work in the UK will accelerate progress towards 4 goals:

- Zero carbon schools by 2030
- Maximising zero carbon local electricity by 2030
- Rapid acceleration of buildings retrofit
- Communities richer in nature, and adapted to a changing climate



Ashden Award winner Energise Barnsley has created warm, energy efficient homes for Margorie Litherland and hundreds of others in the Yorkshire town. She's joined by Louise Wood from Berneslai Housing Association, a project partner.

We will create impact with compelling, evidence-based storytelling that changes national policies and drives investment, and by creating networks that connect, scale and showcase innovation.

Goal 1:

Zero carbon schools by 2030

Schools are the heart of our communities and can be trailblazers for change. By supporting schools to be zero carbon by 2030, Ashden can shift the narrative of what is possible everywhere – accelerating the pace of net zero.

With 43% of UK households having school age children, our classrooms can inspire progress right across the nation – with children as key agents of change. We will support high-impact interventions, such as upgrades to school buildings, and put climate action at the heart of everyday school life. This will create powerful learning opportunities, and equip young people for the green jobs and opportunities of the future.



Let's Go Zero is Ashden's campaign for all UK schools to be zero carbon by 2030. Our support includes free help from climate action advisors.

Working with key partners, we will:

- **Build a national movement for change.** Our campaigns will raise awareness, empower schools to become net zero carbon and stimulate demand for this change across the nation.
- **Drive towards a social tipping point on school decarbonisation.** We will work to galvanise every UK school. This includes ensuring that by 2026 25% have committed to reach net zero. This approach will create an unstoppable movement for school decarbonisation.
- **Change policy.** We will support the UK government to develop a roadmap for decarbonising schools as early as possible in the new parliament.
- **Secure investment.** We will showcase how low-cost, low-risk capital can finance school decarbonisation. By demonstrating replicability and scale, will help to ensure billions are available to decarbonise the school estate.
- **Directly reduce emissions.** We will support schools to measure and significantly drive down emissions by 2030.

Goal 2: Maximising zero carbon local electricity by 2030

A zero-carbon electricity system will be the workhorse of the UK's net zero future. Building such a system by 2030 will require a rapid expansion in local renewable energy.

Ashden will support efforts to ensure the UK is generating 10GW of decentralised renewable energy by 2030 – maximising the growth of solutions such as rooftop solar on schools, community centres and housing estates. Alongside emissions reductions, local renewables can massively reduce energy bills, reduce inequality and fuel poverty and boost jobs and skills.



Gabriel Novais is Head of Electronics at tepeo, a 2024 Ashden Award winner. The company's zero emission boilers will help power the UK's clean energy future.

Supporting local communities, entrepreneurs and innovators, we will:

- **Champion effective business models.** This will help secure the right financial and policy environment for decentralised wind and solar to thrive.
- **Energise innovators.** We will enable SMEs and community energy groups to connect and scale their activities, integrating and championing their solutions and facilitating investment.
- **Leave no-one behind.** Ashden will support those ensuring local energy projects are democratically co-designed, and prioritise community benefits. In this way, our work will reduce inequality and drive up participation.
- **Plan for success.** We will work so Local Area Energy Planning is effectively delivering efficient, smart and integrated local electricity, heat and transport systems

Goal 3:

Rapid acceleration of buildings retrofit

Buildings are responsible for around 30% of UK emissions. Ashden will support and create opportunities for businesses delivering transformative building retrofits like better insulation and low-carbon heating systems.

By boosting innovators such as training providers, heat pump manufacturers or community engagement specialists, alongside securing policy change, we can help the retrofit revolution take off.

The benefits of transforming our homes, classrooms and other buildings include better health and stronger local economies – nationally, retrofit could create hundreds of thousands of green jobs.



Stockport's B4Box give paid, on-the-job retrofit training to marginalised young people – delivering skills and support into work. The organisation won an Ashden Award in 2022.

We will work with our partners to:

- **Kickstart the retrofit revolution.** We will push to make sure pace and scale are achieved through policy and investment. We will support work towards a national retrofit strategy, simplified and devolved grant systems, and the unlocking of billions of pounds in low interest financing.
- **Help local businesses thrive.** We will include showcase innovation, and create connections between solutions, retrofit innovators, local authorities and investors.
- **Supercharge the workforce.** Hundreds of thousands of retrofit jobs must be created, and appropriate skills nourished and supported. We will showcase the training and employment innovators who are helping to ensure a just transition for existing workers, and creating good jobs for the next generation.
- **Bring power to the people.** We will work so citizens are well informed and demanding action – and so solutions such as insulation and heat pumps lead to genuinely lower bills and improved livelihoods.

Goal 4:

The growth of nature rich, climate adapted communities

The impacts of climate change on the UK range from floods to heatwaves. Protecting, stewarding and expanding green spaces and waterways protects communities from these impacts, and makes for happier places too.

Our work will nurture natural climate solutions, like new urban parks and wetlands, and improved school grounds. These projects will support better health and wellbeing, and more resilient local economies.



The RSPB's Wild Haweswater initiative, an Ashden Award winner, tackles the causes and effects of climate change by restoring a degraded landscape. Saplings tended by Tree Nursery Officer Jo Chamberlain are part of this effort.

We will work with partners to:

- **Grow cool, green public spaces.** We will support efforts to rewild land, defend and restore green spaces and waterways, and increase biodiversity. This will make communities more resilient to flooding, heat and drought
- **Support green entrepreneurs.** We will work with those developing and deploying nature-based climate adaptation innovation to scale up and champion their solutions.
- **Plant people at the heart of this challenge.** We will support the devolution of powers and resources to support local co-design and implementation.
- **Nurture a shift in attitudes to nature restoration.** Our inspiring storytelling will show the reality of regenerative places and improved livelihoods

Getting to work

The tools and tactics we'll use to create impact in the UK

Creating place based, inclusive climate solutions

Our UK goals are best achieved through support for holistic, place-based solutions. So, acting as a convener, matchmaker and catalyst, we will nurture projects that bring together Ashden Award winners and others to address challenges in specific context.

For example, we will showcase and support initiatives drawing together rooftop solar businesses, green skills providers and financial innovators, to bring affordable clean energy to a particular community. This approach will prove, integrate and showcase the effective, innovative and inclusive solutions driving progress to our 4 goals.

We will target left behind communities, helping to reduce inequality. And we will leave a legacy of enhanced local capacity for climate action – whether that's networks of school Climate Action Advisors, or builders skilled and engaged to create warm, energy efficient homes.

Networks to connect, scale and showcase innovation

Ashden will create green SME networks, building on our expertise in convening local government and community networks. This will showcase innovation for effective climate action, sharing insights and inspiration to help organisations tackle key challenges, like securing funding and engaging diverse groups.

We will also expand the audiences for our learning. As well as local authority officers and community groups, we'll reach influential actors such as council leaders, city region mayors, local net-zero hubs, key infrastructure providers such as electricity distribution network operators and providers of finance..

Compelling, evidence-based storytelling to change national policies and drive investment

None of our UK goals will be achieved without the right policy and public-private funding and investment. And the election of a new UK government in 2024 presents a huge opportunity to drive increased climate ambition.

Storytelling will target decisionmakers: to drive change, our advocacy and influencing will share the benefits of proven, place-based climate solutions with funders and politicians. Tailored narratives and convening will engage this audience with the impact of successful projects, and show the steps decision makers can take to scale up and replicate proven work nationwide. We'll bring together compelling personal stories and relevant data as we explore the social benefits of these solutions, as well as their effect on carbon emissions.

Goals five to seven: our work in the Global South

In 2025-30 our work in the Global South will light the way to a thriving, inclusive and low carbon future. We'll boost progress towards 3 goals:

- Universal clean energy access powers inclusive economic development, decent jobs and livelihoods.
- Livelihoods-based approaches drive resources to the Indigenous people and local communities who are leading nature safeguarding initiatives.
- New approaches to finance catalyses transformative growth of inclusive clean energy and nature protection initiatives in the Global South.



Ashden Award winner Mbou Mon Tour helps forest communities in The Democratic Republic of Congo secure land rights and earn a better living.

We'll achieve these goals by seeking inclusive, equitable solutions for energy access and nature protection which put people, jobs and livelihoods at the heart of climate action. We'll then tell their compelling stories to influence policy makers and drive funding and investment to these solutions. And we'll create networks to connect climate innovators, and build communities of practice which inspire future action.

Goal 5:

Universal clean energy powers inclusive economic development, quality jobs, and livelihoods



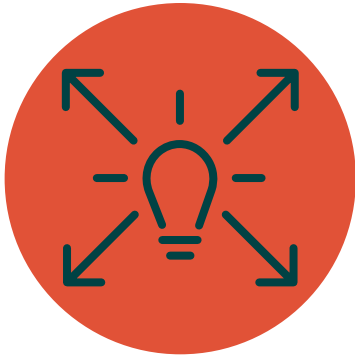
GOGO Electric's motorbikes bring cleaner transport to the streets of Uganda. The company's innovation in training won it an Ashden Award in 2024.

Decentralised renewable energy systems are fundamental to achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7: affordable and clean energy for all. As well as reducing carbon emissions, clean energy access will contribute to all the SDGs. Its effects will include: reducing poverty and inequality; improving food production and security; enhancing health and education outcomes; increasing gender equality; and creating decent jobs and economic growth.

The scale of the challenge is huge: an estimated 675 million people around the world still lack access to clean, affordable electricity, many of them in sub-Saharan Africa and in neglected communities. People living in places such as refugee camps, informal settlements, and remote, rural locations. Far more lack access to safe, efficient cooking.

There is an urgent need to scale affordable, clean energy access in the Global South by offering alternatives to diesel generators, fossil-fuel powered transport infrastructure and polluting cook stoves. This requires unleashing the potential of local enterprises and organisations to deliver scalable, replicable and inclusive solutions, and creating connections to drive more finance to the sector.

Working with clean energy enterprises and stakeholders in the Global South, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, we will:



Showcase effective, inclusive clean energy business models, supporting their replication.

We will seek out and promote enterprise-led clean energy solutions which are replicable and scalable. We will prioritise initiatives that create green jobs, livelihoods and economic development justice – especially for women and young people, people in displacement settings and other base-of-pyramid communities. We will showcase these initiatives to national and international audiences of funders and policymakers, who will be inspired to drive forward system change that accelerates the growth of inclusive energy access solutions.



Help local coalitions advocate for clean energy policy at national and regional level.

We will facilitate our award winners, local partners and other stakeholders to advocate for enabling policy and fiscal environments at national and sub-national levels. We will do so by supporting local and regional networks, and creating new communities of practice. To mobilise stakeholders beyond the energy sector, we will demonstrate how clean energy contributes to economic development, food production and security, and improved health and education outcomes.



Support innovative clean energy enterprises to connect to networks and scale their work.

We will work directly with clean energy enterprises identified through the Ashden Awards and programmes, supporting them to access new sources of finance (including climate finance and carbon credits), and rapidly scale their activities. We will also connect them to new audiences and knowledge partnerships around the world.

Goal 6:

Livelihoods-based approaches drive resources to Indigenous people and local community led nature safeguarding initiatives

Ujamaa Community Resource Team, a 2024 Ashden Award winner, supports communities in Tanzania to safeguard and earn a sustainable living from their land. Semetei Ngauwo has joined his local land pasture committee.



Indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs) safeguard 80% of the world’s remaining biodiversity. The forests and other natural ecosystems which they safeguard are essential to mitigating the impacts of climate change, acting as critical global carbon sinks. But these ecosystems are increasingly under threat from conversion to agricultural use; extractive industries; logging; and expanding infrastructure.

IPLCs have safeguarded and nurtured the forests and ecosystems they rely on for generations but have historically been left out of national and global decision-making processes around nature protection and are increasingly facing economic pressures to sell their land or exploit natural resources themselves to pay for essentials like healthcare and education.

Improving livelihoods reduce pressure to exploit resources and promote more equitable development. Income-generating approaches which focus on agroforestry and non-timber forest products, as well as access to energy, clean cooking solutions and reforestation, are effective ways of safeguarding vital landscapes. However, for such approaches to succeed, IPLCs must be at the centre of leadership and decision making, and the benefits of their work must accrue to them.

Working with livelihood-led IPLC initiatives, we will:



Boost the growth of secure livelihoods that provide safeguards for IPLC-led nature protection efforts.

We will work with the organisations behind these projects to expand their livelihoods and income generating activities, so that the people and communities they serve have viable alternatives to resource exploitation.



Help IPLCs access diversified support and financial resources to strengthen and scale their work.

We will tell stories of how IPLCs are delivering carbon mitigation and ecosystem services through their nature protection work. Our communications support will enable the IPLCs who we work with to reach new audiences and connect to diverse sources of finance, such as global philanthropy and impact investment. We will also direct them to impartial information on equitable carbon and biodiversity financing.



Mainstream livelihoods-led IPLC initiatives in global nature protection efforts.

We will showcase the initiatives participating in our programmes to environmental stakeholders, advocating for a move away from ‘fortress conservation’ approaches, and persuading them to orientate their work towards people-centred nature protection efforts which are livelihood- and IPLC- led.

Ashden's Thriving Forests programme will nurture organisations that help Indigenous People and local communities earn a sustainable living from their land. Those taking part include Peru's ECA Amarakaeri.



Goal 7:

New approaches to finance catalyse transformative growth of inclusive clean energy and nature safeguarding initiatives in the Global South

Patapia, an Ashden Award winner, brings affordable loans to refugee entrepreneurs in Uganda. Ashden will support Patapia's growth through our Powering Clean Energy Investment programme.



There are thousands of Global South enterprises and initiatives, like our award winners, who urgently need access to patient, flexible, and affordable capital to scale their solutions and impact. While billions are being committed to climate action, the international climate finance ecosystem remains complex and inaccessible for many Global South innovators, who cannot secure suitable financial backing.

Equally, the international investment community is increasingly interested in how impact investment and blended finance approaches can deliver sustainable, triple bottom-line returns. While the international debate must focus on increasing the collective goals for climate, adaptation and resilience finance, Ashden will not lose sight of the need to get these funds into the hands of Global South solutions on the frontlines of climate action.

Now is the time for public, institutional and philanthropic capital to play a catalytic role in accelerating finance to meet the needs of Global South energy access enterprises and IPLC-led nature safeguarding efforts.

We will work with entrepreneurs, IPLCS and finance stakeholders to:



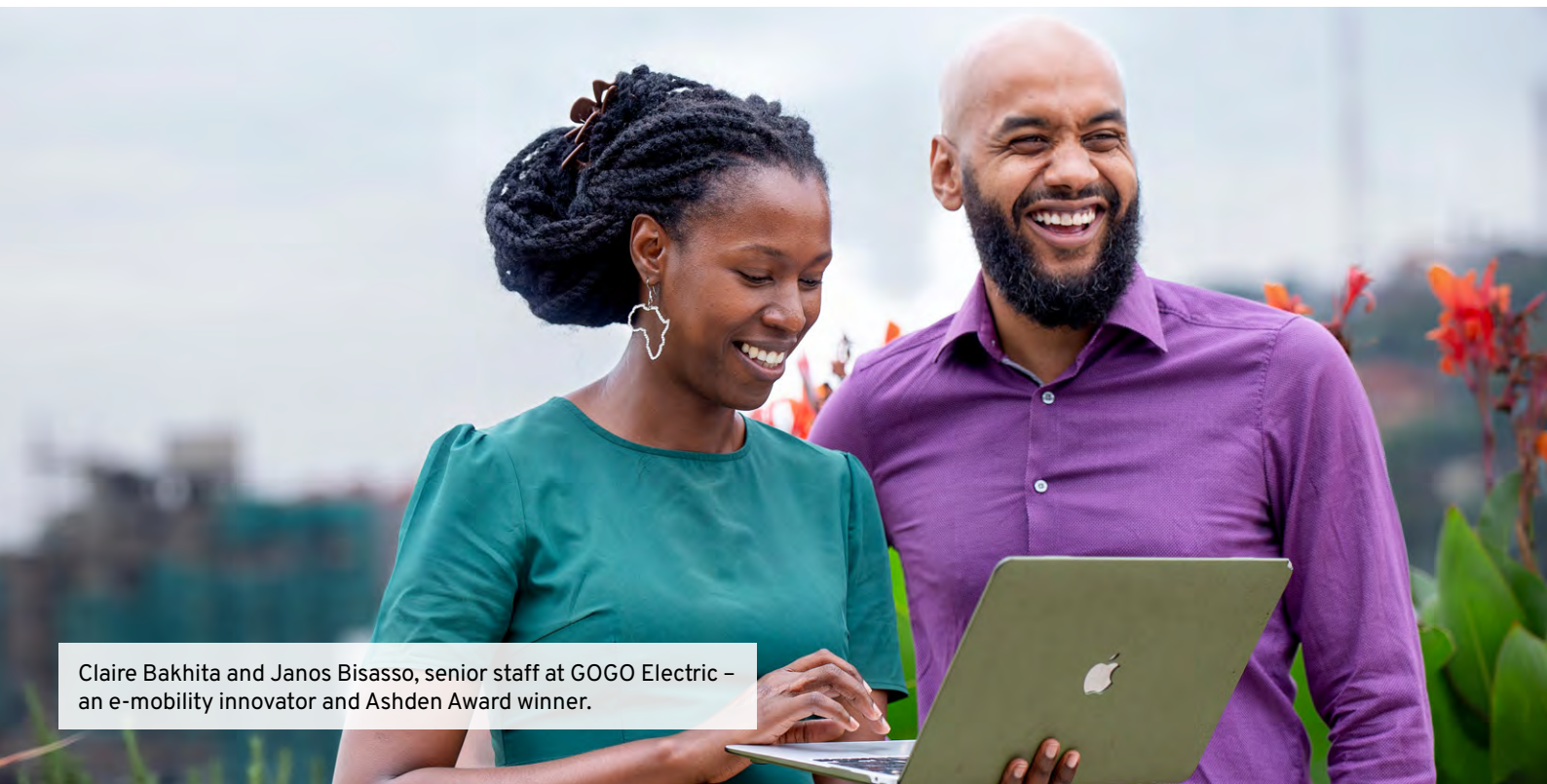
Demonstrate how innovative blended finance can deliver accessible, equitable investment.

Building on our strong track record of working across a broad cross-section of stakeholder organisations, we will influence key actors to deploy public, institutional and philanthropic capital to crowd-in the type of investment urgently needed for Global South climate solutions to scale. In particular, we will advocate for greater innovation in international climate finance.



Ensure more Global South innovators can access finance on the scale and terms suitable for them.

We will strengthen our networks and partnerships with impact investors and climate finance stakeholders to understand the barriers they face to investing in Global South climate solutions. We will work through partnerships to address some of these pain points and support our innovators to navigate the complex ecosystem of climate, carbon and biodiversity finance. We will strive to create systems which enable our award winners, and the thousands others like them, to access better suited, more diverse, and ultimately increased, sources of finance.



Claire Bakhita and Janos Bisasso, senior staff at GOGO Electric – an e-mobility innovator and Ashden Award winner.



Nigeria's Salpha Energy manufacture and sell affordable solar energy products – creating jobs and raising living standards. The business won an Ashden Award in 2024.

Getting to work

The tools and tactics we'll use to create impact in the Global South

An innovator centred approach, delivering tailored support and system change

In 2025-30, we will continue our decades-long work supporting individual organisations to access finance, raise their profile and seize new opportunities. The annual Ashden Awards will be at the heart of this process, bringing resources, recognition and connections to climate pioneers. The awards will also draw many organisations into our programmes, through which they can access further support. In line with our strategic goals, those benefiting will be enterprises and civil society organisations delivering equitable, inclusive clean energy solutions and people-centred nature protection.

But we recognise that this approach is not enough when set against the scale and urgency of the climate crisis – so we will simultaneously work to secure the policy and finance conditions needed for these organisations to achieve transformative impact at scale. Systemic change that unlocks the potential of Ashden Award winners and many others like them.

Ashden has a strong reputation, reach, and knowledge of emerging climate solutions. This enables us to showcase these innovations to relevant audiences, highlight the barriers they face, and build productive partnerships. All of this will pave the way for innovative and transformative capital to flow to the frontlines of climate action, at the scale and on the terms needed by Global South solutions.

Standing out with compelling, evidence-based storytelling

Ashden’s narratives will accelerate system change and the rise of individual innovators – with our annual awards ceremony the high-point of our calendar. Our multi-disciplinary in-house communications team will generate original content, from short films to action-focused reports and briefings, for an audience of policymakers, funders and investors. Our storytelling will be rigorous and rooted in the verifiable impacts of the climate solutions we champion – but will also feature an uplifting, inspiring, human-focused tone and approach that marks us out from other voices in the climate sector.

As well as creating impact as storytellers, we will empower organisations to share their own narratives in ways that meet their individual strategic goals. Growing organisations’ communications capacity will be a strong thread throughout our programmes, with the delivery of resources and guidance from Ashden communications professionals.

Championing inclusivity – and supporting marginalised people

We will accelerate solutions that are locally rooted and advance fairer, more inclusive economies and societies. The solutions we will boost serve communities heavily affected by poverty and marginalisation. Despite some progress, communities continue to be overlooked in the energy access and climate action agendas, despite facing the greatest threat from climate change. We will leverage the social and economic impact of such solutions, as well as their climate benefits, to unlock wider finance and policy support for them.

Our focus on inclusivity will include building a workstream dedicated to refugee-led clean energy projects. Millions of people in refugee camps lack safe cooking fuels and technologies, or access to electricity. We will also champion solutions that create economic opportunities for women and young people, in nations most affected by the climate crisis and grappling with high unemployment.

“
Our revenue has grown 3x since the Ashden Award... it provided SokoFresh with great publicity that has built investor confidence in the company.”



Hunter-gatherers are among those benefiting from the land rights and livelihoods work of Ujamaa Community Resource Team in Tanzania. The organisation won an Ashden Award in 2024.

Our commitment to learning and improvement

We are committed to using our time and resources as efficiently, effectively and equitably as possible. We want to deliver transparency for our partners and funders, and to know we are making a difference.



Ashden brought together two of our award winners – The UK’s FarmED and Cameroon’s CERAF-Nord – to share insights on promoting regenerative agriculture.

As a result, we commit to build monitoring, evaluation, learning and improvement into our culture and all our organisational processes. We will be curious and self-critical, and constantly monitor and review our work to learn what works where, and what doesn’t. We recognise that monitoring, evaluation and learning don’t happen without effort, so we will invest time and resources towards this.

Nurturing our team

To achieve success, we need to recruit the right people with the right skills – and give them the support they need to thrive.



Ashden staff welcome guests at the 2024 Ashden Awards ceremony in London.

In an increasingly competitive field, we need to make sure that we retain and develop our staff. We will do this by providing great, flexible working conditions, robust HR policies and ample opportunities for learning and development.

We recognise that climate is one of the least diverse sectors in the UK – and that we have the power help tackle this problem. Building on input from outside consultants, we will implement policies and ways of working that actively promote opportunities for a diverse range of people, embracing diversity in all its forms.

Funding our work

This ambitious strategy will only succeed with the backing of funders willing to partner with us to create impact. We will:



Work hand-in-hand with philanthropic and government partners to achieve deeper impact.

Their support will enable us to help climate innovators scale. Ashden will reach targeted, influential audiences with evidence-based storytelling to leverage investment in climate solutions.



Identify and engage mission-aligned individual donors through major giving programmes such as Changemakers.

These will enable donors to achieve their ambition around climate action, and fund our work driving lasting systems change.



Partner with businesses that are putting climate and equity at the heart of their work, and share our vision of a zero carbon world.

Support from values-driven corporates will accelerate our work creating green jobs and a just transition – and help these businesses demonstrate commitment on climate action to their workforce, customers and communities.



W: ashden.org

T: 020 7410 0330

E: info@ashden.org

Ashden, The Peak, 3rd Floor,
5 Wilton Road, London, SW1V 1AP

