

Addressing Climate Change through Innovation

The Milken Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank focused on accelerating measurable progress on the path to a meaningful life. With a focus on financial, physical, mental, and environmental health, we bring together the best ideas and innovative resourcing to develop blueprints for tackling some of our most critical global issues through the lens of what's pressing now and what's coming next.

Addressing climate change is the most pressing global challenge of our time, and it is imperative to mitigate adverse economic impact and adapt effectively. As part of our mission to help people build meaningful lives, we work to ensure an environmentally sustainable future. The Milken Institute's programmatic pillars—health, finance, and philanthropy—are committed to confronting climate change from all angles. Below is more information about the Institute's key cross-cutting climate initiatives.

Catalyzing Climate Finance Strategies for Mitigation and Adaptation

Study after study shows the world will need at least \$90 trillion in new climate finance investment by 2050, that expected losses from extreme weather could total trillions of dollars and millions of lost lives, and that current decarbonization pathways and commitments are behind schedule. To ensure that private and international investment funding is available for long-term mitigation as promising, new decarbonization pathways mature, new strategies are needed to ensure that capital investment allocations for mitigation and adaptation are strategically timed and tethered to data-driven, market development and project deployment realities. The current allocation of global climate finance investment leans heavily toward mitigation, accounting for over 90 percent of funding. In the meantime, funding for adaptation efforts, needed as a crucial bridge toward the successful deployment of mitigation technologies at scale, is sorely lacking. The Milken Institute believes that new, collaborative, and transparent partnerships among consumers, investors, banks, governments, and climate analysts are needed to better link climate finance innovation, investable project pipeline acceleration, transparent tracking of actual on-the-ground results, and trust-building across traditional divides.

Accelerating Climate-Resilient Infrastructure Deployment

The Milken Institute launched the Climate-Resilient Infrastructure (CRI) Financing Initiative in 2020 to move the infrastructure system toward 21st-century levels of performance. We focus on scaling up deployment support to 10,000 underserved communities and strategic interventions to accelerate energy transition investments in emerging market areas, such as industrial hydrogen, water conservation and desalinization, natural infrastructure at ecosystem scale, and electrification and digitization of the economy. We also work to incentivize more effective national, state, and local outcomes in permitting and procurement, and develop new mid-stage financing mechanisms to facilitate participation of institutional capital in bundled products for smaller projects that typically have trouble accessing capital at scale.

Building Nutritious, Sustainable, and Resilient Food Systems

A sustainable and resilient food system provides nutritional security for all in a way that ensures the economic, social, and environmental resources to feed future generations while maintaining the ability to withstand, recover from, and adapt to disruptions. Yet the current global food system is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases. Policymakers need to take a comprehensive view to address the complex web of inputs, activities, and outputs within the food system. It is not enough to be sustainable *or* resilient—it must be both to stand up to immediate changes and survive for the long term.

Despite the food system's role in climate change, a minuscule percentage of climate financing has supported sustainable and resilient food systems. In public climate finance, for example, only 3 percent has been directed to food systems, representing only \$9.3 billion out of the \$321 billion distributed. It is estimated that US\$300–350 billion is needed per year to make the necessary changes to the food system.

Milken Institute Feeding Change is a team of food system experts focused on catalyzing a more nutritious, sustainable, and resilient food system. Sitting at the intersection of finance and health, Feeding Change is focused on driving food systems transformation and achieving better health outcomes.

Enabling Innovation through Competition

Led by MI Philanthropy, the Milken–Motsepe Innovation Prize Program is a series of multiyear, multimillion-dollar innovation competitions for technological solutions that accelerate progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The program mobilizes significant financial and human capital through its inclusive and integrated approach to access and mobility for innovators and startups, resulting in global, data-driven insights.

The first competition of the Milken–Motsepe Innovation Prize Program was in AgriTech, focused on the first two SDGs (no poverty and zero hunger) and launched in April 2021. This global competition sourced solutions to increase economic value for farmers. The second competition, launched in 2023, is the Milken–Motsepe Prize in Green Energy, to expand access to reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity in Africa as an essential factor in achieving long-term economic growth and shared prosperity. The competition advances progress toward SDG 7 (ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all).

Modernizing the International Financial System To Better Address Climate Change

Addressing the challenge of climate change requires global coordination among nation-states; however, successfully meeting the challenge necessitates both public- and private-sector investment at a scale yet to be achieved. Multilateral institutions are the existing platforms from which this scale will be attainable, assisting nation-states in their pursuit of development-related climate commitments through access to capital and the technical expertise needed to implement ambitious targets. Most of the world's multilateral institutions were designed to solve certain challenges in the last century; reforms are needed to meet the challenges of our time. Our New Geo-Economics Initiative is focused on ensuring that reform of the international financial system is equitable and impactful, dramatically accelerating climate investment through capital markets to catalyze the trillions in financing needed to combat climate change effectively without exacerbating the burdens facing the most vulnerable populations.

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