

Response from ROOTA (Rising Out of the Ashes) – NGO Observer

(a) Overall expectations, outputs, and outcomes

As an NGO working directly with the Zabaleen community in Cairo—one of the world’s most efficient informal recycling communities—we see the climate finance work programme as an opportunity to recognize, empower, and scale community-driven climate solutions.

We expect the programme to:

- **Acknowledge and integrate informal sector contributions (such as waste pickers and recyclers) into formal climate finance frameworks.**
- **Prioritize locally led, high-impact initiatives that already demonstrate measurable environmental benefits but lack access to funding.**
- **Ensure climate finance reaches frontline communities, where climate challenges intersect with poverty, health, and education.**

Concrete outputs and outcomes should include:

- **Dedicated funding windows for grassroots and informal-sector-led initiatives, particularly in waste management and circular economy models.**
 - **Simplified and accessible funding mechanisms tailored to small and community-based organizations.**
 - **A recognized framework for valuing informal environmental contributions, such as recycling rates and emissions reductions achieved by communities like the Zabaleen.**
 - **Increased investment in integrated projects that link climate action with education, health, and livelihoods (e.g., ROOTA’s EcoRise initiative).**
 - **Support for scalable, community-based climate models that can be replicated globally.**
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(b) Thematic pillars and subtopics

We propose the following pillars, grounded in practical, community-level experience:

1. Inclusive Climate Finance and Recognition of Informal Systems

- **Integration of informal waste management systems into national climate strategies**

- **Financial inclusion of waste pickers and grassroots environmental workers**
- **Policy recognition of circular economy contributions at the community level**

2. Circular Economy and Waste Management

- **Investment in recycling infrastructure led by local communities**
- **Scaling zero-waste models and reducing landfill dependency**
- **Supporting innovation in waste sorting, reuse, and sustainable production**

3. Climate Education and Youth Engagement

- **Embedding climate education in underserved communities**
- **Practical, hands-on environmental learning (e.g., planting, recycling, sustainability practices)**
- **Digital training to empower youth in climate solutions**

4. Adaptation, Health, and Community Resilience

- **Addressing the intersection of climate change with health challenges (e.g., malnutrition, pollution-related illnesses)**
- **Urban greening and community-based environmental restoration**
- **Food security and sustainable local practices**

5. Capacity Building for Grassroots Organizations

- **Training in accessing and managing climate finance**
- **Support in monitoring, evaluation, and reporting**
- **Long-term institutional strengthening**

6. Partnerships and Blended Finance

- **Connecting NGOs with private sector partners for scalable impact**
- **Supporting social enterprises rooted in environmental sustainability**
- **Encouraging investment in proven community-led models**

(c) Organization and format of the work programme

To ensure inclusivity and effectiveness, we recommend:

- **Direct engagement with grassroots organizations, including those from informal sectors, ensuring their voices shape priorities—not only inform discussions.**
 - **Case study-driven sessions, highlighting successful models like the Zabaleen recycling system, which achieves exceptionally high recycling rates with minimal resources.**
 - **Regional and community-level consultations, particularly in urban informal settlements where climate challenges are most acute.**
 - **A hybrid participation model, removing barriers for NGOs with limited travel resources.**
 - **Simplified communication and submission processes, making participation accessible regardless of organizational size or technical capacity.**
 - **Creation of pilot funding initiatives within the work programme to test and scale innovative grassroots solutions.**
 - **Clear feedback and accountability mechanisms, demonstrating how stakeholder input directly influences outcomes.**
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Closing Perspective

For decades, the Zabaleen community has demonstrated that locally driven solutions can achieve global environmental impact, long before climate finance frameworks recognized such contributions.

Climate finance must evolve to value what already works, invest in people on the frontlines, and support integrated solutions that address climate, poverty, and human dignity together.

ROOTA stands ready to contribute its experience and collaborate in shaping a climate finance ecosystem that is inclusive, practical, and transformative.