

THE °CLIMATE GROUP

Subnational governments at the forefront of **climate** action





CLEAN, GREEN
POWER BEING
MADE HERE!

The role of subnational governments in tackling climate change

Subnational governments from all over the world have demonstrated in a number of ways that their contribution and leadership is essential to help achieve the ultimate objectives of the UNFCCC since, according to UNDP, 50% to 80% of adaptation and mitigation actions necessary to tackle climate change are or will be implemented at the subnational or local level of governance.

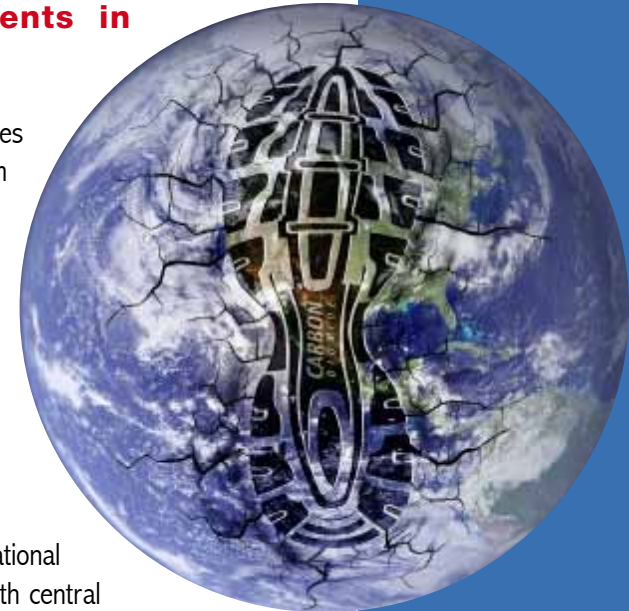
Subnational governments are particularly well placed for identifying the needs and the strengths of their societies in the battle against climate change. Either through power-sharing arrangements or constitutional attribution of powers, they are often responsible for the development and implementation of laws, policies, strategies, standards, programs, and fiscal mechanisms in areas that directly influence GHG emissions levels and deal with the impacts of climate change; such as energy, the environment, transport, industry, agriculture, land and resource management, as well as civil security. Subnational governments also make investment decisions in and for their economies that directly affect the level of global greenhouse gas emissions.

In the last few years, subnational governments have concretely shown that they take their climate change responsibilities very seriously. In fact, their accomplishments in this area have grown tremendously in sophistication, effectiveness and importance. The important lessons being learned at the subnational level can often feed into and improve national policy and shape more ambitious and innovative responses to climate change.

The role of subnational governments in mitigating greenhouse gases

Subnational governments are determined to address the issues of climate change and the economic difficulties many of them are facing by turning these challenges into an opportunity to move towards a green economy. Subnational governments are thus taking concrete actions to build more sustainable, low carbon, and less energy intensive communities. They are also innovating by putting in place carbon footprint accounting of investment projects and consumer products to better inform their citizens, businesses, and all sectors of societies about the choices they make every day.

While putting their climate change policies in place, subnational governments are committed to working in collaboration with central governments, cities and other local authorities, businesses, NGO's and financial institutions, and to tailoring their actions to the particular circumstances of populations and regions. Furthermore, subnational governments have initiated and participated in regional and international partnerships to support the broader implementation of climate change policies and legislation, the exchange of best practices, growth in new green technologies, low carbon technology transfers and cap and trade programs. In the spirit of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, subnational governments from developed countries have also reached out in solidarity to other subnational governments in developing countries to help build their capacities to adapt to climate change and monitor/mitigate the emissions of greenhouse gases, notably through subnational cooperation agreements.





Mitigation policies being put forward by the subnational level

Subnational governments have exclusive responsibilities or share responsibilities with their central governments on a whole range of areas relating to mitigation such as;

- GHG emission reduction targets and renewable energy targets
- Energy policies (e.g., smart grids and meters, renewable energy standards, feed-in tariffs, energy efficiency codes and standards, energy savings programs)
- Clean transportation policies (e.g., vehicle efficiency, emissions and fuel standards including use of biofuels, electric vehicle strategies, public transit policies, cycling paths projects)
- Cap and trade programs
- R&D policies for green, low-carbon and sequestration technologies
- Green building codes, home and business insulation and weatherization programs, zero-carbon buildings programs
- Smart growth policies, sustainable land-use planning, notably to avoid urban sprawl
- Sustainable forest and agriculture practices, forest conservation and preservation, zero-deforestation policies, planting of trees and native plants, notably in urban areas
- Climate-friendly purchasing/procurement policies
- Waste reduction and recycling strategies
- Fiscal and budgetary measures to support climate change initiatives, including the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies





The role of subnational governments in adaptation

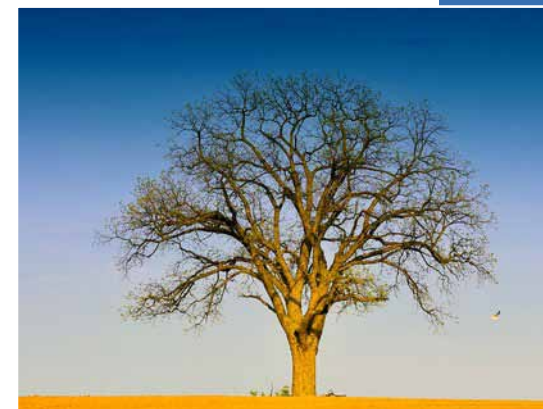
Subnational governments have exclusive responsibilities or share responsibilities with their national governments on a whole range of areas relating to adaptation, such as;

- Risks and vulnerabilities identification and assessment, including for forests and ecosystems
- Development and implementation of risk reduction and prevention strategies and action plans
- Disaster relief (such as compensation and rehabilitation policies), cleanup and reconstruction
- Information gathering about climate conditions, variability and trends to help reduce unpredictability
- Air and water quality monitoring and management
- Health care, especially for vulnerable citizens
- Public security and civil protection action plans
- Education and public awareness campaigns



Subnational governments have often the necessary skills, leadership, and expertise to help communities adapt to climate change, strengthen resilience and, in extreme situations, rebuild those communities after disaster has struck. They also have the capacity to respond quickly to a climate change crisis, notably because they are close to the affected populations and have the most intimate knowledge of their needs.

In addition, risk patterns and trends are often specific to a particular locality or region. In developing a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerabilities, reducing disaster risks and building the capacity of nations to adapt to climate change, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 has recognized that fact, and suggested that responsibilities and resources for disaster risk reduction be decentralized to subnational and local authorities as appropriate. The Hyogo Framework further recommended developing not only national but also subnational systems of risk and vulnerability indicators in order to better assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of potential disasters.



Last, it is important to note that subnational governments, particularly in developed countries, are sharing or are willing to share their experiences, technologies and best practices on adaptation in a North-South context and among themselves. They would, however, welcome an international agreement on climate change that would foster further cooperation in that regard.

Subnational governments and the financing of the climate challenge

Fully aware of the cost of inaction around climate change, subnational governments are also truly convinced that strong, early action on climate change will bring about important benefits for their economies and their societies, notably through the emergence of low carbon and less resource intense technologies. And those that can afford it are willing to invest substantial human and financial resources to make the necessary changes happen. They also welcome the chance to exchange their skills and experiences towards the building of a global green economy.

Indeed, many subnational governments in developed countries often have broad direct and indirect taxation powers to finance the mitigation and adaptation projects they wish to initiate, develop and implement within their own borders and beyond. However, while certain subnational governments in developing countries may have those powers and have the same level of ambition to tackle climate change, the funds they can raise are often insufficient to finance these types of projects or they lack matching financial support to complete them. It is therefore important that subnational governments from developing countries have access, through their national governments or directly when the latter give their approval, to the existing funds of the Convention or any proposed new funds in order to enhance North-South and South-South actions on climate change.



The role of subnational governments in technology development and transfer

Subnational governments, like national governments, are well positioned to tap into the reservoirs of engineering and manufacturing firms and facilities as well as academic and research institutions that are operating within their territories to encourage the sharing of scientific and technological skills, knowledge and best practices, services, processes and applications, products and materials with developing countries. Moreover, subnational governments can enter into cooperation agreements with private sectors companies that hold green or low-carbon technology patents and proprietary rights that can be offered for carrying out adaptation and mitigation projects in developing countries.

In addition, subnational governments often do provide incentives to the private sector and forge partnerships with it to accelerate the innovation, development and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies. International cooperative action on the development and transfer of these technologies for mitigation and adaptation purposes should therefore open the door as much as possible to subnational involvement.



The role of subnational governments in capacity-building

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other UN agencies have responded to an increasing number of requests from subnational governments in the developing world who need assistance in assessing and managing the physical and socioeconomic impact of climate change by creating the Territorial Approach to Climate Change (TACC) program. This initiative seeks to enhance the capacity of subnational governments from developing countries to develop, amongst other things, territorial climate plans, to help them implement their climate change responses. It also provides guidance to public authorities on how to choose and design the most appropriate policies and financing schemes to implement priority measures. The TACC program draws upon the experience, skills and institutional strengths of subnational governments in developed countries, and on their ability to induce the participation of private businesses that have developed expertise in green technologies as well as the participation of NGOs and aid partners that are familiar with the conditions on the ground. The Climate Group and nrg4SD both count among their members subnational governments that have joined TACC and that have capacity-building projects in the works for the coming years. The TACC program is a perfect example of Northern and Southern subnational governments' willingness to collaborate with one another in the fight against climate change.

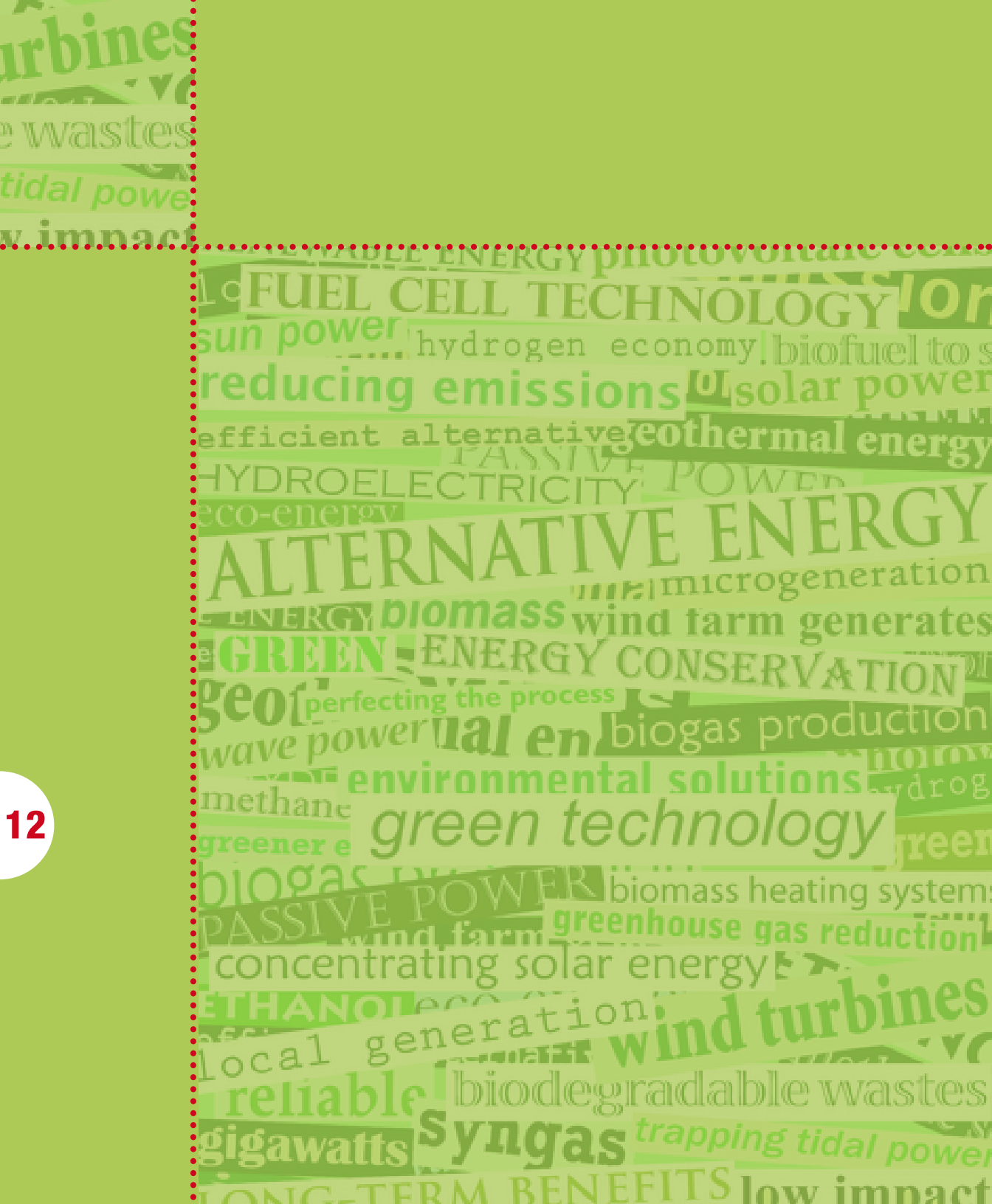


The role of subnational governments on forestry

Subnational governments often have the responsibilities, tools and expertise for developing and implementing plans and strategies to promote conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks. In some countries, subnational governments have considerable if not exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources, and there can simply be no robust forest monitoring system, effective forest related mitigation programs or reforestation action strategies without their full participation. Indeed, on occasions, forest covered areas are so vast that, without subnational governments' detailed knowledge of them and of land use changes, central governments would struggle to adequately keep track of deforestation and forest degradation, and to efficiently plan to prevent further damages in the future.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that, at the Climate Leaders Summit held in 2009 alongside UNFCCC's COP15 in Copenhagen, more than 60 subnational leaders made the commitment to planting at least 1 billion 'permanent' trees worldwide by 2015, and called on national governments businesses and communities to partner with them by planting one tree for every person on the planet.





Subnational governments seek international recognition for their contribution to the fight against climate change

Subnational governments deploy climate change measures in their daily action and play an important role in the global effort to tackle climate change and in the world's transition to a low carbon future. It follows that the international decision-making process with respect to climate change should do more than simply mention their involvement in passing. **In fact, subnational governments take the view that a future UNFCCC agreement should officially recognize their role and actions in the fight against climate change and acknowledge them as the allies they truly are.** Subnational governments are convinced that such recognition would provide them with an additional incentive and encouragement to expand their commitments and to continue implementing multilevel, coherent and complementary strategies for climate change action.





The Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, nrg4SD is an international organisation representing over 600 subnational governments, namely federated states and regional governments, at the global level. The network promotes understanding, collaboration and partnerships in sustainable development and seeks greater international recognition of subnational government's important contribution towards sustainable development. A member of the Forum Global d'Associations de Régions (FOGAR), nrg4SD is the voice of FOGAR in the field of sustainable development.

Member States

Açores (Portugal)
Aquitaine (France)
Aragón (Spain)
Basque Country (Spain)
Bourgogne (France)
Bretagne (France)
Buenos Aires Province (Argentina)
Callao (Peru)
Canarias (Spain)
Cantabria (Spain)
Catalonia (Spain)
Chaco (Argentina)
Équateur (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
Fatick (Senegal)
Flanders (Belgium)
Fundación Comunitat Valenciana (Spain)
Goiás (Brazil)
Kaunas (Lithuania)
Lusaka Province (Zambia)
Mbale District (Uganda)
North Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso)
North Sumatra (Indonesia)
Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (France)
Québec (Canada)
Réunion (France)
Rhône-Alpes (France)

Riau (Indonesia)
Santa Fe (Argentina)
São Paulo (Brazil)
Sofala Province (Mozambique)
Timbuktu (Mali)
Toscana (Italy)
Tulcea (Romania)
Wales (United Kingdom)
Wallonia (Belgium)
West Java (Indonesia)
Western Cape (South Africa)

Members' Forums

ABEMA (Bresil)
ANAAE (Mexico)
CONAGO (Mexico)
CONCOPE (Ecuador)
Congreso de Intendentes de
Uruguay (Uruguay)
CRPM (France)
Northern Forum (United States of America)
OLAGI (Ecuador)
PRODIPAN (Bangladesh)

Observer States

Somaliland (Somalia)
Taipei City (Taiwan)

THE CLIMATE GROUP

The Climate Group is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working internationally with government and business leaders to advance smart policies and technologies, cut global emissions, and accelerate a low carbon economy. Through its States and Regions Program, it acts as a catalyst for leading subnational governments in this regard. Its global coalition of over 80 leading companies, states, regions and cities around the world recognize the economic and environmental imperatives of taking decisive action now. The Climate Group was founded in 2004 and has operations in Australia, China, Europe, India and North America.

Member States and Regions

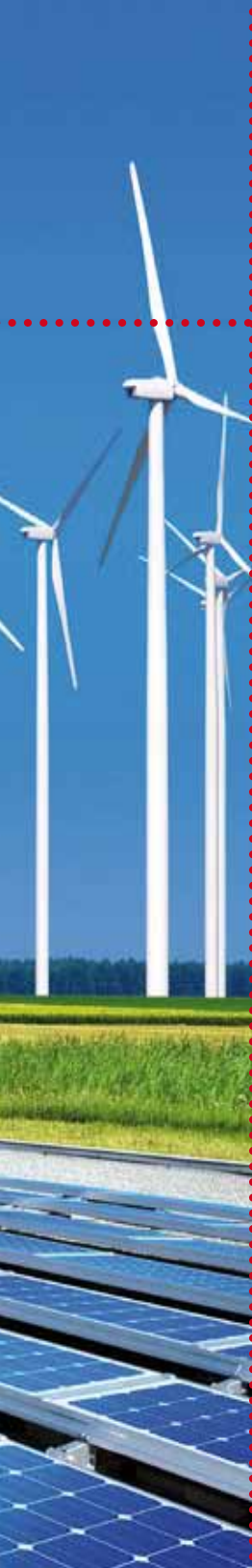
Basque Country (Spain)
Bavaria (Germany)
British Columbia (Canada)
Bretagne (France)
California (United States of America)
Catalonia (Spain)
Manitoba (Canada)
New South Wales (Australia)
New York State (United States of America)
North Rhine Westphalia (Germany)
Ontario (Canada)
Québec (Canada)
Queensland (Australia)
Île-de-France (France)
Rhône-Alpes (France)
São Paulo (Brazil)
Scotland (United Kingdom)
South Australia (Australia)
South Holland (Netherlands)
Upper Austria (Austria)
Victoria (Australia)
Wales (United Kingdom)
Western Australia (Australia)

Other members of The Climate Group's States and Regions Alliance*

Aragón (Spain)
Baden Württemberg (Germany)
Burgenland (Austria)
Carinthia (Austria)
Connecticut (United States of America)
Fatick (Senegal)
Flanders (Belgium)
Jämtland (Sweden)
Maine (United States of America)
New Brunswick (Canada)
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Newfoundland and Labrador (Canada)
Northwest Territories (Canada)
Nova Scotia (Canada)
Nunavut (Canada)
Poitou-Charentes (France)
Prince Edward Island (Canada)
Quintana Roo (Mexico)
Saskatchewan (Canada)
Tuscany (Italy)
Vermont (United States of America)
Wallonia (Belgium)
Western Cape (South Africa)
Wielkopolska (Poland)
Yukon (Canada)

*In 2005, in collaboration with the provinces of Quebec and Manitoba, The Climate Group held the first Climate Leaders Summit resulting in the Montreal Declaration of Federated States and Regions, signed by subnational governments from around the world committed to setting targets and implementing climate change actions in their own jurisdictions.

Disclaimer: The content of this brochure does not necessarily reflect the detailed opinion of each member of The Climate Group nor its States and Regions Alliance.



"Successfully addressing the climate change challenge will only be achieved, and sustained, through involvement and commitment at all levels of decision-making. In particular, subnational authorities have a key role to play in actively incorporating climate change considerations in day-to-day business and in introducing climate-friendly policies, regulations and investment decisions at their level, as a direct outreach to the public."

United Nations Development Program

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