

# THE MULTILEVEL CLIMATE ACTION GUIDE FOR DECISION MAKERS



GLOBAL COVENANT  
*of MAYORS for*  
CLIMATE & ENERGY

# Leadership at Every Level to Drive Action at Local Level



Leaders must lead. No more hesitancy. No more excuses. No more waiting for others to move first. There is simply no more time for that. It is still possible to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and avoid the very worst of climate change. But only with dramatic, immediate climate action.

— *UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, July 2023 Speech*

Climate disasters are already affecting local and regional communities, as well as their capacity for life-saving service provision and local solutions<sup>1</sup>. The climate crisis is as local as it is global, affecting everyone – with disproportionate impacts on the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable among us. Local and regional governments are on the frontlines, and reinforcements are needed – fast.

Action through local governments alone could reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2.1 GtCO<sub>2e</sub> annually by 2030, and more than 14,000 climate hazards have been reported en route to setting resilience goals and plans. Transforming credible, just, and ambitious commitments into impactful actions – and avoiding climate catastrophe – requires effective multilevel governance and coordination.

Building on the latest insights and good practice from the Global Covenant of Mayors alliance, this Guide highlights three overarching recommendations that can catalyze multilevel governance and coordination. Applied with local and regional considerations, these recommendations offer opportunities for meaningful and accelerated progress towards achieving national climate ambition – through local and regional implementation.

These recommendations are completed by more than 100 examples which are presented in the Multilevel Climate Governance Atlas (see pages 8 & 9).

## Three Recommendations to advance multilevel action:

- 1** Align national and sub-national policies to create cost-effective synergies and maximize the impact of climate action
- 2** Formalize collaboration mechanisms between local, regional, and national governments
- 3** Transform local financing and action through diverse coalitions of civil society, business, & academia

<sup>1</sup> Taken from the *Joint response of Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency on elements for the consideration of outputs component of the first global stocktake*

# Achieving National Ambition Through Local and Regional Opportunities

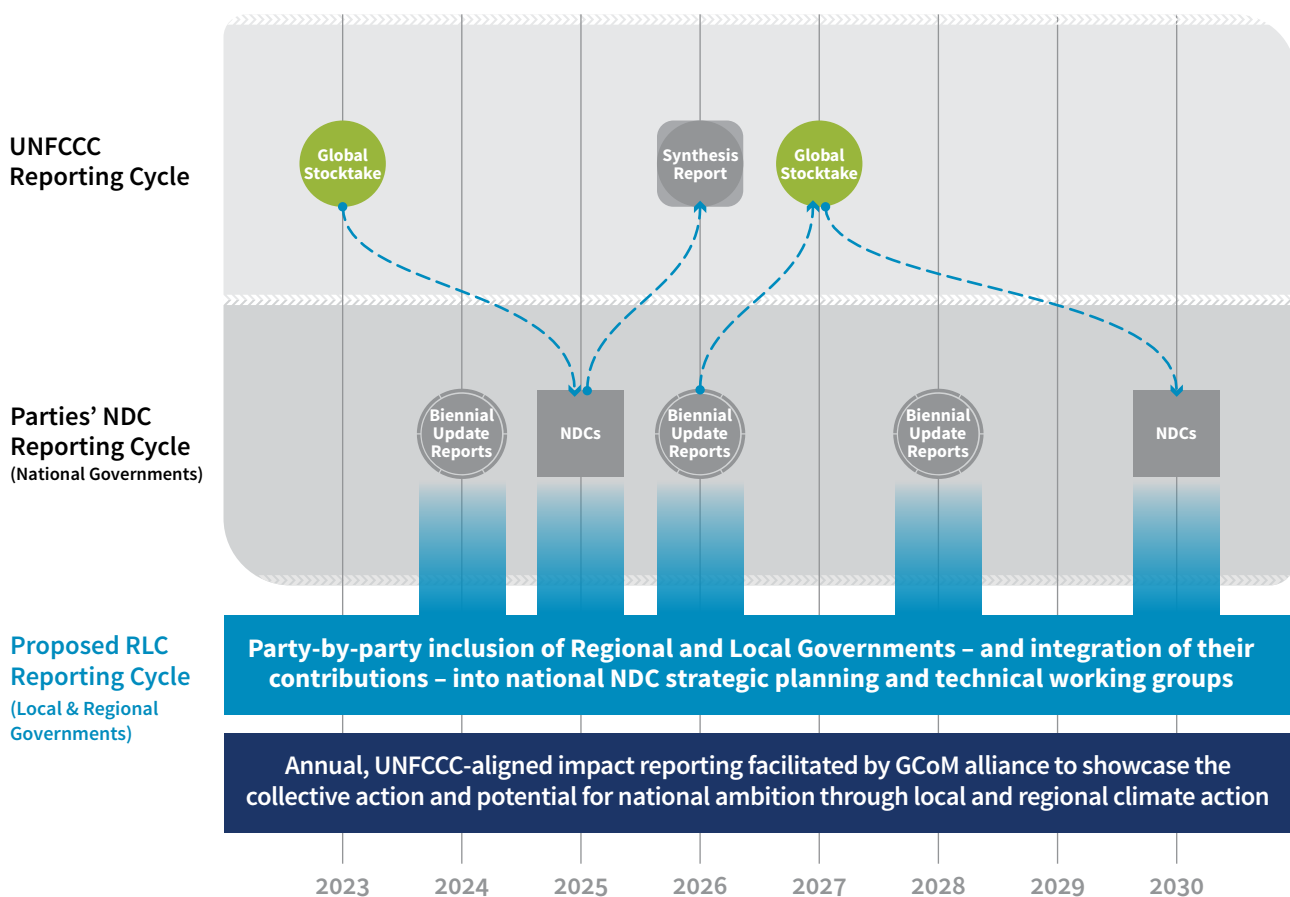


Non-Party stakeholder actions can strengthen efforts for systemic transformations.

— *First Global Stocktake Technical Dialogue 1.2 Summary Report*

The Global Stocktake is an opportunity to reflect on the state of the planet and mechanisms that deliver action. As Parties work to revise their NDCs based on this process, scaling up implementation through Multilevel Climate Action can provide a significant contribution to closing the gap exposed by the Global Stocktake.

2024 will be a critical opportunity for input into the updated NDC submission in 2025 to deliver on targets for 2030. The following recommendations can support increased ambition and integration of the institutions, policies, finance, capacities and innovation necessary to increase collaboration and climate action across all levels.



# Enablers for Multilevel Climate Action

There are many ways in which subnational and national actors are building the pathways to enable effective multilevel climate action. The following five enablers were identified, in consultation with World Resources Institute, building on the **first two Playbooks** and through an analysis of the existing compendium of case studies.



**Vertical & Horizontal Collaboration:** Formal or informal bodies to facilitate coordination and collaboration across levels and sectors of government and other actors for a variety of issues including data and information sharing, policy development, implementation of projects and programs, reporting and monitoring, and integrated national climate policies.



**Multilevel, Multi-Actor Capacity:** Increasing technical, administrative and coordination capacity for multiple actors at local, regional and national levels.



**Unlocking Finance:** Collaboration between national and regional and/or local levels to increase access to finance from a multitude of sources including international donors, climate funds and/or the private sector.



**Accelerating Research & Innovation:** National, local and regional governments all have a critical role to play in fostering much-needed research and innovation on climate action at all levels.



**Civil Society & Civic Engagement:** Creating formal or informal coalitions by engaging with civil society, community groups, indigenous communities, youth groups and other key stakeholders on commitments, policies, solutions, data, information and innovation.

## From the Global Stocktake to Local Action:

“Much more ambition is needed in domestic mitigation measures in NDCs to realize existing and emerging opportunities, in order to halve global emissions by 2030, reach net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050 globally, and promote equitable sharing of efforts across countries.” (*GST Technical Dialogue 1.2 Summary Report*)



Sub-national action has the potential for emissions reductions of 3.3-3.9 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year in 2030, more than the current annual emissions of the EU. (*Global Climate Action from Cities, Regions and Businesses Report, 2021*)

Local & Regional Government



“Collectively, there is increasing ambition in plans and commitments for adaptation, but there also remains an implementation gap, in that plans are implemented inadequately, unevenly, and incrementally.” (*GST Technical Dialogue 1.2 Summary Report*)



States, regional governments and cities have also played a key role in localizing adaptation strategies by developing regional, local, or city wide adaptation plans and actions. For example, more than 1,500 GCoM signatories have developed local adaptation plans.

Local & Regional Government





Are the policies for reducing emissions from transport consistent from the national government to the city level? Is it clear which policies from land use plans to biodiversity laws are relevant for urban nature-based solutions and green infrastructure programs?

## Recommendation 1: **Align national and sub-national policies to create cost-effective synergies and maximize the impact of climate action**

Finding the right policy levers to drastically reduce emissions and minimize climate impacts can be a major challenge for national, regional and local governments, but this work is essential to convert climate and sustainability ambition into implementation.

### **Good practice from the Global Covenant of Mayors' Playbooks suggest:**

- Grounding and updating national plans and goals with regional and local contributions to climate and sustainability – coupling them with institutions and processes that enable greater multilevel integration; and
- Blending economic, regulatory, and voluntary/information instruments with enablers ensures locally appropriate and sustainable climate action.

### **Policy alignment in action:**



**Vertical and Horizontal Collaboration:** 🇿🇼 **Zimbabwe** mapped the relevant policies and mandates of government actions related to climate-resilient development at national and local level. As a result of this exercise, government representatives were better able to navigate the legislative landscape and assign roles and responsibilities for the implementation of climate actions and policies.



**Multilevel, Multi-Actor Capacity:** The Vertically Integrated Climate Policies programme works in five countries: 🇲🇽 **Mexico**, 🇨🇷 **Costa Rica**, 🇿🇦 **South Africa**, 🇮🇩 **Indonesia**, and 🇬🇪 **Georgia** to strengthen the capacities of climate policy decision-makers and institutions to maximise mitigation potential at the subnational level as a contribution to ambitious and inclusive national climate policy.



**Unlocking Finance:** Four regions in 🇮🇹 **Italy** (Emilia Romagna, Sicily, Apulia, and Marche) have established financing schemes – via grants and vouchers proportional to population size used to bring in technical expertise – to support the development of municipal sustainable energy and climate action plans (SECAPs) that are approved by Council and submitted via MyCovenant, one of the two official GCoM reporting platforms. So far, around EUR 8.6 million has been committed through these four regions collectively. Furthermore, those regions offer technical support through capacity building activities, guidance materials and tools useful both for SECAP development and monitoring (e.g. climate and energy regional observatories).



Will this existing mechanism for collaboration between cities and national governments work for reporting on emissions reductions or is a new arrangement needed? Do the platforms for civil society engagement encourage participation from young people and Indigenous Groups or do the methods unintentionally discourage diverse participation?

## Recommendation 2: Formalize collaboration mechanisms between local, regional, and national governments


The calls for building broad coalitions for coordinated climate and sustainability action are clear, but the mechanisms to do so may not be fully realized or formalized.

### Good practice from the Global Covenant of Mayors' Playbooks suggest:


- Utilizing existing committees, working groups, and platforms as dedicated governance mechanisms to identify, plan, and coordinate action across levels of government;
- Establishing dedicated coordination groups – where capacity exists – to align policy and implementation across national, regional, and local levels.

### Collaboration mechanisms in action:




**Vertical and Horizontal Collaboration:** In 2009, the  **Philippine** Government passed a Climate Change Act and established the Climate Change Committee which combined several agencies with overlapping jurisdictions and roles into one agency that could be the sole policy-making authority on climate actions. This Climate Change Committee reports directly to the president, which elevates climate action to the highest levels of government, but also works directly with local leaders to Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAP).



**Civil Society & Civic Engagement:** The national government in  **Peru** created the Indigenous Peoples Platform to face Climate change under the new Framework Law on Climate Change (Ley Marco sobre Cambio Climático del Perú) after an intensive public consultation process that incorporated perspectives from private sector, civil society, local and indigenous people (1,433 indigenous leaders) and promoted gender mainstreaming into the process.



**Data, Research & Innovation:** In  **Austria**, the Smart Cities Network, coordinated by the Salzburg Institute for Regional Planning and Housing, was established to support and accelerate municipal innovation processes, including interdisciplinary working methods and multi-level governance approaches. The format encourages conceptual discussions on approaches to strengthen organizational structures in cities and experience exchanges to generate innovative project ideas and jointly develop solutions to local challenges with stakeholders such as housing companies, businesses, city-related and research institutions.



Who can fill gaps in knowledge and resources on solutions that can be replicated at local level? Who isn't currently involved in consultations on emissions reduction, adaptation, or energy poverty? How can we secure and finance a climate-safe future for the greatest number of people?

## Recommendation 3: Transform local financing and action through diverse coalitions of civil society, business, & academia


“The reality of [our] changing climate is impacting subnational governments now,” says the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency in response to the first Global Stocktake. This requires a response matched in urgency and intent.

### Good practice from the Global Covenant of Mayors' Playbooks suggest:


- Engaging a broad cross-sectoral base of partner organizations to inform action – including youth, business, academia, and civil society – through formal and informal processes;
- Identifying, piloting, and – where appropriate – maturing solutions born with the ingenuity and resource of the business community, leveraging cities as testbeds for innovation;
- Engaging with the research community – at home and abroad – for the latest physical and social science to inform climate and sustainability approaches; and
- Channeling funding and financing towards climate-relevant programs and activities across local and regional governments.

### Transformational collaboration in action:



**Vertical and Horizontal Collaboration:** In  **Nepal**, the goal is for all 753 local government authorities to have local climate-resilient and gender-responsive adaptation plans by 2030. This is a monumental effort in which input is tracked by the Provincial Climate Change Coordination Committees and report progress to the Inter-Ministerial Climate Change Coordination Committee at the national level.



**Civil Society & Civic Engagement:** The Promise of  **Seoul** is an initiative that sets out 10 areas of action for the city to achieve the vision of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 and was developed by the Citizen Committee for Green Seoul in an intensive consultation process that included residents, experts and environmental groups (in total around a third of Seoul's population). A detailed plan is currently being developed to help Seoul continue its sizeable efforts to fulfill the Paris Agreement.



**Unlocking Finance:** The City Climate Finance Gap Fund is the first global fund dedicated to supporting cities in the very early stages of project development. The fund supports over 30 cities in developing and emerging countries with technical assistance and capacity building to support climate-smart investment planning.

# The Multilevel Governance Atlas

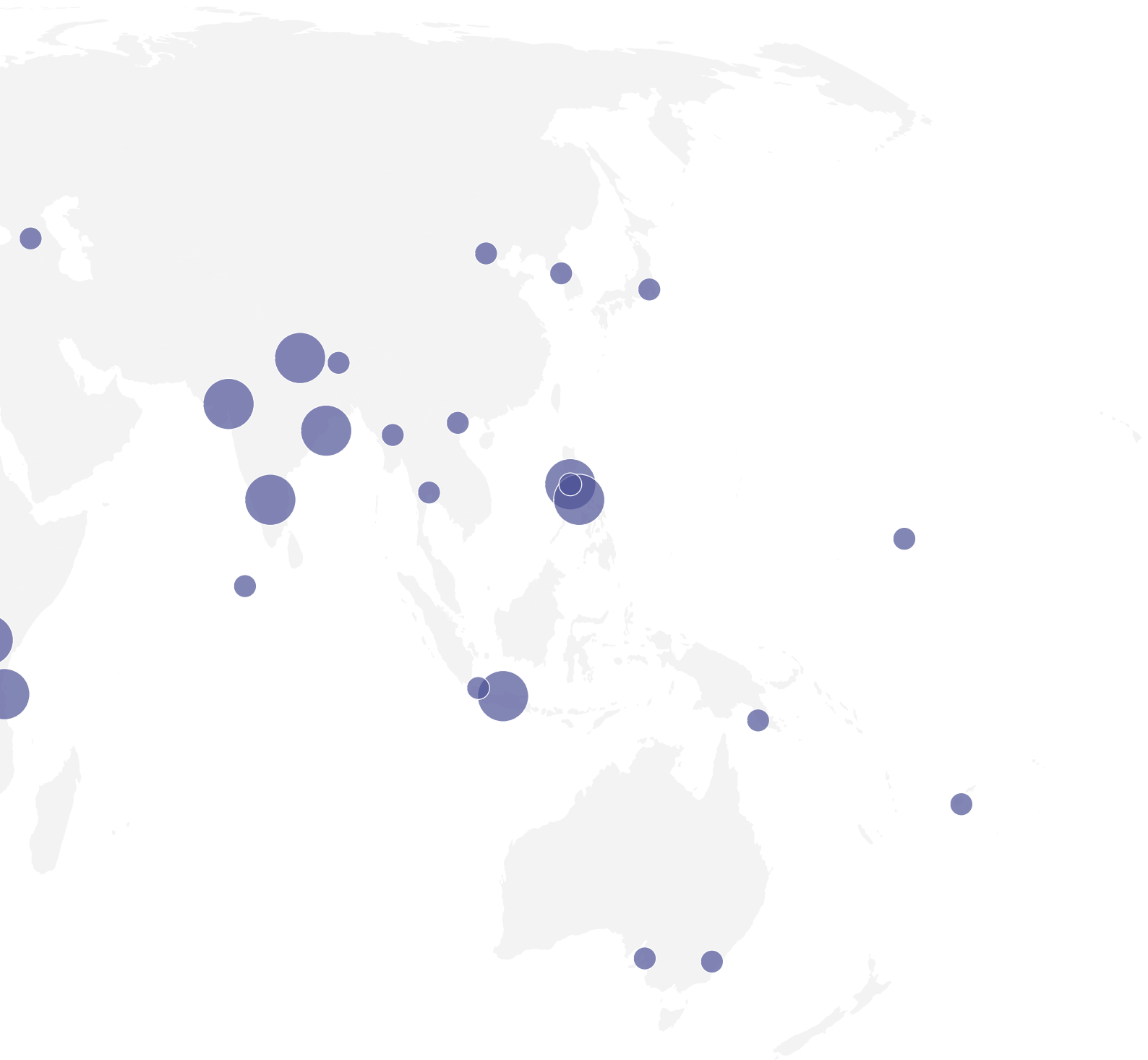


Explore:



[www.wri.org/initiatives/multi-level-governance-atlas](http://www.wri.org/initiatives/multi-level-governance-atlas)





The Multilevel Governance Atlas, produced in partnership with World Resources Institute and supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, showcases over 100 examples of multilevel climate action at work from 52 countries around the world. **Categorized and filterable according to the enablers**, the interactive Atlas demonstrates that aligning planning and implementation of national, regional and local policies around a shared climate action vision can yield greater efficiencies, reduce risk, and help cities and national government achieve their respective climate and development goals. Despite differing country and city contexts, the Atlas demonstrates that there are many lessons to be learned from existing initiatives, and that through collaboration we can move together towards a resilient and net-zero future.



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