



Regions4 Position Paper for COP31

Regions Delivering for Climate Action

Building Resilience, Mobilizing Finance, Delivering Results

COP31 must represent a decisive shift from ambition to implementation. Growing fragmentation, polarisation and declining trust in multilateral cooperation stand in sharp contrast to the increasingly severe climate impacts communities are experiencing. Delivering on climate and biodiversity commitments therefore depends more than ever on agile, inclusive and effective multilevel governance that connects global commitments with implementation across levels, notably the regional and local level. **At Regions4, we support the COP31 presidency priority to increase the resilience of vulnerable regions, seas and oceans.**

States, provinces and regions are at the forefront of implementation and drivers of change. They are not only a bridge between national and local governments, but a multiplier of impact across cities, municipalities, rural areas and territories. They translate global commitments into territorial investment priorities, implementation pathways and measurable results on the ground. Yet their role remains insufficiently recognised in formal global climate processes.

As Regions4 celebrates the 10th anniversary of its flagship climate adaptation initiative, RegionsAdapt, the network now supports more than 85 states, regions and provinces in assessing climate risks, planning for resilience and advancing adaptation action.

Regions4's main call for COP31 is to make subnational governments full partners in climate implementation, with a meaningful role in governance, implementation, reporting and accountability, and with improved access to finance, data and capacity.

Subnational governments can form a critical part of a broader **coalition of willing**¹ governments and stakeholders, capable of rebuilding trust, strengthening cooperation and advancing a shared “Mutirão” vision through tangible action across territories at COP31 and beyond.

¹ “Coalition of the willing” is not a formal negotiating group but a term used at COP30 in Belém (November 2025) to describe the 80+ countries, spanning Global North and South, including Brazil, Colombia, the UK, Australia, Norway, and several European nations, that backed a roadmap for transitioning away from fossil fuels, even as full consensus among all 200 COP parties could not be reached.

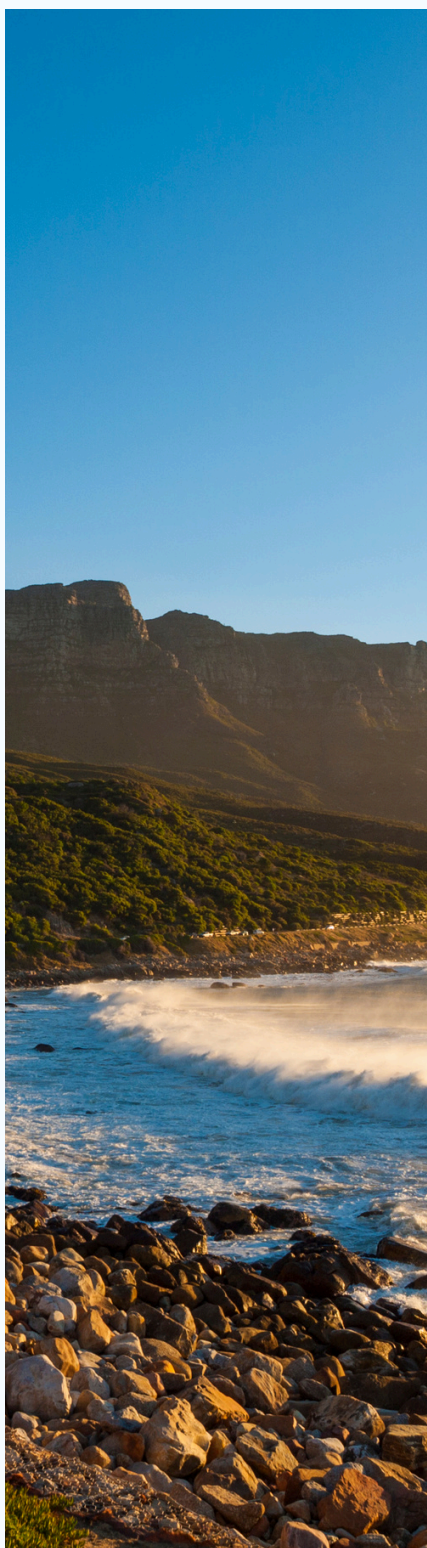
1 Make Regions Central to Climate Governance

Global climate governance is facing a growing credibility gap. While most Parties remain committed to multilateralism, progress has been too slow and current national commitments still fall short of what science and global goals requires, respecting the cap of the 1.5 degrees Celsius remains key to adapt successfully. In this context, regional and local authorities provide continuity by delivering concrete results aligned with global goals.

To close the gap between commitments and implementation, COP31 should:

- **Give regional governments a meaningful role in shaping, implementing, monitoring and reporting on climate commitments.** Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and the Global Stocktake (GST) should better reflect the priorities, capacities and contributions of regions and territories, making multilevel governance a core pillar of climate implementation.
- **Establish a permanent mechanism for cooperation, coordination and accountability across levels of government.** A Multilevel Dialogue should systematically bring regional and local perspectives into NDCs, NAPs, long-term strategies and the Global Stocktake, while strengthening existing initiatives such as the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) and connecting them with the UNFCCC Action Agenda through stronger² channels for coordination, reporting and consultation.
- **Recognise regions as multipliers of impact across municipalities and territories.** Regions play a critical role in coordinating action across sectors, aggregating investment opportunities and connecting local implementation with national priorities. Dedicated delivery-focused forums under Regional Climate Weeks and other implementation platforms such Local Leaders Forums should strengthen this role and accelerate territorial action.
- **Integrate territorial targets, subnational data, reporting and implementation outcomes into national and global climate processes.** Better use of regional and territorial information will ensure that NDCs, NAPs and the Global Stocktake reflect realities on the ground, identify implementation gaps and guide where further support is needed. Reporting on subnational progress should also contribute to the Global Goal on Adaptation through relevant indicators and the operationalisation of the Belém–Addis Vision.

² CHAMP is an initiative launched at COP28 in Dubai (2023) in which national governments commit to working with subnational governments (regions, state, provinces, and cities) in the development and implementation of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). By the time of COP29, over 75 countries had endorsed CHAMP, making it the primary formal mechanism for integrating subnational ambition into national climate plans.



Explore how regions engage and lead in multilevel governance mechanisms:

Gauteng (South Africa): Gauteng demonstrates how subnational governments can align local adaptation efforts with national climate governance. The province coordinates reporting and implementation with the national government and the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC), while jointly implementing the Gulp Spruit Resilient Catchment Plan across Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Ekurhuleni with support from the National Treasury and the World Bank.

Goiás (Brazil): Through the [AdaptaCidades](#), the state supports 20 municipalities in developing local Climate Change Adaptation Plans aligned with Brazil's National Adaptation Plan (NAP). By coordinating with federal adaptation priorities and providing climate risk assessments, technical training and implementation support, Goiás acts as a multiplier of adaptation action by strengthening municipal capacity across the territory.

Cross River State (Nigeria): Cross River State integrates REDD+ principles into territorial planning to protect one of Africa's most biodiverse rainforest ecosystems, the Cross River Rainforest, connecting community action, state institutions and international frameworks into a functioning multilevel governance model.

New South Wales (Australia): Through [AdaptNSW](#) and the [NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy](#), the state supports local governments and communities in assessing climate risks and implementing resilience actions, demonstrating how subnational governments can translate regional strategies into coordinated territorial delivery.

2 Build Resilient Territories Through Local and Regional Adaptation

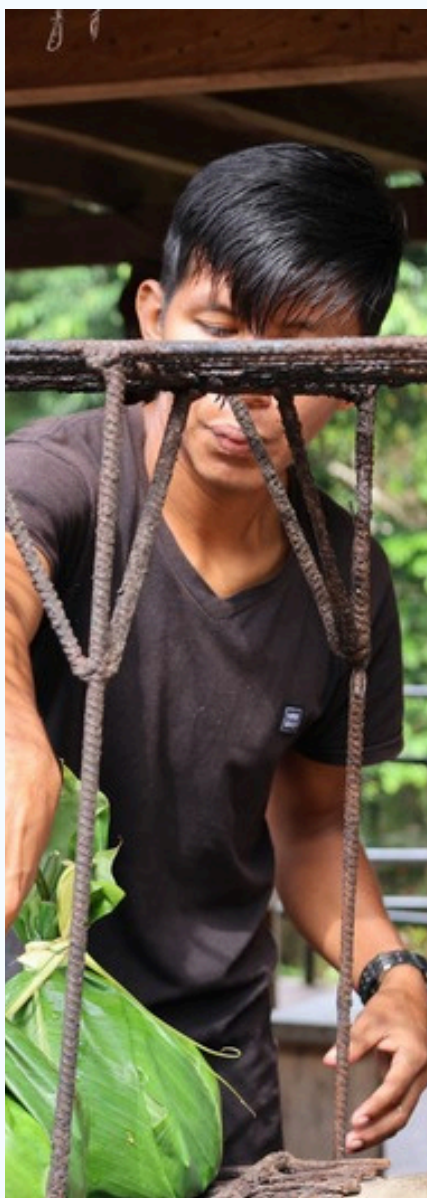
Climate impacts are accelerating across every region, affecting people, economies, infrastructure and ecosystems. As climate risks intensify, adaptation must become a strategic political priority, embedded across public policy and investment rather than treated as a reactive response to disasters.

As Regions4 marks the [10th anniversary of RegionsAdapt](#), COP31 offers an opportunity to build on a decade of regional experience. Ten years ago, only 13 RegionsAdapt member regions had Adaptation Plans or Strategies in place. Today, at least 59 of the initiative's 85+ participating regions have adopted Adaptation Plans or Strategies, collectively covering more than 400 million people. This progress reflects the growing commitment of regional governments to making adaptation a strategic priority.

Regions have shown that effective adaptation depends on long-term planning, multilevel governance, sustained investment and strong partnerships across territories. Adaptation is not only essential for protecting communities, but also for strengthening economic resilience, competitiveness and security.

To strengthen adaptation action and resilience across territories, COP31 should:

- **Elevate adaptation as strategic priority** by integrating resilience across economic, infrastructure, social, land-use and sectoral policies.
- **Accelerate transformational adaptation** by shifting from reactive responses towards preventive, long-term action across entire territories.
- **Recognise and invest in adaptation, and regional adaptation plans**, as essential to competitiveness, economic resilience, security and the protection of people, livelihoods and public services.
- **Advance just resilience** by prioritising the people, communities and livelihoods most exposed to climate impacts, strengthening locally led solutions and ensuring meaningful participation in designing and implementing adaptation responses.



Explore how regions engage and lead in multilevel governance mechanisms:

Pastaza and Zamora Chinchipe (Ecuador): The provinces demonstrate how adaptation can advance **just resilience** by integrating Indigenous leadership, gender equality and inclusive governance into their subnational REDD+ programmes. Their initiatives channel climate finance towards biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and community-led climate action.

Western Cape (South Africa): Through climate risk assessments, adaptation planning and an Implementation Tracking Tool linked to South Africa's national climate information system, the Western Cape integrates climate risks into decision-making, strengthens coordination and ensures territorial priorities inform adaptation strategies.

Scotland (United Kingdom): Through its [Climate Change Adaptation Programme](#), Scotland integrates climate risk assessments into resilience planning and public decision-making. Its evidence-based approach strengthens coordination across sectors and supports long-term adaptation action informed by climate risks and vulnerabilities.

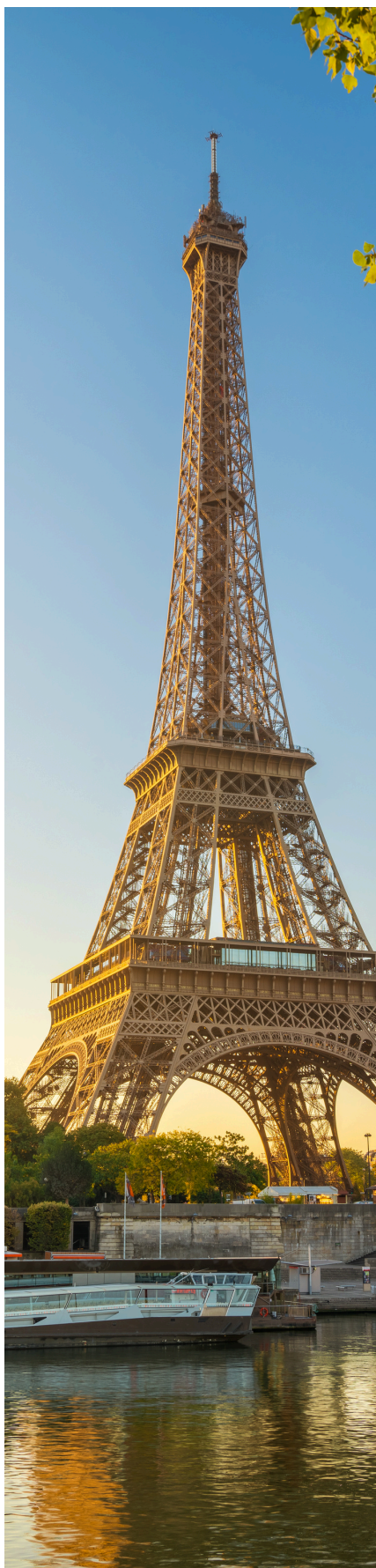
3 Get Finance to Where Climate Action Happens: Pay Now, Save Later

Achieving climate objectives ultimately depends on the availability and accessibility of finance. Subnational governments are key to the climate finance solution, generating their own resources to fund climate action, notably adaptation. As climate risks intensify, finance must increasingly support anticipatory territorial investment in resilience, adaptation and climate-nature solutions, before impacts escalate and to reduce future vulnerability.

While commitments have increased, subnational governments, notably in southern regions, still face significant barriers in accessing the resources needed to deliver climate action at scale. The credibility of commitments such as tripling adaptation finance will depend on their translation into increased and accessible finance for implementation where climate action happens.

To make this a reality, COP31 should:

- **Recognize subnational governments as active players in the climate finance solution.**
- **Ensure that a greater share of climate finance reaches regional and local implementation** through direct, predictable and accessible financing channels, including simplified access to multilateral climate funds, development finance and dedicated subnational financing windows.
- **Embed territorial investment priorities and subnational project pipelines within NDCs, NAPs and national climate investment plans or country platforms.** Invest in project preparation, aggregation and financial structuring so that regional priorities become financeable and investment ready.
- **Strengthen and align the multilevel climate finance architecture** by ensuring that country platforms, adaptation hubs, and similar coordination mechanisms include subnational governments in project identification, investment decisions and implementation tracking, while aligning public, private, climate and biodiversity finance around territorial priorities.



Explore how regions engage and lead in multilevel governance mechanisms:

Québec (Canada): Québec's cap-and-trade system covers 80% of provincial emissions and has generated over CAD 11 billion ring-fenced for climate action. For 2025–2030, CAD 1.34 billion is allocated to adaptation, nearly tripling previous levels, funding a CAD 500 million municipal climate planning initiative, flood resilience, coastal erosion and farm adaptation programmes.

Andalusia (Spain) and Lombardy (Italy): Both regions are advancing climate mainstreaming through EU taxonomy-aligned green budgeting methodologies linking public expenditure to climate objectives. While Andalusia institutionalised annual ex-ante and ex-post climate budgeting through its 2018 climate law, Lombardy's approach, launched in 2024, has mobilised over 230 staff across departments, highlighting the importance of internal capacity building and cross-government coordination for effective climate budget tracking.

Paris Region (France): With a €6 billion budget but limited fiscal autonomy, Paris Region combines public subsidies across 200+ adaptation projects, green bonds now representing over 20% of regional revenues, and European funds, financing 450 climate-resilient schools alongside urban cooling, flood prevention and river restoration.

São Paulo (Brazil): Through its FINACLIMA mechanism launched in 2024, São Paulo is mobilising blended climate finance by combining private capital, environmental compensation obligations and multilateral resources. Focused on ecosystem restoration and adaptation, the mechanism supports projects in the Cantareira water system serving over 20 million people and aims to restore up to 1.5 million hectares by 2050.

Rio de Janeiro (Brazil): The state has created a predictable source of climate finance by earmarking 5% of its oil royalty revenues for the State Fund for Environmental Conservation and Urban Development (FECAM), supporting environmental conservation, climate resilience and sustainable development. The Ecological ICMS further incentivises municipal environmental action.

4 Put Nature at the Heart of Climate Action

Climate change and biodiversity loss are deeply interconnected challenges that require integrated solutions. Subnational governments are increasingly translating climate and biodiversity commitments into practical action across mitigation, adaptation and ecosystem restoration. Building on the outcomes of Biodiversity COP17, integrating climate and biodiversity action across policies, governance and finance is essential to advancing nature-positive action across territories.

To advance this objective, COP31 should:

- **Recognise healthy ecosystems as essential infrastructure for climate action and resilience.** Climate policies, investments and infrastructure decisions should support the protection, restoration and sustainable management of nature as the foundation for mitigation, adaptation and resilient territories.
- **Embed biodiversity and ecosystem protection across climate and territorial planning.** Subnational governments should play a meaningful role in implementing and monitoring national biodiversity strategies and climate commitments through stronger multilevel governance and coordination between climate and biodiversity frameworks.
- **Scale high-integrity nature-based solutions and align finance with integrated action.** Climate and biodiversity finance should support projects that deliver measurable benefits for climate, nature and communities, including through improved subnational access to resources such as the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), stronger safeguards and support for a just transition.
- **Accelerate the transition towards resilient, nature-positive economies.** COP31 should deliver a credible pathway away from fossil fuels and environmentally harmful subsidies, while recognising the role of subnational governments in implementing just transitions, restoring ecosystems and strengthening long-term resilience.



Visit here 

Territorial approaches, such as Regions4's [Just Resilience Action Platform \(JRAP\)](#), demonstrate how integrated solutions can connect climate, biodiversity and development objectives, helping channel investment towards resilient territories and accelerating implementation on the ground.



Explore how regions engage and lead in multilevel governance mechanisms:

Wales (United Kingdom) Circular Economy and Global Partnerships: Wales ranks second globally for municipal recycling at 59%, has banned a wide range of single-use plastics, and through the Wales Africa Programme has planted over 25 million trees in Uganda towards a target of 50 million by 2030, extending nature-positive commitments through international solidarity.

Flanders (Belgium): Flanders's Green-Blue Network weaves green and water corridors through one of Europe's most densely built regions, delivering biodiversity connectivity, urban cooling, flood resilience and carbon sequestration through integrated spatial planning.

Jalisco (Mexico): Through the ORIGEN watershed restoration programme, Jalisco implements large-scale landscape restoration in coastal watersheds, combining ecosystem rehabilitation, agroforestry and biodiversity protection with sustainable land-use practices. It targets 330,000 ha under restoration and 1.4 million ha under improved management.

Western Cameroon: Subnational authorities in western Cameroon's mountain highlands are developing integrated landscape management combining sustainable agriculture, forest conservation and climate adaptation, bridging the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement through community-rooted governance.

Conclusion: From Commitments to Results

The foundations are in place. What is now needed is the political will to turn commitments into concrete, localized results, **delivering for both the climate and the living ecosystems on which all communities depend.**

COP31 must mark the beginning of a new phase focused on **delivery, accountability and impact.** It is essential to demonstrate that international commitments can translate into stronger resilience, healthier ecosystems and tangible improvements in people's daily lives. Making this shift requires fully integrating subnational governments into climate governance and ensuring they have the tools, resources and recognition needed to act effectively, thereby reinforcing trust in multilateral cooperation through visible action across territories.

Regions4 calls for a strengthened multilevel system that connects global commitments with territorial implementation, unlocks finance at scale, and advances integrated climate and biodiversity action.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF REGIONSADAPT

A decade of evidence, leadership and solutions from regions

As COP31 calls for stronger implementation and recognition of territorial action, the RegionsAdapt 10-year journey demonstrates how regional governments are already turning global adaptation goals into practical solutions. Over the past decade, RegionsAdapt has generated evidence, shared experiences and built collective knowledge to support more effective adaptation action. With the support of the Government of Québec, Regions4 has developed three anniversary resources capturing the progress, leadership and lessons of the RegionsAdapt community. Together, these resources highlight three dimensions of regional climate leadership:

Evidence of progress

The *States and Regions Climate Action Summary Report*, developed by Regions4 and CDP, showcases insights from 2025 disclosures and highlights how regions are advancing climate action.

Stories of regional leadership

A Decade of Leadership in Climate Action Campaign celebrates the experiences of regional governments and leaders, highlighting collaboration, innovation and locally driven solutions.

Knowledge for the next decade

The *RegionsAdapt Playbook and Library* brings together lessons, principles and practical resources from ten years of collective learning to support regional adaptation journeys.



Visit here 

Explore the **RegionsAdapt 10-year resources** and discover the evidence and solutions showing how **regions are driving adaptation action worldwide.**