Regions4
Sustainable Development

Outcomes Report

Regions4's Contributions and Outcomes at Biodiversity COP17

Regions Delivering for Biodiversity



We act,
We connect,
We transform.

Regions4's Contributions and Outcomes at Biodiversity COP17

19 to 31 October 2026
Yerevan, Armenia

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1 Biodiversity COP17 Highlights

Regional impact and global visibility

As a coordinator of the Subnational and Local Government Major Group, Regions4 helped bring regional priorities to the forefront of COP17, creating spaces for political dialogue, partnerships and shared action.

- **Co-hosted the 9th Summit for Subnational Governments and Cities,** including a closed-door dialogue for governors and mayors, bringing regional and local priorities into COP17 discussions.
- **Convened "From Vision to Impact" with the Government of Québec,** a high-level event in the COP17 auditorium showcasing how whole-of-society partnerships translate commitments into action.
- **Hosted Regions4 Day at the Subnational Governments Hub,** connecting members and partners to share regional initiatives and advance biodiversity implementation.
- **Amplified regional solutions for nature through #RegionsVoice,** a social media campaign showcasing subnational leadership and action.
- Following COP17, **Regions4 shared a joint statement from its members who attended the conference and members of the High Ambition Coalition's Subnational Government Task Force.** The statement set out shared priorities for turning the COP outcomes into action: stronger coordination across levels of government, recognition of regional contributions in national reporting, and better access to finance and technical support.
- **Featured Arboris at the CBD's CHM Knowledge Fair,** showcasing how regions share practical solutions for implementing the KMGBF.

Regions4 Members' Key Announcements

COP17 marked the launch of **COOP4Trees, an Île-de-France Region initiative supported by Regions4 to help the City of Yerevan** expand urban green spaces and strengthen ecological corridors. Île-de-France launched the project at the "Partnerships for Implementation" networking reception, which it hosted with Québec and Regions4.

ABEMA leaders, represented by Rio de Janeiro State Secretary Rodrigo Mascarenhas, **presented the ABEMA Letter to the CBD Secretariat,** sharing 25 collective commitments from Brazil's state environmental authorities to advance implementation of the KMGBF.

Québec and Berlin State announced financial contributions to the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), demonstrating how subnational governments can help mobilise resources for global biodiversity goals.

Regions4's Engagement

+37
delegates on site
from Catalonia, CONGOPE, CREAF, Île-de-France, Lombardy, Paraná, Québec, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Scotland and Wales.

15
accreditations
facilitated by Regions4 for its members.

10
official side events
convened and co-led by Regions4.

30
speaking opportunities
for members.

+23
strategic meetings
with members, partners and potential donors, including the World Bank, UNEP and IUCN, to mobilise support for regional biodiversity action.



2 Regions4 at Biodiversity COP17: Regions Delivering for Biodiversity

Regions4's Perspective on COP17 Negotiations

Biodiversity COP17 delivered a clear message: the world is off track to meet the 2030 biodiversity targets, and implementation must accelerate. For Regions4, this reinforces the need to support subnational governments already turning global commitments into action.

The negotiations reaffirmed Regions4's long-standing priorities:

- **Stronger regional involvement in national biodiversity planning and reporting**
- **Better multilevel coordination**
- **Improved access to finance.**

The outcomes of this COP, gives regional leaders a stronger basis to seek the partnerships and resources they need.

The task now is to put these outcomes into practice within each country. Through the AC SNG and collaboration with partners and reporting platforms, Regions4 will help members share approaches, document progress and contribute to national processes, so that regional achievements are better reflected in the next reporting cycle.

Connecting biodiversity, climate and land action

The negotiations on the alignment on the Rio Conventions strengthened political support for connecting biodiversity, climate and land action. Regional governments can bring these agendas together through territorial planning, investment and partnerships with communities, delivering benefits for nature and climate resilience.

The biodiversity and climate decision and the Joint Declaration on Rio Convention synergies support this integrated approach. However, the proposed Multilevel Roadmap was deferred to Biodiversity COP18 in 2028, leaving the pathway for implementation still to be developed and agreed.

For Regions4, the priority is to turn this momentum into practical cooperation: helping members connect these agendas in their territories, strengthen coordination with national governments and secure the support needed to advance the 2030 goals.

Making finance accessible to regional delivery

The decision on subnational government engagement (CBD/COP/17/L.7) asks the CBD Secretariat to examine **how much biodiversity finance reaches subnational governments, the barriers they face and opportunities to improve direct and equitable access**. It recognises that effective implementation depends on resources reaching the governments responsible for delivery.

The AC SNG will prioritise follow-up on this mandate, bringing members' experiences into the Secretariat's analysis, from the requirements, delays and costs of accessing finance to practical examples of financing approaches that have worked at the regional level.





2.1 9th Summit for Subnational Governments and Cities

Mayors and regional leaders took centre stage at COP17 in Yerevan. **The 9th Summit for Subnational Governments and Cities brought together more than 500 delegates from 50 countries,** including senior UN officials, leading biodiversity experts and representatives from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

Cities and regions shared what they are already doing to restore nature and discussed how to build on that work to meet the 2030 global biodiversity targets. Two priorities ran through the day: **giving local and regional governments a stronger role in national biodiversity plans and making it easier for them to access finance.**

The CBD Executive Secretary joined the opening of the Summit, an official COP17 parallel event co-convened by Regions4, ICLEI, the CBD Secretariat, the Government of Armenia and the City of Yerevan.

Key announcements

The Summit showcased how cities and regions are putting biodiversity commitments into practice.

Yerevan shared its community stewardship plan for the Hrazdan Gorge - a natural canyon located in the heart of the city - and **New York City presented its first Urban Forest Master Plan**.

On biodiversity finance, the **Global Environment Facility (GEF) reported more than US$500 million** in additional pledges to the GEF and the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF).

Québec renewed its pledge to the GBFF, while **Berlin became the first city-state to pledge to the fund, committing €50,000.** The two governments are now both members of the GEF's Advisory Group of Non-Sovereign Participants.



Regions4's Participation at the 9th Summit:

Scotland | Gillian Martin, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Rural Affairs, set the scene for the afternoon panel on accelerating implementation on the ground. She also delivered closing remarks on behalf of Scotland as Regions4 President.

Île-de-France | Yann Wehrling, Vice-President for Ecological Transition, Climate, Energy and Biodiversity, delivered opening remarks in his capacity as Regions4 Vice-President for Europe.

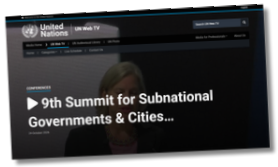
Catalonia | Jordi Sargatal, Secretary for Ecological Transition, took part in the afternoon panel moderated by California's Wade Crowfoot. The discussion included how Catalonia measures and reports progress across its biodiversity, climate and land policies.

Regions4 | Secretary General, Natalia Uribe, co-chaired the closing segment and launched Arboris.

Check our resources

Revisit the Summit and hear how cities and regions are putting global biodiversity commitments into practice, with insights from academics, finance experts, development banks and key allies.

Watch the recording



Across our discussions, one message has come through clearly, achieving the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework will depend on sustained leadership, collaboration and delivery at every level of government. Regions, states, provinces and cities are where ambition becomes action. We are restoring ecosystems, supporting nature-positive economies, engaging local communities and delivering tangible outcomes for people and nature.

Gillian Martin
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Rural Affairs of the Scottish Government



For 20 years, Regions4 has carried the regional perspective into international biodiversity processes, notably through the Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and Biodiversity, co-coordinated with our friends from Québec. (...) I see cooperation between territories as both a responsibility and an opportunity: to share experiences, build partnerships, and scale up solutions that have already proven themselves, like Île-de-France's efforts to protect and conserve 30% of its land.

Yann Wehrling
Vice-President for Ecological Transition, Climate, Energy and Biodiversity of Île-de-France Region





2.2 Overview: Regions4 Co-led Events During COP17

Regions4 convened and co-led 10 side events within the official Biodiversity COP17 venue, creating 30 speaking opportunities for our members.

Subnational and Local Government Day

Held on 22 October in the official venue's auditorium, Subnational and Local Government Day was a full-day celebration of local and regional leadership, with an agenda curated by ICLEI and Regions4, the two coordinators of the Major Group.

- *"From Vision to Impact: Delivering Biodiversity Results through Subnational Leadership and Whole-of-Society Partnerships"*, convened by Québec and Regions4 with the participation of Île-de-France, California, Rio de Janeiro State, Catalonia and Paraná, as well as the GEF, representative from Innu First Nation, among other key stakeholders.
- *"Mediterranean Climate Alliance: Regions that share a climate, a report and an agenda on biodiversity"*, hosted by CREAF, Catalonia and California, the event launched a joint study on climate impact in both regions.
- *Documentary Screening and Discussion: "We Are the St. Lawrence River"*, hosted by Québec.

Regions4 Day at the Subnational Hub

On 23 October, Regions4 Day at the Subnational Governments Hub was dedicated exclusively to Regions4 members. Through a series of side events, members shared what's working in their territories, discussed common challenges and explored with partners how collaboration and finance can help them build on their progress.

Paraná	*From Vision to Impact: Delivering Biodiversity Results through Subnational Leadership and Whole-of-Society Partnerships*
Catalonia	*Regions that share a climate, a report and an agenda on biodiversity*
Lombardy	*From Risk Management to Collective Action: Multifunctional Interventions for Water and Biodiversity Nexus in Watersheds. Territorial perspectives from Italy, the UK, and France*

Regions4 Networking Reception

One of the highlights of our time in Armenia was the Partnering for Implementation networking reception, co-hosted by Regions4, Île-de-France and Québec on 25 October.

The evening brought together 150 guests to celebrate regional biodiversity action and connect political leaders, finance institutions and implementation partners around what it takes to deliver. Île-de-France and Regions4 launched COOP4Trees – Nature-Positive Yerevan, while Québec renewed its pledge to the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF).



AC SNG Executive Meeting

On 25 October, the Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments (AC SNG) met in person in Yerevan and welcomed Île-de-France as a new member.

Representatives from Aichi, California, Catalonia, Île-de-France, Paraná, Québec, Scotland and Wales joined CREAF, the European Committee of the Regions and the Regions4 Secretariat for a lively exchange on the COP17 negotiations and priorities between COPs.

These included sharing practical examples of biodiversity action and linking the biodiversity and climate agendas.

Other key side-events

The selection below highlights events we co-organised or supported, from biodiversity reporting to the role of regional governments in responding to biodiversity emergencies.

- 21 October · The ABEMA Letter for Biodiversity and Progress towards the KMGBF. Hosted by ABEMA.
- 22 October · Making Subnational Biodiversity Action Count: Metrics, Evidence and a Two-Year Pathway to the 2029 National Reports. Co-organised by Regions4, IUCN and ICLEI with subnational leaders from California, Catalonia and Québec.
- 26 October · The NBSAP Accelerator Partnership: Innovative Pathways to Deliver the KMGBF.
- 26 October · Subnational Governments and Civil Society organisations Living in Peace with Nature: A Global Pathway to Prosperity.
- 27 October · Subnational Governments and the Fight against Biodiversity Emergencies. Hosted by ABEMA.







> *In Montreal [at COP15], we were discussing the vision about implementing the global framework, and then at COP16 we started talking about implementation. But [COP17] is really the COP to showcase progress, and it's happening in subnational and local governments. Despite the difficulties Parties are facing in the negotiations, subnational leaders bring a positive message and good examples of concrete progress.*
>
> Jacob Martin-Malus,
> Assistant Deputy Minister,
> Government of Québec

> *Every stakeholder, (...) has a role to play in creating a healthy planet. This is the signal that subnational and local donors are giving, and I think that when we go back to plenary sessions we have to demonstrate that the multilateral buy-in to curating a healthy planet is alive and well, in large thanks to these two donors [Québec and the city-state of Berlin].*
>
> Claude Gascon,
> Director of Strategy and Operations,
> GEF









2.3 Strategic Meetings

EU Regions4 Members Working Lunch

On 25 October, Regions4 convened an informal working lunch with its European members attending the COP, hosted by Île-de-France Region in its capacity as Regions4's European Vice-President. Building on the launch of COOP4Trees, an Île-de-France initiative supported by Regions4, the meeting explored how the project's work with the City of Yerevan on urban greening and ecological corridors could open up practical cooperation among European regions.

The exchange showed where members' expertise could help address shared challenges, from designing green infrastructure that strengthens biodiversity to choosing tree species and managing soils for a changing climate. Catalonia and its research partner CREAF expressed interest in hosting learning labs and technical exchanges, while members identified the regional implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Law as another area for peer learning.

By bringing members together around a live project, Regions4 helped identify where cooperation could start and what members could contribute. The discussion pointed to using Regions4's existing platforms to match implementation needs with regional expertise, involve European members who were unable to attend COP17, and explore joint funding for technical visits and learning exchanges.

2.4 Media Outcomes

#RegionsVoice at Biodiversity COP17

Explore the regional stories we shared at COP17 in our webpage as well as in our LinkedIn page.

COP17 Joint Statement

Read the joint statement on behalf of Regions4 and High Ambition Coalition Subnational Government Task Force members attending Biodiversity COP17.

Photo and Video Gallery

- Visit our Flickr album.
- Watch again the 9th Summit for Subnational Governments and Cities (24 October).



2.5 Key Launch: Arboris, Regions4 Ecosystem of Solutions

Officially launched during the 9th Summit for Subnational Government and Cities, at COP17, Arboris is Regions4's, Arboris is Regions4's ecosystem for regional solutions on climate, biodiversity and sustainable development: bringing together knowledge, peer learning and capacity building to help regions identify what already works, learn from that experience and adapt it to their own regional conditions.

Arboris **matches a successful solution with a region facing a similar challenge**, then aims to close the loop with financing and implementation support

Arboris

1. Identify
2. Document
3. Connect
4. Learn
5. Adapt and Implement

- 45,000+ downloads
- 30+ case studies published
- Available in English, Spanish and French
- Cases from regions across Latin America, Europe, North America and Asia

What do we need from Regions4 members?

Arboris is designed to be a collective learning ecosystem, and its success depends on the knowledge and priorities of Regions4 members. We would therefore ask you to help us in two ways:

1 Share initiatives from your territory that integrate biodiversity, climate and the SDGs and have the potential to be genuine game-changers.

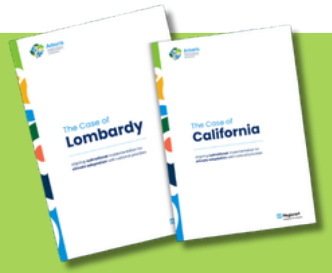
2 Identify priority themes or challenges you would like to learn about from another region. This will help us develop the matchmaking process and connect regions facing similar challenges with relevant experiences.

Your input will help us build both sides of the exchange: regions with solutions to share, and regions looking for inspiration that can be adapted to their own context.

Explore the first two case studies in the new Arboris format

From mobilsing private sector finance in Lombardy to a participatory 30x30 strategy in California

regions4.org/arboris



From a case study, to a peer exchange, to stronger regional capacities, to a funded project on the ground. That's the journey we want to offer regions.

Our ambition is to multiply the impact of solutions that already work, accelerating progress towards our global biodiversity and climate goals.

Natalia Uribe,
Secretary General, Regions4

3 COP17 Negotiations, Decisions and Outcomes

Biodiversity COP17 adopted around 50 decisions against the backdrop of the first global review of progress towards the KMGBF. The Yerevan Pathway called for faster implementation, action on harmful subsidies, greater support for developing countries and closer alignment of budgets with biodiversity objectives.

For subnational governments, the most relevant outcomes concerned participation in national implementation and reporting, access to biodiversity finance, and cooperation across the biodiversity and climate agendas.

Decision	What it means for regions	What Regions4 will do
L.7: Subnational and local government engagement	Encourages National Governments to *consider including* their subnational governments in future planning and reporting, and *requests* that the CBD Secretariat provides a progress report and gathers information on biodiversity finance at these levels of government, by the SBI meeting to be held before COP18.	The Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments (AC SNG) will compile information on funding access, barriers and opportunities to strengthen direct and equitable financing for subnational governments. It will also help gather input for the 2028 progress report in support of RegionsWithNature.
L.15: Global Review	Confirms the world is off track to meet the targets set in the KMGBF and invites Parties to integrate commitments and actions from subnational leaders in their NBSAPs, and strengthen the whole-of-government approach to implementation.	Regions4 will help its members and those of the AC SNG engage more closely with their CBD National Focal Points to help integrate their commitments and actions into NBSAPs, and ultimately, the next global review of collective progress.
Joint Declaration on Rio Convention synergies	Issued by the presidencies of the three Rio Conventions, the declaration recognises subnational governments as contributors across biodiversity, climate and land. Countries failed to reach agreement on synergies, but the declarations signals political support for closer cooperation.	Regions4 will help its members connect the biodiversity, climate and land agendas in their territories. Integrated action across these three agendas will remain a thematic priority for the Regions4 Biodiversity Learning Platform.



4 Conclusions and Next Steps: Regional Leadership on the Road to COP18

COP17 confirmed that global action is falling short of the pace and scale needed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. Closing the implementation gap means building on work already underway in regions.

Several COP17 Decisions called for subnational priorities and contributions to be better reflected, giving Parties a clear opportunity to act in their next planning and reporting cycle.

When cities and regions help shape national plans, they can show what they are already delivering, where they could go further and what technical and financial support they need. COP17 also asked the CBD Secretariat to examine how much biodiversity finance reaches subnational governments, what barriers they face and how access could be made more direct and equitable.

Reforming incentives harmful to biodiversity

The COP17 presidency made advancing Target 18 a priority. All 23 targets of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework work together, but overall progress depends in part on two financial shifts: mobilising more resources for biodiversity under Target 19 and reforming incentives that drive its loss under Target 18.

Progress on Target 18 could make or break efforts to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

As the UN Secretary-General put it, "for every dollar invested in protecting nature, $30 are spent destroying it." That imbalance shows why closing the finance gap also requires changing how existing resources are spent. The question for all levels of government is which incentives are working against biodiversity goals and how they can be reformed.

From Armenia to Ecuador COP18: opportunities for regional action

For Regions4, one of the most strategic outcomes was the opportunity to follow up with development banks and other finance partners on what keeps regional projects from securing funding. The launches of Arboris and COOP4Trees also gave our members practical ways to carry the work forward, through technical exchange among regions and cooperation across levels of government.

In working meetings, Regions4 members identified opportunities to collaborate and agreed on areas for follow-up. By documenting results and lessons between now and COP18, members can bring evidence of what is working, show where support could help them go further and share approaches that other regions can adapt.

Regions4 priorities for the next two years:

- **Strengthen the role of regions in national biodiversity planning.** Build on work already underway with partnering organisations and regional leaders to help more regions shape national biodiversity priorities and plans; and importantly, support implementation of regional action.
- **Make regional progress count.** Build on existing work on biodiversity metrics and use RegionsWithNature to document results. Support the development of the next subnational progress report, due before COP18.
- **Improve access to biodiversity finance**. Use the AC SNG platform to explore and document what helps regions access funding and where barriers remain, including identifying where regional governments can help reform harmful incentives.
- **Bring practical examples of climate-nature action to COP18.** Gather regional examples of how land-use planning, restoration and climate adaptation can advance biodiversity, climate and land goals together. Draw on that experience to show what cooperation across the Rio Conventions looks like in practice.



Contributions

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Regions4
Sustainable Development

About Regions4

Regions4 is a global network of subnational governments driving action in climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable development. It was born in 2002 to represent states, regions and provinces at UN negotiations, European Union initiatives and global discussions on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development. Today, Regions4 brings together 59 members across 25 countries, collectively representing 171 subnational governments reaching over 430 million people.

For more visit: www.regions4.org

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