

RegionsAdapt Brief Report 2020

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Regional governments
leading climate adaptation action
for a resilient future

 **Regions4**
Sustainable Development



FOREWORD



“The experiences and progress of these leading regions show that the recovery from the pandemic must prioritise adaptation actions that can create transformative change and contribute to the wellbeing of communities and territories worldwide.”

Iñaki Susaeta
Secretary General, Regions4

2020 has marked an unprecedented crisis that has impacted all our lives. One that has been particularly challenging for regional governments across the world who have been at the forefront of the response to the pandemic. This crisis has also exposed the urgency to tackle what remains one of the greatest challenges of our time, the climate emergency, and the need to act differently, more boldly and ambitiously to build a more resilient, greener, sustainable, and healthy future.

This year marks the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement, a global commitment that continues to be more relevant than ever, with the urgency to raise the ambition to deliver on the agreed goals. In 2020 we also celebrate the 5th anniversary of the RegionsAdapt initiative, created in 2015 to reinforce the key role of regional governments to accelerate climate action and build climate-resilient territories.

During these five years, RegionsAdapt has promoted vertical and horizontal cooperation, knowledge exchange and multi-level governance for the effective implementation of adaptation strategies. In collaboration with both national and local governments, regional governments have contributed to implementing up to 90% of climate adaptation actions, in sectors such as energy, transport, land use, housing, disaster management, as well as water and natural resources management.

I would like to congratulate the 28 regional governments who, despite facing uncertain times, continue to take ambitious action on climate adaptation. Proof of this is that almost 70% of reporting regions this year have already adopted an adaptation plan and 89% are collaborating with their national counterparts in the development of climate-related goals and strategies.

The experiences and progress of these leading regions show that the recovery from the pandemic must prioritise adaptation actions that can create transformative change and contribute to the wellbeing of communities and territories worldwide.

I invite all regional governments to join us and the RegionsAdapt initiative in 2021 to raise climate ambition and action on the way to COP26 and beyond. Only working together we will win the global race for resilience.

FOREWORD



“One year ahead of COP26, regions and all other levels of government must prepare to further accelerate their climate ambition and action. The example set by these 28 regional governments is one for all other regions to aspire to as we move forward.”

Kyra Appleby

Global Director, Cities, States and Regions at CDP

2020 has been a challenging year, with governments diverting resources to save lives, protect health services, and bolster economies as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Meanwhile, the urgent need to tackle the ongoing climate crisis has not gone away and it was critical this year that momentum was sustained.

Despite the upheaval caused by Covid-19, 28 RegionsAdapt members, spanning 15 countries disclosed information through CDP's platform about their most pressing climate risks and the actions they are taking to address them. Representing a combined population of 233 million, these governments continue to work to keep citizens safe in the face of worsening climate impacts.

Based on the most recent science, we must halve global emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050 if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change such as amplification of heat waves, floods, droughts and coastal inundation – we know what is at stake. But there is reason to be optimistic - findings from this report show that these 28 regional governments are taking these threats seriously and working to build resilience against them. More than three quarters (79%) of disclosing regions have either completed a climate change or vulnerability assessment (54%) or have one in development (25%) to determine how they are or will be affected by climate change.

This kind of action takes us closer to building a safe, secure world for citizens now and in the future, but much more is needed. To successfully adapt and protect their populations all regional governments must identify and manage the most severe risks from climate change, conduct clear vulnerability assessments and develop adaptation plans based on their own environmental data and climate science.

In a year when Covid-19 has brought the whole world to a standstill, it is encouraging that these 28 regional governments have not slowed down their efforts to build resilience against the threat of climate change. All of them, from Prince Edward Island in Canada to Sud-Comoé, Ivory Coast should be congratulated for their unwavering commitment to tackling the climate crisis.

As 2020 draws to a close, we mark the fifth anniversary of both RegionsAdapt and the signing of The Paris Agreement – the latter an event that was to catalyze global climate action. One year ahead of COP26, regions and all other levels of government must prepare to further accelerate their climate ambition and action. The example set by these 28 regional governments is one for all other regions to aspire to as we move forward.



REGIONSADAPT

5 YEARS CATALYZING CLIMATE ADAPTATION

A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF OVER 70 REGIONS, DELIVERING AND REPORTING AMBITIOUS ADAPTATION ACTIONS EVERY YEAR, WORKING COLLECTIVELY TO ACHIEVE THE GLOBAL CLIMATE GOALS

The RegionsAdapt initiative was launched in 2015 alongside COP 21 in Paris by 27 regional governments who decided to take forward global action on climate adaptation by bridging the gap between the global goals, decisions at the national level and on-the-ground implementation. By fulfilling this gap, RegionsAdapt became the first global initiative to inspire and support state, regional and provincial governments to take concrete action, collaborate, and report on climate change adaptation.

Five years on, RegionsAdapt brings together over 70 regional governments worldwide representing more than 270 million inhabitants. Since its launch, RegionsAdapt has promoted cooperation between regions, organising knowledge exchange and learning opportunities, capacity building and implementation of joint projects. More importantly, the initiative has fostered the development of adaptation plans and strategies with up to 70% of reporting regions in 2020 having an adaptation plan in place. As a result, nearly 300 adaptation actions have been reported through the CDP States and Regions Platform annual disclosure, with numbers increasing by the year.

Furthermore, throughout these five years, RegionsAdapt has worked hard to help raise the visibility and engagement of regional governments in the international stage by actively participating and contributing to the UNFCCC processes, such as the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, the Talanoa Dialogues, and the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties. Taking into account the lessons learned on the ground by our members, RegionsAdapt has provided thoughtful recommendations on innovative solutions for adaptation policy designing and fostered a much-needed multi-level governance approach to climate adaptation.

The current climate and biodiversity emergencies, as well as the global crisis that has followed the COVID-19 pandemic, call for unprecedented action and leadership to achieve a green and just recovery for resilient and sustainable territories. This decade will be decisive for climate change adaptation and RegionsAdapt will continue to work with members and partners to enhance global commitment, share innovative actions on the ground and build a larger constituency of pioneer regions leading the global race for resilience on the road to COP26 and beyond.

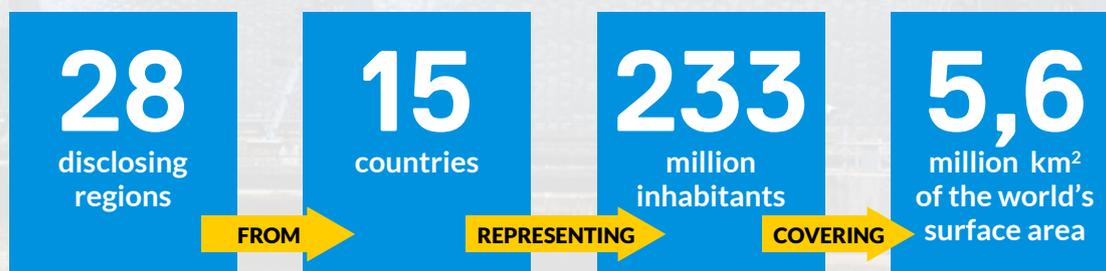
INTRODUCING THE BRIEF REPORT 2020

RegionsAdapt is an initiative made by and for regional governments, open to all regions interested in catalyzing their climate adaptation actions. By joining the RegionsAdapt initiative, signatory regions commit to adopting a strategic approach to adaptation, take concrete actions and report on their progress on an annual basis through the CDP States and Regions platform.

To give visibility to the progress made at territorial level, each year Regions4 compiles and publishes a summary¹ of the data to inform and showcase regions' ambitious actions to adapt to climate change.

The annual disclosure process gives RegionsAdapt members a comprehensive view on the risks they face from climate change, helps measure their progress and supports peer-to-peer learning on their adaptation actions with the aim that these can be used and replicated in other territories. Likewise, annual disclosure strengthens transparency and accountability, enabling RegionsAdapt to assess the evolution of the global progress in adaptation and feed the information to the UNFCCC bodies and processes in contribution to the achievement of the global climate goals.

In 2020 RegionsAdapt members have continued to showcase great leadership and ambition to accelerate climate action.



¹ Access the previous RegionsAdapt reports: <https://www.regions4.org/publications>

DISCLOSING REGIONS

AUSTRALIA

Australian Capital Territory
South Australia

BRAZIL

Caerá
Minas Gerais
Paraná
Rio de Janeiro State
Rio Grande do Sul
Sao Paulo State
Tocantins

BURKINA FASO

Centre Nord

CANADA

Alberta
British Columbia
Prince Edward Island
Quebec

ECUADOR

Pastaza
Santa Elena

FRANCE

La Réunion

ITALY

Lombardy

IVORY COAST

Sud-Comoé

MEXICO

Jalisco

NIGERIA

Cross River State

SENEGAL

Saint Louis

SOUTH AFRICA

KwaZulu-Natal

SPAIN

Basque Country
Catalonia

UK

Scotland
Wales

USA

California

KEY FINDINGS

79%

risk vulnerability assessment developed / in progress

185

climate change impacts

89%

regions report socio-economic impacts

68%

regions have an adaptation plan in place

232

adaptation actions

100%

multi-level governance approach

REGIONS FACING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Today, many parts of the world have declared a climate emergency, with regional governments at the frontline of the response. Data shows that all reporting regions are currently facing significant physical risks due to the impacts of climate change within their territories, recognising the pressing need to take more ambitious adaptation action.

In this context, **more than two-thirds (79%) of the reporting regional governments, have undertaken or are in progress of developing a climate change risk or vulnerability assessment**, to determine the actual impacts in their territories, identify their needs and tailor their adaptation strategies and actions accordingly.

RISK OR VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

FROM 28 REGIONS



21%
intending to undertake in the next 2 years



25%
in progress



54%
undertaken

The experience of

CENTRE NORD Burkina Faso

Working to adopt a climate adaptation strategy, Centre Nord has undergone a participatory assessment of vulnerabilities and capacities with grassroots communities. To adapt to frequent droughts, adapted seeds and subsidized equipment are distributed among vulnerable communities each year. Adaptation technologies such as supplementary watering through water banquets in fields are also promoted. By fostering the diversification of its production systems and the sustainable use of its natural resources, the region seeks to empower citizens and institutions, while increasing its overall capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change².

² To know more about Centre Nord's experience: <https://www.regions4.org/actions/building-resilience-in-centre-nord/>



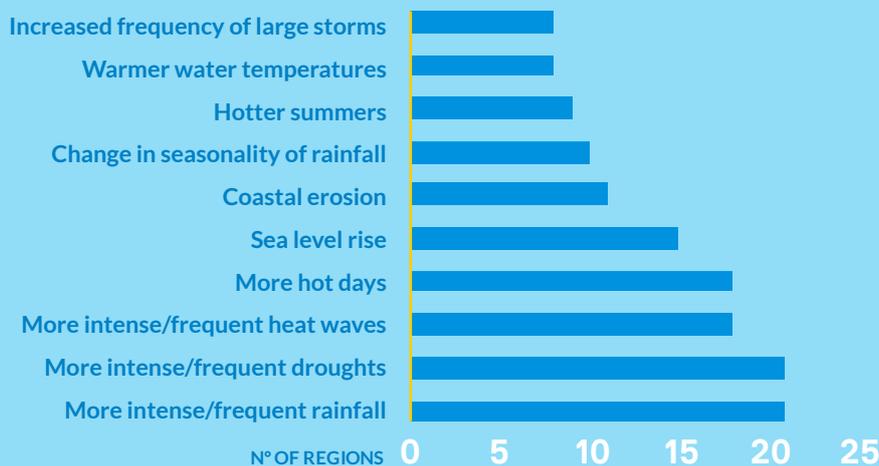
The 28 reporting regions that confirmed to be experiencing significant physical risks **reported over 180 climate change impacts**. Following last year's results, the main concerns for the disclosing governments in 2020 are more intense and/or frequent rainfall or droughts (75% each), followed by more intense and/or frequent heat waves, as well as more hot days (each 64%). Sea level rise was reported by 53% of the regions as a climate change impact that they face or will face in the future, while coastal erosion also posing a significant risk to the disclosing regions, with 39% reporting such risk. Besides, change in seasonality of rainfall, increased frequency of large storms and warmer water temperature are among those risks most reported in 2020.

The experience of

CATALONIA Spain

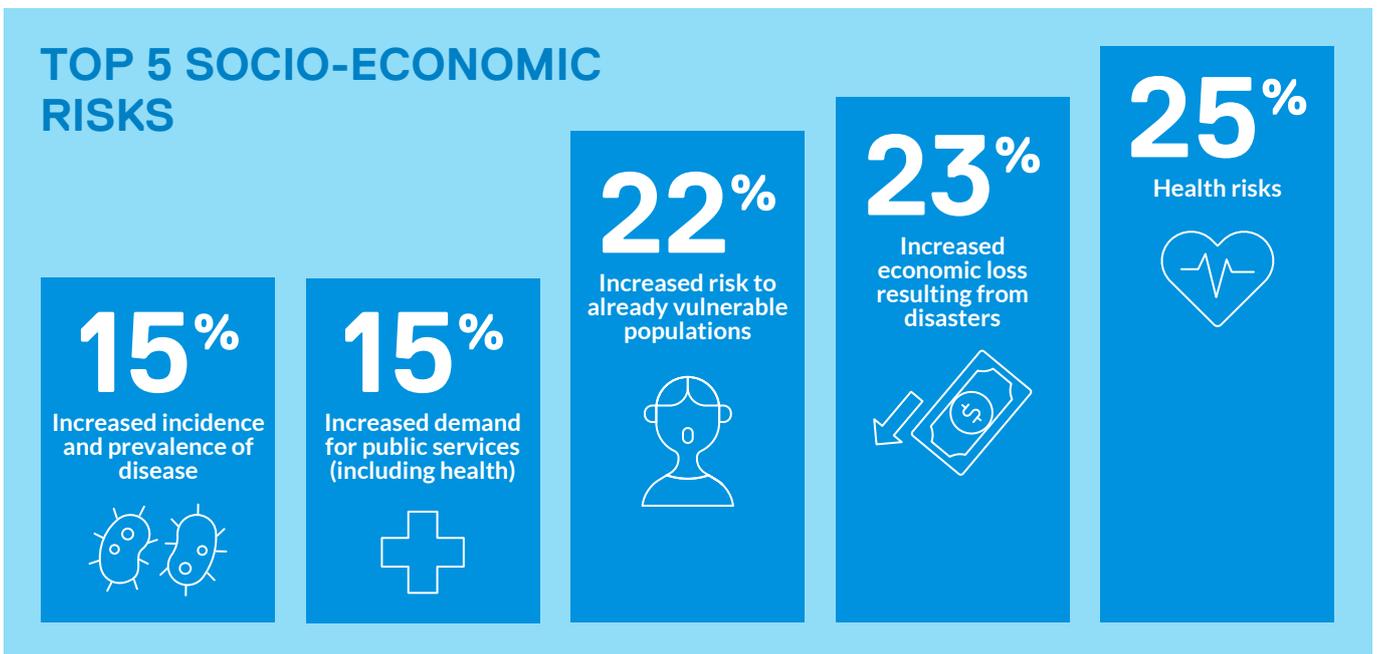
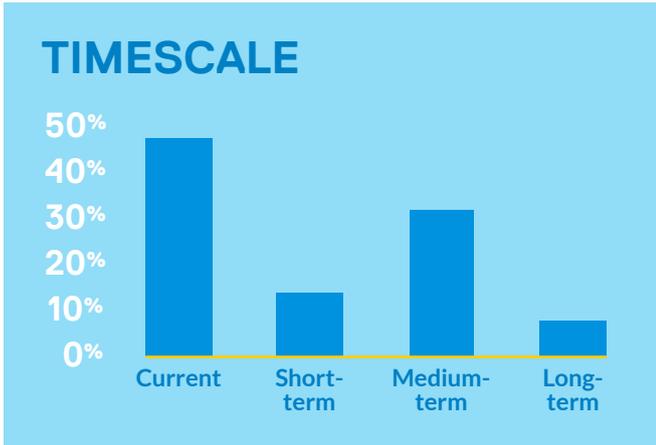
During 2019, the Catalan Water Agency revised and updated the flooding risks maps, as well as the zoning of the Catalan River Basin District. This update has integrated climate change projections that feed into the Flood Risk Management Plan of the Catalan River Basin District (PMH), an instrument that defines the set of measures in order to reasonably reduce the expected damage through measures of a structural or risk management nature³.

10 MOST REPORTED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



Climate change impacts are assessed according to their level of risk and their anticipated timescale. The level of risk is described by estimating the potential impact from the anticipated effect of climate change, along with the likelihood of that effect occurring. **Most reported risks are considered as either serious (51%) or extremely serious (22%), with 47% of regions reporting they are currently experiencing these impacts and 31% will experience them in the medium-term.** This shows, as in previous assessments, that there is a pressing need to implement short-term adaptation actions in the context of long-term planning to reduce the overall vulnerability of our societies and territories.

³To know more about Catalonia's experience: <http://aca.gencat.cat/ca/plans-i-programes/gestio-del-risc-dinundacions>



Social and economic activities are the main drivers of increasing global temperatures and the acceleration of climate change. In turn, climate change can have serious consequences on the socio-economic development of our territories as it not only causes physical risks to humans and nature but also poses significant socio-economic risks such as threats to livelihoods, health and infrastructure.

89% of disclosing regions reported to be facing socio-economic impacts because of climate change. Health risks, increased economic loss resulting from disasters, and increased risk to already vulnerable populations, followed by increased demand for public services (including health), and increased incidence and prevalence of disease are among the most reported socio-economic risks.

The experience of

BASQUE COUNTRY

Spain

The region recently launched the pioneer large-scale integrated Life Project, Urban Klima 2050, which includes the delivery of 40 specific adaptation actions and pilot projects in three specific areas: coast, river basins and urban/suburban areas, impacting over 2 million people. The project will also support the finalization of the current Basque Climate Action Plan and promote the integration of the KLIMA 2050 Strategy in territorial and sectorial planning⁴.

⁴ To know more about the Basque Government experience: <https://urbanklima2050.eu/en/>

ADAPTATION IN ACTION

The impacts of climate change are already affecting millions of people worldwide, especially the most vulnerable populations. In response to this situation and following their commitment to the Paris Agreement and RegionsAdapt, regional governments continue to pave the way through adaptation policies and plans that boost resilience and reduces overall vulnerability to climate change from an early stage.

From the 28 regions that reported in 2020, **68% have already adopted an adaptation plan and 21% are in progress of developing one**. Consequently, 27 regions reported to be taking concrete actions in adaptation to protect their regions and populations from climate change impacts.

ADAPTATION PLAN

FROM 28 REGIONS



11%
yet to be
developed



21%
in progress



68%
in place

The experience of

SCOTLAND UK

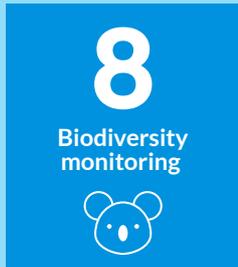
The second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme takes an outcomes-based approach derived from the UN Sustainable Development goals. Its cross-cutting approach promotes co-benefits and integrating adaptation into wider Scottish Government policy development and service delivery. Inclusive and resilient communities, climate justice, a sustainable and flexible economy, a natural environment for everyone to enjoy and protect, as well as coastal and marine health are at the core of the Scottish Adaptation Programme⁵.

⁵ To know more about Scotland's experience:

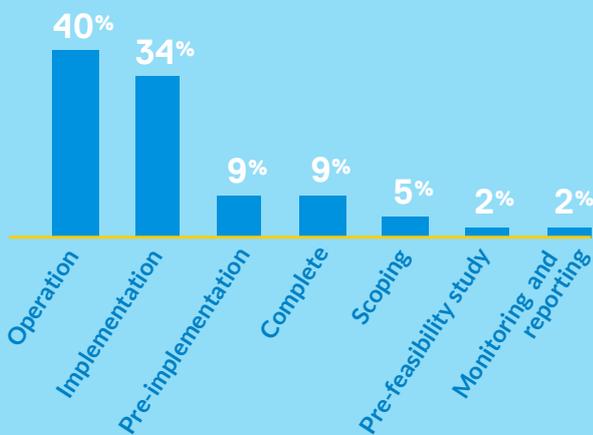
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/climate-ready-scotland-second-scottish-climate-change-adaptation-programme-2019-2024/>

TOP 5 MOST REPORTED ADAPTATION ACTIONS

NUMBER OF REGIONS PER ACTION



STATUS OF ADAPTATION ACTION



In total, 232 adaptation actions have been reported, an increase of 63% in relation to 2019.

It is worth highlighting that 40% of the reported actions are in the status of operation, while 34% are already under implementation.

A high number of the reported actions are addressed at incorporating climate change into long-term planning, fostering community engagement and education, as well as monitoring biodiversity. Regarding the addressed priority areas, forestry, protected areas, biodiversity, resilience, and disaster risk reduction are among the most reported.



The experience of

QUEBEC Canada

Its current Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2013-2020) has delivered specific actions to ensure the well-being of the population and communities, the continuity of economic services, the safety and durability of buildings and infrastructures, as well as the maintenance of ecological services. Their new 2030 Plan for a Green Economy lays the groundwork to achieve a resilient economy and society through net-zero emissions, prevention to future climate risks and land use planning⁶.

PRIORITY AREAS ADDRESSED

NUMBER OF REGIONS PER AREA

15

Forestry, protected areas and biodiversity



14

Resilience and disaster risk reduction



14

water resources and management



13

agriculture and zootechnics



12

infrastructure and territorial planning



10

economic impacts



10

social impacts



⁶ To know more about Quebec's experience: http://www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca/changements/plan_action/strategie-adaptation2013-2020-en.pdf and <https://www.quebec.ca/en/government/policies-orientations/plan-green-economy/>



FOSTERING MULTI-LEVEL ADAPTATION GOVERNANCE

The Paris Agreement not only underlines the key necessity to mainstream adaptation but also acknowledges the importance of involving all levels of government, as well as other non-State actors for its implementation. Furthermore, the IPCC 1.5 Special Report, recognised that effectively addressing climate change requires “accountable multilevel governance”⁷. In this regard, regional governments play a crucial role in contributing to fill in the gap left by national climate plans, by defining ambitious objectives and acting as implementors of concrete actions on the ground.

Of the 28 disclosing regions, **25 reported to be collaborating with their national counterparts** and all of them with their local counterparts in the developing and/or meeting each other’s environmental-related targets, goals and/or strategies. However, it is important to highlight that **only 7 reported to be collaborating in climate adaptation, while 12 reported to be collaborating in emissions reduction**. Other reported action areas were renewable energy (5), National Adaptation Plans (3), and National Determined Contributions (2).

The experience of

SAO PAULO Brazil

The collaboration between the State of Sao Paulo and its municipalities is based on a multi-level governance approach, to enable their local counterparts to develop disaster risk reduction policies through their *Município Resiliente* Programme. The information obtained from hazards and risks mapping, as well as a portfolio of adaptation projects and data collection for climate projections will feed the new Resilience Strategy of the State of Sao Paulo, as a catalyser of adaptation actions in their territory⁸.

The experience of

JALISCO Mexico

Jalisco’s State Action Programme Against Climate Change (PEACC) follows the adaptation measures and approaches guided by Mexico’s National Determined Contribution: adaptation of the social sector, ecosystem-based approach adaptation, and adaptation of strategic infrastructures and productive systems. These approaches allow the State of Jalisco to set their goals and priorities such as strengthening the adaptive capacity of at least 50% of the most vulnerable municipalities, establishing early warning and risk management systems in all government orders, and achieving a zero deforestation rate⁹.

⁷ IPCC 1.5 Special Report: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

⁸ To know more about Sao Paulo’s experience: <https://www.al.sp.gov.br/norma/192628>

⁹ To know more about Jalisco’s experience:

<https://semadet.jalisco.gob.mx/gobernanza-ambiental/cambio-climatico/programa-estatal-de-accion-ante-el-cambio-climatico-peacc>

THE WAY FORWARD

- Climate change adaptation must address both physical impacts and the transformation of the economic system to truly achieve resilient territories.
- Considering the synergies and trade-offs of all climate risks, cross-cutting actions across sectors will be key to adapt our societies while protecting health, ecosystems, and businesses.
- Communities must be at the core of resilience strategies. Investing in social capital in ways that promote inclusive partnerships as well as participatory and representative governance in decision-making processes, will enhance its adaptive capacity and help build resilience and sustainability on the long-term.
- Many of the reported actions (74) do not fall into any of the predetermined categories provided by the reporting platform, showing that there are no “one-size-fits-all” solutions in climate change adaptation.
- The reasons for not having an adaptation plan are various, however, insufficient funding and resources, as well as a lack of expertise, continue to be among the most reported ones.
- Much work is still needed to mainstream adaptation actions into multi-level governance, as well as to bring a balanced and comprehensive approach between mitigation and adaptation to national commitments.
- RegionsAdapt continues to offer a unique platform for regional governments to advance these efforts and further foster a multi-level governance approach by facilitating opportunities for cooperation and knowledge exchange among its members.

IN PARTNERSHIP



Regions4 is the global network representing regional governments (states, regions, and provinces) before UN processes, European Union initiatives and global discussions in the field of sustainable development. Through advocacy, cooperation, capacity-building and knowledge exchange, we empower regional governments to accelerate climate action, halt biodiversity loss and raise ambition to achieve the global goals towards resilient and sustainable territories and societies.

For more information, visit: www.regions4.org

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CDP is an international non-profit that drives companies and governments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, safeguard water resources and protect forests. Voted number one climate research provider by investors and working with institutional investors with assets of US\$106 trillion, we leverage investor and buyer power to motivate companies to disclose and manage their environmental impacts. Over 9,600 companies with over 50% of global market capitalization disclosed environmental data through CDP in 2020. This is in addition to the hundreds of cities, states and regions who disclosed, making CDP's platform one of the richest sources of information globally on how companies and governments are driving environmental change. CDP is a founding member of the We Mean Business Coalition.

Visit cdp.net or follow us @CDP to find out more.

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