

# We act, we connect, we transform.

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Our mission is to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, by enabling the strongest connections inside and outside the Network, transforming them into impactful action.

Dear Friends,

I am immensely proud that Scotland is President of the Regions4 Sustainable Development Network. Regions4’s work on the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, and on sustainable development is more important now, than ever before.

Regions4’s annual report for 2024 details the hugely impactful work that has taken place this year. Some of the inspiring successes include strengthening the network, advocating for climate finance at COP29, building resilience through RegionsAdapt and strengthening capacity building. As President, Scotland will continue to support this kind of work that has sustainable impact and will make a real difference to vulnerable communities.

I am also deeply proud that Scotland is funding the Just Resilience Pipeline Project. This project aims to ensure that climate impacts are responded to in a way that is fair, and to help governments in the Global South access funding to prepare for the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, fire and disease.

As President, I look forward to working with members of the network across the globe to build on the successes demonstrated in 2024.

**Mr John Swinney**  
President of Regions4  
First Minister of The Scottish Government



## Reach & Growth



**55** regions → 22 countries → **215M** people impacted

**+ 8** new members → 70.3M more people covered

## Learning & Scaling Solutions



**5** training sessions (Climate, Adaptation, Finance, Governance)

**40+** best practices amplified (RegionsVoice, Case Study Database)

## Climate, Biodiversity & SDG Action



**26** regions leading biodiversity advocacy & action at the Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity

**82** regions advancing climate adaptation through RegionsAdapt

**6** new regions join the Plastic Pollution Coalition

**2** EU Mission Adaptation Projects (MAIA and Pathways2Resilience)

**12** regions in West Africa empowered for biodiversity and climate resilience (COOP'R project)

 Regions4SDGs launched to accelerate SDG localization & regional leadership



## Global Influence & Advocacy

**100+** participants → at the Regions4 General Assembly in Rio de Janeiro → hosted the **1st Financing Resilience Forum** → adopted the **Rio Political Declaration** calling for stronger recognition of regions in global governance

**At Climate COP29** 50+ delegates from 18 regions mobilized → 5 co-lead events → 21 supported events → influenced global adaptation and finance agendas

**At Biodiversity COP16** 50+ delegates from 12 regions mobilized → 4 led events led → 15+ supported events → 45+ interventions at key negotiations and side events

**At the UN Summit of the Future** Regions4 contributed to the **UN Secretary-General's Advisory Group of Local and Regional Governments** and the Local and Regional Governments Forum

**40+ global events** featured Regions4 and its members across COP29, COP16 and UN Summits



## Funding & Partnerships

€80,000 (Basque Country → Secretariat support)

£40,000 (Scottish Gov → Just Resilience)

\$40,000 (CONGOPE → Indigenous Economy, Ecuador)

€30,000 (Québec → RegionsAdapt)

**5** new strategic partnerships





## Our impact



Strengthening the Network for the Future

Renewed leadership of Regions4

At the Regions4 General Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, we welcomed our new political leadership 2024-2028 to drive our mission forward. Thank you, Basque Country, for your outstanding leadership (2020-2024), driving global action and regional collaboration. Your legacy inspires our future.

- President: John Swinney, First Minister, Scottish Government
- Vice President for the Americas: Cláudio Castro, Governor, State of Rio de Janeiro
- Vice President for Africa: Rachid El Abdi, President, Region Rabat- Salé-Kenitra
- Vice President for Europe: Giorgio Maione, Minister of Environment and Climate, Lombardy



Regions Leading SDG Transformation

Empowering regional governments in driving Sustainable Development Goals implementation

At the UN Summit of the Future, in New York, Regions4 and UN-Habitat launched the [Regions4SDGs](#) initiative. The initiative will empower regional governments, enhancing their ability to attract investments and deliver the transformative changes urgently needed to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The Basque Country, Lombardy, Paraná, Rio de Janeiro and Wales joined as Founding Partners of Regions4SDGs Initiative. Be part of this movement - become a Founding Partner today!

[Join as a Founding Partner here](#)



Driving Action for People and Nature at Biodiversity COP16

Changing the Narrative of Biodiversity Negotiations

At the 2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16), Regions4 played a pivotal role in biodiversity negotiations, co-hosting the 8th Summit for Subnational Governments & Cities with ICLEI. Over 1,200 delegates from 81 countries joined, showcasing the power of regional leadership. Key milestones included Québec’s historic first-ever subnational contribution to the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund and the expansion of the RegionsWithNature initiative to all 27 Brazilian states. Looking ahead, the Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments will hold a strategic in-person meeting to prepare for Climate COP30 (2025) and Biodiversity COP17 (2026), ensuring regional voices remain at the forefront of global environmental governance.

Biodiversity COP16 Report



Advocating for Multilevel Finance & Climate Nature Integration at Climate COP29

Where National Governments Fall Short, Regional Authorities Take the Lead

At the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), over 500 delegates from local and subnational governments convened within the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) to advocate for greater inclusion in global climate frameworks. Regions4 played a significant role, collaborating with the LGMA constituency as co-lead of its adaptation working group alongside the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), to champion multi-level climate action and finance. A key advocate for subnational governments, Regions4 contributed to drafting the LGMA Constituency [COP29 positions](#). Represented by over 50 delegates from 18 member regions, Regions4 facilitated active regional involvement by securing 5 accreditations and arranging 37 speaking opportunities for 13 members and supporting 21 events from members and partners. Regions4 co-led five events highlighting subnational climate leadership in addressing the interconnected climate and biodiversity crises. We further explored the urgent need for increased subnational investment during "Building the Business Case for Climate Finance," hosted with Scotland.

Climate COP29 Report





Tracking Subnational Progress

RegionsAdapt continues to showcase subnational governments’ leadership on climate adaptation worldwide

A key partner of the [UN Race to Resilience](#), RegionsAdapt continues to drive climate resilience through building commitment, collaboration and knowledge-sharing. In 2024, we welcomed four new regions - Pernambuco (Brazil), Assam (India), Louga (Senegal), and Andalucía (Spain) - growing our community to 82 regions. Our newly launched website now offers enhanced tracking of adaptation progress and peer learning for our members.

Join RegionsAdapt



Strengthening adaptation planning: insights from real-time cases like Scotland

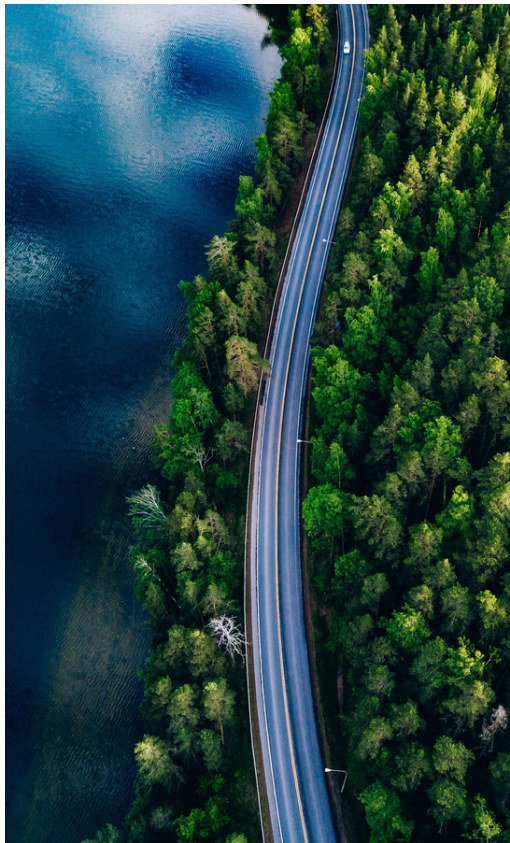
By examining concrete examples, Regions4 members can gain valuable lessons and practical strategies to enhance their own adaptation efforts. For example, RegionsAdapt supported the new Scottish National Adaptation Plan, offering a review and a peer exchange session during a [Science-Policy Dialogue on Regional Adaptation Planning](#), in collaboration with the MAIA EU Project. Scotland’s experience provides a lens through which to explore effective approaches, challenges, and solutions that can inform broader adaptation planning across regions. By engaging with real-world cases, members can strengthen their own strategies, foster collaboration, and accelerate progress towards resilient and sustainable development.

Brief for Action Report



### Key Collaboration Projects

Regions4 is actively engaged in two major EU Mission Adaptation projects - Pathways2Resilience and MAIA - alongside a broad network of European partners. Through these initiatives, we support regional governments in advancing adaptation planning, investment strategies, and policy-science integration, reinforcing our role in shaping Europe's climate resilience agenda.



### MAIA continues to connect people, regions and knowledge for climate impact

As a key partner , Regions4 is enhancing climate knowledge exchange, stakeholder engagement, and policy-science integration. At COP29, we co-organized [a policy-science dialogue on subnational climate finance](#), advocating for stronger investment in regional adaptation. Through MAIA, we continue to bridge research and policy to drive impactful climate solutions.

MAIA Project 



### Strengthening Regional Leadership in Climate Adaptation with Pathways2Resilience

In 2024, Pathways2Resilience (P2R) selected 40 European regions to receive targeted support for adaptation planning and investment strategies. Regions4 contributed to key training materials, including the [Regional Resilience Journey \(RRJ\) Guidance](#) and a framework for developing [Regional Resilience Investment Plans](#), featuring case studies from Scotland and Catalonia.

Pathways2Resilience Project 



Key Collaboration Projects

COOP’R: Strengthening Interregional Cooperation for Climate and Biodiversity Resilience in West Africa

Funded by the French Delegation for the External Action of Local Authorities, the project brings together 12 Francophone regions, the International Association of Francophone Regions, and the Federation of Regional Natural Parks of France to strengthen local capacity in management of protected areas and biodiversity integration into climate strategies. By fostering collaboration between multiple stakeholders and peer learning, the initiative enhances regional connections while promoting synergies between climate adaptation, ecosystem conservation, and sustainable local development.

COOP’R Project



Strengthening Our Team for Bigger Impact

In 2024, Regions4 strengthened its team by welcoming a Communications Manager and a secondment official from the Government of Rio de Janeiro (State Secretariat for Environment and Sustainability) working at Regions4 as the Sustainable Development Goals Liaison Officer. We also receive the support of an intern from Blanquerna Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, Spain. As we look ahead, we remain committed to expanding our team, fostering collaboration and advancing our mission.



Unlock New Opportunities with the Regions4 Secondment Scheme

The Regions4 Secondment Scheme offers a unique, mutually beneficial opportunity for both seconded experts and participating regions. With experts from Lombardy and Rio de Janeiro, the initiative has strengthened inter-regional collaboration and facilitated meaningful professional experiences. Watch the testimony of Eugenio Amato, Sustainable Officer at Lombardy Foundation for the Environment, and discover how secondments foster innovative solutions, ultimately advancing regional sustainability goals and strengthening inter-regional cooperation. [You can join here!](#)

Secondment Scheme Testimony



### Strengthening our Members' Expertise

Over the past year, Regions4 has provided valuable learning opportunities to strengthen our members' expertise in climate resilience, adaptation, governance and advocacy in global discussions through its Biodiversity Learning Platform, Regions4SDGs initiative and RegionsAdapt Community of Practice.



- In 2024, Regions4 organized a [Financing Resilience International Forum](#) that addressed critical funding gaps and explored innovative solutions for climate resilience.
- Regions4 organized the Community of Practice '[Nature at the Heart](#)', which advanced multilevel governance and strengthened regional engagement in global climate, biodiversity and SDG agendas.
- At COP29, Regions4 and the MAIA EU Project co-organized the side-event "[Building the Business Case for Climate Finance at the Subnational Level](#)" showing why investing at the subnational level is key in achieving global climate goals.
- To support our members in navigating international negotiations, we held a preparation webinar for Climate COP29 and Biodiversity COP16, providing key insights and strategies.
- In partnership with the NAP Global Network, we hosted a [webinar on multilevel governance and adaptation](#), sharing the latest research and best practices.



**Advancing Just Resilience for Climate-Vulnerable Communities**

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**Regions4 is working to strengthen just resilience, ensuring that climate adaptation efforts are inclusive and equitable, particularly for the most vulnerable communities.**

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In 2024, with the support of the Scottish Government and the Consortium of Ecuadorian Provincial Governments (CONGOPE), Regions4 launched a dedicated initiative to **advance just resilience and support indigenous economies**. This initiative focuses on defining just resilience, identifying best practices, and helping climate-vulnerable regions access funding to address pressing challenges such as flooding, wildfires, and disease. It includes networking activities at global events such as the Biodiversity COP16, an Indigenous Economy and Just Resilience Breakthrough Workshop, and knowledge-sharing efforts leading up to the Climate COP30 in 2025. By bridging local needs with global climate finance opportunities, Regions4 is ensuring that subnational governments and indigenous communities can strengthen their resilience and drive sustainable solutions.







## Collective Voice and Key Publications



# RegionsAdapt Progress Report 2024: Connecting Climate and Nature

At Climate COP29, Regions4 launched the RegionsAdapt Progress Report, highlighting regional expertise in climate-biodiversity integration. Based on insights from 40 reporting members, the report presents 12 compelling case studies showing how integrated biodiversity and climate adaptation strategies drive effective solutions. From youth-led climate resilience efforts in Assam, India, to provincial initiatives protecting natural heritage and ecosystems in Ecuador, the report shows how regions are driving effective strategies with positive outcomes for both nature and communities.

[RegionsAdapt Progress Report](#)



## Declaration of Rio de Janeiro: Empowered Regions, Shaping a Sustainable, Fair and Resilient Future

Subnational governments adopted the Rio de Janeiro Political Declaration, calling for greater recognition and inclusion of regional governments in global decision-making processes. The declaration urges multilevel governance reforms, enhanced direct financing for regions, and stronger regional participation in implementing global sustainability agendas.

[Rio de Janeiro Political Declaration](#)



New Global Partnerships

# 5 Global Partnerships

Regions4 signed five strategic partnerships with [Climate Chance](#), the [Consortium of Ecuadorian Provincial Governments \(CONGOPE\)](#), [Nature4Climate](#), the [European Committee of the Regions \(CoR\)](#) and the [United Nations Human Settlements Programme \(UN-Habitat\)](#) to empower regions and drive transformative solutions for a more resilient, nature-positive, and sustainable future.

Key Project Collaborations

We are actively supporting regions through three major projects:

- **MAIA EU Project:** co-led by BC3 Basque Centre for Climate Change, strengthening climate knowledge exchange.
- **Pathways2Resilience:** co-led by Climate KIC, supporting regional adaptation planning.
- **COOP’R:** co-led by La Fédération nationale des Parcs naturels régionaux (AIRF), enhancing biodiversity conservation in Francophone regions.

Expanding Global Alliances and Deepening Engagement

- Regions4 joined the **Steering Committee of the Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Coalition of Cities and Regions** to address coastal climate risks.
- Together with six regions, Regions4 joined the **Local and Subnational Governments Coalition to End Plastic Pollution**, reinforcing its commitment to global environmental action.
- **Partnered with the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework-EU support project** implemented by Expertise France, by hosting a series of events at Biodiversity. Through these events, we are organizing meaningful discussions on subnational solutions for climate and biodiversity.
- Regions4 co-coordinates the **Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and Biodiversity (AC SNG)** with the government of Quebec. At Biodiversity COP16, Regions4 hosted an Executive In-Person Meeting bringing together members, partners, and observers.






## #RegionsVoice

#RegionsVoice shared 17 inspiring [stories from regions](#), reaching over 16,319 people. Through Regions4's Knowledge Hub, the campaign amplified the impact of subnational climate action by highlighting new member initiatives. Additionally, we expanded the [#RegionsVoice video series](#), bringing these stories to life in a more engaging and dynamic way.

## 10 stories and best practices

from our members were highlighted in prominent publications, including the UNFCCC Yearbook of Climate Actions, the High-Level Climate Champions 'Nature Positive for Climate Action' and the Race to Resilience In Action.

## RegionsAdapt

Through RegionsAdapt, we contributed with a subnational perspective to the [UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2024](#)  sharing how subnational governments are tracking their adaptation progress with concrete examples from the the province of Québec, in Canada and the Western Cape province of South Africa.

## The Case Study Database

In 2024, Regions4 ['The Case Study Database'](#) published 9 new case studies in Spanish, French, and English, showcasing regional success stories and providing replicable solutions for subnational governments and stakeholders facing similar challenges. Since its launch, the initiative counts with over 6,500 total downloads. Over the last years, Regions4 case studies have been highlighted at major global events and reports, including Biodiversity COP15 and COP16, Climate COP28, the Bern Conference 2024, the Network Nature Annual Event 2024, and the Toolbox for Integrating Biodiversity into Development Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Expertise France.







# Stories from Our Regions

In 2019, Regions4 launched the global campaign #RegionsVoice in a collective effort to amplify the voice of regional governments in UN events and negotiation processes on sustainable development. Read the stories that Regions4 and RegionsAdapt members brought to global events in 2024.

#RegionsVoice 



In 2019, Regions4 launched the global campaign #RegionsVoice in a collective effort to bring the voice of regional governments to the major events and negotiation processes in sustainable development within the UN. The aim of the campaign is to ensure the visibility and wider recognition of the role of regional governments in sustainable development, by elevating both individual and collective messages and engaging with a wider audience during the UN Decade of Action.



© State of Assam

## Assam: Empowering Assam's Youth to Build Climate-Resilient Communities

Assam, located in northeastern India, is known for its rich cultural heritage and biodiversity, yet it faces significant environmental challenges. Increasingly frequent floods, extreme weather events, and erratic rainfall patterns have placed Assam among the most climate-vulnerable states in India. With 15 of its districts ranked among the top 25 most vulnerable areas in the country, the Assam government has prioritized climate adaptation as a matter of urgency. In 2022, the government launched the Chief Minister's Climate Resilient Village Fellowship Programme (CMCRVF), a pioneering initiative that enlists post-graduate science and engineering students to help communities build resilience against climate change.

[Read the story](#)



## Paraná: Supporting conservation with environmental tax revenue

The “Ecological ICMS” initiative was launched in Paraná to support municipalities that protect natural areas or provide water to nearby cities. By sharing tax revenue, the ICMS encourages local governments to create protected areas and manage their natural resources sustainably. Each year, approximately 500 million Brazilian reais are transferred to municipalities under this scheme, fostering the expansion of Protected Areas and reinforcing Payments for Environmental Services (PES). This initiative exemplifies effective multilevel governance, promoting biodiversity conservation, clean water access, and climate resilience. Recognized as a pioneering model, the Ecological ICMS offers valuable insights into aligning economic development with environmental sustainability.

[Read the story](#)



## Québec Facilitates Species Movement Through Ecological Corridors

Rising temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns in North America are pushing many species to move northward, with Québec, in Canada, at the crossroad of these ecological changes. To address this, the 2024-2029 implementation of the 2030 Plan for a Green Economy, supports the conservation and establishment of ecological corridors, to enhance species' adaptability. The effectiveness of these ecological corridors is further strengthened using data and science. The province collaborates with New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers on ecological connectivity, climate adaptation, and biodiversity conservation through [Connectiviteecologique.com](https://connectiviteecologique.com).

[Read the story](#)

© Government of Quebec



## Tonpoi Cliffs: A Model for Climate-Adapted Coastal Restoration in the Basque Country

The Tonpoi cliffs, located in the picturesque town of Bermeo, have long held high natural and landscape value. Situated between the Talape cliffs and the iconic San Juan de Gaztelugatxe, and within the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, the area is part of the [Natura 2000 Network](#), signifying its importance for biodiversity and environmental conservation. Before its restoration, the area was degraded and with no public access due to illegal market gardens and temporary settlements, such as huts, provisional enclosures, fencing, invasive vegetation and waste.

[Read the story](#)



© Basque Country



## Scotland: Peatland ‘The Flow Country’ wins UNESCO’s World Heritage Status

In a groundbreaking achievement for Scotland and the world, The Flow Country – one of the largest and most intact blanket bog ecosystems on the planet – was officially recognized, in 2024, as the world’s first peatland by UNESCO World Heritage Site. Nestled in the far north of Scotland, this vast expanse of peatland, with 4,000 square kilometers, now stands alongside globally iconic sites like the Serengeti, the Galapagos Islands, and the Great Barrier Reef. The designation underscores the exceptional significance of this fragile ecosystem, cementing its place as a natural treasure of UNESCO’s Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

[Read the story](#)



At Regions4, we act, we connect, we transform. We act by staying close to the territories we serve, embodying transformative change on the ground. We connect regions to each other and to the UN, ensuring their voices are heard in global discussions. We transform by driving real, localized progress in climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable development.

On behalf of the constituency we served in 2024, thank you for your support.



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