



## **RegionsAdapt Initiative**

### **A Subnational Partnership on Adaptation to Climate Change**

#### **Background**

Even if anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions were immediately stopped, humanity will have to endure climate change and its associated impacts for centuries. Climate change amplifies and creates new risks for natural and human systems, which are associated with a wide range of impacts already observable, such as floods and droughts, increased frequency and magnitude of heat waves and heavy rains, coastal erosion and melting glaciers, damaged ecosystems and biodiversity loss, as well as reduced crops and frequent epidemics. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognizes, these risks are unevenly distributed across territories, and generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities. A temperature increase of around 2°C will result in significant global annual economic losses equivalent to 0.2% to 2% GDP<sup>1</sup>.

To manage and reduce the risks of climate change, while contributing to climate-resilient pathways for sustainable development, adaptation and mitigation are crucial and complementary strategies. Adaptation can reduce the mean net value of climate change impact by 30%, from \$1240 trillion (impact without adaptation) to \$890 trillion (impact with adaptation)<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, the global costs of adapting to climate change could reach \$150 billion by 2025/2030 and \$250-500 billion per year by 2050, even if the temperature rise is kept below 2°C<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, long-term planning including financial planning, as well as the development of new and improved funding mechanisms are essential. More importantly, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on policies and measures across all levels of government, business and society.

A strong adaptation response is particularly important at the subnational level. Subnational governments play a fundamental role to enhance coordination and cooperation across all levels of governments, to boost policy coherence, and to ensure concrete results of adaptation actions. In this sense, adaptation measures must also be implemented in order to avoid economic losses at the regional level.

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> The figures have been calculated by summing up the impacts and costs of the adaptation from 2000 to 2200 and discounting them back to 2000, in a business as usual scenario. "Assessing the costs of adaptation to climate change", Grantham Institute for Climate Change, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> UNEP Adaptation Gap Report, 2014.

However, international support and collaboration for regional action on adaptation remains underexplored. While many subnational governments have already developed long-term adaptation strategies and innovative solutions to increase climate resilience, a number of on-going constraints and challenges limit their ability to respond effectively. These include scarce financial and human resources, lack of integration and coordination between levels of government, insufficient management practices, research and tools to monitor adaptation effectiveness, and, critically, the absence of medium to long-term adaptation planning.

## Commitments

Based on the aforementioned considerations, and recognizing that legal responsibilities as well as technical and financial capacities vary widely among different jurisdictions, the signatories of the **RegionsAdapt** initiative (hereinafter referred to as “the Participants”) commit to join efforts to improve the effectiveness of subnational governments in adapting to climate change. With this aspiration, the Participants express their intention to:

1. Adopt a strategic approach to adaptation and prioritize adaptation actions, e.g., through adopting or reviewing a regional plan or strategy on climate change adaptation within two years of joining the initiative;
2. Take concrete action on adaptation in at least one of the key priority areas identified by the regions. These could include: water resources and management; resilience and disaster risk reduction; agriculture and zootechnics; forestry, protected areas and biodiversity; infrastructure (including transport and the energy sectors) and territorial planning; economic impacts and opportunities; social adaptation and impacts;
3. Report data on the progress of the adaptation actions on an annual basis through the Compact of States and Regions reporting platform.

As an international cooperation initiative, **RegionsAdapt** aims to provide a framework to facilitate and support collaboration between state and regional governments and other relevant international partners, undertaking joint efforts based on solidarity principles. Nevertheless, with a view to the particular circumstances and capacities of each Participant, it is fundamental they have own specific plans tailored for their territorial priorities and reality.

This is neither a contract nor a treaty.