

## **Workshop**

# **Tracking and Aggregating Non-State and Sub-National Climate Action Toward 2018**

**Hotel Le Méridien N'Fis, Marrakech**

**16 November 2016**

On November 16, 2016, on the margins of COP22, the Yale Data-Driven Environmental Solutions Group, The Stanley Foundation, and the Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Action Coalition ([www.climategroundswell.org](http://www.climategroundswell.org)), in collaboration with the UNFCCC secretariat, held a workshop for data providers, analysts, and researchers. This forum focused on discussing opportunities for participants to collaborate on harmonizing and aggregating data on sub-national (i.e., city, state and region) and non-state (i.e., business, investor and civil society) climate action. Participants discussed current goals and challenges in their work to support and understand the rapidly expanding landscape of sub-national and non-state climate action. This short summary synthesizes the discussion, from the perspective of the GGCA.

## **Introduction**

Efforts to track and analyze sub-national and non-state climate actions have taken extraordinary steps forward in recent years, but data tracking and analysis remains a challenge. Strengthening subnational and non-state data analysis will be critical to understanding their scientific contribution to global climate goals, including the new 1.5°C target introduced in the Paris Agreement. The lead-up to 2018 offers a number of especially valuable opportunities to raise the profile and demonstrate the impact of sub-national and non-state climate action.

The [Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action](#) provides a framework for supporting and connecting national climate action with the activities of non-state and sub-national actors. In particular, it proposes an annual Yearbook of Climate Action, to collect and compile annual data on subnational and non-state climate action, and suggests several criteria toward which non-state action should aspire. The 2018 Facilitative Dialogue, Summit of Non-State Actors, and release of the IPCC Special Report of the 1.5°C Target represent additional forums where a better understanding of the contributions of non-state and subnational actors could prove critical. Participants agreed that these moments of reflection must become an integrated and on-going process, rather than be a series of discrete events.

## **Gaps, Overlaps and Challenges for Tracking Climate Action**

Discussion opened by recognizing that the Non-State Action Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) portal now provides a centrepiece for tracking non-state and sub-national climate action, with over 12,500 commitment currently recorded.

Additionally, the first quantitative reference to non-state and sub-national action in a UN report was included in the recent 2016 UNEP Emissions Gap Report.

Moving to the key challenges facing efforts to track climate action, participants emphasised the need to move from tracking commitments to actual action and implementation over time. This requires detailed knowledge of participants, targeted sectors, proposed actions, and the regular collection of information around progress and implementation. However, it was also noted that overlaps on data collection and analysis, between both data collection initiatives and reporting platforms, can fragment the landscape of climate action, even as they each offer valuable analysis.

Participants highlighted the significant gaps around climate action focused on adaptation and capacity building, as well as a lack of data capture in developing regions, particularly Africa and Southeast Asia, and relating to small- and medium-sized enterprises. Some major polluters, such as particularly state-owned enterprises, are also notably absent, with only 28 of the 90 largest emitters pledging taking action on NAZCA.

It was noted that despite numerous detailed studies and reports, uncertainties remain large because of the use of different baselines, indicators, actors and timeframes. These gaps apply to both data collection and data analysis efforts. Taking cities as an example, currently only 36% of climate-disclosing cities use 2010 IPCC guidelines, while 10% still use 1990 guidelines, resulting in a mismatch of goal types and exacerbating aggregation difficulties. Participants agreed that harmonization is essential and researchers should adopt a consistent approach to data tracking and aggregation, whether through meta-analysis and/or a systematic analytical framework. This coordination needs to address both quantitative assessments, such as an action's mitigation potential and co-benefit creation, and qualitative terms, such as the defining characteristics of an effective or innovative intervention.

It will also be crucial to better understand the overlaps between sub-national and non-state climate action and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)s , to support and help increase countries' climate ambition. Some efforts have been made towards this end already, but again many employ different methodologies, making them difficult to compare. Researchers are also in the midst of trying to more precisely identify overlaps within cooperative initiatives involving sub-national and non-state actors that are also taking action individually.

### **Priorities in the Path Towards 2018**

Looking forward to 2018, it was noted that many of the [recommendations from the Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions' May 2016 Bonn meeting](#) are being addressed, but several on-going goals and processes remain.

### *Data aggregation*

Data aggregation is still a fundamental issue that faces challenges from restrictions on data use and disclosure, as well as a lack of funding to support data collection efforts. Partnerships with the NAZCA portal and funders mitigate this to some degree, but staffing limitations constrain the resources that can be ded ed to further data processing and aggregation. Participants strongly supported suggestions that data providers could partner with academic institutions in meeting this labour shortage, bolstering credibility and avoiding duplication of effort. It was also suggested that data providers sit down with the NAZCA team at the Secretariat to put together a joined-up plan for data-sharing going forward.

### *Harmonizing methodologies for subnational and non-state climate actions*

The Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT), spearheaded by UNEP DTU Partnership (UDP), Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and World Resources Institute (WRI), is convening a working group to develop a set of guidelines for how countries can address subnational and non-state climate action in their inventories and NDCs. Participants suggested ICAT's work from 2017 onwards could expand to include producing a set of similar guidelines for subnational and non-state climate action transparency. Others pointed out that changing target-setting is a long and politicized process, urging managed expectations on the impact of ICAT by 2018. The CDP considers IPCC mitigation guideline adoption at subnational level to be relatively strong, with IPCC reports a good current resource for target-setting. CDP is reporting data on 550 cities and 5,500 companies to ICAT, with multiple layers of data for the same region allowing analysts to tease out specific impacts. Suggested ICAT deliverables also included case studies demonstrating how state and non-state actions could be aggregated, to support the Facilitative Dialogue in 2018.

Some participants also suggested that efforts could concentrate on country-level studies that can then be used to re-aggregate mitigation impact to the global level. It was also observed that sharing best practices, possibly via the ICAT platform, would be a useful way of streamlining reporting and generating a level playing field for 2018. Achieving harmonization would also catalyse efforts to track whether targets are achieved, a key next step for research efforts.

### *Funding and resources*

Tracking the implementation of climate action will also likely play an important role in the Global Action Agenda. The High Level Champions could play a role in enhancing disclosure, and possibly making it mandatory (though strict enforcement is unlikely). The Champions could also act as focal points for soliciting resources and funding. Some participants expressed concerns about placing excessive power in the hands of the Secretariat. The discussion noted that their involvement should be viewed as a means of unlocking ambition and

gathering insights from subnational and non-state actions to inform national policies.

The funders present at the discussion underlined the importance of a convincing and detailed theory of change that describes exactly how comprehensive and accessible data drives transformation, and could enhance accountability, transparency and compliance with the Paris Agreement at the non-state level. There is also a need to target funding pitches to different funding timelines. Many large funders are already beginning to make funding decisions for 2018. ClimateWorks will need to understand how ICAT will be fleshed out towards 2018 to design its funding pipeline accordingly. Smaller foundations tend to work on short time scales, and could be good targets for proposals in the first and second quarters of 2017.

## Next Steps

Participants proposed four broad functions that the research and analytical community must address going forward:

1. Create effective ways to aggregate data across providers, while still safeguarding their operational models, in order to generate a holistic picture of climate actions.
2. Harmonize methodologies over time so that non-state and sub-national actors can be tracked in a consistent and credible fashion, and so that overlaps between non-state and sub-national actors and national policies can be assessed.
3. Track how non-state and sub-national actors change their goals, results and ambition over time.
4. Understand gaps and identify areas for more reporting or mitigation action.

Several actionable priorities were identified:

1. Close the loop: report data and best practices back to the non-state actors that provide this information, making raw data and analysis available to drive a race-to-the-top, particularly among local and regional governments.
2. Bridge the funding and resource gap that currently faces many governments eager to take climate action. Create a strong evidence base of what subnational and non-state climate actions can contribute to national governments looking to raise ambition.

Three short-term deliverables were agreed upon:

1. A two-page Theory of Change produced by GGCA Data and Analysis team; Yale University will lead on this action item.
2. The UNFCCC Secretariat and NAZCA data providers will engage in discussion on how to create a unified data-sharing arrangement
3. Engage with analysts to create a working group on harmonizing methods for assessing subnational and non-state climate action. Representatives from NewClimate Institute, World Resources Institute, and The Climate Group will lead on this action item.

### **Who we are: Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions**

Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions is a series of dialogues that brings together organizations supporting climate action at all levels. Its objectives include:

1. Bringing the groundswell of climate actions from cities, regions, companies, and other groups to a higher level of scale and ambition;
2. Increasing efficient coordination among cooperative initiatives and sub- and non-state networks;
3. Improving analysis and understanding of “bottom up” climate actions;
4. Building a positive narrative of pragmatic, concrete action on climate change; and
5. Identifying opportunities for the groundswell of climate actions and the multilateral process to support and catalyze each other.

Since 2014, Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions has brought together city and regional networks, company networks, cooperative initiatives, governments, international organizations, and researchers to discuss and advance these objectives. By convening the community of actors that make up and support the groundswell of climate actions, we seek to realize the full potential of this extraordinary innovation in global governance.

[www.climategroundswell.org](http://www.climategroundswell.org)