Call for submission on human settlements and adaptation

According to the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, human settlements can be defined as the totality of the human community – whether city, town or village – with all the social, material, organizational, spiritual and cultural elements that sustain it.[1] During SBSTA 44, Parties highlighted that those making submissions should "bear in mind the unique challenges and scale differences in urban, rural and remote settlements, in particular in small island developing States and least developed countries.[2] During SBSTA 46, Parties further underscored their interest in collecting information related to rural and coastal settlements, particularly remote settlements.[3]

We thank you in advance for filling out this template with concise, evidence-based information and for referencing all relevant sources. There are 5 sections in the template: please fill the sections that are relevant to the work of your government or organization. As you will see on the last page of the document, more detailed information on case studies, tools/methods and other knowledge resources for dissemination through the Adaptation Knowledge Portal is welcome, but optional.

Name of the organization or entity:

Regions Adapt (an initiative of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD))

Type of organization:

Please choose as appropriate:

☐ Local government/ municipal authority   ☒ Regional center/network/initiative
☐ Intergovernmental organization (IGO)   ☐ Research institution
☐ National/public entity   ☐ UN and affiliated organization
☐ Non-governmental organization (NGO)   ☐ University/education/training organization
☐ Private sector

Location

City: Brussels
Country: Belgium

Scale of operation:

☒ Global   ☐ Regional
☐ Local   ☐ Subregional
☐ National   ☐ Transboundary

City(ies)/Country(ies) of operation (if appropriate):

For an updated list of regional governments partaking in the initiative, please visit:
http://www.nrg4sd.org/climate-change/regionsadapt/public-global-map/

1. Assessing sensitivity and vulnerability to climate change

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[1] See: https://unhabitat.org/the-vancouver-declaration-on-human-settlements-from-the-report-of-habitat-united-nations-conference-on-human-settlements-vancouver-canada-31-may-to-11-june-1976/
[2] FCCC/SBSTA/2016/2, paragraph 15(b)(ii).
[3] FCCC/SBSTA/2017/L.7, paragraph 13.

Description of relevant activities/processes or research:

Description of relevant tools/methods:

Key outcomes of the activities undertaken:

Description of lessons learned and good practices identified:

Description of key challenges identified:

Planned next steps (as appropriate):

Relevant hyperlinks:

2. [Integrating both short-term and long-term climate considerations (including both extreme and slow onset events) into planning](#)

According to UNFCCC decision 1.CP/16, slow onset events include sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinization, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and desertification.[4]

Description of relevant activities/processes or research:

Description of relevant tools/methods:

Key outcomes of the activities undertaken:

Description of lessons learned and good practices identified:

Description of key challenges identified:

Planned next steps (as appropriate):

Relevant hyperlinks:

3. [The role of national governments in supporting adaptation at the local level](#)

Description of relevant activities/processes or research:

Description of relevant national-level policies, programmes or projects:

Description of relevant tools/methods:

Key outcomes of the action undertaken:

Description of lessons learned and good practices identified:

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[4] FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, para 25, footnote 3.

Description of key challenges identified:

Planned next steps (as appropriate):

Relevant hyperlinks:

4. [Cross-cutting issues and linkages to the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs)[5]](#)

Description of relevant activities/processes or research:

Description of relevant national-level policies, programmes or projects:

Description of relevant national-level policies, programmes or projects:

Key outcomes of the action undertaken:

Description of lessons learned and good practices identified:

Description of key challenges identified:

Planned next steps (as appropriate):

Relevant hyperlinks:

5. Region-to-region City-to-city partnerships on climate change adaptation

Description of relevant activities/processes or research:

nrg4SD's flagship initiative in climate change, RegionsAdapt, was created to establish a framework for regional governments to take concrete action, collaborate and report efforts on climate change adaptation. The initiative is open to all governments situated between the local and the national level from across the world, regardless of their size or stage of implementation of their climate policy.

The RegionsAdapt members are working within seven priority areas: 1) Water Resources and Management; 2) Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction; 3) Agriculture and Zootechnics; 4) Forestry, Protected Areas and Biodiversity; 5) Infrastructure and Territorial Planning; 6) Economic Impacts and Opportunities; and 7) Social Impacts and Adaptation.

In order to promote cooperation and knowledge sharing the RegionsAdapt is working within working groups reflecting its priority areas. These working groups are coordinated through one or more coordinating participant from the member regions and supported by the initiative's Secretariat. Online meetings are being used to facilitate the discussions and the working groups define by themselves on which specific topics they want to focus and how they want to carry the discussion.

Ideally, each working group is supported by technical partners to provide their respective group with technical support and knowledge. Currently the initiative works with Cap-NET in the Water Resources and Management Working Group and with the GIB Foundation in the recently launched Infrastructure and Territorial Planning Working Group.

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[5] For additional information on NAPs, see: http://www4.unfccc.int/nap/Pages/Home.aspx

Description of relevant tools/methods:

The aim of RegionsAdapt is to establish a cooperative framework for regions in order to promote cooperation, exchange experiences and best practices on adaptation actions, and develop projects based on joint standards. This is being implemented through the creation of Working Groups. These Working Groups are established around the seven key priority areas of the initiative.

It is recommended that the working groups
1.   Hold regular online meetings, in which participants present what they are doing in this particular area in their respective region, highlighting what is already in place, what are the challenges that are being faced, and what they aim to achieve. The Secretariat will offer the platform for the online meeting;
2.   Together with the Technical Partners develop joint projects according to the priority topics defined by each Working Group. These projects could then be implemented in certain pilot regions upon the availability of the necessary resources.

The RegionsAdapt also offers webinars open to participants of all member regions to discuss about transversal topics related to climate adaptation that are pertinent to regional governments. Apart from covering cross-cutting themes, these webinars also aim to ensure coherence and coordination among the discussions carried out through the Working Groups.

Apart from the knowledge exchange within the working groups and the webinars, RegionsAdapt members also commit to report their adaptation efforts annually through CDP's states and regions platform. This data will be analyzed by the Secretariat and feeds into an annual report on the initiative and the status of adaptation efforts of its member regions.

Key outcomes of the action undertaken:

Whenever possible, the exchange of best practices will be based on matching expertise and demand for cooperation. Based on the discussions within the groups it was possible to map and suggest points of convergence related to matters of interest of the members, the so called 'matchmakings'. One example for a successful matchmaking here is the use of the Catalan Adaptation Index as a reference in the development of adaptation indicators for watershed management plans under the leadership of Rio Grande do Sul.

This year the RegionsAdapt launched its first report based on the reported data of 27 regional governments. The report portrays the assessment of physical, water supply and socioeconomic risks, as well as adaptation responses of these governments. The report gave the opportunity for participants to share their policies and programs to a wider audience and to encourage other governments to learn from their experiences, exchange and create common knowledge on how to adapt to climate change.

Description of lessons learned and good practices identified:

The initiative was created out of the need of regional governments to effectively address the issue of climate change adaptation. The first two years of the initiative have shown that an exchange of knowledge between different regions worldwide can help not only regions in developing countries but also in developed countries to produce effective adaptation strategies.
The value of the reporting process in this regard cannot be neglected. It enables regional governments to stick to their commitments and stimulates an ongoing process of strategy development and improvement of existing strategies.

Involving dedicated technical partners has been very beneficial for the member regions. The technical partners assist regional governments in the development of certain strategies and support them with innovative knowledge.

Description of key challenges identified:

Online meetings offer a convenient way of bringing together regions from different part of the world, however in person meetings would be sometimes more efficient and would further strengthen the relationship between the member regions that have been built within the initiative.
Difficulties in running a project without previously secured financial resources were also identified.

Planned next steps (as appropriate):

The next steps within the initiative are to further promote staff exchange and the sharing of technical knowledge and to gather recommendations related to the priority topics discussed in each of the working groups.
Further, the aim is to have all current members endorsing a second round of 3 commitments on climate adaptation and asses their delivery.
Iit is planned to develop a guidebook on regional adaptation that should help regional governments to develop adaptation strategies and plans.
In addition, it is necessary to further look for technical and sponsor partners.
The Secretariat will keep supporting the application for call for projects and aims to raise funds to strengthen the Secretariat and provide services of technical institutions.

Relevant hyperlinks:

- *Website of the initiative:* http://www.nrg4sd.org/climate-change/regionsadapt/
- *2016 Brief Report (on the working groups):* http://www.nrg4sd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/nrg4SD-RegionAdapt-v6.pdf
- *RegionsAdapt 2016 Report: An assessment of risks and actions:* http://www.nrg4sd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/RA2016REPORT_FINAL-1.pdf

Further information:

Please do not hesitate to submit more detailed information on case study(ies), tool(s)/method(s) and/or other relevant knowledge resource(s) that are relevant to adaptation in human settlements. The latter will be shared through the Adaptation Knowledge Portal:

- o Case study(ies)
- o Tool(s)/method(s)
- o Other knowledge resource(s) (online portals, policy briefs, training material, multimedia material, technical reports and scientific publications)