

COP30 Presidency Roadmaps | Contribution from the Global Planning Community

Submitted by the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)
Initiative for Climate Resilience Planning (ICRP)

The International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) welcomes the COP30 Presidency's initiative to develop Roadmaps on transitioning away from fossil fuels and halting and reversing deforestation. These priorities are both urgent and critical to advancing the implementation of the Paris Agreement, particularly in the current context where the focus of climate action is shifting from commitments to delivery.

As an observer organisation to the UNFCCC, ISOCARP is pleased to contribute a spatial planning, place-based and territorial perspective to this important process. This contribution addresses the key questions outlined in the Presidency call, including barriers, enabling factors, and implementation pathways for both transitions, from a spatial planning and territorial governance perspective.

Key messages

1. **Climate implementation lives in territories.**
Translating COP commitments into action depends on governance, place-based planning and investment decisions taken in cities, regions and landscapes.
2. **Spatial and territorial planning are critical implementation tools.**
Most countries already have planning systems, and these can be enhanced and strengthened to provide the regulatory, institutional and participatory frameworks needed to deliver energy transition and sustainable land-use change.
3. **Multilevel governance must move from recognition to empowerment.**
Effective climate action requires stronger systemic and place-based coordination, supported by increased capacity and financing at subnational levels.

Bridging the implementation gap

COP30 marked a shift from negotiation to implementation. However, a central gap remains: key barriers to implementation remain insufficiently addressed at territorial level, particularly in relation to governance capacity, finance access and institutional coordination, including addressing increasing climate risks and loss and damage, particularly in vulnerable and under-resourced territories.

While COP30 advanced processes, dialogues and reporting frameworks, it provided limited clarity on how climate commitments will be operationalised at territorial level, particularly in terms of governance capacity, finance access and institutional coordination.

Climate action ultimately takes place where we live: in neighbourhoods, cities, regions and landscapes, where overlapping climate, conflict and social vulnerabilities require integrated, place-based approaches, particularly in fragile and recovery contexts. Bridging the implementation gap therefore requires strengthening territorial governance, spatial planning systems and multilevel coordination.

Planning the transition away from fossil fuels

Transitioning away from fossil fuels requires not only technological innovation but also spatial and socioecological transitions. Energy systems, mobility patterns, infrastructure investments and urban development are all shaped by spatial planning decisions, increasingly supported by data-driven and geospatial tools.

Spatial planning can support this transition through:

- **Strategic siting and integration of renewable energy systems** within territorial development frameworks;
- **Urban energy transition planning**, promoting compact urban forms, energy-efficient buildings and integrated infrastructure systems;
- **Sustainable mobility planning**, reducing car dependency and supporting public transport and active mobility;
- Supporting **climate-responsive housing and urban development strategies**, particularly in resource-constrained and intermediate cities, as a key component of demand-side energy transition and emissions reduction;
- **Just territorial transitions**, addressing the uneven spatial impacts of the shift away from fossil fuel-based economies.

Effective transition roadmaps require integrated systemic approaches that combine energy access, subsidy reform, economic diversification, and investment planning, reinforcing the need for coordinated territorial implementation. This aligns with the evolving understanding of just transition as extending beyond energy systems to include land use, housing, mobility and access to services.

Planning to halt and reverse deforestation

Halting deforestation requires integrated land-use governance capable of addressing the drivers of land-use change, including agricultural expansion, tourism, infrastructure development and urban growth.

Planning regenerative socioecological systems and landscape approaches contribute through:

- **Integrated land-use planning**, balancing conservation, production and settlement development;
- **Landscape restoration and nature-based solutions**, strengthening ecosystem resilience, supporting climate adaptation and contributing to improved environmental quality and well-being in urban and peri-urban areas;
- **Managing urban expansion**, reducing pressure on forests through more efficient land use and land governance, including strengthening security of tenure where relevant;
- **Strengthening rural-urban linkages**, recognising the territorial dynamics shaping land-use change.

These approaches enable a more coherent alignment between development strategies and ecosystem protection goals.

Recommendations for the COP30 Roadmaps

To strengthen implementation of the COP30 Presidency Roadmaps, the planning community recommends:

- Integrating spatial and territorial planning into national climate strategies and implementation frameworks, including strengthening the integration of place-based and urban dimensions within NDCs and related national climate instruments, and promoting place-based climate action planning in urban contexts;
- Strengthening multilevel governance mechanisms, including engagement with the private sector and other non-state actors, with clear mandates, coordination tools and resources for subnational authorities;
- Leverage existing planning instruments to integrate growth and development with the climate agenda to provide a clear and univocal direction to territorial and place-based strategies.
- Supporting planning capacity in rapidly urbanising and climate-vulnerable contexts, including fragile, conflict-affected and recovery settings;

- Aligning climate finance with territorial planning and implementation, including enabling direct or facilitated access for subnational actors;
- Embedding rights-based and participatory approaches in development and climate governance, including strong participatory governance and the meaningful inclusion of affected communities, including Indigenous Peoples where relevant, recognising that legitimacy is essential for effective and sustained implementation;
- Ensure that transition roadmaps integrate key policy dimensions, including energy access, subsidy reform, economic diversification and finance, within coherent territorial implementation frameworks;
- Promoting structured knowledge exchange, capacity-building and dialogue platforms connecting cities, regions and planning professionals, including practitioner-led forums that support peer learning, multilevel coordination and the translation of global commitments into territorial action.

The role of the planning community

ISOCARP, through the Initiative for Climate Resilience Planning (ICRP), brings together planning professionals, researchers and policymakers committed to advancing regenerative, climate-resilient and inclusive sustainable territorial development.

The global planning community stands ready to support the COP30 Presidency Roadmaps through knowledge exchange, capacity-building and collaboration with national and local governments, including cities and regions, and by acting as solution-oriented mediators across public, private and community actors in the implementation of climate action, while strengthening the capacity of municipal planning systems.

Strengthening the role of planning in climate governance will be essential to translate global commitments into effective localised climate action. The planning community, as part of the broader ecosystem of non-state actors, plays a critical role in translating climate commitments into implementable, place-based solutions.