
Advice on the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment

Responding to FCCC/SBI/2021/L.18 Para. 13

Addressing the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment in-session technical workshop and short-term action plan

ABOUT CITIZENS' CLIMATE INTERNATIONAL

Citizens' Climate International (CCI)¹ is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization focused on ensuring all people are effectively included in the process of shaping a sustainable future. We work to empower citizen-driven climate civics everywhere, with more than 150 chapters in 76 countries. We further our mission through four programs that advance the climate-smart and just transformation:

1. Volunteer Policy Advocates;
2. Civic Diplomacy;
3. Carbon Pricing;
4. Resilience Intelligence.

CCI, as an observer to the UNFCCC process, supports the success of multilateral agreements to act on climate by expanding civic engagement capacities and spaces across different levels of governance. It is our view that all people are climate stakeholders, regardless of status or station, and that this comes with a number of fundamental rights:

- To inherit a climate undisrupted by human activity.
- To expect public officials to act in service of this universal and necessary right.
- To build lives of opportunity and prosperity, within that undisrupted climate.
- To be recognized as legitimate voices for a vision of future climate stability.

We welcome the adoption of the Glasgow Work Programme and the opportunity to inform the in-session workshop and short-term action plan in order to ensure we can strengthen and catapult ACE as a key enabler of achieving the 1.5C limit goal by tackling climate change at speed and scale.

BACKGROUND

When we talk about “climate action”, we are talking about transformational change across all sectors and down to the community level. Whether the subject is energy policy, trade policy, technological innovation, finance, or resilience measures, climate action touches human experience and requires human-scale commitment and capability.

¹ To follow up on this submission, please contact the CCI core team at inquiries@citizensclimateintl.org

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) is more than information, awareness, and training; it is an active, everyday measure of a society's ability to carry out pervasive, multisector climate-smart transformation at all scales. ACE provides the foundational toolkit for ensuring we unlock the benefits of an informed and active society

Assertive, coordinated, inclusive, and balanced action on all 6 elements of ACE can, and should:

- foster locally rooted direct and ongoing public participation in climate-related decision-making,
- ensure the flow of sound scientific information and boost innovation to accelerate ambitious climate action planning
- build capacity for communities, industries, and public agencies, to meet bold climate goals, sustainable development and a just transition
- and attract additional resources attuned to that enhanced ambition and capacity.

In other words, Action for Climate Empowerment is a way to ensure climate policy aligns better with human need and local capability and aspiration, and major climate-related investments line up with the most effective locally rooted sustainable development and climate resilience measures.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE IN-SESSION WORKSHOP

The in-session workshop should be a 2-day convening that includes participation of parties and observers and focuses on leveraging linkages between means of implementation and relevant workstreams of the UNFCCC. We propose the examination of 2 priorities per day to identify challenges, opportunities in existing support mechanisms within and outside the UN system for mainstreaming ACE into national climate policies, plans, budgets, strategies, and action. As part of the opportunities, the in-session workshop should explore partnerships with civil society and other relevant ACE actors to expand capacity for ACE Implementation. This Additionally, it should explore how participatory ACE Strategies act as an enabler of policy coherence and coordination, resource mobilization, and MRE.

SHORT-TERM ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on our 2020 submission for the Doha Work Programme review and our call for a strong and principled Glasgow Work Programme, we recommend that the next Glasgow Work Programme Action Plan:

1. Honor the right to know, right to act and right to participate of all people in environmental and climate impacts and policy.
2. Foster effective public participation and access to information in all aspects of climate-related decision-making.
3. Incentivize and support decentralization of knowledge production, policy design, technological and administrative capacity, and economic incentives to work toward climate stability.
4. Invite communities and decision-makers into shared meeting spaces to foster deeper-rooted, more structurally sound national policy proposals.

5. Engage and support National ACE Focal Points for advancing ACE agenda both locally and interregionally.
6. Provide guidance to the ACE NFP to be involved in other relevant workstreams to ensure a cross-cutting implementation of all the elements through the policies and projects implemented under the Convention.
7. Gather and distribute knowledge about best practices, critical interactions between policy design priorities and rights, with national budget support.
8. Include multiscale participatory reporting and future visioning processes that feed new, shared, and locally rooted knowledge into spaces for supranational decision-making.

PROCEDURAL SUPPORT

We further recommend the following modes of procedural support:

- Recognize partnerships to expand capacity of the Secretariat and Parties to advance ACE Implementation locally, regionally and Internationally. We support:
 - universal deployment of the Engage4Climate Toolkit for local stakeholder meetings;
 - The ACE Observatory as a coherent monitoring and evaluation tool to bridge the gap between civil society expectations and government action
 - ACE-aligned climate civics as a means of achieving and measuring science and people-centered climate activation;
 - the People's Pavilion, a virtual climate empowerment lab to expand access at the Conference of the Parties.
 - the ECOS Community of education, communication, and outreach stakeholders;
- Alignment of capacity-building, technology transfer, and mainstream financial resources with ACE-enabled economic diversification;
- An ACE global platform for active sharing of best practices, strategies for overcoming challenges, resources, and reported benefits of ACE activity;
- ACE metrics to assess climate action capability at the community level, with the aim of accelerating science-informed sustainable development, including diverse and traditional knowledge;
- People-centered climate action as a shared priority, informed by year-round formal and informal programs of thematic multi-stakeholder roundtables, town hall meetings, and citizens' assemblies, at local, national, and international levels;
- Ministerial participation in ACE roundtables at the international level, to build capacity across areas of public policy and national action.
- Structured ACE Dialogue that allow for the share of ACE Implementation for systematic transformation following the Engage4Climate Toolkit to ensure the Dialogues are dynamic, results-oriented, and participatory. These should be collaboratively designed between the UNFCCC ACE Secretariat, Parties, and civil society.

- In-person Marketplace that facilitates collaborations, partnership, and exploration of new and repurposed financing mechanism to support mainstreaming of ACE into national climate policies and budgets as well as to support the participation of civil society in ACE activity.
- Regional workshops to share experiences and support capacity-building on ACE budgeting, including the mainstreaming of ACE into national budgets to advance climate empowerment climate policies, plans, strategies and action, as appropriate.

Because climate action touches all aspects of human experience, need and aspiration, national governments' chances of succeeding in their climate emergency response will depend on active ongoing participation of an informed public. It is vital that a robust Glasgow Work Programme Action Plan should be adopted at COP27.

ACTIVE, ONGOING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

A critical step for any nation looking to make full use of the value-building potential of ACE is to welcome non-governmental ACE leadership, while continuing to use public authority to stimulate bold and inclusive transformational climate action.

ACE knowledge-exchange networks should be welcomed, both as formal means of implementation and as informal civil society-driven ACE support mechanisms. They can take many forms:

- They can be formalized institutions, with or without a physical headquarters.
- They can be formalized networks, where convening and information management are shared responsibilities of partner institutions.
- They can be informal networks of communities and stakeholders, of all varieties, including governments and the private sector.
- They can adaptive, collaborative innovation hubs, oriented toward localizing the human development benefits of major climate action initiatives.

Knowledge sharing is critical to a society's ability to integrate insights grounded in the best available science into everyday experience. We call this science activation, and will be building a cooperative training program to build capacity for civic engagement as a lever for science activation.

BROAD ACTION PLAN LANGUAGE

We support an Action Plan for the Glasgow Work Programme that:

1. Integrates ACE into relevant workstreams of the UNFCCC
2. Mainstreams ACE across the Convention and Paris Agreement
3. Provides adequate funding to ensure adequate resourcing, capacity building, and ongoing support for the Glasgow Work Programme
4. Establishes of an ACE marketplace or cooperative platform to match needs with resources

We further support strong and detailed ACE National Strategies, recognizing that in some cases the optimal ACE strategy will be decentralized and dependent on actions by non-Party stakeholders, including civil society, subnational jurisdictions, and communities, and coalitions.

- We encourage interagency work, within governments, and for public participation to become a normal part of climate-related policy-making at the local, agency, and integrated national levels.
- Nationally Determined Contributions should look to ACE activity as a grounding and ambition-raising mechanism—helping national policy to put down roots at the community level, secure support from the public, and optimize the delivery of climate-related development finance suited to local needs and aspirations.
- We welcome the Glasgow Work Programme’s recognition of the role of communities and non-Party stakeholders in facilitating, coordinating, and sustaining ACE activity, including through training and partnerships.
- We also welcome the active encouragement for Parties to welcome public participation in the design and implementation of climate policies.

We will work with partners, and with aligned Parties and agencies, to create conditions for the Action Plan to be outlined at the mid-year negotiations in Bonn to consolidate real empowerment gains for stakeholders and communities.