

Concept Note

Towards COP31: Local Climate Action Policy Dialogue

“Local Leadership, Inclusive Urban Resilience and Sustainable Transformation”

Format: Regional Municipal Dialogues and a COP31 Showcase

Regional Hubs: Muğla, Gaziantep

COP31 Showcase: Antalya, on the margins of COP31

Partners: United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia (UCLG-MEWA), World Academy for Local Development (WALD), UN Türkiye and COP31 High-Level Climate Champion

1. Background and Rationale

Climate change is increasingly a **local development, urban resilience human security and social inclusion challenge**. Cities and municipalities are at the frontline of climate impacts, while also holding many of the levers required to deliver practical solutions in urban planning, infrastructure, transport, water and sanitation, energy, solid waste management, care and social services public space, ecosystem protection, public services and local economic development. The successful implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, Belem Gender Action Plan adopted in COP30 and other global commitments therefore depends on strengthening the connection between **global ambition, national policy and local implementation**. Yet municipalities continue to face significant barriers, including limited fiscal space, constrained access to climate finance, institutional and technical capacity gaps, fragmented governance, insufficient data and difficulties in developing investment-ready climate projects. Türkiye's hosting of COP31 provides a unique opportunity to strengthen the role of municipalities in the global climate agenda and demonstrate how climate ambition can be translated into practical action at the local level. The initiative will seek to promote inclusive, people-centered and gender-responsive local climate action, recognizing that climate impacts and opportunities are experienced differently across communities.

Against this backdrop, **UCLG-MEWA, WALD, UN Türkiye and the COP31 High-Level Climate Champion** will convene Regional Local Climate Action Policy Dialogues, hosted by the municipalities of **Muğla and Gaziantep**. These cities will serve as **regional hubs**, bringing together municipalities and stakeholders from surrounding provinces and cities. This approach will capture diverse local experiences and priorities while building a coherent national dialogue on local climate action. The outcomes of the Regional Dialogues will be consolidated and showcased through a dedicated **Local Climate Action Side Event in Antalya on the margins of COP31**, creating a direct bridge between Türkiye's municipalities and the international climate community. The initiative also responds directly to the COP31 Presidency's focus on implementation and its priorities on climate-resilient cities, zero waste, food security, clean energy, green industrialization, youth and education, health, Rio Convention synergies and the Climate Implementation Bridge. It will connect relevant municipal

solutions to the six axes of the Global Climate Action Agenda and, where feasible, to existing Plans to Accelerate Solutions.

2. Objective

Overall Objective

To strengthen local climate leadership and accelerate the translation of national and global climate commitments into **resilient, inclusive and measurable local action**, while bringing the priorities, solutions and investment needs of Türkiye's municipalities to COP31. The outcome document e.g., a small set of policy recommendations or key messages are expected to feed into the ministerial session or Cities Day roundtables during COP31

Specific Objectives

The initiative will:

- Strengthen the voice and visibility of municipalities in the COP31 process through better alignment with the Global Climate Action Agenda;
- Facilitate structured dialogue among municipalities across Türkiye's regions;
- Identify local and regional climate risks, priorities, policy gaps and investment needs;
- Promote access to climate and development finance for municipalities;
- Promote the integration of climate action into spatial and urban plans, municipal budgets, infrastructure programmes and service-delivery systems and
- Share and scale successful local climate solutions;
- Strengthen city-to-city, South-South and triangular cooperation; and
- Develop concrete policy recommendations and messages for COP31.

3. Regional Hub-and-Spoke Model

The initiative will establish **regional dialogue hubs** rather than organizing standalone municipal events.

Each host municipality will convene municipalities from surrounding provinces and cities, together with relevant public institutions, financial actors, academia, private sector and civil society. The approach will enable each dialogue to reflect the specific climate, economic, geographical and social characteristics of its wider region.

Regional Hub	Regional Focus
Muğla	Coastal resilience, tourism, water security, biodiversity, nature-based solutions and sustainable development
Gaziantep	Resilient cities, green industry, circular economy, migration/human mobility and inclusive transition

Participants will include:

- Mayors and municipal leadership;
- Municipal technical and planning departments;
- Provincial and national public institutions;
- UCLG-MEWA and WALD;
- UN Türkiye and relevant UN entities;
- COP31 High-Level Climate Champion representatives;
- International financial institutions and development partners;
- Banks and climate finance actors;
- Universities and research institutions;

- Private sector and technology providers;
- Civil society, youth and community representatives.

4. Thematic Architecture

The Regional Dialogues will follow a **common six-theme framework**, allowing regional perspectives to be compared and consolidated into a coherent contribution to COP31.

Theme #1: Local Leadership and Multi-Level Climate Governance

This theme will constitute the **Mayoral Roundtable** and examine:

- the role of municipalities and provincial institutions in implementing national climate commitments;
- coordination between national and local climate policies;
- local climate action plans and targets;
- Alignment with spatial plans and urban development strategies;
- institutional mechanisms for multi-level climate governance; and
- strengthening the voice of cities in national and global climate processes.
- strengthening inclusive participation and representation in local climate decision-making.”

Theme #2: Urban Resilience and Climate-Responsive Development

Thematic discussions at the **Technical Round Table** will address:

- climate-resilient infrastructure;
- adaptation and disaster risk reduction;
- extreme heat, drought and other climate risks;
- resilient urban planning and regeneration;
- urban forestry and nature-based approaches for climate resilience;
- inclusive and climate-resilient public services;
- Community-based resilience and locally led adaptation
- sustainable mobility; and
- protection of critical infrastructure and services.

Theme #3: Localizing Climate Finance

The session at the **Technical Round Table** will focus on closing the gap between local climate ambition and available finance, including:

- municipal access to climate finance;
- development and investment banks;
- green bonds and sustainable finance;
- blended finance and guarantees;
- public-private partnerships;
- inclusive and gender-responsive approaches to municipal climate finance;
- project preparation; and
- development of investment-ready municipal climate projects.

Theme #4: Just and Inclusive Transition

The discussion at the **Technical Round Table** will consider:

- energy poverty and affordability;
- green jobs and skills;
- climate-induced migration and displacement;
- social protection and care systems as resilience infrastructure;
- gender equality, women’s leadership and meaningful participation;
- youth engagement; and
- vulnerable communities and Leaving No One Behind.

Theme #5: Water, Food, Nature and Circularity

The dialogue at the **Technical Round Table** will examine interconnected climate and development systems, including:

- water security and drought resilience;
- climate-resilient agriculture and food systems;
- biodiversity and ecosystem restoration;
- nature-based solutions;
- zero waste and circular economy;
- community-based and locally led approaches to water, food and ecosystem resilience;
- resource efficiency; and
- integrated water-energy-food approaches.

Theme #6: Innovation, Technology and Data

The final thematic session at the **Technical Round Table** will explore:

- climate data and risk mapping;
- artificial intelligence and digital solutions;
- early-warning systems;
- smart-city applications;
- emissions monitoring;
- sex-disaggregated data and inclusive approaches to climate data and decision-making;
- digital decision-support systems; and
- technology transfer and innovation.

5. Two-Day Dialogue Format

Each regional dialogue will follow a common two-day structure, combining high-level political engagement, thematic policy discussions and practical exposure to local climate solutions.

The afternoon of Day 2 will be dedicated to **field visits to selected local climate action initiatives** in the host municipality and/or surrounding municipalities.

Potential sites may include:

- renewable energy installations;
- energy-efficiency projects;
- water management and wastewater reuse;
- waste and circular economy facilities;
- sustainable mobility systems;
- climate-resilient urban transformation;
- urban agriculture and food systems;
- nature-based solutions;
- smart-city applications; and
- disaster risk reduction and early-warning systems.

The field visits will serve as a **practical policy laboratory**, allowing participants to examine how local climate solutions are designed, financed, implemented and potentially replicated elsewhere. Participants will be encouraged to assess each initiative through five dimensions:

1. **Climate impact** — What mitigation or adaptation impact has been achieved?
2. **Financial model** — How was it financed and what is its economic model?
3. **Institutional model** — What governance arrangements made implementation possible?
4. **Social impact** — Who benefits and how are vulnerable groups included?
5. **Scalability** — What would be required to replicate the model elsewhere?

6. From Regional Dialogues to COP31

The Regional Dialogues will constitute **one integrated national process**. Following each dialogue, the key findings will be documented against a common framework, allowing the partners to identify:

- shared national priorities;
- region-specific climate challenges;
- policy and institutional barriers;
- municipal financing and investment needs;
- scalable local solutions;
- opportunities for inter-municipal and international cooperation; and
- priority recommendations for COP31.

The findings will then be synthesized into a consolidated **Local Climate Action Call to COP31** highlighting commitments and actions related to the 6 Axis of the Climate Action Agenda. This also includes thematic priorities announced by the COP31 Presidency and the commitment to people-centered approaches advocated by the COP31 Climate High Level Champion.

7. COP31 Local Climate Action Side Event — Antalya

The regional process will culminate in a dedicated **Local Climate Action Side Event in Antalya on the margins of COP31**. The Side Event will provide an international platform for participating municipalities to present the outcomes of the Regional Dialogues and demonstrate how local governments are contributing to the COP31 Global Climate Action Agenda.

8. Expected Outputs

Regional Outputs

- Regional Local Climate Action Dialogue Reports;
- Regional climate priorities and policy recommendations;
- Documentation of good municipal practices;
- Identification of potential climate investment opportunities;
- Identification of city-to-city and regional cooperation opportunities.

COP31 Outputs

- **Local Climate Action Call to COP31;**
- Consolidated synthesis of municipal climate priorities;
- Portfolio of scalable local climate solutions;
- Preliminary municipal climate investment/project pipeline;
- Policy recommendations on multi-level climate governance and local climate finance;
- Strategic messages and case studies for COP31 dissemination.

9. Expected Outcomes

The initiative aims to contribute to:

- A stronger, more inclusive and more coordinated municipal voice in the COP31 process;
- Alignment in terms of messages with the Local Government Municipal Authorities (LGMA)
- Improved national-local climate policy coordination;
- Greater access to climate and development finance;
- Increased development of investment-ready municipal climate projects;
- Stronger city-to-city, South-South and triangular cooperation;
- Greater visibility and replication of successful local climate solutions; and
- A stronger connection between the **COP31 Global Climate Action Agenda and implementation at the local level.**

10. Guiding Questions

The following guiding questions will structure the discussions across the Regional Local Climate Action Dialogues. Each session should conclude with **2–3 concrete priorities, recommendations or actions** to inform the regional synthesis and the Local Climate Action Call to COP31.

10.1 Mayoral Roundtable — Local Leadership and Multi-Level Climate Governance

1. What are the most pressing climate risks and priorities facing municipalities in the region, and how are they affecting local development agendas?
2. What are the main institutional, regulatory and capacity barriers preventing municipalities from translating climate commitments into concrete action?
3. How can national climate policies, NDC implementation and local climate action plans be better aligned through stronger multi-level governance?
4. What additional mandates, capacities, financing mechanisms or technical support do municipalities need to accelerate local climate action?
5. What support is needed from national governments and international partners to implement and scale local climate solutions?
6. How can municipalities strengthen inclusive participation and representation in local climate governance and decision-making?
7. What are the three most important actions that mayors would like to see reflected in the COP31 Global Climate Action Agenda?

10.2 Thematic Roundtable I — Urban Resilience and Climate-Responsive Development

1. What are the most significant climate risks facing cities in the region, and which infrastructure, services and communities are most vulnerable?
2. How can climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and mitigation be better integrated into urban planning and investment decisions?
3. What innovative approaches, including nature-based solutions, can strengthen the resilience of urban infrastructure and public services?
4. How can climate-resilient urban transformation be made more inclusive and financially feasible for municipalities and communities?
5. How are cities integrating Urban Heat Resilience and Cooling mechanisms in city development plans?
6. Which successful local solutions could be replicated or scaled across Türkiye and brought to the international climate agenda through COP31?

10.3 Thematic Roundtable II — Localizing Climate Finance

1. What are the principal barriers preventing municipalities from accessing domestic and international climate and development finance?
2. How can municipalities strengthen their capacity to develop investment-ready and bankable climate projects?
3. How are municipalities aligning with national policies to ensure Decarbonisation and Resilient
4. Buildings, Constructions and Infrastructure?
5. What role can development banks, IFIs, commercial banks, climate funds and private investors play in closing the municipal climate finance gap?
6. How can blended finance, guarantees, green bonds, sustainable finance instruments and project-preparation facilities help mobilize greater investment at the local level?
7. How can climate finance mechanisms better support communities and groups that face disproportionate climate risks and barriers to access?

8. What concrete changes should COP31 promote to enable cities and municipalities to access more climate finance and accelerate implementation?

10.4 Thematic Roundtable III — Just and Inclusive Transition

1. Which communities and groups are most vulnerable to the social and economic impacts of climate change and the green transition in the region?
2. How can municipalities ensure that climate policies reduce inequalities while addressing energy poverty, affordability and access to essential services?
3. How can local climate investments generate decent green jobs, skills and new economic opportunities?
4. How should municipalities address climate-induced migration and displacement while ensuring inclusive and resilient local services?
5. **How can COP31 help ensure that the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy is fair, inclusive and locally owned?**

10.5 Thematic Roundtable IV — Water, Food, Nature and Circularity

1. What are the most significant climate-related threats to water security, food systems, biodiversity and ecosystems in the region?
2. How can municipalities strengthen resilience to drought, water scarcity, floods and changing precipitation patterns through integrated water and land management?
3. How can climate-resilient food systems, nature-based solutions, biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration be better integrated into local development planning?
4. How can zero-waste and circular economy approaches reduce emissions, improve resource efficiency and create new local economic opportunities?
5. **Which integrated water, food, nature or circularity solutions have the greatest potential for replication and international scale-up through COP31?**

10.6 Thematic Roundtable V — Innovation, Technology and Data

1. What are the most important data, technology and capacity gaps currently limiting effective local climate planning and decision-making?
2. How can municipalities make better use of climate data, geospatial technologies, artificial intelligence and digital tools for risk assessment, planning and monitoring?
3. How can technology strengthen early-warning systems, climate-risk management and the resilience of critical urban infrastructure and services?
4. What partnerships between municipalities, universities, technology companies and other stakeholders are needed to move from pilots to scalable solutions?
5. **How can COP31 accelerate the responsible use of technology, data and AI to make local climate action faster, smarter, more inclusive and measurable?**

* * *

End of Document