1. **Context**

**For the past several decades and all over the world**, local and regional governments and civil society organisations have been actively involved in actions of cooperation with their counterparts in other countries, guided in particular by the principles of equality, solidarity, reciprocity and subsidiarity. Local and regional governments, as democratically elected public institutions in charge of establishing public policies that adhere closely to citizens’ needs and of providing essential services that affect people’s daily lives, therefore possess the necessary legitimacy to help each other and to build up their capacities through cooperation.

Thus, local governments, whether from urban, rural, coastal or mountainous areas, and their associations have cooperated in all the different areas that fall under their competence: essential services such as water, sanitation, waste, health, transport, lighting, access to energy, housing, but also in spatial planning, food and agricultural production, preservation and management of natural resources, etc. Their specificity consists in bringing their know-how in the fields of capacity building, training, exchanges and support in projects management.

What is commonly called “city-city cooperation”, “municipal international cooperation”, “twinning” or “decentralised cooperation” actually refers to an extreme patchwork of realities and encompasses a very broad variety of practices.

In many European countries, the actions of authorities represent a significant proportion of official development assistance (for example, in France, it has been estimated that in 2013, official development assistance coming from LRAs amounted to 60.2 million euro). In certain countries, local and regional governments have made ambitious financial commitments in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals; in Spain for example, the government of the Basque Country sets aside 0.7% of its revenue for international cooperation. LRAs and their associations have increasingly become more involved in actions of cooperation specifically focused on the fight against the effects of climate change; in Germany since 2011, with the support of the federal government, 50 municipalities have entered into partnerships with their Southern counterparts in order to bring solutions to the vulnerabilities of territories caused by climate change.

Civil society organisations are doing work that is both vital and complementary: through actions consisting of advocacy, capacity-building, awareness campaigns and their facilitation, they foster people’s participation in decision-making processes, strengthen the civic dimension of partnerships, promote people’s ownership of the actions taken and the feeling of shared responsibility.

Local and regional governments and civil society organisations sometimes act in a one-sided manner, but just as often side-by-side. They form multi-actor partnerships that help to aggregate and structure the action of all the actors from both territories around a cooperation framework built for the long-term and which fully subscribes to the principles of development effectiveness.

These actions contribute to the objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and of adapting to the impact of climate change. These partnerships also have the potential of offering a territorial approach to finding solutions, moving beyond sectoral approaches; climate challenges require that a response be found.

**In fact, responding to climate challenges requires that traditional partnerships be re-examined**. These challenges call for the systematic development of a comprehensive overview of a territory, its vulnerabilities, its strengths and the challenges to be addressed in both the short- and medium-term. This also entails having a good understanding of not only the climate element but the development dimension of this territory as well.

Methodological change also needs to be introduced: all the stakeholders concerned (State, population, private sector, researchers, etc.) need to be involved. These partnerships must evolve into more inclusive partnerships made up of elements from all of society, including the most vulnerable groups, with responsibilities entrusted to all, collectively and individually, based on shared governance.

They must help to equip the territories in terms of planning, and integrated resource management tools, in order to improve their resilience.

Alongside inter-state cooperation, these territorial partnerships will allow for true collaboration in addressing these shared problems, to have exchanges, to compare practices and innovate, to foster peer-based sharing of expertise regarding sustainable development policies, in keeping with the challenges of climate change.

**2. Best practices**

Examples of partnerships that have already achieved this watershed exist. We have selected only a few to present here, but we could have included many more.

**Dakar Region (Senegal) – Regional Council of Ile-de-France (France)**

Within the context of decentralised cooperation activities going back nearly 20 years, the Dakar Region sought the Ile-de-France Region’s assistance in drawing up its Integrated Territorial Climate Plan (the first ITCP in Africa). This ITCP contained both a dimension of mitigation (willingness to develop a green economy) and adaptation (to address territorial vulnerabilities such as coastal erosion, soil dryness, floods). This approach entailed identifying all the sectoral initiatives in view of harmonising them in a shared and coherent development strategy. Civil society and all local authorities on the territory were also kept involved throughout the process, thus demonstrating the virtues of dialogue, participation and coordination.

**Bojanala Platinium District (South Africa) – Ho (Ghana) – Lahti (Finland)**

These three authorities entered into a tripartite cooperation focusing on capacity-building, i.e. increasing the autonomy of their administrations, enhancing their responsibilities and training their personnel, with regard to water management and air quality, evaluation and preservation of the climate, education and increased awareness on environmental issues (for both policy makers and the general population), waste management, cleaning of water pollution and the planning of new environmental policies based on local needs. This tripartite cooperation allowed for the institution of a peer-based evaluation mechanism (peer review) with a dimension of equality among the partners and of mutual learning.

**State of Minas Gerais (Brazil) – Region of Nord Pas de Calais (France)**

The state of Minas Gerais and the region of Nord Pas de Calais decided to focus their decentralised cooperation partnership on the elaboration of a Territorial Climate Energy Plan in the Brazilian state, with a specific focus on adaptation to climate change and reduction of emissions. This project was supported, among other, by two environmental agencies: ADEME (France) and FEAM (Minas Gerais). They helped the two regional governments in the elaboration of a global and integrated climate strategy, based on an evaluation of GHG emissions and the vulnerabilities of the territory. Both regions also made efforts to involve all stakeholders from their territories.

**Wales (United Kingdom) – Mbale (Uganda)**

Longstanding ties between the communities of the Mbale District, very vulnerable to climate uncertainties, and Wales, which has pledged to reduce CO2 emissions on its territory by 40% by 2020, were already well-established when the two territories decided to work together on a territorial approach to climate change. Their partnership supports the institutional capacity-building of Ugandan local decision makers in the design and implementation of an ITCP, which includes the objectives of reducing poverty and sustainable development and which resulted in particular in:

* The setting up of a platform of coordination for scheduling the work on climate change in the region;
* The identification of current and future threats;
* The planting of a million trees;
* The mobilisation of international financing;
* The setting up of a meteorological monitoring system.

**“Declic” – an initiative by Enda**

This initiative aims at raising awareness of the citizens in the global South regarding climate emergency, but also at offering civil society of the global South a platform to share innovative solutions, and formulate messages and positions on inclusive and sustainable solutions to face climate change and its effects, in order to influence decisions on climate at national, regional and international level.

**3. Recommendations and commitments of territorial actors to promote the development of partnerships and cooperations**

Buoyed by the complementary nature of these different local and regional actors (federal structures of local and regional authorities, local and regional authorities themselves and civil society organisations), who are working together to promote, support and implement cooperation projects and who are coming up with answers to the challenges of climate change at the level closest to the population, we encourage them:

* **To support and recognise coalitions of non-state-actors in the area of international cooperation:**
  + Recognise the contribution of cooperation between territories in fighting climate change and its effects.
  + In developing cooperations and exchanges of best practices South-South, such as what is being done in the Mediterranean Basin.
* **To extend the integration of climate issues in their areas of intervention:**
* By capitalising on and disseminating success stories – best practices – specifically on endogenous practices for adaptation - by integrating the question of climate change through the use of network communications in particular (website, newsletter, etc.) and specific categories that facilitate the sharing of best practices on this theme;
* By raising awareness and advocating the strengthening of international cooperation actions focusing on climate change issues through communications, debates, workshops, etc.
* By promoting a secured enabling environment for decentralised cooperation, and cooperation tools, in order to stimulate cooperation.
* By supporting the dynamics of territorial cooperation geared towards climate issues (through actions to raise awareness, training, capacity-building, etc.) and by promoting the participation and involvement of citizens, such as in the “DECLIC” initiative,. Likewise, Cités Unies France (United Cities – France) and the ARENE agency of Ile de France region, will continue supporting French local and regional governments, through the development and dissemination of tools and know-how, so that they include a climate dimension to their cooperation.
* By facilitating exchanges of technical experience focusing on cooperation on climate issues through frameworks of exchange (e.g. working groups) specifically dedicated to forms of cooperation on climate, supported by inter-disciplinary research.
* **To initiate operating mechanisms for innovative forms of cooperation in response to the challenges presented by climate change:**
* By formulating integrated policies, in particular by incorporating a dimension of international cooperation in territorial policies for sustainable development.
* By developing methodological tools – which take into account the gender dimension, cultural dimension, endogenous know-how of territories and the necessity to preserve them - for the development of innovative “win-win” projects: agenda 21 processes, integrated approaches to development, territorial climate energy plans, spaces for collective learning: “Communities of Practices”’;
* By developing tools that enable access and sharing of data in a systematic way.
* By promoting mechanism that enable citizens’ participation, with a specific focus on women – in particular in rural environments – on youth and vulnerable people participation, in the definition and implementation of cooperations.
* By strengthening the transfer and exchange of expertise and experience in the following areas: transport and mobility; sanitation and waste; water; access to energy; energy efficiency; adaptation/vulnerability of territories/resilience; agriculture; management of natural resources; risk management; ecosystem-based management of natural areas; urban planning; sustainable housing.
* By strengthening the capacities of local and regional governments to monitor greenhouse gas emissions on their territories, on the basis of the experience learnt via initiatives such as Carbon Climate Registry, Making Cities resilient, the Covenant of Mayors, the Compact of States and Regions, the Pact of Islands etc.
* By developing interdisciplinary approaches to planning and by implementing training and capacity-building actions in targeted areas;
* By supporting service delegation initiatives or public/private partnerships in targeted areas, when relevant;
* By replicating successful actions of adaptation and mitigation on the partner territories through mutual agreement;
* By developing exchanges on innovative mechanism to enhance local governance, involving interdisciplinary research in the management of territories.
* **To develop and mobilise innovative financial means to support the launching of cooperation initiatives on climate issues:**
* By using local taxation to mobilise greater resources specifically dedicated to cooperation projects of local and regional authorities;
* By supporting the introduction of innovative funding mechanisms for cooperation. To this end, provisions such as the 1% from water, waste and energy bills (carried out for example in France and in the Basque Country in Spain) can be used as an example to advocate the governments and donors for their extension to the regional and national levels, and to various sectors such as mobility/transport.
* By pooling the means dedicated to partnerships: coordination of actions, triangulations and the use of a consortium approach. The networks can help to ensure that these procedures are systematised;
* By developing financing instruments which include a gender dimension.
* By creating an award expressly honouring actions of cooperation in the area of climate change. The Climate Leadership Award, organised annually by C40, is a good example;
* By supporting the creation of a green fund for territories steered by a coalition of local and regional governments and civil society, which would be funded with innovative financing mechanisms;
* By dedicating parts of the future EU tax on financial transactions to international cooperation between territories.
* By quantifying adaptation measures to enable better access to fundings.

To achieve these objectives, we must bear in mind the assistance received from donors, **International Organisations**, to whom we recommend:

* **Promoting the international cooperation of territories on climate issues**
* By creating a tool to valorise cooperations on sustainable development, based on the experience of the award “European Green Capital” and “European Green Leaf”.
* By integrating the dimension of international cooperation into the Covenant of Mayors and Mayors Adapt initiatives. In this regard, we encourage the European Commission and the networks behind these two initiatives to include a clause encouraging the signatories to share their experience with their partners, with a special reference to decentralised cooperation where applicable;
* By making the financing of projects conditional upon the existence of quantifiable and measurable post-project indicators in order to ensure that there is a real impact in terms of adaptation or mitigation to avoid any hint of *greenwashing*;
* Taking the example of the European Commission, by supporting the efforts of integrated economic areas (such as WAEMU) in strengthening their technical and financial instruments to support South-South-North cooperations undertaken by local and regional governments.
* **Supporting partnerships between territories**
* By increasing the funding mechanisms for cooperation between territories. In this regard, we encourage the European Union to facilitate European and partner countries’ local and regional authorities’ access to the funds of the “Global Public Goods and Challenges” programme so that they can carry out joint actions.

**4. Key recommendations and expectations with regards to the UNFCCC negotiations**

Subnational actors call on the Parties to UNFCCC to:

* Recognise already in the preamble,  the commitments of territories in the fight against climate change and for adaptation, through multi-actor partnerships made at the subnational level and led by local and regional governments;
* Recognise the added value and the transformative role of these partnerships, which complement  inter-governmental cooperation between the States party to the convention and strengthen their commitments:
  + By supporting territorial actors in all countries
  + By strengthening citizens' participation, specially women, and mobilization of all actors in the territory which allow behavioral change.
  + By reinforcing the methodological and financial capacities of territorial actors which will benefit immediate actions and on the long term.
  + By reinforcing interdisciplinary research in the territorial governance.
* Refer in the provisions pertaining to adaptation and the « losses and damages » mechanism to cooperation developed by territorial actors
* Recognize the urgency of mobilizing financing and deploying market mechanisms for territorial actors involved in cooperation (ETS, CDM), NAMA mechanism, green fund, adaptation funds and other international funding by simplifying the access methods.
* Refer to cooperation projects between territories in the provisions relating to sharing of experience and information, based on accessible data.
* Recognise and integrate, in the provisions related to technology transfer, the transformative and facilitating role played by cooperation between territories.
* Recognise the potential of cooperation and partnerships between territories in the strengthening the capacities of territorial actors.  Integrate these cooperation in the provisions and mechanisms relating to capacity building.
* Identify, in the mechanisms relating to reporting, measurement, verification of the commitments and actions of the 'developed' States (annex 1) towards 'developing' States (annex 2), the actions taken by local and regional governments with civil society in partnerships for the benefit of their local partners; and adapt these mechanisms to monitor the true impacts in reducing GHG emissions and in respecting principles of fairness, transparency and subsidiarity.