

International Public Engagement Case Studies

Brussels Climate Action Plan and Mosaic of Public Engagement Efforts

Brussels' Climate Action Plan is a comprehensive strategy to engage citizens in climate governance and address environmental challenges. Launched in 2021, the plan was developed through a participatory process involving almost 700 citizens across 46 meetings and workshops, leading to over 300 actionable ideas. These ideas were subsequently integrated into the plan by municipal experts, resulting in a framework structured around 11 key areas—energy, water, mobility, waste, and food, among others. The plan outlines 150 strategic objectives and numerous actionable steps for regional climate protection.

The participatory process utilized varied channels for public engagement, including street interviews, neighborhood meetings, thematic workshops, and targeted discussions with young people. A novel aspect of the plan is the establishment of a Local Climate Assembly to guide the plan's objectives and ensure broad community involvement in climate action. Furthermore, the city has mobilized financial aid and support mechanisms to encourage local stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations, to engage in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

A significant innovation within Brussels' climate governance is the creation of the world's first permanent Climate Citizen Assembly. This assembly, comprising 100 randomly selected citizens rotated annually, is tasked with defining themes, proposing solutions, and monitoring the political follow-up to recommendations. Digital platforms like "faireBXLsamen" and the Brussels Open Data Portal have been launched to enhance civic engagement and transparency, enabling wider public participation in decision-making processes and access to governmental data.

This holistic approach not only aims to address climate change effectively but also seeks to foster a more inclusive, transparent, and participatory governance model, emphasizing the critical role of citizen involvement in shaping and achieving climate objectives.

Buenos Aires' Open Data Platform for Climate Transparency, Co-creation, Participation, and Accountability

Buenos Aires has pioneered a groundbreaking approach to climate action by integrating open government and climate initiatives by launching a Climate Action Platform to monitor its climate goals. The platform is centered around the principles of citizen engagement, transparency, and accountability from its inception. The platform was collaboratively designed with civil society organizations, experts, and residents in three phases:

Exploratory Phase: 15 interviews with activists, NGOs, and policymakers identified demands for open data on emissions, transport, energy, and ideas like sustainability incentives and collaborative data collection.

Co-Creation Phase: Workshops and ideathons with 130+ residents, youth, and NGOs spawned civic activation concepts like rewards programs and platforms to connect neighbors for ride-sharing.

Open Data Phase: 30+ datasets covering emissions, climate projections, waste, air quality, etc. demanded in initial phases were published as open data. An open data challenge and hackathon strengthened capacities for reuse.

The hands-on participation of over 600 residents, experts, and NGOs built awareness and produced a tailored, community-centered platform. An Advisory Council on Environment and Sustainable Development created by the Ministry of Environment assisted with platform design and data decisions. Cross-departmental government collaboration coordinated datasets and communications for a coherent user experience.

Ultimately multi-stakeholder engagement achieved public buy-in, met information needs identified by civil society, and implemented transparency as well as participation mechanisms seen as essential to climate progress. This groundbreaking co-creation process underscores that collective action is imperative to deliver a carbon-neutral, resilient, and inclusive Buenos Aires. The resulting platform empowers citizens with targeted data and tools to alter habits and monitor government accountability on key benchmarks.

Dakar's Climate and Energy Action Plan (PCET)

The City of Dakar established a Climate and Energy Action Plan (PCET) focused on stakeholder mobilization and inclusive governance to drive the ecological transition. Upstream adoption was enabled via an organizational architecture:

Steering Committee - Comprised of officials, agencies, and civil society tracking progress and validating adjustments. The mayor's leadership sent a strong legitimacy signal which encouraged participation.

DAKCLIM Platform - A 28-member civil society coalition supporting participation and communication campaigns.

Citizen Dialogue Service - Trained territorial coaches to facilitate public consultations.

Central to the PCET were climate communication and capacity building for social change. Mass awareness campaigns leverage art, outdoor recreation, schools, and the DAKCLIM platform to mobilize residents, youth, and officials into eco-citizenship and eco-responsibility. A few examples include *Ecological Hiking*, *Environmental Hip Hop*, and other trainings. Resulting in the mobilization of more than 2,000 residents and the training of 289 public sector and civil society representatives on climate change, planning, facilitation, energy efficiency, and communication.

Broad public consultations convened elected officials, community leaders, civil society organizations, and cultural associations for inclusive dialogue and co-development. After meticulous stakeholder mapping, Green Ambassadors were appointed to support participatory planning. 57 focus groups engaged 500 stakeholders across all 19 municipalities, leveraging "neighborhood godmothers" as trusted messengers to reach disadvantaged groups.

In total, the PCET established an activated public, trained officials, structured civil society partnerships, and facilitated participatory decision spaces for collaborative climate action. Mayoral leadership and broad participation built social cohesion, while targeted communications and trusted community mobilizers ensured representation of marginalized constituencies. The result is a collectively constructed plan adapted to local contexts and inclusive of gender considerations.