

This paper outlines the important contribution of subnational governments towards the implementation of the UN 10 Year Framework of Programmes

# Subnational Governments: Key Actors in Sustainable Consumption and Production

*An Advocacy Paper*

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Promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production (SCP) was recognised at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg as one of the three overarching objectives of sustainable development. Governments at the Summit called for the development of a 10-year framework of programmes (10YFP) in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards SCP patterns that will promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems.

Subnational governments from around the world who attended the Johannesburg Summit formed the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, nrg4SD. This joint venture demonstrates their willingness to promote Sustainable Development at the subnational government level throughout the world and seek international recognition of the important contribution to Sustainable Development made by subnational governments.

Ten years later, **subnational governments welcome a stable framework for legislation and policy** on SCP and are convinced that such a prospect would provide them with additional means and encouragement to continue playing a crucial role in this area of sustainable development. **Governments at all levels, businesses and civil society can work together enabling** public policy frameworks, economic conditions and incentives, and investments in sustainable infrastructure that will contribute to the implementation of **the 10YFP**.

In this context, from the perspective of subnational governments, **the Marrakech Process should be strengthened to acknowledge the key role played by subnational governments and local authorities and to offer adequate tools to maximise it.**

This advocacy paper outlines the role of subnational governments in Sustainable Consumption and Production in general and, more specifically the potential of their contribution to the Programme areas of the 10YFP.

## Subnational Governments: Key Actors in Sustainable Consumption and Production

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Subnational governments play a vital role in achieving sustainable consumption and production. Either through power-sharing arrangements or constitutional attribution of powers, they are often **responsible for** the elaboration or development of **policy, legislation, fiscal mechanisms and public investments plans** in several areas that **directly contribute to SCP**.

Their close **proximity to citizens** means they have a **prime position to understand needs, challenges, and opportunities** related to SCP, as well as to **influence consumers' behaviour**. Subnational governments are **also used to engaging and cooperating directly** not only **with consumers** but also with **other levels of governance and economic and social actors**, including businesses, academia and NGOs.

**This in depth knowledge of their societies and ability to work in a multilevel and multistakeholder approach is key to foster new business models and more sustainable lifestyles**; as well as **to mainstream SCP** into all policy areas **and to support monitoring and evaluation** processes.

**Green public procurement** by subnational governments is **an essential tool** in this process that **also contributes to the market penetration of innovative SCP resources**.

Confronted to the real needs and opportunities of their territories, subnational governments are **forced to find innovative SCP solutions, also by means of sharing grass-roots knowledge and good practices with other industrialised or emerging subnational governments**.

The **10YFP should** serve to **build stronger bridges between policy makers and policy researchers, including all levels of government, businesses, academia, NGOs, and other key stakeholders**. In order for subnational governments and local authorities to maximise their potential in achieving SCP, **the 10YFP must fulfill its objectives of providing sufficient and adequate tools to encourage partnership between subnational governments, local authorities and all other key stakeholders**.

## The role of Subnational Governments in the Programme Areas of the 10YFP

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Subnational governments can contribute to the programme areas of the Marrakech process in the following way:

**Establish a Conducive Policy Framework** - Subnational governments play a vital role in developing subnational and local programs and frameworks not only on specific SCP matters, but also in general economic regeneration and poverty eradication aspects. The important lessons being learned at the subnational and local levels can often feed into and enhance national policy. Subnational governments also have the ability to mainstream UN guidelines at subnational and local levels. Equally they foster green investment and implement sustainable public procurement policies conducive to the introduction of SCP practices.

**Invest in capacity building, education and raising awareness for sustainable living** - Due to their closeness to citizens and experience in working directly with other stakeholders, subnational governments provide information, advice and tools for more sustainable lifestyles. By promoting traditional values and knowledge for sustainable living, they also play a key role in anchoring education for sustainable lifestyles.

**Promote sustainable procurement practices** – Sustainable procurement is of particular importance and relevance for subnational governments and local authorities as it is a crucial mechanism to tackle many environmental, social and economic issues. Subnational governments have the ability to implement sustainable procurement practices and set standards and guidelines for green procurement. As subnational governments often collaborate with other stakeholders such as businesses, academia or NGOs, they can provide knowledge and expertise to help improve the eco-efficiency of companies at a local level. By encouraging innovative resource efficient products and services, subnational governments support the market penetration of SCP initiatives. As public procurement is the biggest single customer driven market, addressing the skills shortage to ensure more sustainable procurement should be a key pillar of the 10YFP.

**Strengthen waste management systems** – Implementation of waste management strategies requires coordinated efforts by international agencies, national governments, subnational governments, the private sector and civil society. Subnational governments very often develop and implement waste prevention and management programmes adapted to their communities and they do it in close

collaboration with all relevant sectors. Many subnational governments put in place and collect environmental taxes related to waste prevention and management. Subnational governments can influence producers by giving them incentives to design products which use recycled material and reduce waste.

**Support sustainable transport systems** – Subnational governments are particularly well placed to vertebrate their territories by means of city-region approaches to low carbon sustainable transport and interlinkages with national plans. This is why sustainable transport systems must be designed and implemented at subnational and local levels, especially as citizens and communities are affected by local air pollution and related health problems.

**Foster partnerships and collaboration** – Subnational governments have a long-track experience in engaging and working with central governments, cities and other local authorities, businesses, NGOs and financial institutions in an effort to tailor their actions to the particular circumstances of their societies. Besides, they use knowledge and good practice exchange as policy-making tool, either in their bilateral contacts with similar actors or when they come together under the framework of international networks where to address common challenges and learn from each other. The many decentralised cooperation programmes on sustainable development matters that have been established bilaterally between subnational governments from the North and the South over the past years are a clear example of their willingness to collaborate with one another in the achievement of more sustainable societies.



## Global commitment of North and South Subnational Governments to Sustainable Development

The **Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, nrg4SD** works tirelessly to champion the work of subnational governments on sustainable development, including climate action. International organisation representing over 600 subnational governments\* (namely federated states and regional governments) at the global level; nrg4SD promotes understanding, partnerships and projects in sustainable development and seeks greater international recognition of the important contribution of subnational governments towards sustainable development. Member of the Forum Global d'Associations de Régions (FOGAR), nrg4SD is the voice of FOGAR in the field of sustainable development.

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