

REGIONS4 2020 - 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

# Upscaling actions for a resilient future



**WE ACT.  
WE CONNECT.  
WE TRANSFORM.**



## Foreword



The last couple of years we have endured a global pandemic which has exposed social and economic inequalities worldwide, and the inextricable link between human and planetary health.

We have learnt that if the world wants to secure a future where people and planet can thrive together, we must address the interconnected emergencies of biodiversity loss and climate change in a collaborative manner.

**“ Regional Governments are contributing to shaping a new multilateral system that leaves no one behind.**

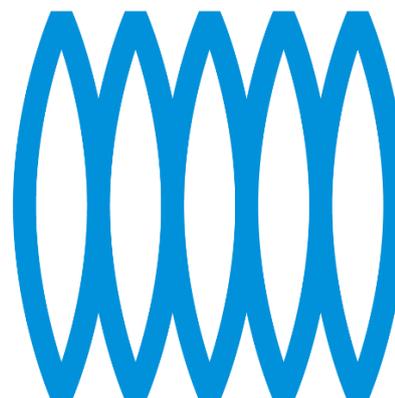
Regional governments have stepped up their efforts to design green recovery plans aligned with the 2030 Agenda, connecting the dots, and drawing lines of action for multilateral governance. They have raised their ambitions and taken bold actions in their territories, while contributing to shape a new multilateral system that leaves no one behind.

Regions4 has continued to catalyse regional leadership, showcasing best practices, advocating for increased recognition, and channelling regions' voice into the main UN fora on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development.

During these challenging years, Regions4 Presidency and Secretariat have gone above and beyond to build a stronger governance model, reinforce member engagement and commitment, strengthen ongoing partnerships, seek new financial support avenues, and deliver impactful actions.

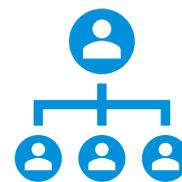
The following pages show the key outcomes of this work during 2020 and 2021, as some of the milestones achieved by a global community of regional leaders working to build a resilient and inclusive post pandemic future.

**Natalia Uribe Pando**  
Secretary General, Regions4



# Transformative governance

In 2020 Regions4 constituency chose the regions that would lead the strategic and political direction of the Network, increase our visibility, and foster new partnerships for a greater impact. In 2021, Regions4 appointed a new Secretary General and welcomed new experts to lead Regions4's roadmap and deliver its actions.



As of 2021, Regions4 governance bodies are formed by:

## Board of Chairs



**Ms Arantxa Tapia**  
**President of Regions4**  
Minister of Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment of the Basque Country



**Mr Rachid El Abdi**  
**VP for Africa**  
President of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra



**Ms Huguette Bello**  
**VP for Asia and the Pacific**  
President of La Réunion



**Mr Sergio Graf**  
**VP for the Americas**  
Secretary of Environment of Jalisco



**Ms Zuhail Demir**  
**VP for Europe**  
Minister for Justice and Enforcement, Environment, Energy and Tourism of Flanders

## Steering Committee



- ❖ Basque Country
- ❖ Catalonia
- ❖ Centre-Nord
- ❖ Flanders
- ❖ Jalisco
- ❖ La Réunion
- ❖ Lombardy
- ❖ Louga
- ❖ Rabat-Salé-Kénitra
- ❖ Quebec
- ❖ Sud Comoé
- ❖ Wales

## Secretariat



**Natalia Uribe Pando**  
**Regions4 Secretary General**



**Ivan Draganic**  
**Executive Director**



**Ivy Moraes**  
**Sustainable Development Manager**



**Renata Gómez**  
**Biodiversity Manager**



**Héloïse Chicou**  
**Climate Advocacy Officer**



**Mayra García-Blásquez**  
**RegionsAdapt Project Officer**



**Susanna Rivero**  
**Treasurer**

## Shared vision, collective roadmap: our strategy

In 2020 Regions4 approved the Strategic Plan 2030 as the roadmap to develop a stronger Network, with more means to have a wider impact for sustainable development, to facilitate greater collaboration among regional governments, and to ensure increased recognition by the international community.

After a consultation and peer review process with members, Regions4 Secretariat introduced the Plan of Action 2021-22 with key actions that would contribute to achieve the goals to 2030.

In order to contribute to the global agendas of biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development in the next two years, Regions4 would focus on:

1

Achieving the adoption of a COP15 Decision that sets out the enabling conditions and means for the subnational implementation of the upcoming biodiversity targets by 2030.

2

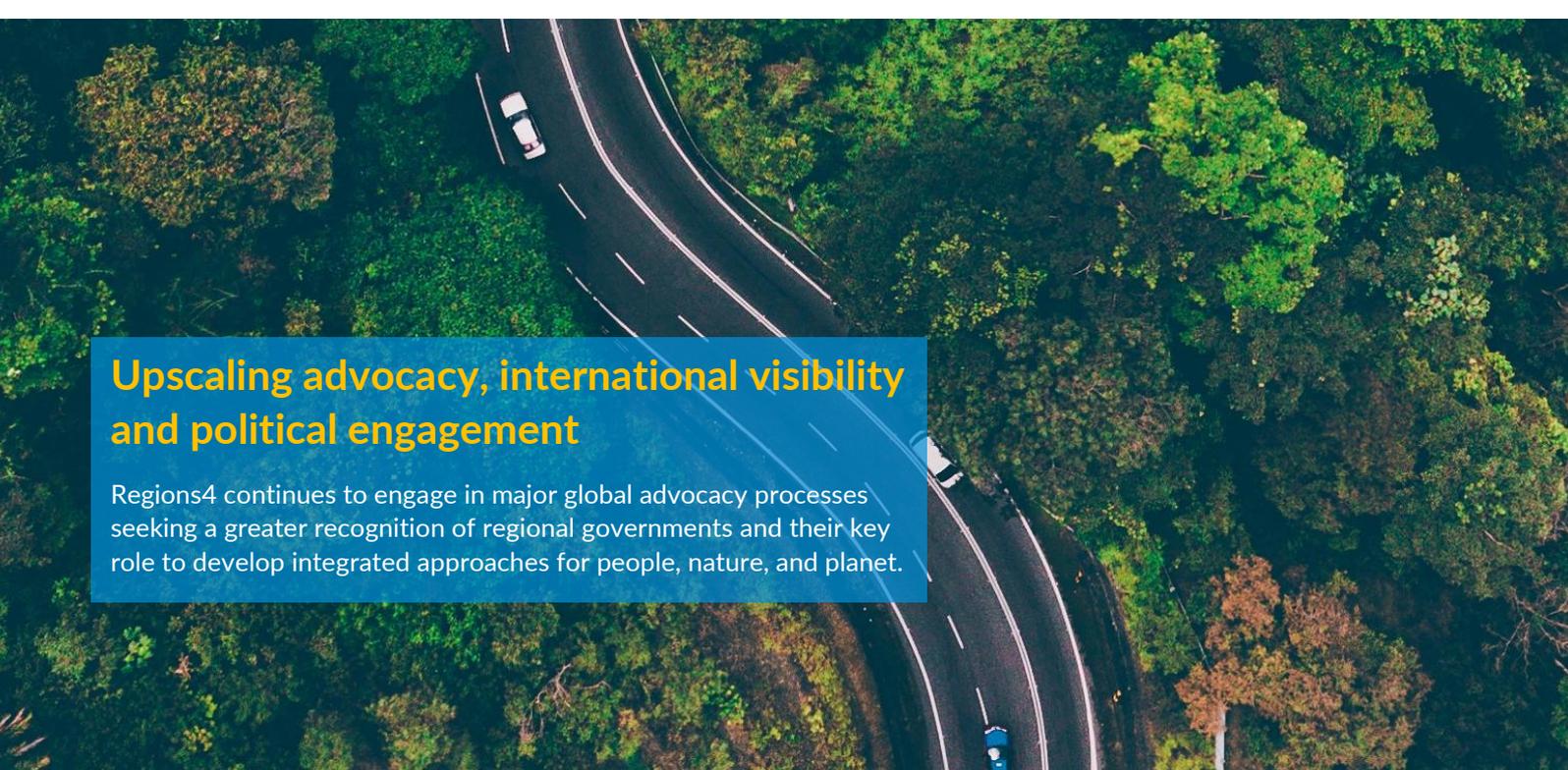
Advocating for multi-level action at COP26 and COP27 that promotes multi-level governance for effective climate action, with joint, amplified, and measurable ambitions on adaptation.

3

Ensuring greater recognition of the key role of regional governments to localise the SDGs and accelerate transformative economic, social, and environmental solutions during the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.

4

Working towards bolstering coalitions and developing alliances for increased impact of Regions4 collective actions to ensure a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future.



### Upscaling advocacy, international visibility and political engagement

Regions4 continues to engage in major global advocacy processes seeking a greater recognition of regional governments and their key role to develop integrated approaches for people, nature, and planet.

# Key Milestones

## Our global efforts for biodiversity

As partner of the Edinburgh Process and coordinator of the [Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and Biodiversity \(AC SNG\) to the Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#), together with the Government of Quebec, Regions4 has worked in support of the [Edinburgh Declaration](#). As part of that effort, **we are strongly advocating for the adoption, at CBD Conference of the Parties (COP15) of a dedicated Decision and a Plan of Action** that outline regional leaders' role in the implementation of the new global biodiversity framework, and to that end, we are raising regions' voice for nature in the main international fora.

**We participated at the [UN Biodiversity Summit](#), and the first part of [CBD COP15](#) calling for the CBD and its Parties to continue to engage all levels of government meaningfully, to bring about the transformations required to live in harmony with nature and create solutions to protect the biodiversity gains.**

Likewise, at [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\) COP26](#) we co-hosted an event with the Government of Scotland and the signatories of the Edinburgh Declaration that showcased global support to our cause, connecting the climate change and biodiversity agendas as well as their key actors.

Additionally, we are **promoting the launch of [RegionsWithNature](#)**, together with global networks of local and subnational actors. A key component of the platform is the [Regions4 Case Study Database](#), designed to strengthen and identify regional champions on biodiversity, create a community of leaders and lay the foundation to implement the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Finally, through our flagship **Regions4 Biodiversity Learning Platform ([R4BLP](#))**, we organised exclusive learning sessions on marine and coastal biodiversity, and led a workshop on the interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development in collaboration with Basque Country, Campeche and Gossas.

Our internal discussions with members and the outcomes of our exchange sessions have helped shape our participation in the resumed negotiations of the SBI-3, SBSTTA-24, and WG2020-3 (March 2022, Geneva) and prepare us for our milestone event, the **7<sup>th</sup> Global Biodiversity Summit of Local and Subnational Governments**, to be held alongside the second part of CBD COP15 (August/September 2022, Kunming, China).



**The Edinburgh Declaration gathers the ambitions and commitments of over 229 local and regional governments towards the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF).**



### Raising ambitions on climate adaptation and resilience

Regions4 has played an influential role throughout 2020 and 2021 to give visibility to the role of regions on leading ambition on adaptation and resilience in collaboration with two key strategic partners: the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities constituency (LGMA) and the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MPGCA).

Our joint advocacy efforts for COP26 ensured that the resulting Glasgow Climate Pact included a concrete mention and recognition of subnational institutions, and the 2-year-programme **Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh** was approved to define and operationalise the global goal on adaptation, recognising the need to help countries measure and track adaptation. In addition, COP26 also saw record-breaking pledges to the Adaptation Fund increasing the fund by 40%.

In contribution to achieving these accomplishments by raising regions' voice, **Regions4 led 27 regions in a strong delegation at COP26**, with a common advocacy strategy and a joint regions' statement co-led with Scotland and Lombardy, calling for further action on resilience and adaptation. Furthermore, Regions4 and RegionsAdapt launched a report highlighting 11 leading practices from regional governments, and organised a high-level event at the Multi-level Action Pavillion, followed by a technical adaptation lab and an official COP side-event on Adaptation Day.

Moreover, the RegionsAdapt initiative positioned itself as the voice of regions for adaptation and resilience within the climate arena. RegionsAdapt became an official partner of the UNFCCC Race to Resilience campaign, which was launched in January 2021 by the High-level Climate Champions. To date, **77 regional governments are committed to continue adapting their territories** while building resilience for the most vulnerable communities and reach the goal of 4 billion resilient people by 2030.

RegionsAdapt also launched the new RegionsAdapt strategy 2021-2022, which was developed in a collaborative manner with our members and in partnership with the Basque Centre for Climate Change – BC3. The strategy aims to transform RegionsAdapt into a boosted initiative offering concrete services to members, supporting advocacy and international visibility, as well as implementation and cooperation amongst regions, thus accelerating action and ambition on adaptation and resilience.



**At COP26 regions jointly called for: ambitious emission reduction targets and pathways to 2030; measurable actions on adaptation; multi-level collaboration; and mobilisation of climate finance based on equity.**



**In 2020 regions reporting to RegionsAdapt and CDP disclosed 232 adaptation actions, with 70% of regions having adopted an adaptation plan and 89% collaborating in national goals and strategies.**

### Regions' actions to deliver on the promise of SDGs

The world is facing a breakthrough moment and Regions4 members have come together to drive a sustainable recovery. At the global level, Regions4 has advocated for the **importance of a more systematic engagement with subnational authorities**, both by increasing the participation in national processes, and promoting a more inclusive multilateral system.

The commemoration of the [75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations](#) and the first two SDG Moments of the Decade of Action reinforced the key role of regional governments in the future global governance. Likewise, the [ECOSOC & HLPF Review](#) and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) Ministerial Declarations successfully included the **recognition of multi-level coordination and Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews**. In our role as Organising Partner of the Local Authorities Major Group (LAMG), Regions4 was strongly involved in those achievements, participating in over 100 meetings with UN bodies and non-governmental stakeholders and contributing to boosting partnerships for the Global Goals.

Regions4 has continued to shine light at numerous synergies and complementarities that can be explored when **implementing integrated approaches on sustainable development** to mainstream SDGs across regional policies and strategies.

In the [2020 HLPF](#), Regions4 gathered Ministers to discuss a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In the [2021 HLPF](#), Regions4 raised the bar and hosted the **highest political event ever organised by our network**, where Prime Ministers, Presidents, and Governors sent the message that political leadership is a success factor for SDGs implementation. By working together, we stressed that partnerships are key to surpass the persisting gap between ambition and reality.

To foster policy efficiency, we have facilitated the exchange of knowledge and good practices by regional governments that contribute to accelerate the transitions required to meet the Global Goals. **In 2020, Regions4 created the SDG Working Group as a platform to facilitate our common position in SDGs-related processes and launched the [Community of Practice - Regions4SDGs](#)**. With the aim to encourage mutual support and capacity building based on peer-learning and review, we organised sessions on the topics of legislation, budget and long-term planning, indicators and disaggregated data, and interlinkages between biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development.

In addition, **Regions4 published the brief report [Regions Voice in UN reporting](#)** and contributed to two annual reports of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments towards the localisation of the SDGs.



Since 2015, subnational governments have played a crucial role in localising the SDGs, successfully implementing them on the ground. **Regions Voice in UN reporting presents 29 examples of regional progress reports and voluntary subnational reviews, as well as 3 case studies, in contribution to the 2030 Agenda.**



# Members in the Spotlight

## TRANSFORMATIVE GOVERNANCE

Regions4 President, Basque Country has largely represented the constituency of regional governments in the main climate, biodiversity, and SDGs-related fora, bringing forward regions voice, fostering partnerships, and enabling the conditions to achieve our common goals.

Their leadership to pledge for sustainable development and raise ambition through tangible actions and integrated solutions for people and planet, continues to inspire regions on the path to a green and inclusive recovery.



## LEADING FOR NATURE

Scotland has shown great leadership as the convener of the Edinburgh Process to channel the demands and contributions of regions into the CBD and the global biodiversity agenda.

Likewise, Québec as coordinator of the AC SNG, and Jalisco as Regions4 Vice-president for the Americas, have widely represented our constituency at key international fora, leading by example as regional biodiversity champions.



## ELEVATING THE CLIMATE AGENDA

Lombardy and Scotland were the hosts of the PreCOP26 and COP26 events co-led with Regions4, to bring the voice of regional governments to the major climate event in 2021.

Regions4 Steering Committee member, Louga, also joined the gathering in Milan to contribute to the development of the joint regional statement for COP26 with the African perspective.



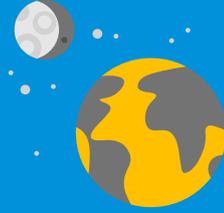
## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT THE CORE

The regions of Wales, Sao Paulo, and Catalonia shared their expertise and frontrunner experiences to mainstream SDGs within the Community of Practice – Regions4SDGs.

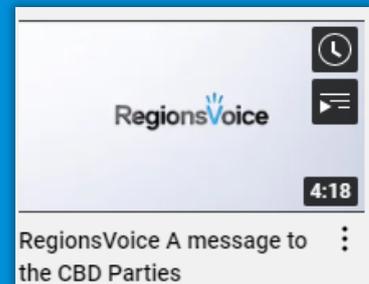
In addition, Sao Paulo lead by example by joining the Race to Resilience after passing a state decree on the road to decarbonisation by 2050.



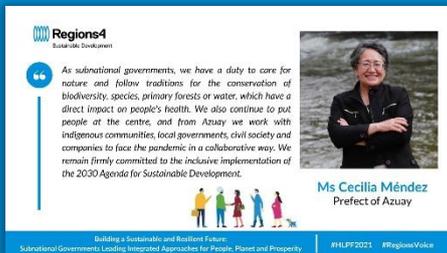
# Our voice for people and planet



In order to create momentum for the main UN COPs and HLPF, Regions4 Secretariat has built on the #RegionsVoice campaign with key messages from regional leaders on their actions and our collective demands to build an inclusive and resilient future. The whole list of video-messages is available on Regions4's [YouTube Channel](#).



Member quotes have also been widely spread on social media in the framework of key global events, to see more you can follow the [#RegionsVoice](#) hashtag on Twitter:



Additionally, members and partners were able to share their views on key moments for sustainable development and the role of regional governments through website articles and interviews. To read more, go to the Regions4 [website](#):



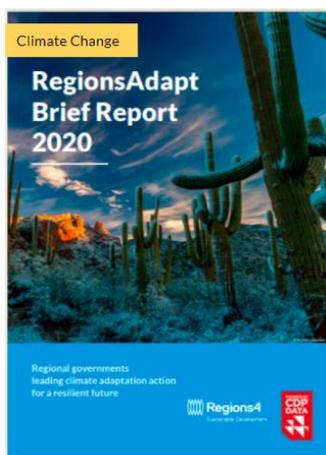
# #RegionsVoice

# Knowledge Hub

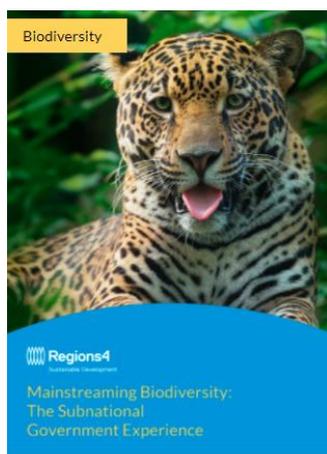


## Improving capacities, knowledge, and collaboration

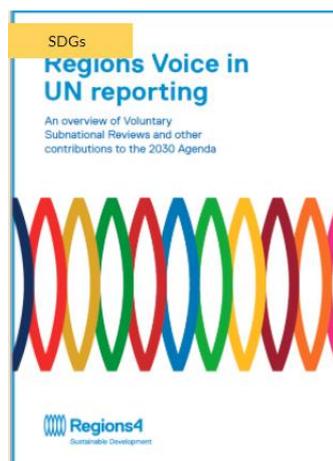
Regions4 has continued to build our knowledge hub with key reports that share best practices and recommendations showcasing regional governments as natural leaders of sustainable development.



[RegionsAdapt Brief Report 2020](#)



[Mainstreaming Biodiversity: Official CBD Information Document](#)

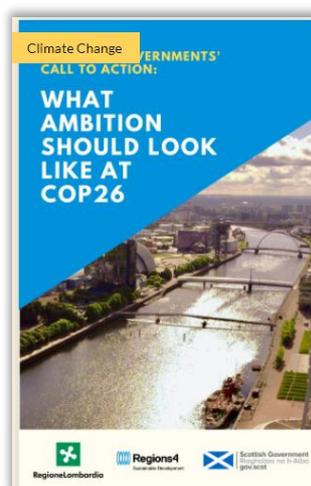
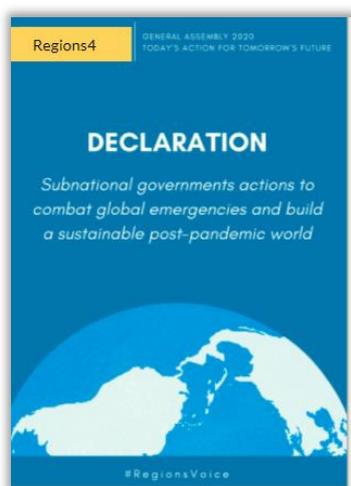


[Regions Voice in UN Reporting](#)



[Raising ambitions on climate adaptation](#)

In addition, in 2020 and 2021 our community has gathered in two joint declarations for a green and inclusive post-pandemic recovery, as well as a call to raise ambition for climate at COP26.



Available in English, Spanish, and French at: <https://www.regions4.org/publications/>



## Strengthening partnerships for increased impact

Regions4 continues to collaborate with fellow networks and organisations in key initiatives to bring forward regional leadership and best practices for sustainable development.

# Alliances

Key partnerships during 2020-21 include the support to Regions4's high-level events during the HLPF and COP26; the approval of a joint action plan (**CoR**); the delivery of the global campaign [#WhatsAtState](#) (**Under2 Coalition**); the development of the Race To Resilience initiative (**MPGCA**); the efforts to increase the RegionsAdapt community (**ORU FOGAR**), develop a new 2021-22 strategy for the flagship adaptation initiative (**BC3**) and ensure transparency through reporting (**CDP**); the creation of a new collaborative initiative such as RegionsWithNature (**ICLEI**); or the organisation of the flagship conference "2030 Agenda: Transforming Regions, Changing the World" (**AER**), among others.



Additionally, Regions4 members have shown increased support to Regions4 actions by engaging in our activities, joining as co-organisers of high-level events, and providing voluntary contributions for key actions.



## Enlarging our community



Read the interview [here](#).

In the past two years Regions4 has attracted increased interest among regional governments worldwide, and as a result, we have welcomed the regions of **Scotland**, **Åland Islands**, **La Rioja**, and **Guanajuato** to our growing community of global leaders. In addition, we have received the interest of Rio de Janeiro and Yucatan to formally join in 2022.



Read the interview [here](#).

Regions4 Secretariat is also in conversations with the regions of Guadeloupe, Emilia-Romagna, British Columbia, Aquitaine, California, Balearic Islands, LA County, Maharashtra, Misiones, and North Rhine-Westphalia, assessing possibilities for collaboration.

## Reinforcing membership

Regions4's flagship initiatives have also continued to increase in membership.



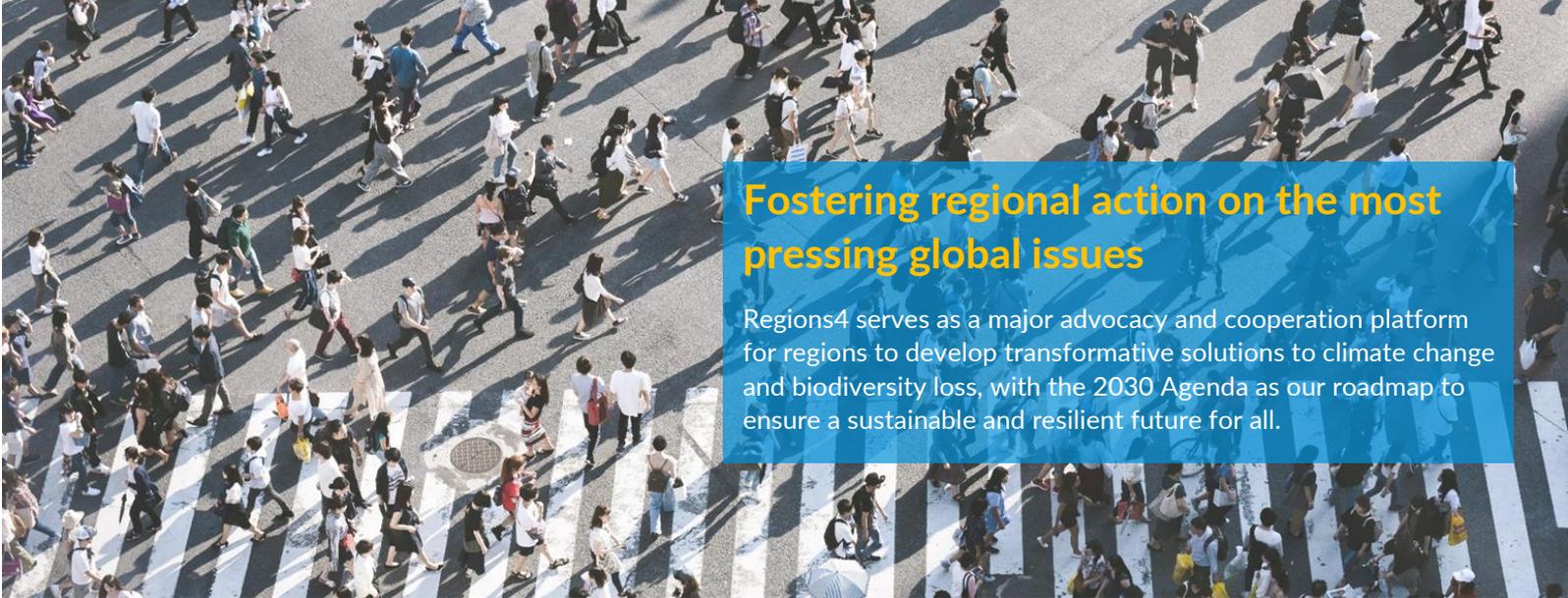
**RegionsAdapt** has grown to a community of 77 members strongly working on climate adaptation, including Regions4's Vice-presidency for Europe, Flanders, or the new additions of **Hauts-Bassins**, **Guanajuato**, **Maharashtra**, **RAP Pacífico**, **La Rioja** and **Mancomunidad Regional de los Andes**.



The **AC SNG** continues to gain support to advocate for nature through subnational leadership, with the **new additions of Regions4 Vice-presidency for the Americas**, **Jalisco**, as well as **CONGOPE**. It currently has the participation of 21 regions and 3 partner organisations.



Likewise, the **SDGs Working Group** currently gathers **16 Regions4 member regions** in a collective effort to follow-up on the most relevant UN processes on sustainable development and facilitate our common position and participation in global SDGs-related negotiations and events.



## Fostering regional action on the most pressing global issues

Regions4 serves as a major advocacy and cooperation platform for regions to develop transformative solutions to climate change and biodiversity loss, with the 2030 Agenda as our roadmap to ensure a sustainable and resilient future for all.

# The future ahead

In taking stock of the last two years, we are proud to see that Regions4's unique expertise in biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development has resulted in a solid advocacy and knowledge partnership across its member network, partners and the UN system. During 2020 and 2021 Regions4 has gathered our community for knowledge exchange sessions led by our flagship initiatives, our high-level events organised in the framework of the HLPF and COP26, and the main gathering of our members, the Regions4 General Assembly. We are delighted to see increased numbers of participants and high-level political engagement, and a growing community celebrating our collective milestones, welcoming new members, exchanging on the challenges ahead and jointly defining the roadmap for the coming years.

In 2022 we will embrace the opportunities that will further strategically position Regions4 as a centre of innovation and thought leader in regional portfolio design and technical implementation. We will work to redefine and elevate our cross-cutting initiatives to achieve a greater impact for our members, raising regions' voice in the main global agendas through our advocacy expertise. And most of all, we will continue to grow in collaboration with members and fellow partners, to truly make a difference to halt biodiversity loss, adapt to climate change and achieve SDGs from a multi-level governance perspective.

Ivan Draganic  
Executive Director  
Regions4

### What does Regions4 have on store?

- 🌐 Kick-start of the *Community of Practice of RegionsAdapt* to allow for more peer-to-peer exchanges with regions on key adaptation challenges, including how to better measure the regional impact of adaptation actions in contribution to the *Race to Resilience* targets to 2030.
- 🌐 *New collaborative project under the EU Horizon and MAIA framework* to make climate change research more accessible to regions and communities.
- 🌐 Launch of the *Regions4 Biodiversity Case Study Database* which identifies regional champions on biodiversity and lays the foundation to implement the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- 🌐 *New sessions within the series "Regions Voice in UN reporting"* exploring experiences on accountability and transparency, citizens engagement and participatory mechanisms, horizontal coordination, and multi-stakeholder platforms to achieve the SDGs.
- 🌐 Organisation of *Regions4 General Assembly 2022* and the participation at the *ECOSOC'S HLPF* (July), *CBD COP15* (August/September), and *UNFCC COP27* (November), among many other high-level events.

**We act. We connect. We transform.**

## Connect with Regions4!

Learn about our work through the video that highlights our recent milestones for a resilient future.



Follow our social media channels to receive live updates and share!

Twitter / Instagram: @Regions4SD

LinkedIn / Facebook: @Regions4

[#RegionsVoice](#) | [#Regions4Climate](#) [#Regions4Biodiversity](#) | [#Regions4SDG](#)

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[Regions4.org](#)

## Contact us!

Share your best practices, engage Regions4 in your projects and participate in our activities!

✉ [info@regions4.org](mailto:info@regions4.org)



**Regions4**

Sustainable Development