

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR EQUITABLE LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION



A HOW-TO GUIDE ON PARTNERSHIP  
DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION  
FROM THE MUNICIPAL NET-ZERO  
ACTION RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP  
(N-ZAP)



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## Land Acknowledgement

Recognizing that our research team and partners are located on different traditional territories and treaty lands across Turtle Island, N-ZAP respects and honours the diversity of Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and Communities as the original rights-holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live, work, and study.

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**[www.pcp-ppc.ca/resources/community-partnerships-for-equitable-local-climate-action-guide](http://www.pcp-ppc.ca/resources/community-partnerships-for-equitable-local-climate-action-guide)**



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## Executive summary

This guide, prepared by the Municipal Net-Zero Action Research Partnership (N-ZAP), details best practices for designing community partnerships for equitable local climate action. Local governments can partner with organizations and entities from across the public, private and civil society sectors to plan and implement actions aimed at tackling climate change and reducing community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These partnerships play an instrumental role in advancing climate mitigation efforts, as they bring together skills and resources, and enable collective action. Research shows that local governments that adopt a partnership approach achieve greater progress in achieving their community climate goals.

This guide has been developed based on the insights of 55 partners from 12 local partnerships from across Canada, each with local climate action and equity at its core. The guide synthesizes the academic literature, non-academic literature, and partnership experiences to produce recommendations for local governments wishing to design (or improve) a partnership. In other words, this guide not only presents research findings, but it also provides action-oriented recommendations.

## Partnership structure and design

The guide offers insights into best practices for structuring partnerships. Fundamentally, effective partnership structures typically consist of the following features:

- an oversight body or leadership group responsible for decision-making,
- a coordinator or secretariat for facilitation and coordination support,
- a framework for measuring and monitoring the partnership's efforts,
- mechanisms for communicating about the efforts,
- an approach to engaging with partners on a regular basis, and
- a formal process for resourcing the work of the collaboration.

This guide provides recommendations on how to design partnerships for effective community-wide climate action, from formation and planning to implementation and evaluation. Figure 1 provides an overview of key recommendations related to designing partnerships aimed at achieving climate and equity goals.



**Figure 1.** Key recommendations for designing a partnership

### Partnership formation

- Explicitly design: oversight, coordination, communication, partner engagement and resourcing.
- Ensure diverse and equitable partner representation in the oversight committee.
- Match the design to the partnership's focus (community-wide, project or sector).
- Number and type of partners should match partnership's goals, and these may change over time.
- Ensure core funding, at least for staffing coordination (typically hosted by the municipality).

### Planning, implementation and evaluation

- Establish clear climate and equity goals and actions for intended impacts.
- Ensure partners are involved in implementing collective action.
- Track progress and adjust actions to achieve goals, if needed.
- Communicate results, including partners' achievements.
- Provide opportunities for partners to learn, interact and celebrate success.

## Equity considerations

Municipalities can foster collaborative and equitable climate action by embedding equity considerations into their partnerships to ensure that climate actions leave no one behind and help to correct past injustices. This guide emphasizes the importance of equity in climate action and provides evidence-based recommendations for embedding equity and wise Indigenous-engagement practices in community-wide climate action. While equity considerations are included in the "Structural considerations" section, the "Equity considerations" section examines this subject in greater depth.

The lessons learned from the 12 partnerships are organized into three pillars of equity considerations:

1. embedding equity in the partnership design; for example, using equity considerations to shape partnership goals, partner engagement, communications and decision-making procedures;
2. ensuring the partnership pursues equity-related goals, such as equitable opportunities, energy poverty reduction and accessibility; and
3. embedding equity in climate actions to ensure the inclusion of equity-deserving groups, Indigenous Peoples/Communities and diverse voices.

Equity is not achieved through a specific intervention, nor should it be considered an add-on to climate action. Instead, it should be viewed as a journey of continuous learning that concerns all partners involved in climate action. At present, many partnerships are grappling with equity-based work and are continuing to learn and to refine their efforts. This guide provides examples of equity goals for each of the three pillars mentioned above, as well as examples of equity actions related to governance, Indigenous community collaboration, working with underserved groups, engagement, accessibility and inclusion, and equity indicators and other tools. Detailed guidance is also provided on wise practices for Indigenous engagement. Figure 2 summarizes some of the key recommendations presented in the "Equity" section of the guide.

**Figure 2.** Key recommendations for each of the three pillars of embedding equity

### **Inclusion and diversity**

- Explicitly integrate equity into governance and decision-making processes.
- Engage diverse stakeholders using an equity lens, and by removing barriers to participation.
- Use wise practices for Indigenous engagement, including strengthening relationships.

### **Accessibility and benefits**

- Address existing inequities in infrastructure and services.
- Tailor programs and investments to ensure equitable access to climate actions.
- Establish metrics to measure progress on equity goals.
- Build capacity and skills.

### **Accountability and power**

- Train staff on equity, diversity and inclusion, and on Indigenous knowledge and histories.
- Have an equity mandate and accountability framework.
- Work towards mitigating power dynamics between partners.
- Ask how municipalities can support Indigenous climate work.

Several boxes and tables highlighting specific aspects of relevant case stories are presented throughout this guide. Towards the end of the guide, the ClimateActionWR partnership from Waterloo, ON, is featured as an exemplary case study, including a detailed discussion of its goals, structure, key performance indicators, and reflections. The guide ends with a checklist that synthesizes the recommendations into tasks within four steps (partnership formation, planning, implementation and evaluation). Additional resource suggestions are also included in the guide's final section.

In summary, this guide is intended to help municipalities more effectively structure partnerships to equitably advance collective climate mitigation efforts aimed at achieving Canada's goal of net-zero GHG emissions by 2050.

## How to use this guide

This guide consists of six sections that outline considerations and recommendations on partnering for equitable local climate action.

- 1. Introductory content:** The introductory content includes definitions, a presentation of the N-ZAP project, and details about the research methods used in the development of this guide (see the “Definitions,” “Introduction to the Municipal Net-Zero Action Research Partnership,” and “Research methods” sections).
- 2. About local equitable climate action:** This section provides background information on equitable local climate action in Canada. Specifically, we introduce the Canadian context, the partnership advantage, climate goals, and equity goals (see section titled, “Local governments and community-wide climate action”).
- 3. Designing partnerships:** In this section, we introduce cross-sector partnerships and outline considerations and recommendations for designing effective partnership structures for achieving climate and equity goals. In addition, this section provides suggestions for designing oversight; coordination; measuring and monitoring; communications; partner engagement; and resourcing, budgeting, and financing (see sections titled “Introduction to cross-sector partnerships” and “Designing your partnership: Structural considerations”).
- 4. Equity considerations:** This section presents sample equity goals and actions, along with wise practices in Indigenous engagement. Further, this section provides recommendations for embedding equity in community-wide climate actions (see the “Equity considerations” section).
- 5. Exemplary case story:** A case story from the Waterloo region in Ontario is highlighted to capture all the essential elements of designing and managing partnerships and embedding equity in local climate action efforts (see section titled, “Exemplary case story”).
- 6. Resources:** Finally, we provide a checklist that municipal staff can use to effectively manage partnerships for equitable local climate action. This section also includes a list of the academic and non-academic literature used to complete this guide (see sections titled, “Checklist: Steps to building your partnership,” “Other resources,” and “References”).





## Definitions

**Climate action:** Efforts on the part of municipalities to address climate change, especially actions pertaining to the planning, implementation, and monitoring of climate-related initiatives. This guide specifically focuses on efforts aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (climate mitigation).

**Climate adaptation:** Actions to help people and organizations adjust to the current and future effects of climate change.

**Climate goals:** Targets for reducing GHG emissions and/or the articulation of desired outcomes from climate action.

**Climate mitigation:** Actions to reduce GHG emissions and limit the amount of warming the planet experiences due to climate change.

**Community-wide climate action plan:** A strategic plan that outlines how a community will reduce GHG emissions created by key activities within the geographical boundary of the municipality or region. Such plans typically require commitment and effort from many stakeholders and/or rights-holders in a community.

**Corporate climate action plan:** A strategic plan that outlines how the local government will reduce the GHG emissions it has direct control over, including, but not limited to, municipal building and operations and municipal-owned fleets.

**Equity goals:** An explicit commitment to ensure that climate action efforts leave no one behind, correct injustices, and remove obstacles to participation. Equity goals may be related to the partnership design, the partnership's intended outcomes, or the partnership's processes.

**GHG inventories:** A list of emission sources and their emissions outputs, quantified using standardized methods.

**Governance structure:** Defines how the partnership is structured, and how partners work together to achieve common goals through a mechanism for shared decision-making, coordination of activities, monitoring progress, communication among partners and with the public, mechanisms for engaging new partners, and managing shared resources and funding.

**Net-zero GHG emissions (or carbon neutrality):** Achieved when human-caused (i.e., anthropogenic) GHG emissions are equal to GHG emissions removed from the atmosphere over a specific period.

**Partnership stages:** The phases a partnership undergoes throughout its duration, including formation, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

**Rights-holders:** Indigenous individuals or groups that have particular entitlements and constitutionally protected rights. For more details, see the "Wise practices in Indigenous engagement" section of this guide.

**Spectrum of public participation:** Consists of five modes of public participation (i.e., inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower) that fall on a continuum of increasing influence over decision-making during engagement processes.

**Stakeholders:** Individuals or groups who are directly or indirectly affected by a project. Stakeholders may also have interests in the project or influence (positive or negative) over the project's outcome.

**Structural configuration:** The relationship and roles of partners in the partnership.

## Introduction to the Municipal Net-Zero Action Research Partnership



The Municipal Net-Zero Action Research Partnership (N-ZAP) aims to support Canadian municipalities in monitoring, measuring and achieving their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals, and to help ensure that municipal emissions efforts are aligned with the Canadian national target of achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. N-ZAP has an explicit equity statement, which details our equity goals with respect to our operations, content and reach. The N-ZAP project is primarily funded by the Government of Canada, and it is jointly led by the University of Waterloo, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Municipal Fund (GMF) and ICLEI Canada, in partnership with 11 other academic institutions, eight other national organizations and 15 municipal governments.

N-ZAP's work is being accomplished by five working groups consisting of academics, national municipal networks and municipal representatives. In addition to these working groups, N-ZAP has four "sounding boards," which provide advice and feedback. The objectives and areas of focus of the five working groups are as follows:

- **Working Group 1** focuses on determining the current state of climate action in Canadian municipalities, including target setting for GHG emissions reduction, climate action planning, intervention implementation, and systems for measuring and monitoring progress.
- **Working Group 2** advancing standardized measurement systems and tools (indicators) for identifying mitigation opportunities and furthering social equity.
- **Working Group 3** is responsible for enhancing municipal monitoring and disclosure (e.g., carbon accounting, climate budgets and climate-related fiscal disclosure) and integrating net-zero accounting and climate budgets into municipal decision-making.
- **Working Group 4** aims to improve community-wide emissions measurement and monitoring (collaborative governance) and ensure equitable, diverse and inclusive engagement in climate action, measurement and monitoring.
- **Working Group 5** is responsible for connecting diverse audiences with knowledge resources and tools using accessible and inclusive formats.

This guide is a deliverable of N-ZAP's Working Group 4. Other working groups are also producing guides, tools and reports. For more information on N-ZAP, links to the various outputs, or to sign-up to pilot this guide in your Canadian municipality, please visit:

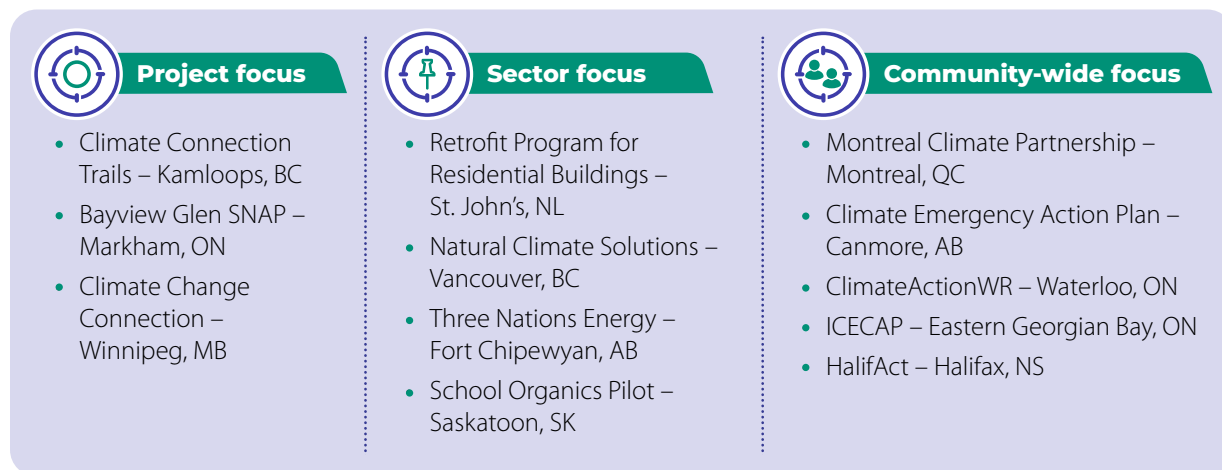
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/implementing-sustainable-community-plans/n-zap>
- <https://www.pcp-ppc.ca/n-zap>


## Research methods

This guide has been developed based on the insights from 12 cross-sector partnerships for equitable local climate action from across Canada. The 12 partnerships were analyzed with a focus on highlighting a particular strength of the partnership design. Of the 12 cases, three are partnerships with a project-focus, four are partnerships with a sector-focus, and five are partnerships with a community-wide focus. The names and focus of each partnership are detailed in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Three focus areas, and the partnerships studied in each one





The 12 cases were identified based on recommendations from N-ZAP Working Group 4 and other N-ZAP partners, as well as from the results of a survey conducted by N-ZAP Working Group 1. The partnerships were selected using pre-defined case-selection criteria that reflected N-ZAP Working Group 4's requirements. The primary selection criteria included the following components:

- Both equity and climate mitigation as explicit elements and/or goals.
- Scope—at least three cases at each focus (project, sector and community-wide).
- Formal partnerships.
- Diverse configurations within the partnerships (e.g., number of partners, type of partners, stage of engagement, type of collaboration, structural features).
- Reached the implementation stage.
- Has an accountability mechanism.
- Has transferable lessons for others.

The secondary (if possible) selection criteria were:

- Differing climate focus (e.g., electricity, buildings, transportation, waste, nature-based).
- Some cases that were more advanced in implementation than others.
- At least one partnership with an Indigenous partner and at least one partnership located in a French-Canadian community.
- Regional diversity across Canada.
- Differences in municipal capacity (in provinces that are and are not pro-active).
- Urban and rural cases.

Building on academic literature and existing guides, Working Group 4 developed an extensive analytical framework for data collection and analysis. Working Group 4 conducted interviews with partners and reviewed relevant documents to understand each partnership's goals, governance structures, evaluation frameworks, and practices related to equity. In total, 165 partners were invited to participate in interviews; of this initial sample, interviews were successfully conducted with 55 partners from 12 partnerships. After the interviews had been completed, a case study was prepared for each partnership, which was then further reduced into a matrix for comparison and analysis. This guide presents the findings of these analyses in a manner that highlights the lessons learned and provides guidance for others interested in developing or improving a partnership to further advance equitable local climate action.

## Local governments and community-wide climate action

### The climate change challenge

The steady rise in GHG emissions poses a significant threat to the planet's climate system and has contributed to an increase in extreme weather events, higher temperatures, and higher sea levels. These changes often result in outcomes such as heatwaves, flooding, fires, drought, permafrost melting and coastal erosion, which all negatively impact a wide range of sectors.<sup>1</sup> Human activities have already caused the global temperature to increase by approximately 1.48°C, a number which is expected to continue to rise if emissions are not curbed.<sup>2</sup> To limit climate change to tolerable levels, climate experts agree that global emissions must be reduced by 45 percent by 2030 and brought to net zero by 2050.<sup>3</sup>

Urban areas account for 70–80 percent of **global GHG emissions**.<sup>4</sup> Local governments have an important role to play in ensuring these emissions are mitigated. Research shows that local governments incorporating cross-sector partnerships into their implementation approach make more substantial progress in advancing climate action than those that do not.<sup>5</sup>

Research shows that municipalities with cross-sector partnerships make more progress in achieving community-wide GHG emissions reductions than those without such partnerships.

### The Canadian context

The Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, which became law on June 29, 2021, formalizes Canada's commitment to achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. The *2030 Emissions Reduction Plan* is a roadmap that outlines a sector-by-sector path for Canada to reach its emissions reduction target of 40 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050.<sup>6</sup> **Canada's climate action efforts** to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 requires the collective efforts of local, regional, and national organizations and entities.

Climate action requires tangible strategies, processes, and activities targeted towards climate mitigation and climate adaptation. Climate mitigation efforts aim to reduce the severity of climate change impacts by reducing GHG emissions and enhancing the removal of GHGs from the atmosphere. Climate adaptation measures aim to reduce the impacts of climate change by building the communities' resilience to extreme weather events.







Although **this guide focuses on climate mitigation efforts**, some of the case stories also highlight climate adaptation, as partnerships are equally important to climate adaptation efforts (and many other local issues).

Scientists indicate that current mitigation measures are insufficient for keeping global warming below 2°C. In Canada, approximately half of GHG emissions fall under the control or influence of local governments.<sup>7</sup> Local deep-decarbonization strategies often involve multiple **key pathways (sectors)**, including transportation-, building-, electricity-, waste-, and nature-based solutions, with local partnerships playing a critical role in achieving community-wide reductions.<sup>8</sup>

## The local response to climate change

At present, over 600 Canadian municipalities have declared a climate emergency.<sup>9</sup> However, many of these communities are also facing challenges in developing and implementing GHG-reduction activities. Canadian municipalities have demonstrated their commitment to reducing GHG emissions by committing to the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program, which included 557 municipalities, or approximately 70 percent of the Canadian population, as of the publication of the PCP's 2023-2024 Annual Report.<sup>10</sup>

## Results from N-ZAP's 2023 Canada-wide survey

Local governments develop **climate action plans** to achieve their climate mitigation efforts. Corporate climate action plans aim to reduce emissions from sources directly controlled by municipalities (i.e., emissions from municipal operations such as municipal buildings), while community-wide plans target all emissions within the local government's boundaries (i.e., emissions from non-municipal operations, such as private vehicles).<sup>11</sup> In 2023, N-ZAP's Working Group 1 conducted a Canada-wide survey of municipal climate action.<sup>12</sup> Some of the survey questions asked about the degree to which municipalities engaged stakeholders, rights-holders and rights-bearers in climate action planning and implementation. The results indicate that, while many municipalities empowered or collaborated with internal stakeholders, far fewer did so with external stakeholders (22 municipalities out of 256 for planning and 21 out of 256 for implementation), and even fewer with Indigenous Peoples and Communities (12 municipalities out of 256 in planning and 4 out of 256 in implementation).

## The partnership advantage

Local governments can partner with organizations and entities from the public, private and civil society sectors to develop and implement strategies for achieving their climate mitigation goals. Since the 1990s, local governments across Canada have been working to implement climate mitigation strategies through **cross-sector partnerships**.<sup>13</sup> These partnerships employ various partnership approaches for achieving climate mitigation priorities.

As noted above, research suggests there is a partnership advantage, as municipalities engaged in partnerships report higher GHG emission reductions.<sup>14</sup> A partnership approach allows municipalities to influence emissions outside their direct control, which is ideal for implementing community climate action plans and achieving community-wide targets. Partnership approaches also enable access to partner resources for GHG-reduction activities, thus expanding the initiatives, funds and expertise available for achieving the partnership's common vision.

A partnership's **climate goals** are often established collectively during the planning stage. For community-wide partnerships, these goals may align with community climate action plan targets; however, for sector or project partnerships, these goals will usually support the partnership's objectives. A partnership's climate goals are also reflected in its implementation plan and activities, although each partner may have additional goals beyond those of the partnership. Case Story 1 (in the text box) highlights the climate goals of the Three Nations Energy partnership, while Case Story 2 highlights the climate goals of the Natural Climate Solutions partnership.

### Case Story 1. First example of a partnership's climate goals



#### Three Nations Energy (3NE) partnership, Fort Chipewyan, AB

Three Nations Energy (3NE) is a small partnership co-led by the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, the Mikisew Cree First Nation, and the Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation. Located in Fort Chipewyan, a northern rural community in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, AB, this partnership aims to address GHG emission reduction, energy efficiency, and wellness of the Earth in the community. Fort Chipewyan is home to approximately 1,000 residents and is only accessible by air transport for most of the year, with a winter road also operating in the winter months. The 3NE partnership is based on a stewardship approach and focuses on providing clean and affordable energy to the community of Fort Chipewyan through a solar farm and infrastructure supports. The partnership's climate goals focus on energy security for the community and meeting its growing electricity needs through clean energy sources that reduce GHG emissions. The infrastructure developed as a result of this partnership includes solar panels to replace diesel tanks, wood fuel heaters in homes and buildings, and infrastructure for Electric Vehicles (EVs) (three charging stations). The 3NE partnership was initiated in 2018, and its climate goals were established during the planning stage. The partnership is currently in the implementation and evaluation stage.

Weblink: <https://www.3ne.ca/3ne-solar-farm/>

### Case Story 2. Second example of a partnership's climate goals



#### Natural Climate Solutions partnership, City of Vancouver, BC

The Natural Climate Solutions section in the City of Vancouver's Climate Emergency Action Plan (2020–2025) focuses on carbon sequestration and a range of ecosystem benefits generated by the planning and implementation of nature-based solutions. The Still Creek enhancement project partnership is a notable example of this approach. Still Creek is one of the few remaining visible streams in Vancouver, and it provides habitat and drainage by collecting and funnelling rainwater. City staff are working with local partners and neighbouring municipalities to rehabilitate and enhance Still Creek, with the goal of creating a more natural creek corridor, making room for water, sequestering carbon, providing space for cultural practice, and creating housing opportunities in the neighbourhood. A drainage and restoration plan has been created, and, upon completion of the restoration works, the creek corridor will be regularly measured and monitored to ensure the partnership's goals are met. When available, the City will also share monitoring outputs with the public. The natural climate solution actions from the Climate Emergency Action Plan have now been integrated into the City's Climate Adaptation Strategy, with the biggest benefits being observed in relation to cooling, rainwater management, and ecological health.

Weblink: <https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/still-creek-enhancement.aspx>

In addition to climate goals, partnerships often set **equity goals** to ensure that climate actions leave no one behind. In this context, equity entails correcting for historic and current injustices by removing barriers and obstacles faced by marginalized groups so they can participate in and benefit from climate action. Equity is a critical consideration, as underserved groups are more vulnerable to climate change impacts, less able to access the benefits of climate action,<sup>15</sup> and often lack representation in decision-making processes. Advancing equity requires decision makers to recognize and address inequities and barriers, and to reduce them by shifting norms, structures, policies and practices. Municipalities can work towards these goals by embedding equity into partnerships so that efforts to achieve community wide climate action leave no one behind and help to correct past injustices. Case story 3 describes the equity goals of the City of St. John's Retrofit Program for Residential Buildings Partnership.

### Case Story 3. Example of a partnership's equity goals



#### **Retrofit Program for Residential Buildings Partnership, City of St. John's, NL**

The Econext and City of St. John's Retrofit Program for Residential Buildings Partnership is a cross-sector partnership established in alignment with the Resilient St. John's Community-wide Climate Action Plan. The partnership is referenced in the City of St. John's Mitigation Implementation Framework and its Adaptation Community Climate Plan. Currently, the deep retrofit program for buildings is in the implementation phase. The lead organizations, in consultation with other stakeholder groups, established the partnership's equity goals during the planning phase. The partnership's equity goals focus on addressing energy poverty and providing residential homeowners with access to resources. The partnership's activities prioritize energy efficiency to address energy poverty and, where possible, to ensure access to supports and guiding resources.

Weblink: <https://www.stjohns.ca/en/living-in-st-johns/sustainability.aspx>

Equity efforts often include recognizing the importance of intentionally building relationships with Indigenous Communities and Peoples and actively including them in all stages of climate mitigation efforts. As municipalities begin or grow their engagement with **Indigenous Communities and Peoples** in their climate action planning, it is important to understand expectations and cultural considerations for engagement, and to recognize Indigenous People as rights-holders. Because of the diversity of Indigenous Communities across Canada, engagement approaches must be community-specific and regionally-relevant.

In this section, we established this guide's context, including considerations such as the climate challenge, the Canadian context for municipal climate action, and the partnership advantage. We also introduced and distinguished between climate goals and equity goals and provided examples of what these might look like in a local partnership. Note that, while we discussed equity goals and Indigenous engagement in this section, they are addressed in greater depth later in this guide.

## Introduction to cross-sector partnerships



### Cross-sector partnerships

**Purpose:** Cross-sector partnerships unite diverse skills and resources to collectively advance climate mitigation.

**Possible partners:** Public, private and civil society organizations, including local governments, utilities, universities, NGOs, businesses and more.

Cross-sector partnerships for local climate action are critical to advancing climate mitigation efforts, as they bring together diverse and complementary assets for the purpose of addressing climate change. Pooling skills and resources allows partners to reap the benefits of their collective efforts. Cross-sector partnerships can involve a wide variety of partners, including local governments, universities, schools, chambers of commerce, non-governmental organizations, small businesses and larger companies.<sup>16</sup> Locally, cross-sector partnerships typically take one of **three areas of focus**, namely, a community-wide, sector, or project focus.<sup>17, 18, 19</sup> Each case story in this guide is based on one of these areas of focus, with the relevant focus being highlighted in the case story box.

- **Community-wide focus:** Partnerships with a community-wide focus leverage climate action from across the community. These partnerships tend to consist of many partners working together to formulate and implement strategies for achieving climate and equity goals. Partnerships with a community-wide focus often address several pathways.
- **Sector focus:** Partnerships with a sector focus aim to reduce emissions from a specific sector or priority pathway (i.e., buildings, transportation, electricity generation, waste disposal, or nature-based solutions). These partnerships can be large or small depending on the aspect of the sector being targeted by the climate and equity goals.
- **Project focus:** Project-focused partnerships tend to focus on small-scale initiatives within municipalities and are usually smaller in size (i.e., under 10 partners).

The partnership's governance structure fosters collaboration between partners and helps them align their actions with the partnership's goals. The type of collaboration is important in setting the expectations for engagement, as well as for fostering inclusiveness. Partnerships can be **top-down vs. bottom-up, or problem-based vs. vision-based**.

- Top-down partnerships are initiated by municipalities, while bottom-up partnerships are established through other partners within communities.
- Problem-based partnerships are solutions-focused, with an emphasis on solving an identified problem, while vision-focused partnerships focus on shared goals (e.g., net zero by 2050).

Partnerships can be divided into **four stages**: formation, planning, implementation and evaluation.<sup>20</sup> While the area of focus and efforts in each stage influence the partnership's design, the progression through each stage is rarely linear, as each stage contains feedback loops and the ability to incorporate new elements to improve performance (e.g., new partners or new staff). These four steps can be defined as follows:

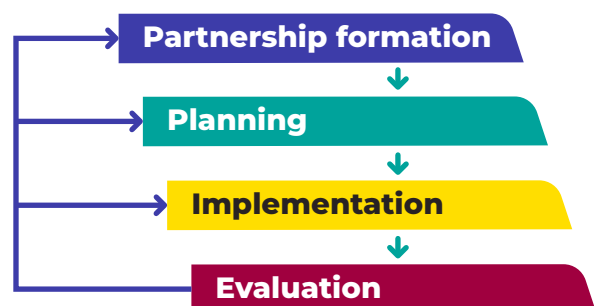
- **Formation:** During this stage, the partnership is formed based on shared interests and needs, and the focus is set. As the partnership structure is set up, relationships are developed, roles are defined, resource needs are identified and sources of funding are secured.
- **Planning:** In this stage, the partners develop the plan for implementing the partnership's work, including defining its climate and equity goals and its methods for monitoring activities and progress. The partners also consider how their individual goals align with the partnership goals, and what synergies may be developed.
- **Implementation:** The implementation stage consists of the work required to reach the partnership's goals. This includes both work done by individual partners and collective efforts towards the partnership's goals. In this stage, partners continuously engage and communicate with one another regarding the work being done.
- **Evaluation:** During the evaluation stage, the work of the partnership is assessed. As a best practice, evaluation systems are set up at the beginning of the partnership and employed throughout the implementation stage. For shorter-term partnerships, evaluation can be conducted after the partnership's work has been completed. In most partnerships, monitoring is ongoing and reporting is regularly conducted to foster continual improvement (i.e., adding new partners, updating the plan and/or updating implementation actions).





The four stages of a partnership, along with the feedback loops, are visualized in Figure 4.

**Figure 4.** Stages of a partnership



Case Story 4 provides an example of a project-focused partnership with a distinct start and end date that moved through the four stages in a linear fashion.

#### **Case Story 4.** Partnership story that highlights the partnership stages



##### **Bayview Glen SNAP, City of Markham, ON**

The Bayview Glen Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP) is a partnership between the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the City of Markham (Markham), aimed at accelerating the implementation of sustainable practices at the neighbourhood scale to prepare for climate change. Located in the Thornhill community at the intersection of Bayview Avenue and Steeles Avenue, Bayview Glen is a residential neighbourhood that is home to approximately 2,100 people. Bayview Glen was selected because of scheduled flood remediation work to reduce residential flooding and improve stormwater management. The Bayview Glen SNAP provided an opportunity to update Glencrest Park with amenities that better served the area's residents, such as a multi-purpose trail around a large rain garden, a new play structure, and a pathway through the park to increase active transportation and provide access to the local public school. In 2016, the Bayview Glen SNAP won the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) Awards of Excellence for New Directions. The partnership was initiated in 2011 and concluded in 2018: the formation and planning stages of the project lasted from 2011 to 2016 and entailed building the partnership and defining its goals and structures, while the implementation and evaluation stages spanned from 2016 to 2018. With support from LURA Consulting in 2014, the TRCA led the development of the Bayview Glen SNAP—Phase 2&3 Action and Implementation Plan to identify community priorities. This initiative was instrumental in the successful completion of rebuilding Glencrest Park to better meet the community's interests.

Weblink: <https://trca.ca/conservation/sustainable-neighbourhoods/snap-neighbourhood-projects/bayview-glen-snap/#projects>



## Designing your partnership: Structural considerations

Designing cross-sector partnerships for climate action entails defining how the partnership will be structured, and how the partners will work together to achieve common climate and equity goals. A partnership's governance structure serves as a mechanism for shared decision-making and a way to engage new partners, coordination of activities, monitor progress, communicate among partners and to the public, and manage shared resources and funding. Equity considerations are also embedded within the partnership's governance structures. This section of the guide is framed around each governance structure feature to highlight its relevance and how equity is embedded within it (see the "Equity" section for more detail on equity). The recommendations (next) and checklist (at the end of the guide) reorganize the structural feature content to spotlight the most prominent details in each stage of the partnership.

### **Recommendations on how to design partnerships for effective community-wide climate action**

The learnings from the 12 partnerships relating to governance structures are presented as recommendations below. In essence, these recommendations summarize the key content about governance structures presented in the next section in the form of recommendations and organized by stage.



## Formation and planning: Recommendations

Effective partnerships require shared vision, clearly defined roles, and strong communication. The recommendations listed below are important to consider during the formation and planning phases of partnership development, as they ensure that the partnerships will be mutually beneficial, equitable and guided by balanced decision-making.

- 1 Invest in relationships between partners, including the promotion of flexibility and adaptability in the early stages to enable contributions from many partners and greater cohesion on collective decisions.
- 2 Cultivate diversity among partners, with a particular focus on ensuring underserved participants/groups are represented. From the outset, reach out to diverse communities to foster a culture of inclusion and continue to engage them throughout the partnership. Celebrating diversity and ensuring that underserved groups are heard is critical to building trust.
- 3 Determine responsibilities for oversight and coordination early. Match the selected approach to coordination and oversight to the scope of the project (e.g., consider establishing oversight or coordination body for community-wide actions) and to the partners' capacities (e.g., municipality oversight for project-focus given access to resources).
- 4 Establish a flat hierarchy (e.g., equal involvement in decision-making; use a round table approach for meetings) to ensure inclusivity. Clarify expectations regarding each partner's role and obtain agreement on each partner's responsibilities.
- 5 Define the approach to partner engagement and assign related responsibilities. Provide clarity on expectations for each partner's involvement in and contribution to the partnership's efforts. Set clear expectations for partner engagement at partner meetings and acknowledge the value of partners' contributions on ongoing basis.
- 6 Navigate power dynamics by setting clear terms of engagement and ensuring diverse and equitable representation on the oversight body. Use a round table approach to include each member of the oversight body in discussions.
- 7 Define the approach to communication with partners and assign related responsibilities. Provide a clear schedule and clarify expectations for partners with respect to communications.
- 8 Develop a shared vision beyond GHG emissions. For example, attaining broader community equity goals through low-carbon retrofit projects.
- 9 Municipalities should provide funding to alleviate financial pressure on partners. The mandate of this funding should be established from the start, as doing so helps to set expectations and provide direction. Clarity on the level and mandate of funding should also be provided.
- 10 Establish clear goals and agreement on shared outcomes and intended impacts. Determine milestones for evaluating progress towards these outcomes.
- 11 Define the approaches for measuring, monitoring, and reporting, and assign partners' responsibilities for managing this process.
- 12 Define resourcing and funding approaches to establish a framework for their management and for reporting on their use throughout the partnership.

## Implementation and evaluation: Recommendations

Clear processes, dedicated staff, collective action and precise communication are some of the factors that contribute to effective partnerships in the implementation and evaluation phases. Some key recommendations to consider during these are listed below. These recommendations ensure that partnerships are mutually beneficial, equitable and governed by balanced decision-making.

- 1 Establish a clear process for coordination so tasks can be easily delegated. Dedicated staff positions and roles are also important, especially those that connect across departments and ensure the plan remains a priority.
- 2 For greater clarity and cohesion, emphasize progress tracking and status reporting, including the identification of challenges, risks and new opportunities.
- 3 Report regularly to enhance partner and community engagement, as well as knowledge-sharing and accountability. Ensure reporting is accessible, transparent and provides opportunities for community feedback.
- 4 Refine communications to meet the partnership's needs. Communications should focus on reporting the progress and impact of the work, as well as on opportunities for connecting. Ensure communications are accessible, transparent and provide opportunities for feedback.
- 5 Leverage multiple channels for communication (i.e., meetings, emails, online platforms, media) to enable greater partner engagement. Frequent and direct communication with partners enables timely progress towards outcomes, and transparent communication channels facilitate open dialogue, information sharing, feedback mechanisms among partners, and help to build trust, enhance collaboration, and foster a shared understanding of goals and expectations.
- 6 Review resource usage to enable continued support for the partnership's efforts and planning for meeting shared goals and objectives.



Figure 5 summarizes key recommendations for successful partnership design.

**Figure 5.** Key recommendations for designing a partnership

#### Partnership formation

- Explicitly design: oversight, coordination, communication, partner engagement and resourcing.
- Ensure diverse and equitable partner representation in the oversight committee.
- Match the design to the partnership's focus (community-wide, project or sector).
- Number and type of partners should match partnership's goals, and these may change over time.
- Ensure core funding, at least for staffing coordination (typically hosted by the municipality).

#### Planning, implementation and evaluation

- Establish clear climate and equity goals and actions for intended impacts.
- Ensure partners are involved in implementing collective action.
- Track progress and adjust actions to achieve goals, if needed.
- Communicate results, including partners' achievements.
- Provide opportunities for partners to learn, interact and celebrate success.

### Governance structure and structural features

Effective cross-sector partnership structures typically consist of six key features, which are visualized in Figure 6:<sup>21</sup>

- an **oversight body** or leadership group who is responsible for decision-making,
- a **coordinator or secretariat** to support facilitation and coordination,
- a framework for **measuring and monitoring** the partnership's efforts,
- mechanisms for **communicating** about the efforts,
- an approach to **engaging with partners** on a regular basis, and
- the staff **resources and/or funding** for the work of the partnership.





**Figure 6.** Partnership governance structure and structural features



The governance structure can be established through an agreement between partners and can be leveraged to achieve progress towards climate and equity goals. Common tools for formalizing the structure include a memorandum of understanding (MOU), a memorandum of agreement (MOA), a contribution agreement, terms of reference or a partnership agreement. For partnerships involving a municipality, the municipality can play the role of regulator, coordinator/facilitator, broker, funder, convener, program deliverer/service provider, GHG-reduction implementor, educator/capacity builder, strategic partner, consultant, initiator, advocate, innovator or any combination of these.

## Oversight

### Explanation

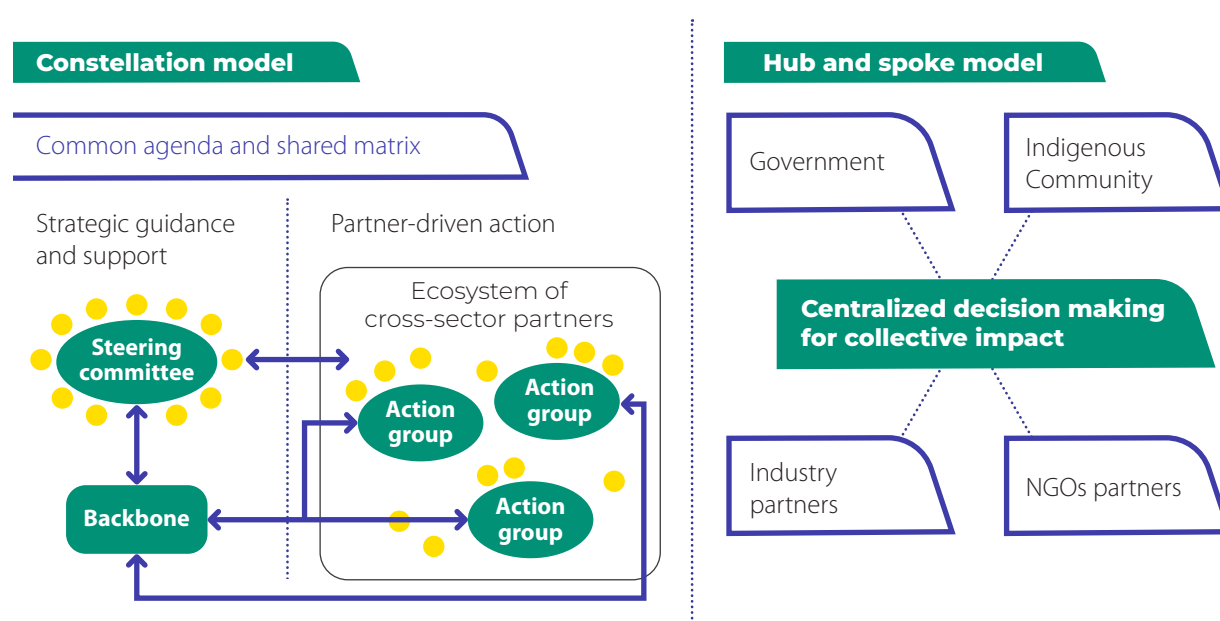
Oversight defines the framework through which the partnership carries out efforts aimed at achieving shared goals and consists of decision-making and monitoring of this work by one or more partners. Generally, oversight is performed by the partner(s) who initiated the partnership, or the partner who contributes most to resourcing and/or financing the work, such as a municipality.

### Design implications of the focus/scale and partnership stage

A partnership's oversight body will differ depending on its focus. For example, many community-wide partnerships are managed through a steering committee, or an equivalent oversight body, made up of a sub-set of partners. Conversely, oversight in sector-focused partnerships tends to be carried out by a smaller group of partners (with the municipality taking a lead role) using a less formal approach compared to those employed by steering committees, while project-focused partnerships are generally overseen by one lead partner, which, in many cases, is the municipality.

In larger partnerships, the governance structure defines the relationship between the oversight body and the other partners, with two of the most prominent structural configurations being the constellation model and the hub-and-spoke model (see Figure 7).<sup>22, 23, 24</sup> The constellation model comprises a steering committee, a central group of staff to facilitate coordination (the backbone), and action groups (e.g., working groups for specific pathways or projects). In contrast, the hub-and-spoke model concentrates decision-making authority in the hands of a single entity, such as a municipality. Despite this centralization of decision-making, the hub-and-spoke model still prioritizes a shared vision and collective action, with partner engagement being managed centrally. Municipalities may adopt either of these configurations or a mixture of both, depending on how they wish to approach decision-making and define the role of the partners. However, the constellation model is more aligned with an equity-lens given its more even distribution of power.

**Figure 7. Partnership structural configurations**



*Adapted from the Tamarack Institute.<sup>25</sup>*

The partnership's oversight approach is established during the formation and planning stage, which is why it is critical to include equity-deserving groups and right-holders from the onset of the project. Defining oversight during the early stages provides a framework for decision-making throughout the duration of the partnership and assigns specific partners to see the partnership's work to completion. The partnership's work is typically carried out during the implementation and evaluation stages. During these stages, oversight focuses on monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes, as well as evaluating how well the partnership is functioning and ensuring that needed resources are available.

Case Story 5 describes the Montreal Climate Partnership and highlights its approach to oversight.

### Case Story 5. Example of oversight within a partnership



#### Montreal Climate Partnership, Montreal, QC

The Montreal Climate Partnership is an independent initiative that brings together over a hundred economic, community, institutional, union and philanthropic organizations. Its mission is to mobilize critical players in the community to help reduce GHG emissions by 55 percent by 2030 and put Montreal on the path to carbon neutrality by 2050. The partnership structure is a relatively flexible and agile hub-and-spoke model that is administratively attached to the Foundation of Greater Montreal. The partnership structure consists of a permanent internal team (six staff) that is supported by an executive committee made up of lead partners. The executive committee consists of those who have been with the partnership since its inception, and who have helped create the partnership's vision and keep it on track. There is also a larger steering committee (a group of 10–15 leaders) who act as ambassadors for the partnership and are the driving force behind climate action among the partners and in the broader community. Partners who are not part of the executive or steering committees are members of various working groups, which are supported by the partnership in conducting key mobilization efforts to address climate action. These partners also engage with the work of the partnership through the annual Montreal Climate Summit. The municipality is a member of the steering committee and contributes to the funding and the implementation of some of the initiatives generated through the partnership.

Weblink: <https://climatmontreal.com/>

## Coordination

### Explanation

The partnership's activities can be coordinated by a secretariat comprised of staff dedicated to supporting the partnership's efforts by providing administrative and project support. Sometimes, the staff is solely responsible for coordination, while others only a portion of its time is devoted to coordination support. Coordination can be performed either by a hosted secretariat or by a separate secretariat. In the case of a hosted secretariat, coordination is carried out by a lead partner, such as a municipal-led secretariat; in contrast, in the case of a separate secretariat, coordination is organized by a third party. Defining the secretariat's role is crucial for setting expectations. Secretariats can provide support for decision making, communications, measuring and monitoring progress, partner engagement and budgeting and resource allocation.

### Design implications of the focus/scale and partnership stage

The coordination of a partnership should be handled differently depending on the area of focus. For community-wide partnerships, coordination may be managed by the municipality or a local non-governmental organization. In sector- or project-focused partnerships, coordination is usually managed by the municipality, but it can also be managed by a non-governmental organization, academic institution, or another governmental entity.

The coordination of the partnership efforts is established during the formation stage. Defining coordination during this early stage establishes who will be responsible for it, which in turn enables planning, facilitates the partnership's activities throughout its duration, and sets expectations regarding which activities will be coordinated centrally. During the implementation and evaluation stage, coordination is more focused on enabling the partnership's activities and supporting evaluation.

Case Story 6 details the coordination of the HalifACT partnership in Halifax, NS. From an equity perspective, this partnership explicitly promotes the inclusion of diverse communities.

### Case Story 6. Example of coordination within a partnership



#### HalifACT partnership, Halifax, NS

The HalifACT partnership is a large, community-wide partnership that supports the HalifACT climate-action plan, which aims to reduce GHG emissions (net zero by 2050) and promote social inclusion and collaboration with diverse groups and communities. The partnership's activities are coordinated through a hosted secretariat: the HalifACT team in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The program coordinators act as mediators/liaisons between partners, which allows staff and resources to be allocated to the partnership's efforts, thereby ensuring that the work remains a priority and progresses in a timely manner. At present, HalifACT has approximately 30 dedicated staff who also provide coordination support, including administrative tasks, communications, progress reporting, and funding requests. HalifACT is made up of 250+ partners, with new partners being added as the work progresses.

Weblink: <https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/environment-climate-change/halifact-acting-climate-together>

## Measuring, monitoring and reporting

### Explanation

Best practice is for partnerships to establish a system/process for measuring, monitoring and reporting progress, led by either the oversight body, the secretariat, and/or a specific partner. "Measurement" refers to the collection of data, typically using pre-determined progress indicators, while "monitoring" refers to the systems involved in the continuous evaluation of equitable local climate action, including revising plans as needed.<sup>26</sup> Monitoring is pivotal for continual strategic decision making; the ongoing assessment of climate action progress; ensuring equity in processes and outcomes; and identifying areas of opportunity. "Reporting" is defined as the sharing of GHG emissions inventories and other climate and equity actions with external audiences. In particular, reporting is essential in providing stakeholders with accurate information and results relating to climate actions.<sup>27</sup> The established system should define the format and frequency for measuring, monitoring and reporting, as well as who is responsible for each task.

Measurement, monitoring and reporting provides **accountability**, which plays an important part in ensuring the effective use of resources, demonstrating tangible progress, and inspiring actions. Partnerships are accountable to their funder(s), partners, and the community at large. Clearly-defined climate goals, equity goals, and key performance indicators allow partnerships to effectively assess their progress towards shared objectives, which is achieved by defining success and measuring progress against this definition. In addition, using learnings to inform ongoing efforts is also a critical aspect of monitoring. Setting up measurement, monitoring and reporting requires partners to define targets and timelines for shared goals, and to collaboratively establish the means through which targets will be achieved, including indicators marking progress towards targets and the resources that will be used to achieve the agreed upon goals.

Measuring and monitoring with respect to equity is critical, as it ensures equity is embedded not only at the start of the partnership, but also throughout its duration. See the “Equity considerations” section of this guide for more detail relating to the different types of equity goals and actions. While efforts are being undertaken to determine key performance indicators relating to equity goals, this is an area that is still in its early stages of development.

A partnership aims to achieve specific outcomes through its activities. Reporting on inputs, actions, outputs and/or outcomes can be done by sharing quantitative indicators, qualitative stories and progress over time.<sup>28</sup> Various types of outcomes can be of interest, including plan-centric (relating to the goals of the partnership’s strategic plan), process-centric (relating to the process), partner-centric (relating to the partners’ goals), person-centric (relating to partners’ representatives or partnership staff), outside-stakeholder-centric (relating to non-partner goals, for example, those of other branches of government or funders), and community-centric (relating to the community more generally) outcomes, among others.<sup>29, 30, 31</sup>

## Design implications of the focus/scale and partnership stage

Measuring, monitoring and reporting approaches are similar among partnerships with a community-wide, sector, and project focus, although they tend to vary in complexity. In community-wide partnerships, measuring, monitoring and reporting is done on a larger scale, with community-wide impacts and partner actions being key outcomes. In all types of partnership, monitoring is normally led by the oversight body, while measurement and reporting are typically led by the coordination team. Partnering with universities can be helpful for the measurement and interpretation of data, as these institutions possess expertise in this type of research.

Ideally, the partnership’s measuring, monitoring and reporting approach will be defined during the formation and planning stages, while the work of measuring, monitoring and reporting is done during the implementation and evaluation phases. If need be, the approach can be defined and/or refined during these later stages, too.





Case Story 7, which discusses the Region of Waterloo's ClimateActionWR partnership, illustrates the importance of measurement, monitoring and reporting.

### **Case Story 7.** Example of the measuring, monitoring and reporting structure in a partnership



#### **ClimateActionWR, Waterloo, ON**

ClimateActionWR is a community-wide climate-action partnership between local organizations, community members, and municipalities in Waterloo region, Ontario. GHG data is gathered and analyzed for the community inventory, with ClimateActionWR reporting the data every five years. ClimateActionWR operates an online platform called the TransformWR Progress Dashboard, which is dedicated to measuring and reporting on the implementation and progress of climate actions. Two local partners, Sustainable Waterloo Region and Reep Green Solutions, also lead on reporting through the SWR Impact Report and the Reep Green Solutions Report, which are presented annually to municipal and regional councils. Notably, both organizational reports have specific program impact reporting embedded within them. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are used to evaluate performance, with community GHG emissions reductions being the main KPI. Other indicators are also regularly assessed, including funding and success in plan implementation. All municipal councils have adopted a target of 50 percent emissions reduction by 2030 and at least 80 percent by 2050, with accountability mechanisms being implemented through impact reporting. However, there is still limited data available for some topics.

For more detail on this partnership, see the full exemplary case story later in this guide.

Weblink: <https://climateactionwr.ca>

## **Communications**

### **Explanation**

Partnerships should have agreed-upon communication practices for engaging with partners and the public. Communication practices establish communication channels and frequency, as well as strategies for partner engagement, recognition, and conflict resolution. Communications may be handled by the secretariat or by designated partners who are equipped to support the partnership's communications.

### **Design implications of the focus/scale and partnership stage**

Community-wide, sector-, and project-focused partnerships employ similar communications, but these approaches tend to vary in frequency and format. In community-wide partnerships, communications are conducted at a larger scale with a greater number of partners, and they must align with the intended scale of impact. Therefore, the channels used may be more advanced, and a more explicitly articulated approach to conflict resolution may be adopted. Communications are generally handled by the secretariat. However, for sector- or project-focused partnerships, communications may be handled by the secretariat or a partner with the resources to support communications.

The partnership's communications approach is defined during the formation and planning stages and refined during the implementation and evaluation stages. Communications are typically targeted to an internal audience (e.g., the partners, the city council) and an external audience (e.g., the community). Defining the communications approach during the early stage provides a framework for connecting with partners on an ongoing basis, and for sharing information with partners and the community throughout the partnership. In addition, defining the communications approach early on is useful for establishing which partners will be responsible for managing the process. Communication should be ongoing during all four stages of the partnership (i.e., formation, planning, implementation and evaluation). During the implementation and evaluation stages, communications should focus on reporting on the progress and impact of the work, celebrating successes, and opportunities for connecting.

## Specific considerations for Indigenous knowledge and communications

For partnerships with Indigenous community partners, best practice is to intentionally develop data collection, storage, and access procedures that support Indigenous knowledge and data sovereignty<sup>32</sup> efforts. Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge that Indigenous Communities own their data. One well-known model of Indigenous data management that supports Indigenous Communities' sovereignty is the First Nations Principles of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession). It is also critical to dedicate space in the communication plan and guidelines for the priorities, reflections and suggestions of Indigenous partners. Similarly, ensure that all outputs mentioning or referencing Indigenous contributions are properly attributed, shared with the community and are designed to be accessible and usable by community members and partner(s). Furthermore, consideration should be given to feedback that may be unrelated to the specific goals of the climate action partnership, but that could be important for other municipal projects.

Case Story 8 highlights a partnership in Canmore, AB, that illustrates a communications strategy within a partnership. From an equity perspective, this partnership directly strives to include rights-holders and other stakeholders.



## Case Story 8. Example of the communications structure within a partnership



### Climate Emergency Action Plan partnership, Canmore, AB

Developed through a community-wide partnership, the Town of Canmore's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) aims to update its GHG emission reduction target to align with the federal goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. To this end, the Town of Canmore has established robust communications systems and processes to facilitate collaboration, transparency and effective coordination. The partnership utilizes a mix of structured and informal communication channels, including face-to-face meetings, shared documents, emails, phone calls and project-specific updates. These diverse communication formats cater to the specific needs of the public and stakeholders/rights-holders, thus promoting effective collaboration, transparency and the alignment of efforts towards common goals. The partnership's communication systems and processes prioritize regular dialogue, information sharing and collaboration to ensure alignment with shared objectives, thereby contributing to the success of the partnership and its initiatives. Communications are structured through regular meetings and shared platforms, with the degree of formality varying by stakeholder/rights-holder.

In the formation and planning stages, ongoing dialogue was assured through regular monthly meetings wherein progress, challenges, opportunities and next steps were discussed. In addition, in-person and online engagement was conducted to gather input from the public. A shared central platform for storing reports, documents and updates was also employed to enhance transparency and accessibility for partners.

Now, in the implementation stage, regular meetings are being held with key community partners, and communication and engagement has been increased to take action on specific recommendations. Annual meetings with town managers are also being held to provide progress updates and report to council as part of the annual GHG inventory/CEAP update. This structured communication system allows for timely information sharing and collaborative decision making, thus ensuring alignment with project objectives and encouraging greater engagement among partners. The partnership prioritizes proactive communication, open dialogue, and mutual respect as key elements of the partnership's conflict resolution mechanisms. By fostering a culture of transparency and collaboration, conflicts can be addressed constructively, enabling the partnership to overcome challenges and maintain productive working relationships.

Weblink: <https://www.canmore.ca/your-community/environmentandclimate/climatechange>





## Partner engagement mechanism

### Explanation

The mechanism for partner engagement considers the size of the partnership and the diversity of its membership when defining the frequency of engagement, the partners' roles and the recruitment of new partners. Clearly defining the role of partners (in relation to engagement and decision-making) is crucial to partner commitment and their involvement in the partnership's efforts.

It is also important to consider how space is made to include diverse partners. It is critical to take the time to clearly craft the composition of partners, as doing so will help to ensure equitable representation and balanced power relations. Furthermore, some partners may be more able to actively participate in the partnership than others. For example, many important partners either cannot afford to participate or don't have the time to volunteer. As such, invitations to these partners may not be enough; instead, specific supports may be needed to support the partner's engagement.

### Design implications of the focus/scale and partnership stage

Partner engagement approaches vary depending on the partnership's area of focus. In community-wide partnerships, engagement among all partners may be less frequent, with a subset of partners being more active in engagement activities. Relatedly, partner expectations are formally articulated in partnerships with a community-wide focus, with different partners assuming different engagement responsibilities. In these partnerships, providing new partners with the opportunities to engage on specific intervals is important for promoting inclusiveness and responsiveness to changes in the community. In contrast, sector- and project-focused partnerships tend to be characterized by more frequent engagement among partners and do not always have formally articulated expectations for each partner's role. Instead, these expectations may be shared through less formal means, such as during meetings or in conversations. Nonetheless, having a written terms of reference document can be helpful in onboarding new staff, even if the partner organization remains the same.

Partner engagement begins during the formation and planning stages of the partnership. In addition, the approach for engaging new partners and the responsibility for managing the onboarding process are defined during these stages as well. Engaging partners in the formation and planning stages, particularly in designing and refining the strategies for action, is very important for setting expectations. The work of engaging partners is done during the implementation and evaluation stages, especially those implementing climate actions and pursuing climate goals. During the implementation and evaluation stages, partners are also asked to report on work being done, present information and knowledge, and share learnings to help with the evaluation of the partnership.

## Specific considerations for Indigenous engagement

When considering Indigenous engagement, it is necessary to reflect on some additional elements. First, it is important that the partnership initiator is familiar with Indigenous histories, experiences, perspectives, and protocols of Indigenous Peoples in their region. Ideally, all partners involved should be familiar with Indigenous history and knowledge, as well as how their own colonial history has affected Indigenous People (for example, the colonial grounding of municipalities in the Canadian context). If the municipality has an equity, diversity and inclusion or Indigenous relations staff member, consult them first. Employ Indigenous approaches to engagement rather than expecting Indigenous People to engage using a settler's approach. Once engagement begins, understand that flexibility on timelines may be required and take steps to create a safe(r) space for Indigenous engagements. Hold continual check-ins and share updates regarding the process and activities with Indigenous partners. It is also useful to set aside funding for local protocol standards (i.e., honoraria, gifts, travel subsidy, childcare, etc.). More details on Indigenous engagement can be found in the "Wise practices for Indigenous engagement" section of this guide.

Case Story 9 details the Climate Connections Trails partnership in Kamloops, BC, which features partner engagement throughout the partnership. In addition, this partnership has explicit equity goals and exemplifies Indigenous engagement.

### Case Story 9. Example of partner engagement in a partnership



#### Climate Connections Trails partnership, Kamloops, BC

The Climate Connections Trails partnership at West Highlands Park was established to support the City of Kamloops' efforts to raise climate-change awareness, including the Community Climate Action Plan. The Climate Connections Trail offers community members a unique way to learn about climate change, local ecosystems, and traditional knowledge while reflecting on their own connections to the environment. One of the project's key equity goals was to make the information accessible, engaging and educational for a diverse population, including children. Nine partners from diverse areas ensured the project was rooted in the community and able to inspire local action and learning. Each partner had their own framework for assessing success and a moderate-to-high engagement level. Engagement included a relationship-based approach (e.g., with the Indigenous partner who contributed traditional knowledge). All engagement was spearheaded by the city, with respect for Indigenous protocols, knowledge and processes. This respect ultimately earned the endorsement of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc knowledge keepers, Chief and Council. Partners were recruited by leveraging existing relationships and internal resources or by considering mission and resource fit. Regular check-ins were held via email and in-person meetings. Partners had specific roles (e.g., content creation, feedback, convening community), which enabled the city to fulfill the project's purpose and objectives. Since the Climate Connections Trail's official opening in 2023, the city continues to work with its partners to amplify the project's impact, including offering teachers and students interactive tours of the Climate Connections Trail.

Weblink: [www.Kamloops.ca/ClimateAction](http://www.Kamloops.ca/ClimateAction)

## Resourcing, budgeting and financing

### Explanation

Effective partnerships have defined processes for resourcing, budgeting and financing. Resourcing typically refers to dedicated staff time, budgeting typically refers to the process of determining financial needs and likely revenue sources, and financing refers to the process of securing the required funding. Funding and resourcing relate to the running of the partnership and the costs associated with projects/initiatives the partnership or partners undertake.

While sources of revenue vary, the municipality is often the main source of funding and resourcing for local climate action partnerships, in addition to serving as the lead organization and provider of the secretariat. There are also processes for encouraging partners to self-fund initiatives that further climate action in their organizations and communities. Larger institutions and businesses are generally able to help achieve a shared vision through their own budgets and operations, and non-profit organizations may be able to align their contributions with their funded programming or tie it to future fundraising. In many cases, partners are able to provide their time as an in-kind contribution. That said, it is important to note that not all partners are in the same financial situation, and some will require support to engage and/or take climate action. Furthermore, some larger initiatives will require fundraising, for example from FCM, provincial or federal grants.

Depending on the sources of funding and resources, there may be explicit mandates that provide direction for the partnership activities and a process for reporting on use of funds and resources. This is a key point, as, from an equity lens, the power of the funder (especially if they are also a partner) may create tensions if not explicitly considered.

### Design implications of the focus/scale and partnership stage

Resourcing, budgeting and financing approaches are largely similar across community-wide, sector-, and project-focused partnerships. In all cases, resourcing is managed by the oversight body and/or the partners themselves (for self-funded contributions to collective action).

The approach to resourcing and funding is established during the formation and planning stages of the partnership. Defining this approach in the early stages of the partnership provides a framework for managing resources and funding, and reporting on their use throughout the partnership. Resourcing is obtained and provided during the formation and planning stages, as well as during the implementation and evaluation stages. During the implementation and evaluation stages, resource usage is reviewed, and fundraising is continued to support the initiatives and operations of the partnership.

Case stories 10 and 11 detail two different partnerships and their resourcing and funding sources. Whereas the first case is led by a municipal government, the second is led by a steering committee of eight organizations, with staff working directly for the partnership. From an equity perspective, the School Organics Pilot partnership has an explicit equity/commitment to engage youth (including Indigenous youth), while the Climate Change Connection partnership emphasizes supporting underserved communities (seniors, disabilities, youth, newcomers).



### Case Story 10. First example of a partnership's resourcing and funding approach



#### School Organics Pilot partnership, Saskatoon, SK

The City of Saskatoon's School Organics Pilot partnership was a small partnership between the City of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Public School Division, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, and the Saskatoon Early Childhood Education Demonstration Centre that aimed to tackle waste diversion and targets within the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan adopted by city council. The partnership focused on assessing the collection of organic waste in schools to inform the development of regulations around organic waste collection. This was achieved by measuring the production of organic waste in food-prep areas, such as cafeterias, nutrition programs, and food studies classes. The partnership considered the unique challenges faced by inner city schools and encouraged youth participation, including Indigenous youth. The partnership's work was funded by the City of Saskatoon, including funding for waste collection. As the lead partner, the city oversaw the process for resourcing, budgeting and financing, with two staff from the city assigned to support the partnership as part of their waste-diversion work. The school partners were responsible for managing the waste at their facilities as part of the pilot project, while the municipality regularly monitored the collection, measurement and reporting of organic waste.

Weblink: [www.saskatoon.ca/businessorganics](http://www.saskatoon.ca/businessorganics)

### Case Story 11. Second example of a partnership's resourcing and funding approach



#### Climate Change Connection, Winnipeg, MB

Climate Change Connection is a partnership that provides education, solutions and networking on climate change for practitioners in Manitoba. The partnership aims to raise awareness of climate change facts and facilitate action to reduce GHG emissions and build climate-resilient communities. The partnership also emphasizes ensuring accessibility for and diversity of its partners, and supporting underserved communities (seniors, disabilities, youth, newcomers) by providing resources and access to solutions. The partnership is funded through donations and grants, including funding from the Winnipeg Foundation, and is supported by Makeway, a charitable organization. This funding supports the work of bringing partners together to share information, resources and operational supports for the purpose of building networks and sharing knowledge. Climate Change Connection has three staff dedicated to providing support for the partnership's efforts, and the steering committee consists of eight core partners, namely, the City of Winnipeg, the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, Fort Whyte Alive, the Green Action Centre, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, the University of Manitoba, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Keystone Agricultural Producers. Other partners are engaged in various aspects of projects stemming from the work of the partnership.

Weblink: <https://climatechangeconnection.org/>

The focus, size and stage of the partnership can help determine the best structure for it. Table 1 summarizes the six design considerations in terms of their focus/scale.

**Table 1.** Summary of partnership structures by focus/scale, based on 12 partnerships

	Community-wide	Sector	Project
<b>Oversight (decision-making)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A steering committee or equivalent body in charge of decision-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically conducted by a smaller group of partners, with the municipality taking a lead role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be overseen by one lead partner, preferably the municipality given its resourcing capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination (secretariat)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosted by the municipality, a community foundation or a non-governmental organization committed to providing dedicated staff support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be managed by the lead partner or co-managed by the municipality and a non-governmental organization.</li> </ul>	
<b>Measuring, monitoring and reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performed on a larger scale, with community-wide progress being a key aspect of outcomes. A more comprehensive system. May be led by the oversight body, with support from the secretariat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Done on a comparatively smaller scale, with an emphasis on progress related to specific areas (sector, neighbourhood, etc.). May be led by the municipality.</li> </ul>	
<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carried out on a larger scale with a greater number of partners, aligning with the community-wide plan and intended community-wide impact. The channels used may be more advanced, and a more explicit approach to conflict resolution is often adopted. May be managed by the secretariat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Done on a comparatively smaller scale aligning with the goals of the partnership. Communication efforts may be managed by the secretariat or one of the partners who has the resources to support communications.</li> </ul>	
<b>Partner engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tends to be more broad and less frequent due to the partnership's size. Additionally, partner expectations are more formally articulated and may differ based on their roles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occurs more frequently, and expectations of the partners may be articulated less formally.</li> </ul>	
<b>Resourcing, budgeting and financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resourcing may be managed by the municipality with support from other organizations, depending on the partnership's goals and each partner's role. Typically, in-kind contributions are made by all partners.</li> <li>Funding support from the municipality alleviates financial pressure on the partnership's formation and ongoing operations. External funding is often required to complete larger initiatives.</li> </ul>		

Partnership design is key to ensuring progress on climate and equity goals. Considering the partnership's focus, the six structural features, and the stage, allows the selection of an appropriate structure (or the improvement of an existing structure). However, the structure will often evolve over time to ensure that progress is being made towards the intended outcomes, and that all the right partners are engaged. The partnership's structure should also include equity considerations, although such considerations are also tied to the partnership's goals and actions. This topic is explored in greater depth in the next section.



## Equity considerations

Embedding equity into partnerships allows municipalities to enact community wide climate action that leaves no one behind and works to correct past injustices. Equity is not achieved through any single intervention, nor should it be considered an add-on to climate action. Instead, it's a journey of continuous learning that should be undertaken by all partners and departments involved in climate action. This section examines the integral role of equity in climate action and offers evidence-based recommendations for embedding equity and wise Indigenous-engagement practices in local climate action. Following this discussion, we summarize the equity goals and actions pursued in 12 local climate action partnerships across Canada, and we conclude by elaborating on wise practices of Indigenous engagement.

### Considering equity in climate action

There are inequalities in power, access to resources and needs among people. An equity approach aims to rectify imbalances in power and resources and to meet people's unique needs, instead of treating everyone the same. Equity means correcting for historic and current injustices by removing barriers preventing marginalized people from participating in and benefiting from climate action. In the context of climate action, equity should focus on effecting systemic changes aimed at addressing historic and current injustices. For instance, lower-income and disadvantaged groups are more vulnerable to harms such as climate change impacts and are less able to access the benefits of climate action.<sup>33</sup> Individuals from these groups are also often excluded from decision-making processes, both overtly and inadvertently, and therefore lack representation in key decision-making entities. **Equity-deserving communities** are groups of people who have been historically disadvantaged and underrepresented, and who face discrimination and barriers to access and opportunity as a result. Advancing equity requires the recognition of these inequities and barriers and the shifting of norms, structures, policies and practices to eliminate them. Climate actions must include diverse voices if they are to achieve their equity goals.

Equality means treating everyone the same and giving everyone the same resources or opportunities, regardless of their individual circumstances. It assumes a level playing field.

Equity means recognizing that people have different circumstances and needs and therefore may require different resources or opportunities to achieve the same outcome. It is about fairness through inclusion and accommodation.



## Recommendations for embedding equity and Indigenous engagement in local climate action

The lessons learned from the 12 partnerships can be organized into three key pillars for embedding equity:

1) embedding equity in the partnership design, including in decision-making; 2) adding equity-related goals, such as equitable opportunities, energy poverty reduction and accessibility; and 3) embedding equity in the process, to ensure the inclusion of equity deserving groups, Indigenous Peoples/Communities, and diverse voices.

### Embedding equity in the partnership design

Climate goals should be pursued by engaging with diverse stakeholders and applying an equity lens to ensure an inclusive transition that addresses past injustices. Inclusion and diversity relate to who is shaping and taking climate actions. Equity-led approaches strive to overcome barriers and obstacles that (overtly or inadvertently) prevent underrepresented groups from shaping climate action priorities, assessing their progress, and participating in their implementation. The following recommendations for inclusion and diversity should be considered when designing local climate partnerships:

- 1 Identify equity-deserving groups in the community, recognize their needs, and consider what equity and reconciliation might look like for them.
- 2 Remove barriers to participation in engagement activities by conducting outreach work with specific underserved communities (e.g., in particular cultural centres, language groups and/or geographic areas) and offering fair compensation.
- 3 Ensure that equity-deserving groups and Indigenous rights-holders are represented on advisory committees and in decision-making processes.
- 4 Formally integrate equity into governance structures (e.g., through the partnership's oversight entity, decision-making processes, and the municipal staff's mandates).
- 5 Strengthen relationships with Indigenous governments and Communities.
- 6 Follow wise practices for Indigenous engagement throughout the process, including respecting local protocols (e.g. honoraria, gifts etc.), managing data in manner that supports Indigenous knowledge and data sovereignty, creating flexible and safe spaces for engagement, regular and ongoing check-ins and updates, ensuring Indigenous contributions are attributed, and sharing accessible and useable outputs.
- 7 Outline how to collaborate with partners and citizens during the planning stage, and continuously revisit and revise this approach during implementation and monitoring.



## Ensuring equity-related goals

Underserved groups are disproportionately impacted by climate change and often lack the resources to adapt or decarbonize. Furthermore, municipal infrastructure and services do not meet everyone's needs. Equitable climate action aims to reduce existing inequities in access to the benefits of municipal services, while also pursuing climate goals. The following recommendations are suggested for improving access to the benefits of climate action:

- 1 Identify opportunities to increase equity by working to understand and track existing inequities in infrastructure and services (e.g., communities lacking greenspace, concentrations of energy poverty).
- 2 Establish metrics to measure progress on equity, including progress towards reducing inequities for people facing barriers to climate action.
- 3 Devote climate investments to underserved communities (e.g., prioritizing retrofits for vulnerable communities, or provide free fruit trees to community members).
- 4 Go beyond education to also build capacity and skills (e.g., providing underserved communities with home-retrofitting skills training).
- 5 Tailor programs to ensure equitable access to climate actions, as general programs will not be accessible to everyone (e.g., to low-income households).

## Embedding equity in the actions

Embedding equity in community-wide climate action requires a reconsideration of governance structures and the integration of new approaches to mitigate power dynamics in decision-making. This pillar is concerned with who has power in decision-making, and to whom the decision makers are accountable. Municipalities are currently considering various methods of building trust, partnerships, and opportunities in an effort to transfer decision-making power and make climate action more equitable. Some communities in the studied partnerships are realizing that it is not sufficient merely to identify inequities and are starting to develop approaches that use targeted actions to benefit underserved groups. Recommendations relating to accountability and power include:

- 1 Provide staff in municipal and partner organizations with social equity and inclusion training.
- 2 Provide staff in municipal and partner organizations with training on Indigenous knowledge, histories and perspectives. Ensure staff understand the context of local Indigenous Communities and proper local protocols.
- 3 Create governance bodies with equity mandates (e.g., Climate and Equity Working Group) and develop relevant accountability frameworks (e.g., Climate Justice Charter).
- 4 Work to mitigate power dynamics in decision-making (e.g., grant selection committees made up of citizens instead of just city staff, develop terms of engagement, evaluate whether equity-seeking groups have decision-making power in current governance structures).
- 5 Ask Indigenous organizations and/or Communities how municipalities can support Indigenous climate work rather than just asking Indigenous groups to be a part of municipal work.
- 6 Explore opportunities for accountability, defining what that means for a partnership and developing accountability mechanisms (e.g., faster feedback mechanisms, transparency).



Figure 8 summarizes the key recommendations for embedding equity into local climate-action partnerships.

**Figure 8.** Embedding equity and Indigenous engagement in community-wide climate action: Summary of key recommendations

#### **Inclusion and diversity**

- Explicitly integrate equity into governance and decision-making processes.
- Engage diverse stakeholders using an equity lens, and by removing barriers to participation.
- Use wise practices for Indigenous engagement, including strengthening relationships.

#### **Accessibility and benefits**

- Address existing inequities in infrastructure and services.
- Tailor programs and investments to ensure equitable access to climate actions.
- Establish metrics to measure progress on equity goals.
- Build capacity and skills.

#### **Accountability and power**

- Train staff on equity, diversity and inclusion, and on Indigenous knowledge and histories.
- Have an equity mandate and accountability framework.
- Work towards mitigating power dynamics between partners.
- Ask how municipalities can support Indigenous climate work.



## Equity goals and actions

Table 2 summarizes the equity goals of the 12 partnerships with respect to their partnership designs, impacts, and processes. It is important to note that these equity goals are specific to the individual case studies and are not representative of all possible equity goals.

**Table 2.** Summary of equity goals in the 12 local climate-action partnerships

Goal type	Equity goals mentioned in case studies
<b>Partnership design: Shared decision-making</b>	<p><b>Indigenous partnership:</b> Co-governance with Indigenous communities; stewardship; sovereignty/rights for land and water.</p> <p><b>Inclusive leadership:</b> Ensuring many voices at the table; a co-leadership model; intergenerational collaboration.</p>
<b>Impact goals: Equitable access to opportunities and no one left behind</b>	<p><b>Equitable opportunities:</b> Focus on ensuring that economic benefits and opportunities from climate action are equitably distributed; equitable distribution of investments.</p> <p><b>Poverty reduction:</b> Affordability for community; alleviating energy poverty; reducing poverty through improved food security.</p> <p><b>Accessibility:</b> Promoting walkability, cycling and transit opportunities for all users; ensuring access to resources, greenspaces, health care, and food security for all.</p>
<b>Process goals: Diversity, inclusion and accessibility</b>	<p><b>Include equity-deserving and Indigenous groups:</b> Prioritization of frontline and underserved groups and communities; ensuring that frontline communities are at the centre of decision-making.</p> <p><b>Broad Engagement:</b> Promoting engagement across society; including diverse voices, especially youth voices; working at the grassroots level and ensuring the participation of community members; creating opportunities for community members to connect and engage in various projects.</p> <p><b>Youth engagement:</b> Promoting youth inclusion and participation in decision-making and action.</p> <p><b>Diversity and inclusion:</b> Building relationships with diverse stakeholders; ensuring diversity underpins decision-making; engaging and involving diverse communities and voices.</p>

## Leading with equity

Communities across Canada are engaging in planning, relationship-building and implementation as they work to promote equity through climate action. Table 3 summarizes some examples of key equity actions observed in the partnerships. Some partnerships are early in their equity journey and others are further along, but, overall, they are all diligently pursuing equity-based work and continuing to learn and iterate. Table 3 does not show all possible actions, just the key actions documented in the studied partnerships.

**Table 3.** Summary of equity actions planned or underway in the 12 partnerships

Equity actions	Examples of actions
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring gender inclusivity in co-chair elections (Eastern Georgian Bay).</li> <li>Co-creating terms of reference for municipalities that prioritize actions aimed at improving the wellbeing of, and reducing negative impact on, equity-deserving communities (Waterloo).</li> <li>Establishing a Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion Division (READI) to help integrate equity-related concerns into the city's work, including climate (Waterloo).</li> <li>Ensuring diverse representation on steering committees (Winnipeg).</li> </ul>
<b>Indigenous Community collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designating Indigenous/non-Indigenous co-chairs for oversight (Eastern Georgian Bay).</li> <li>Maintaining engagement with Indigenous Communities by assigning this responsibility to specific municipal staff; holding regular meetings with, and delivering presentations to, the Tk'emlúps council; and integrating traditional ecological knowledge into projects (Kamloops).</li> <li>Engaging closely with nearby First Nations Communities and leveraging individuals with relevant expertise to ensure these engagements are respectfully navigated (Winnipeg).</li> </ul>
<b>Working with underserved groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing energy poverty (St. John's).</li> <li>Supporting youth leadership in climate action (Kamloops, Saskatoon).</li> <li>Building partners' capacity to better engage, codesign and co-create solutions with underserved communities (Waterloo).</li> <li>Customizing publicity and engagement efforts with demographic and socio-economic analysis and initial engagement with community leaders or champions, who then help shape engagement (Markham).</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaching out to, and engaging with, diverse and underrepresented groups and Indigenous Communities to encourage their participation in climate action dialogues and plan development (Halifax, Vancouver, Markham, Canmore).</li> <li>Holding consultations with vulnerable populations, such as seniors and families with young children (Markham).</li> <li>Attending community events, building relationships with ethnocultural groups and ensuring equitable access to engagement opportunities. Providing snacks and ensuring that venues and content are accessible (Canmore).</li> <li>Hiring program assistants from communities who understand neighbourhood needs and dynamics (Markham).</li> </ul>

Equity actions	Examples of actions
Accessibility and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing information and engagement materials in multiple languages to ensure they are accessible to residents (Markham).</li> <li>• Ensuring transparency in information access (Eastern Georgian Bay).</li> <li>• Producing diverse resources targeted at, and potentially actionable by, a wide range of partners and audiences (Montreal).</li> </ul>
Equity indicators and other tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning to develop an equity framework (Halifax) and equity indicators to monitor progress in reducing inequities (Vancouver, Waterloo).</li> <li>• Creating equity initiative zones to identify historically underserved areas for prioritization (Vancouver).</li> <li>• Developing a climate justice charter through the work of the Climate and Equity Working Group (Vancouver).</li> <li>• Conducting equity assessments to understand how actions impact and burden underserved groups and vulnerable residents (Canmore).</li> <li>• Engaging with funders and provinces to consider equity in funding (Halifax).</li> </ul>

## Wise practices in Indigenous engagement


Indigenous Peoples have a distinct status within Canada. As such, there are different requirements and considerations that must be observed when engaging and consulting with them. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, recognizes and affirms that the “Aboriginal Peoples”<sup>34</sup> of Canada, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, have distinct and pre-existing Aboriginal and treaty rights,<sup>35</sup> which have been further defined and clarified through numerous Supreme Court rulings.<sup>36</sup> Thus, Indigenous Communities are rights-bearing collectives, and Indigenous Peoples are rights-holders and knowledge holders.

Additionally, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) holds that Indigenous Communities have the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) to ensure their effective and meaningful participation in decisions that affect them, their communities and their territories. In June 2021, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* received Royal Assent and immediately became law in Canada.<sup>37</sup> The Government of Canada acknowledges that:

FPIC describes processes that are *free* from manipulation or coercion, *informed* by adequate and timely information, and occur sufficiently *prior* to a decision so that Indigenous rights and interests can be incorporated or addressed effectively as part of the decision-making process – all as part of meaningfully aiming to secure the *consent* of affected Indigenous Peoples.<sup>38</sup>

While there are legal distinctions between formal federal consultation processes and municipal-led engagements,<sup>39</sup> the underlying principle remains the same: Indigenous Peoples and Communities have rights and are important (and unique) partners in municipal planning.

It is also important to acknowledge that municipalities have contributed to and benefited from the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples from their lands and territories and the colonization of the land we now call Canada. Many Indigenous Communities and people may still distrust government actors, which can amplify barriers or challenges to engagement.



It is also important to note that, because of the diversity of Indigenous Communities across Canada, there is no “one size fits all” approach to engagement. Engagement planning must be regionally specific, as different regions will be home to different Communities with unique considerations. For example, some municipalities may be neighboured by First Nations reserves that can be engaged (e.g., the Climate Connection Trails partnership). Other municipalities may be home to Indigenous individuals from many different Communities; these individuals could be engaged by partnering with an Indigenous service organization or a friendship centre. However, if an Indigenous Community does not want to work with a municipality or the partnership, those wishes should be respected.

To find out more about Indigenous Communities and territories, visit <https://native-land.ca/>

The following sections outline a framework for engaging Indigenous Peoples and Communities in climate-action planning.

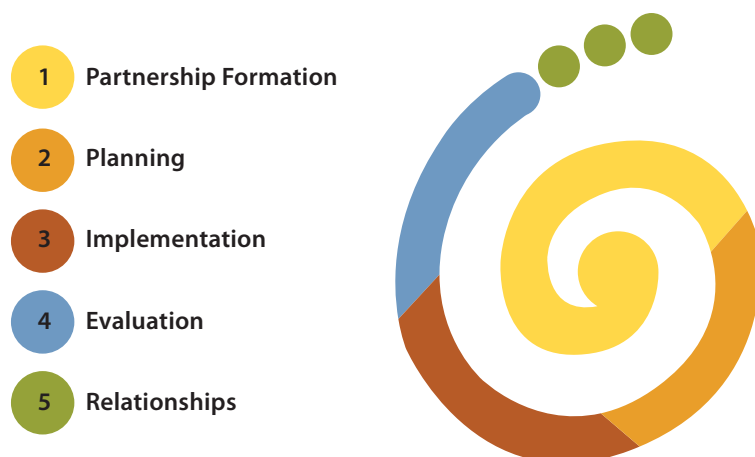
## Principles of engagement

Taking a principled approach to Indigenous engagement means prioritizing and exercising values, principles and processes that create respectful, ethical and balanced interactions for Indigenous partners. While each Indigenous Nation and community is unique, general principles of ethical engagements with Indigenous Peoples include respect, responsibility, relevance, reciprocity and relationships.<sup>40</sup> These principles focus on (1) demonstrating and leading with **respect** throughout all stages of the partnership lifecycle and beyond; (2) centring and caring for the relationships that will be created; (3) taking **responsibility** for the cultivation of an ethical collaboration experience; (4) approaching Communities with (or creating new) opportunities that are **relevant** to their needs and priorities; and (5) ensuring that the partnership’s work and its outcomes are guided by **reciprocity** and are mutually beneficial and balanced among the partners.

## The importance of relationships

Wise practices are actions that adhere to the above-noted principles and demonstrate respect for Indigenous Peoples and Communities, as well as acknowledging the value of their knowledge, time and contributions. Along with the principles described above, the wise practices shared in this guide should be applied throughout the lifecycle of a partnership. Applying a lifecycle framing to partnerships and their associated activities enables better planning for the ongoing collaboration and the necessary care and consideration for the partners involved. Additionally, following a principled approach and placing **relationships** within this framework highlights that relationships are long-lasting and endure after the partnership has ended. In general, relationships with Indigenous Communities take time to build and should not be outcomes-focused (to ensure reciprocity). When possible, such relationships should be built upon the municipality’s existing relationships. While partnership activities and engagement have bounded timelines, the relationships necessary for mutually meaningful collaborations will ideally live on, thus providing future opportunities for connection and collaborations.

**Figure 9.** Visualization of the four stages, with relationships included



(Source: Graphic created by Jade Hill and Sara Anderson from the Indigenous Research Team at the University of Waterloo and members of N-ZAP Working Group 4).

The image in Figure 9 visualizes the entire climate-action partnership lifecycle and demonstrates wise practices for engaging with Indigenous Communities and Peoples that can be applied to create a more respectful, ethical and balanced collaborative partnership. The image starts at the center yellow dot, which represents the partnership formation stage, and continues through the planning, implementation and evaluation stages. The three dots at the end of the graphic do not represent a lifecycle stage; rather, they indicate relationships that will ideally be long-lasting and open for communications and future opportunities. This “fifth stage” was included to emphasize the importance of nurturing relationships with Indigenous partners throughout and beyond the partnership.

Wise practices for Indigenous engagement might require the capacity and the budget to observe local practices (i.e., providing honoraria, gifts, travel subsidies, childcare, etc.). During the planning stage, wise practices might also look like intentional planning for how data will be collected, stored, shared in support of Indigenous knowledge and data sovereignty. Wise practices might also look like designing flexibility for engagement timelines and ensuring a safe space for engagement during the implementation phase. See the section called ‘Recommendations for embedding equity and Indigenous engagement in local climate action’ for more detail on these points.





Case Story 12 provides an example of a partnership that has integrated Indigenous engagement into its structure, goals and actions.

### **Case Story 12.** Example of a partnership highlighting Indigenous engagement



#### **Integrated Community Energy and Climate Action Plans (ICECAP) partnership, Eastern Georgian Bay, ON**

The Integrated Community Energy and Climate Action Plans (ICECAP) partnership is a large partnership of municipalities and First Nation Communities within Ontario's Georgian Bay Biosphere region. The partnership has enabled a cost-effective approach to energy management and GHG emissions reduction for all partner communities. The partnership's climate goals centre on reducing GHG emissions and improving energy management. The partnership emphasizes relationship building and has created a space where partners can share information and opportunities for advancing climate action in the region. The partnership's governance structure is built around an oversight body responsible for decision-making and assessing progress. The structure allows all partners to participate in decision-making. Working with First Nations Communities is an integral part of the partnership's structure, with efforts being made to have a First Nations member co-chair the collaborative. The partnership's governance structure allows municipalities and First Nations Communities to collectively define goals and work towards shared objectives, while also sharing knowledge and resources.

Weblink: <https://georgianbaybiosphere.com/climate-action/>

Embedding equity into a partnership's structure, goals and actions allows it to pursue climate action while leaving no one behind and addressing past injustices. This section has provided a detailed discussion of the lessons learned from the 12 studied partnerships and a review of the literature on equity and wise practices for Indigenous engagement. Throughout this guide, we have presented short case stories to illustrate the principles being discussed. In the next section, we conduct a more in-depth review of the ClimateActionWR partnership and its goals, structure, and approach to measuring progress. We conclude by outlining key points that may be useful for those wishing to create or improve their own partnership.



## Exemplary case story: ClimateActionWR Partnership, Waterloo, ON

ClimateActionWR is a community-wide climate action partnership between local organizations, community members, and municipalities within Waterloo Region, ON. The partnership was established in 2012 with funding by the Region of Waterloo and the Cities of Kitchener, Cambridge, and Waterloo, and it is currently in the implementation stage of its climate action plan. Waterloo Region is formed by three cities (Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo) and four townships (North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich) and possesses a two-tier governance structure. Waterloo Region is home to approximately 587,165 people, mostly of English, German, Scottish or Irish ancestry. As of the 2024 Census, only 27% of residents identified as a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2024).<sup>41</sup>

ClimateActionWR was selected as an exemplary case story because it is a relatively successful partnership that has been ongoing for a few years, which allows us to assess all the partnership dimensions discussed in this report.



## The partnership, its purpose and its goals

ClimateActionWR is a large process-oriented project that focuses on specific actions developed through collective decision-making processes at partnership meetings. These processes are also used to develop strategies, policies and relationships to further the partnership's goals.

The partnership aims to create a community-wide climate action plan to achieve the climate and equity goals detailed in *TransformWR: Waterloo Region's Transition Plan to an Equitable, Prosperous, Resilient, Low Carbon Community*.<sup>42</sup> To achieve its climate and equity goals, the partnership has adopted an integrated approach consisting of the following actions:

To reach its climate goals, ClimateActionWR is undertaking four major actions:

- 1 "Transform the Ways We Move," which aims to replace 50 percent of the region's gasoline-powered vehicles with zero-emissions modes of transportation by 2030 and 99 percent by 2050.
- 2 "Transform the Ways We Build and Operate Our Spaces," which aims to eliminate the use of fuel oil and propane for building heating by 2050.
- 3 "Transform the Ways We Produce, Consume, and Waste," which aims to maintain 2010 levels of methane emissions from livestock through 2050.
- 4 "Transform the Ways We Relate," which aims for locally-produced electricity from carbon-neutral, renewable sources to make up 4 percent of the region's power use by 2030 and 30 percent by 2050.

To reach its equity goals, ClimateActionWR focuses on two transformative change actions, and the call to action to "Transform the Ways We Relate":

- 1 Supporting people to walk, cycle or roll, and to build a culture of active transportation and public transport ridership. This action seeks to improve the well-being of equity-deserving groups and reduce their vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change by developing active transportation and transit programs.
- 2 Prioritizing equity throughout GHG-reduction planning. To achieve this action, ClimateActionWR has established metrics for measuring progress towards reducing inequity; incorporated education on sustainability justice and equity into planning; funded a climate justice committee led by equity-seeking members; supported organizations in prioritizing equity while planning their transition; built reciprocal relationships between Indigenous groups, local municipalities and climate action organizations; and applied an equity lens to all the actions in this transformation.

Each "call to action" has several corresponding milestones and transformative changes, which are detailed in the plan.

## The partnership's structure

The ClimateActionWR is structured as follows:

### Oversight and decision-making

- Configuration: The management committee in charge of decision-making consists of the funders (i.e., the area and regional municipalities) and two local environmental NGOs (Sustainable Waterloo Region (SWR) and Reep Green Solutions). SWR and Reep are intermediary (backbone) organizations that support the management committee and the broader partnership.
- Mode of governance: The partnership is governed through an enabling approach, wherein the regional municipality maintains formal legal agreements amongst funding partners, SWR and Reep host dedicated staff who facilitate and coordinate partnership activities, and decision-making is consensus-based.
- Formality of the partnership: All eight municipalities adopted TransformWR through council processes, but there are no mechanisms for holding partners accountable. However, a new model adopted by the partners in 2025 includes provisions for holding one another accountable.
- Partner involvement: Partners involved in major decision-making through the steering committee meet monthly with backbone partners, who are conduct day-to-day decision-making using consensus-based process.

### Coordination

- ClimateActionWR assigns the secretariat/coordination role to staff under the supervision of the backbone organizations and reporting to the management committee. This includes the roles of plan manager and project coordinator, as well as communications and research staff.

### Measuring, monitoring and reporting

- System/process, frequency and lead organization:
  - The TransformWR Progress Dashboard is an online platform for measuring and monitoring the implementation of climate actions, which also enables reporting on emissions reduction. This tool is led by ClimateActionWR and is operational when capacity allows and there is information available.
  - The Region of Waterloo conducts, gathers and analyses the GHG data for the community inventory, and ClimateActionWR then completes the messaging and reporting using feedback from municipal partners. This process is currently performed every five years, but the partnership is planning to begin doing so annually for some components.
  - Organizational reports are generated through the SWR Impact Report and Reep Green Solutions Report, which are presented to municipal and regional councils each year. SWR and REEP lead this reporting, and both documents contain specific program impact reporting.

### Accountability mechanisms

- All eight municipal councils have adopted the same target of 50 percent emissions reduction by 2030 and 80 percent reduction by 2050, with accountability mechanisms implemented through impact reporting.
- However, accountability methods have not been formalized, and there is limited available data to report on.

## Communication

- Communication with partners takes place at regular meetings and over email as needed; communication with the community is less structured and more project-based.
- Email and online video software are used as communication channels for the partnership. ClimateActionWR communicates with the community through its blog, in-person community events and social media, and with SWR and Reep through their workshops and events.
- Conflicts are resolved using a collaborative approach that is often mitigated by trust and interpersonal relationships. Conflict resolution is usually led by SWR and Reep's Executive Directors.

## Partner engagement

- The partnership consists of 10 members from diverse regional and sectoral backgrounds. It also contains a newly launched governance structure that aims to grow the partnership and its diversity.
- Partner engagement is relationship-based; while this approach requires a high level of commitment, related activities are limited based on staff capacity.
- SWR, Reep and the municipalities conduct most of the engagement with Indigenous Communities and leaders. Indigenous engagement has been minimal to-date and efforts are being made to increase this aspect of the partnership.
- The partnership's recruitment strategy is to employ intentional outreach through existing relationships and their connected networks.

## Resourcing, budgeting and financing

- The Region of Waterloo and the three cities provide equal funding. Sometimes, the partnership is also able to secure federal grants.
- The management committee oversees the budget, which is managed by SWR and Reep. There are no financing mechanisms for TransformWR, as municipalities adopt actions individually and are responsible for the resultant projects. Thus, funding is project-based and must receive council approval through municipal budgeting processes.
- Regional and municipal partners are required to budget for TransformWR. When applying for external funding, partners must follow mandates regarding funding sources (e.g., applications for building retrofitting must be directed to the federal government).
- The ClimateActionWR team consists of 12 people: a plan manager, a project coordinator, an engagement coordinator, a community strategic researcher, a marketing coordinator, two community action researchers, two content writers, and three events team members. Two team members are full-time-equivalent staff, and the rest are volunteers.

## Partnership effectiveness

- Key performance indicators (KPIs) are used for evaluation and performance reporting, as presented in the TransformWR plan. GHG emissions reductions are the main indicator used for these purposes, but a number of other areas are also reviewed and/or assessed, including: activities identified in TransformWR; funding as an input; and success in plan implementation, including an equitable implementation process and other measures as indicated by moving forward as a community.

## Reflections and learnings

- Some of the identified challenges and barriers include:
  - No financing mechanisms for implementing TransformWR, as municipal budgets are tight.
  - The importance of having a good understanding of climate mitigation pathways to engage with others.
  - The partners' capacities and access to resources.
- Some notable lessons learned include:
  - Building and sustaining the partnership requires a shared vision beyond just GHG emissions reduction.
  - Enacting equity goals requires equity to be implemented more intentionally in the governance and organizational structures of ClimateActionWR.
  - A new governance structure is required to allow for implementation to be scaled up.
  - Power dynamics must be navigated through new terms of engagement that ensure the leadership table includes diverse voices and equitable representation.
  - The partnership's co-leadership model is unique and novel.
- Differences in perspectives among actors:
  - Differences in perspectives were minimal, as all actors are largely on the same page.
- Implications for, and limits to, transferability:
  - Municipalities need to "give up" some of their power and collaborate with others to ensure ClimateActionWR's success.
  - Very strong relationships between NGOs and the community and municipalities. Backbone organizations and intermediaries are crucial to enabling collaboration across many municipal partners. Furthermore, this is a two-tier regional system, which may limit transferability to other municipalities.

Climate Action WR – <https://climateactionwr.ca/>



## Checklist: Steps to building your partnership

This checklist is a synthesis of the content and recommendations from the guide. For more guidance see the related content earlier in this guide.



### 1. Partnership formation

*During this stage, the partnership is formed based on shared interests and needs, and the focus is set. As the partnership structure is established, relationships are developed, roles are defined, and resource needs and sources of funding are confirmed.*


#### Key tasks and recommendations

##### Define focus, shared vision and equity practices

- ☐ Create an initial vision for climate action, including the focus (scale) of the partnership. This is helpful in designing the partnership and likely matches a portion (or all) of your community-wide climate action plan.
- ☐ Formally integrate equity into the partnership by explicitly committing to equity.

##### Design the partnership structure (with the six structural features) and define roles

- ☐ Define **oversight** entity and partnership configuration during the early stages; this provides partners with clarity with respect to expectations and processes.
  - Match the oversight entity's decision-making responsibility and the partnership configuration to the partnership's focus, goals and capabilities.
  - Invite core partners to join the oversight entity. Establish a flat hierarchy with the core partners on the oversight entity to ensure inclusivity.
  - With the core partners, finalize the terms of reference for the oversight entity, including frequency of meetings.
  - Clarify which partner is responsible for each task (such as coordination, communication, reporting, etc.). Perhaps use a RACI (responsible, accountable, consult, inform) matrix to clarify each partner's role.
  - Work to mitigate power dynamics in decision-making and ensure diverse and equitable representation on the oversight body.

- 
- ☐ Determine the process for **coordination**. This enables effective collaboration by having at least one staff person responsible for managing the partnership.
    - Consider where the secretariat should be housed. Likely a hosted secretariat within one of the partner organizations.
    - Create a secretariat with at least one person responsible for providing administrative support to the partnership.
  - ☐ Determine the approach to staff **resourcing and funding**.
    - Develop a budget, with the anticipated revenue needs. Consider what can be provided in-kind (e.g., dedicated staff time from partners) and what needs funding.
    - Secure initial resourcing and funding needs.
    - Municipalities should provide funding to help alleviate financial pressures on some partners. Some partners will be unable to provide in-kind time; they will need financial support for their organizations in order to participate.
    - Establish partner funding (or resourcing) requirements (if any) at the start of the partnership to set expectations.
    - Determine the timeframe of the partnership. Depending on the focus, planning for a temporary partnership with a defined start and end date is appropriate. For community-wide partnerships, this is probably meant to be a long-term initiative with no end date.
    - If need be, seek external funding through grant applications.
  - ☐ Define a **communications** framework for connecting with partners and the public on an ongoing basis and sharing information throughout the partnership.
    - Choose relevant communication channels that fit the focus of the partnership (e.g., a website, an e-newsletter, an annual partner event, public engagement opportunities, etc.)
    - Assign related responsibilities.
    - Provide a clear communications schedule and expectations for partners on when their input is needed.
    - Ensure communications are accessible and transparent and provide opportunities for feedback.
    - Acknowledge the value of partner contributions on ongoing basis.
  - ☐ Develop a high-level structure for tracking progress throughout the partnership. Defining the approach to **measuring, monitoring and reporting** early on enables greater clarity on progress towards goals.
    - Assign specific partner(s) the responsibility for managing aspects of the process.

- ☐ Define the mechanisms for **engaging partners** throughout the duration of the partnership. This will clarify expectations relating to each partner's involvement and contribution to the partnership's efforts.
  - Based on the configuration chosen for the partnership, define the approach to partner engagement and assign related responsibilities.
  - Set clear expectations for partner engagement in meetings and in climate action.
  - Invite additional partners to join.
  - Ensure diversity among partners, with a focus on ensuring that marginalized participants/groups and Indigenous rights-holders are represented on committees and in decision-making processes. Celebrating diversity and amplifying the voice of marginalized groups is critical in building trust.
  - Remove barriers to participation in engagement activities by reaching out to specific underserved communities and offering fair compensation.

### **Build and strengthen relationships (internal and external)**

- ☐ Invest in relationships between partners, including being flexible and adaptable in the early stages to enable contributions from as many partners as possible and to cultivate greater cohesion on collective decisions, and a greater commitment to collective action.
- ☐ Strengthen relationships with Indigenous governments, organizations and Communities.
  - Ask Indigenous governments, organizations and/or Communities how municipalities can support Indigenous climate work.
  - Follow wise practices for Indigenous engagement throughout the process.

## **2. Planning**

*During the planning stage, the partners establish a plan for implementing the work of the partnership. This includes defining the partnership's climate and equity goals and its approach to monitoring activities and progress. At this stage, partners also consider how their own goals align with those of the partnership and what synergies could be developed.*

### **Key tasks and recommendations**

#### **Defining goals (climate and equity)**

- ☐ Establish climate and equity goals during the formation and planning stages. This provides a clear direction for the partnership's efforts. This likely matches a portion (or all) of your community-wide climate action plan.
  - Establish clear goals and agreement on shared outcomes and intended impacts.
  - Align partners' individual goals with the partnership's goals.

## Implementation plan

- ☐ Create an implementation plan to articulate how the partnership's climate and equity goals will be accomplished. This likely matches a portion (or all) of your community-wide climate action plan.
  - Engage with partners (and potential partners) on the planning, including on how to conduct implementation and monitoring.
  - Build capacity and skills through the planning process.
- ☐ Anchor staff positions and roles to the plan; allow the flexibility to adapt these roles to support the partnership's efforts.
- ☐ Update the roles and responsibilities, and partnership structure as needed to ensure it is the appropriate scale to achieve the goals. For example, new partners may need to be added. Communication channels might be updated.
- ☐ Update the budget and financing plans as needed. Be sure to dedicate climate investments to underserved communities.

## Measurement, monitoring and reporting plan

- ☐ Define the approach to measurement during the planning stages. This will provide greater clarity on progress towards goals.
  - Determine KPIs for measuring the climate action success. Ensure GHG reduction measurements are grounded in science and established measurement methodologies.
  - Establish metrics for measuring progress relating to equity, including reducing inequities preventing people from participating in, and benefiting from, climate action.
  - Formally integrate equity into the partnership processes by developing a relevant accountability framework with equity-related KPIs.
  - Determine interim milestones for evaluating progress towards outcomes.
  - Explore opportunities for partner accountability, define what accountability means within the context of your partnership, and develop accountability mechanisms.
- ☐ Consider the frequency of monitoring and reporting.
  - Frequency and audience will vary for different types of reports.

### 3. Implementation

*During the implementation stage, the work required to reach the partnership's goals is undertaken. This includes work done by individual partners, as well as collective efforts towards the partnership's goals. Partners continue to engage and communicate regarding the work and adjust efforts to ensure progress towards the partnership's goals.*

#### Key tasks and recommendations

##### Collective effort towards partnership goals

- ☐ Have partners participate in implementation through their roles, which were defined in the formation and planning stages.
- ☐ Tailor programs to ensure equitable access to climate actions.

##### Continued partner engagement and communication

- ☐ Refine communications to adapt to the partnership's needs. Communications should focus on sharing progress and the impact of the work, partner success stories, as well as opportunities for partners (and perhaps the public) to engage and interact.
- ☐ Utilizing an online platform for sharing results (reporting) can be helpful for expanding your reach.
- ☐ Use multiple communication channels to enable greater partner engagement. Maintaining regular and direct communication with partners fosters timely progress towards outcomes.
- ☐ Provide staff from municipal and other partner organizations with social equity and inclusion training.
- ☐ Train staff from municipal and other partner organizations on Indigenous knowledge, histories, and perspectives. Ensure staff understand the context of local Indigenous Communities and proper local protocols.
- ☐ Provide other climate-related training as needed. The opportunity to learn is one of the reasons partners engage.
- ☐ Enable new partners to join, perhaps on an annual frequency so onboarding can occur.

##### Monitoring (continued oversight) and reporting

- ☐ The partner(s) responsible for measurement begin tracking progress and action.
- ☐ The oversight entity monitors progress, and adjusts the implementation plan, actions, budgets and fundraising efforts, communications, and partner engagement to ensure progress towards desired outcomes.
- ☐ Identify opportunities to increase equity by working to understand and track existing inequities in infrastructure and services.
- ☐ Reporting begins. This might be to Council(s), internal reports, and/or external reports.
  - Emphasize reporting on progress, including challenges, risks and new opportunities.
  - Ensure reporting is accessible and transparent and provides opportunities for feedback.
  - Report regularly to enhance partner and community engagement, as well as knowledge-sharing and accountability.

## 4. Evaluation

*During the evaluation stage, the work of the partnership is assessed. Monitoring systems are most effective when established at the onset of the partnership and executed throughout the implementation stage; however, evaluation can be conducted after the work of the partnership has been completed or after five years of implementation. Evaluations should focus on the outcomes of the partnership and the process of the partnership itself. In the evaluation stage input relating to the partners' learnings from the collective effort is gathered. The evaluation stage can lead to an updated structure and plan, and, thus, the partnership's progression through the four stages once again.*

### Key tasks and recommendations

#### Evaluate outcomes

- ☐ On a longer frequency, such as every five years, an evaluation should be conducted to consider the climate and equity goals, implementation plan, partnership configuration and structure, etc.
  - During this evaluation consider the interim milestones towards achieving GHG-reduction goals (and other goals) and ensure the partnership is on track progress towards the intended outcomes.
  - Look for new opportunities and innovative approaches.

#### Evaluate processes

- ☐ Review each of the structural features to ensure the processes still serve the partnership effectively.
  - Review the oversight entity, and current core partners.
  - Review the coordination aspects.
  - Review resource and funding use and needs.
  - Review communications channels and frequency.
  - Review monitoring, measurement, and reporting systems.
  - Review partner (and public) engagement opportunities.
- ☐ Review equity KPIs and related progress.
- ☐ Update KPIs and processes as needed. This is a good moment to update the membership of the oversight entity.

#### Input and learnings from partners

- ☐ Engage partners to review work being done and their experience with the partnership.
  - Consider the outcomes to partners through their involvement and what improvements might be made to enable a better partner experience.
  - Partner outcomes might include: costs savings, GHG reductions, new relationships and social capital, improved reputation, marketing and business opportunities, knowledge gained, increased employee morale, increased capacity, etc.



## Reporting progress

- ☐ Share the evaluation results and recommended next steps.

## Update partnership structure, plan ... implement again...

- ☐ If this is a temporary partnership, with a specific end date, celebrate the completion.
- ☐ If this is an ongoing partnership, celebrate progress to date, and then take action to implement the improvements.
- ☐ If an update to the goals and implementation plan are needed, a broader partner consultation on next steps should be undertaken.



## Other Resources

### Climate Partnership Resources

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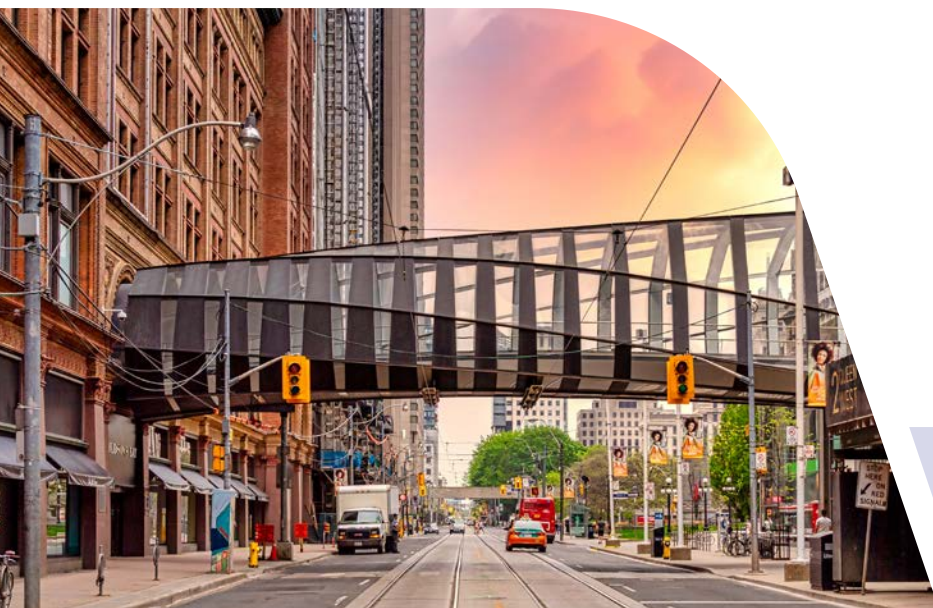
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