



Why are rural areas crucial to the green transition?

The Rural Agenda for Climate Action





What is the Rural Agenda for Climate Action?

Rural policies have an essential role to play in reaching net-zero GHG emission targets while also generating benefits for rural communities.

The OECD has developed *the Rural Agenda for Climate Action* to strengthen rural policies and the role they can play in achieving climate change mitigation goals. The *Agenda* shows how rural regions can make the most of new opportunities in the transition to a net-zero economy, including generating benefits for local communities. The *Agenda* also promotes a long-term dialogue on how rural policies and involved actors can support the transition to net-zero emissions economies. Furthermore, it encourages countries, regions and communities to better integrate rural development opportunities into broader national and subnational climate strategies. The *Agenda* was approved by the OECD's Working Party on Rural Policy in October 2021 and was launched at 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow.

Six Areas of Climate Action for Rural Policies



The *Rural Agenda for Climate Action* identifies how policymakers can integrate the goals of climate resilience and the transition to net-zero emissions into a broader, place-based, rural development agenda.

1. Improving the evidence base at the regional and local level.



2. Empowering rural regions through local capacity building.



3. Fostering renewable energy.



4. Promoting sustainable land management.



5. Accelerating the circular and bio-economy.



6. Decarbonising transport while advancing physical and digital infrastructures.





Why is it important?

Across the OECD, rural regions cover 80% of the territory and are home to approximately 30% of the population.

Many rural regions face important challenges in reaching climate change goals. They are also home to energy intensive industries and still depend on carbon based forms of transport. Tailored policies are needed to help secure the transition of these places and attract new private sector investment.

Despite the specific challenges rural regions face, they are also places of opportunity. They make strong contributions to national economies and are essential providers of food and raw materials, amenities, biodiversity and ecosystem services. Rural regions, especially remote ones, are also leading in renewable electricity production. They also account for 43% of the electricity produced in OECD countries, generate 38% of their electricity using renewable sources. In total, regions far from metropolitan areas account for around half of the total electricity produced from renewable sources in the OECD.

In 2018, average emissions per capita in OECD countries were three times higher in remote rural regions (26.3 tons of CO₂ per capita) compared to large to large metropolitan regions.

The increasing need for place-based policies



Rural regions come in different shapes and sizes. They are socially, economically, geographically and culturally diverse. Climate change policies are often spatially blind, often targeted to specific sectors or applied too uniformly within countries. This raises risks of policy fragmentation and sub-optimal outcomes . It can lead to sub-optimal use of public funds and trade-offs between climate change mitigation and other policy goals. Understanding this diversity helps to design more effective climate policy responses.

Place-based rural policies are an essential way forward in addressing these concerns. Place-based approaches that adapt to unique rural assets can only function through meaningful cooperation. National, regional and local governments will need to collaborate with private sectors and civil society to implement place-based policies. Also, it is equally important that local communities benefit from these partnerships through meaningful co-ownership or benefit-sharing agreements.





How to become a part of the initiative?

Who are we?

The OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities provides comparative statistics, analysis and capacity building for local and national actors to work together to unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises, promote inclusive and sustainable regions and cities, boost local job creation, and support sound tourism policies.

How to join in?

While Delegates to the OECD Working Party on Rural Policy are the main champions of the Rural Agenda for Climate Action, subnational governments, the private sector and civil society are also called upon to express their support to the Rural Agenda for Climate Action.

Express support for the Rural Agenda by signing up using the second QR code below.

Contact rural@oecd.org

Visit our Website



Express your support

