**Network of Regional Govenrments
for Sustainable Development**

nrg4SD WORK-PROGRAMME (2014-2016)

**In development of the Transition Phase document presented at the nrg4SD Summit
General Assembly in Sao Paolo (June, 2013)**

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INTRODUCTION

This document aims to give basis for the network's work for the next three years (2014-2016). For this purpose, and continuing the analysis made by the "transition road-map" document, it is necessary to take into consideration what nrg4SD has achieved in its more than 10 years of life as well as the challenges that currently bring sustainable development, paradipomacy and the general social existing demand for more democracy and transparency in the creation and implementation of policies.

Since its creation in 2002, nrg4SD has achieved a position not only in the international scene but also among other paradiplomatic organizations, has created synergies and collaborations with other fellow organizations, and has positioned as observer before UN bodies as well as participated and contributed to UN processes. In addition, nrg4SD has shown its political character by creating different statements and declarations with regards to different significant events, and has enhanced global cooperation (North-North, North-South, and South-South) in sustainable development to improve the quality of life in territories as well as to prepare the subnational level to the coming sustainable development challenges.

After over 10 years of life, the international panorama has evolved into new sustainable development demands and challenges, new ways of participative cooperation created by the UN, and an increased demand by citizens of a transparent and democratic political management. This scenario forces nrg4SD to evolution and adapt its strategy, governance and aims according to the mentioned panorama. Despite being satisfied with our trajectory since the network's creation, it is our

obligation to make the necessary adaptations and changes to maintain our referent position as global subnational network in the international scenario.

Besides, the current situation in nrg4SD must be taken into account. The initial design of the organic structure of the network decided in Gauteng, has proved to be insufficient due to the above mentioned causes as well to the own success of nrg4SD. Indeed, the great development of the network and its activities, the increase of region/organization members, the large amount of fields and forums where nrg4SD has a presence or the wide relations that nrg4SD holds with fellow networks, have created a workload that exceeds the capacity of the traditional organic structure of the network, based in two Co-Presidencies, 3 Vice-Presidencies, a General Secretary and a Treasurer.

In brief, nrg4SD faces a triple challenge that must be duelled in the next years: i) to adapt to the new demands of global negotiation participation possibilities and to the plurality of subnational/local actors collaborations and trans-horizontal cooperation possibilities, all aiming to give response to the global social demand of more democratic and transparent policies; ii) to maintain nrg4SD activity, visibility, contributions and products in order to keep the reference position that nrg4SD has gained in the international scene after 10 years of hard work; and iii) to adapt the internal organic structure of the network to the new demands of activity as well as to the nrg4SD conditions, especially with regards to the disposal and activeness of members.
The present 2014-2016 work plan aims to respond those challenges.

1. THEMATIC PRIORITIES

The thematic priorities of action and partnerships of nrg4SD for the next three year period are to be in line with the global agenda, especially with the post 2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs, and in particular with the newly created High Level Political Forum. Besides, the nrg4SD thematic priorities must respect a continuous principle capable of linking the new work plan not only with the last period's work plan but also with the general strategy and actions developed by nrg4SD since its creation. In this sense, priorities must be settled according to i) the UN processes on sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity; ii) the created partnerships with other fellow networks; and iii) the production of tangible results in the forms of statements, papers, exchange of experiences booklets etc.

According to the above, the thematic priorities for the 2014-2016 period are the following:
  – Climate Change.
  – Post-Rio + 20.

- – Sustainable consumption and production.
- – Biodiversity

Climate change will be principally addressed by the active participation of nrg4SD in the UNFCCC COPs 19, 20 and 21. A high level participation, advocacy on behalf of the Local Authorities and Municipal Governments constituency, an official side-event organization and participation at other events to raise political stature and visibility for nrg4SD's actions are goals. Besides, nrg4SD aims to actively contribute to the global negotiations in this field and intends to follow closely the works of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action.

In addition, formal and active collaboration with ICLEI should be sought in order to take part in the *Friends of Cities* initiative, which will engage representatives of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities constituency (LGMA) in close dialogue with UNFCCC Parties and will foster new collaboration mechanisms to control carbon emissions and tackle climate change. Besides, nrg4SD aims to promote and look after the interests of regional governments in this field.

Rio + 20 demands work to be developed in the following fields: i) acting as Organising Partner of the Local Authorities Major Groups within UNDESA, particularly, following the progress of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 Development agenda and the High Level Political Forum; ii) the COMMUNITAS project; and iii) representing Local Authorities Major group in the Major Group facilitating Committee within UNEP.

Sustainable consumption and production will be tackled by the gathering and eventual exchange of best practices and experiences from nrg4SD members, resulting in a survey to be published and disseminated. Decide whether to submit our application to be nominated as a Stakeholder Focal Point for the 10YFP on SCP.

Biodiversity demands us to work in accordance with the Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments and Biodiversity as well as the Advisory Committee on Cities. Nrg4SD members part of the Biodiversity Working Group will follow closely this works and will take part at the foreseen meetings, giving visibility to their works and to nrg4SD. More specifically, nrg4SD will take part at the CBD COP 12 (2014, Republic of Korea) and will bring to the event case studies of subnational governments on the field.

Nrg4SD members are called to participate actively in nrg4SD delegations present at the mentioned events as well as to create their own regional events in collaboration with nrg4SD dealing with the thematic priorities described under this point.

In addition, certain key drivers at international level will have an impact on our agenda. Those key drivers that nrg4SD must consider in the next 3 year period are: tackling

poverty; reaching a new global agreement on climate change; integrating environmental sustainability into the post-2015 Development Agenda; establishing Green Economies patterns, which will include green jobs employment and social inclusion; transitioning towards low carbon economies; sustainable consumption and production; landscape fragmentation and City-Region planning; meeting sustainable development challenges towards lower intensity development paths; improving waste management; achieving a more sustainable production and responsible consumption; improving resource efficiency and innovating for sustainable growth as the response to tackle global crisis; and, establishing a multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance.

Finally, certain action fields need to be maintained and/or recovered, such as nrg4SD observer/partner position before the CBD, UNEP, UNDP, ECOSOC or nrg4SD's work in biodiversity and water. Despite the thematic priorities are the ones stated below, the continuity principle forces us to maintain at least a minimal action in other fields in which nrg4SD has worked. Special attention to the Network's decision on whether to resume the application for ECOSOC accreditation is a pending issue for the Network.

2. TO BE A VOICE & CONTRIBUTING TO THE INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND DISCUSSIONS

The new participative procedures created by the UN bodies enable international actors such as nrg4SD to participate to the on-going processes. The UN-DESA Major Groups and the High Level Political Forum are an example of innovative and inclusive global decision-making, enabling stakeholders and subnational/local levels to make contributions and achieve a more democratic and transparent global policies.

Nrg4SD must take the opportunity of those new democratic mechanisms for enhancing stakeholder engagement and transparency with an eye towards achieving greater participation in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation procedures. Therefore, nrg4SD needs to use its position at the UN-DESA Major Groups, the ECOSOC, UNEP, CBC and the UNFCCC to make substantial contributions.

In this field, a wide-open vision needs to be addressed towards the efforts initiated by other regional and local networks. Indeed, local networks such as ICLEI have proved to be contributing to democratic decision-making procedures by projects such as Friends of the Cities. Nrg4SD is a key actor that can provide a more integrated, democratic and complete approach to those procedures thanks to its regional perspective and contributions. Therefore, it's time to work actively with other fellow networks in this path and strengthen/create effective alliances that can bring a more democratic world-wide decision making. In this sense, nrg4SD must effort to give a practical and aim-addressed focused to the already existing Memorandums of Understanding with other networks as well as institutionalize relation with other stakeholders.

3. NRG4SD PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Products that nrg4SD aims to offer members in the next 3 year period:

- **Surveys**. The good practices of nrg4SD members need not only to be shared and exchanged, but also to be recorded. In this sense, nrg4SD aims to produce different surveys on subjects of interest of nrg4SD members in order to give visibility to nrg4SD members' actions and create a possible input to global governance. In addition, surveys' results will feed nrg4sd's contributions in international *fora*.
- **Advocacy papers**. Nrg4SD's advocacy work oriented to the recognition of the vital contribution that subnational governments make to sustainable development goals, enable the network to contribute to the elaboration of responsible and ambitious worldwide policies, tools and resources with a territorial dimension. This not only gives international visibility and recognition to nrg4SD but also generates long-term opportunities for subnational governments.
- **Technical and political briefings and advice**. Including: technical background information and analysis of international sustainable development policies and available funding streams; specialised advice adapted to the context of subnational governments and their regional and local partners, with a view to the definition of regional sustainable development strategies in anticipation to international decisions in this area; building capacity and skills on current dossiers and tools with the objective of bringing real development benefits to subnational government administrations, as well as to political representatives and technical staff; direct participation of our members in technical discussions and negotiations.
- **Effective contributions to global decision-making**. See point 2 of this document.

Services that nrg4SD aims to offer members in the next 3 year period:

- **Access to funding opportunities**. The Secretariat aims to explore funding possibilities that may be of the interest of members and provide them with the necessary information to apply for those funds.
- **Exchange of good practices North-South, South-South, North-North**. The aim is not only the mere exchange of information but to enable a step further consisting in the identification of specific best practices that partners would like to effectively implement in their territories. To this end, a bilateral collaboration between the region that "sells" the good practice and the one that "buys" it must be developed. Nrg4SD aims to promote this type of

collaborations among members in different fields such as biodiversity or climate change. The starting point would be the already exchange of experiences events developed in past years (i.e. exchange of best practices between LAC regions and Spanish regions in the field of water).

- **Access to case studies and real life examples relating to thematic areas**. Coordination and representation of subnational positions and case studies in international decision-making processes on sustainable development policies with direct impact on the subnational level.
- **Participation in international pilot initiatives and projects**. Participation in the elaboration of policies and tools seeking ambitious and responsible goals with a territorial dimension.
- **Representation of nrg4SD at international events or co-organisation of nrg4SD events**. Nrg4SD aims to be present and to represent its members in the major international events happening in the thematic priorities of the network. Besides, nrg4SD aims to provide assistance in the organization of events held by members.
- **Access to newsletters, UN information and specific issues briefings**. Nrg4SD aims to provide its members with all the information related to UN courses, vacancies, events, as well as other organizations newsletters in order to provide employment, training, cooperation and funding opportunities to members.

4. COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION

Internal communication of the network must be improved, as it is essential for an efficient and useful network. A lack of reaction among nrg4SD members (except few taking part in the SC) has been identified and must be tacked.

To that end, the following tasks have been identified as essential: i) to update members' contacts to ensure that all members are posted and receive nrg4SD information, ii) to contact those members that have been lately inactive/silent to identify and tackle the reasons for that, iii) to provide an easy and useful information to members (avoid overload of information, clear messages, essential and useful information that may be of members' interest).

Tasks i) and ii) need necessarily from members cooperation to avoid "only one direction" communications.

In order to enable the exchange of experiences among members and to produce best practices surveys, nrg4SD needs to know what are the best practices and interests of members. Therefore, members are called to participate actively and cooperate in the questionnaires that the Secretariat will propose annually.

Besides, the participation of all members of the network in all nrg4SD initiatives and activities are requested and will be foster by the Secretariat.

Outreach of nrg4SD products and activities: Nrg4SD has achieved international visibility thanks to its position and activities before the UN bodies, its collaborations with other fellow networks and the products that nrg4SD has contributed to different processes. Nevertheless, the present work programme intends to give more visibility to nrg4SD members rather that to nrg4SD itself. Therefore, the following actions are proposed:

- o Members are requested to include in their domestic websites/documents/flyers a mention to their membership to nrg4SD. This not only will give visibility to nrg4SD as network before potential members/partners, but also will bring prestige to nrg4SD members who can show among fellow partners their membership as an added value to their activities.
- o Members are called to provide, on its own initiative and on the Secretariat's request, information of their activities, achievements, events etc. in order to be disseminated by nrg4SD worldwide.

In addition, nrg4SD must maintain its membership increase campaign to achieve a wide, geographically spread and representative participation in the network. Continental Focal Points are requested to take leadership in this task. In addition, the present work programme **challenges each nrg4SD member to bring a new member before 2018.**
Besides, members' re-engagement must be appraised and set as priority. A strategy must be settled for this purpose including direct contacts and the assessment of the reasons to leave nrg4SD membership. Nrg4SD will effort to erase those barriers and bring former members back to the network.

5. PARTNERSHIPS

Nrg4SD along its more than 10 years of life has started and formalize different partnerships with UN bodies and other local and regional networks. Considering that the first one has discussed in previous points of this document, the present point will now analyse the current partnerships and their status with other local and regional networks.

- • **ORU-FOGAR**. Since 2007, nrg4SD is the voice of FOGAR in sustainable development international events. A more deep collaboration will be developed between ORU-FOGAR and nrg4SD when exploring the possibility of sharing structure for their Secretariats in Barcelona. Besides, ORU-FOGAR will

hold its Summit and GA mid-2014, a key moment to disseminate nrg4SD activities and develop a search of new members.

- **The Climate Group**. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2010. Since then (and before then) joint activities (such as joint side-events in the frameworks of UNFCCC-COPs) have been developed. Concrete common actions plan to be completed annually.

- **ENCORE**. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2012 but no content or action has been developed since then. Contacts to establish common actions should be established. Moreover, that ENCORE will hold its 11th Conference in May 2014 and that could be a key moment to disseminate nrg4SD activities and develop a search of new members.

- **ICLEI**. Cooperation with ICLEI has not been formalized by signature but in practice both networks cooperate within the UN-DESA Major Groups or the Friends of the Cities initiative. Strengthening and widening of actions should be explored and implemented.

- **UCLG**. The organization is ahead of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Leaders for Post-2015 and Habitat III processes, which nrg4SD composes and that aims to develop a shared position and strategy among local and subnational governments to be defended at international *fora.*

6. INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE NETWORK: GOVERNANCE

Historically, the networks' governance consisted in 2 Co-Presidencies (one North and one South, provided by member regions elected by the SC and the GA), a Treasury (provided by a volunteer region) and a Secretariat (provided volunteer by a region).

Following the typical organic structure of International organizations and seeking independence and professionalism in the **Secretariat**, it was decided to professionalize the Secretariat in 2008. Since then, nrg4SD has had as Secretary General Ms Lohitzune Charola, Ms Rachel Stephens (provided by Wales as interim Secretary) and Ms Maruxa Cardama.

Due to the complexity and quantity of the works developed by the Secretariat, it was agreed when the last Secretary General left in December 2012 to revise the Secretariat structure. As a result, in Sao Paolo General Assembly it was agreed that the Secretariat structure would consist in 2 different positions that could cope with all the Secretariat's workload and that would work closely together:

- An International Affairs Coordinator or/and a Secretary General. Aiming to provide strategic direction and represent the network internationally. Both positions should be provided by a volunteer region. The aim is to fulfil both

posts, but fulfilling one of the positions would be enough until the network has enough resources to hire a professional Secretary General.

- An Internal Affairs Coordinator. Aiming to support the Secretary General and engaging with members while ensuring the smooth running of the network. This position is currently held by Ms Natalia Vera.
- A policy officer provided by Sao Paolo, Mr Rodrigo Messias.

The **Treasury** was held for many years by the CRPM. When the CRPM resigned to its nrg4SD membership in 2012, Wallonia took over the post. Wallonia resigned to this position in the last General Assembly held in Sao Paolo (June 2013). Having no volunteer members to take over the Treasury, it was decided that the Internal Affairs Coordinator would take the post interim. Notwithstanding, the Treasurer post is still open to members and a new Treasurer needs to be found by the next General Assembly as latest.

The current **Co-Presidencies**, Catalonia for the North and Sao Paolo for the South, still have a mandate of 3 and 1 and a half years respectively.

The current **Vice-Presidents** are: Brittany for Europe, ANNAE for Latin America and the Caribbean and North Sumatra for Asia. The Vice-Presidencies for Africa and North America need to be fulfilled as soon as possible.

The current governance situation seems precarious since the Co-Chairs together with the Internal Affairs Coordinator and the policy officer must cover the lack of a Secretary General, an International Affairs Coordinator and a Treasurer. Until those positions are fulfilled, the development of the present work programme as well as all nrg4SD commitments with UN bodies and other local/regional networks need from all members' efforts and support. Therefore, and until that situation is solved, the Co-Chairs will ask for the support of the Vice-Chairs, who will be requested to be directly responsible for certain nrg4SD policies and actions.

Besides, nrg4SD members with special interest in specific actions or policies are very welcome to volunteer as leaders for specific nrg4SD actions.

In addition, Vice-Presidents should have a close relation with Co-President, to whom they should inform periodically and discuss relevant actions/events/demands. As well, Vice-Presidents should try to have a close contact with the members in their scope area. This communication flux (Co-Presidents-Vice-Presidents-members-Vice-Presidents-Co-Presidents) is essential for nrg4SD efficiency and should be developed in collaboration with the Internal Affairs Coordinator.

On the other hand, the traditional meetings held by nrg4SD will be maintained in the present work programme. That is to say:

- o A Summit every three years. Members should be represented at the highest political possible level.
- o A continental annual meeting (held together another major event or independently).
- o Two Steering Committee meetings a year. One strategic Steering Committee meeting with ministerial participation (held together with a major international event) and one meeting with a more technical character.
- o An annual General Assembly meeting.

Nrg4SD is currently going over a transition phase and needs, more than ever, from its members support, dedication and effort. Nrg4SD is a team of 49 members and all of them have a responsibility towards the network being strong and working all together will definitely contribute to leave aside the transition phase and to build a reinforced better structured and more efficient nrg4SD. Therefore, all nrg4SD members are requested to be active and supportive over the next 3 years.

7. PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND HEADQUARTERS

Over the past years, it was verified and agreed that holding facilities in Brussels resulted in several strict employment obligations and extra high taxes compared to other national legislations. Moreover, work levels did not match the expectation of having an office at central Europe.

Initially, headquarters in Brussels appeared more convenient due to the proximity to EU facilities and as a good capital for holding meetings, especially for European region members. Nevertheless, experience, and new movements at the international scenario, has proved that it is fundamental for the Secretariat to have global participation, attending meetings and encounters worldwide, but most important being able to contact different places and regions at work time.

Therefore, in the upcoming years the network will explore new places to hold its headquarters, considering the Secretariat's needs and best interests, and also in view of nrg4SD reality of constrained budget.

8. CALENDAR OF NEXT ACTIVITIES

The present Work Programme will be annually developed and completed with an annual calendar of activities, actions and relevant *fora.*
However, the next immediate actions are included in the present document:

– Seventh session of the Open Working Group for the Sustainable Development Goal, January **6-10th, 2014**: Sustainable cities and human settlements, sustainable transport, energy, sustainable consumption and production, climate change, and disaster risk reduction.
– Spring SC Meeting
– **19-20 June 2014** Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum.
– **23-27 June 2014** UNEA- UN Environmental Assembly (that takes the role of the former UNEP Governing Council).
– UN GA- Major Groups meeting
– Autumn SC Meeting
– **6-17 October 2014** CBD COP 20 Pyeong Chang.
– **3-14 December 2014** UNFCCC COP 20 Paris.