

Climate democracy in the Grenoble metropolitan area

a selection of experiences and local
innovations



Facing climate change requires collectively adopting effective local policies to mitigate and adapt to its effects: urgent decisions need to be taken for both short-term and long-term effects.

Our European democracies are faced with the dilemma of having to deal with these two dimensions (emergency and long-term actions) with instruments and institutions that require time and are complex to most.

But in order for substantial change to be implemented to deal with quickly changing climate and shortage of resources, a territory needs to be able to react fast without leaving any of its inhabitants behind.

The local scale appears to be a solution in the democratic challenge of tackling climate policies as it can be more reactive to city/ metropole changes and citizen "lived" experience, in order to mould, adapt or change its policies and measures.

Local authorities are therefore at the heart of the democratic innovations to be developed and implemented in order to face these challenges for the future.

Introduction

The Grenoble metropolitan area has a **strong culture of citizen participation in public life.**

Voted in late 2021, the **Metropolitan Citizenship Pact** reaffirms this political commitment and adopts the “**5 Commitments for a Participatory Territory**”, co-written and signed with around thirty municipalities of the metropole. These commitments form the foundation of the rules the Metropole has set for itself to offer an engaging participatory policy (available at <https://metropoleparticipative.fr>).

Furthermore, **many metropolitan competences are directly related to climate issues**, including energy, housing, public spaces, and the development of cycling paths. This broad range of responsibilities provides the Metropole with significant power to act on ecological transition. The Metropole has chosen to engage citizens around these issues by actively involving residents in the decision-making process concerning their daily lives, such as public space planning and the implementation of Low Emission Zones, among others.

Climate challenges thus occupy a central place in the participatory dynamic with residents, both in processes specifically related to climate (Citizen’s Climate Convention, Climate Air Energy Plan...) and in consultations linked to other public policies (public space planning, mobility, water, energy...). Impacting the daily lives of residents today and the decisions to be made for tomorrow, these issues are frequently revisited in any consultation or dialogue process conducted with the inhabitants.

WHY THIS DOCUMENT ?

The aim of this document is to share and disseminate the innovations and initiatives implemented in the Grenoble metropolitan area, in terms of participative democracy and climate transition. It aims at giving insights into some of the actions undertaken, and to inspire other territories to follow similar approaches.



The Youth Climate Convention Pont de Claix

Where does it come from ?

This Convention is inspired by the Citizen's Climate Convention held in 2022 at the metropolitan level.

What are the objectives ?

- To raise young people's awareness about climate issues through a participatory approach in the city.
- To educate young people about the democratic practices of institutions and citizen engagement.
- To support young people in drafting technical proposals and actions to inform local elected officials decisions.

Who were the participants and how were they selected ?

16 young people aged 11 to 14 years old (middle school students in the 4th and 3rd grade) were selected based on their voluntary participation and commitment.

What mobilization tools were used ?

- A press release was sent out by the city through social media, in partnership with the local middle school.
- Flyers were handed out to students.
- A first meeting was organized in the municipal council hall, allowing young people and their families to learn about the project and its objectives.

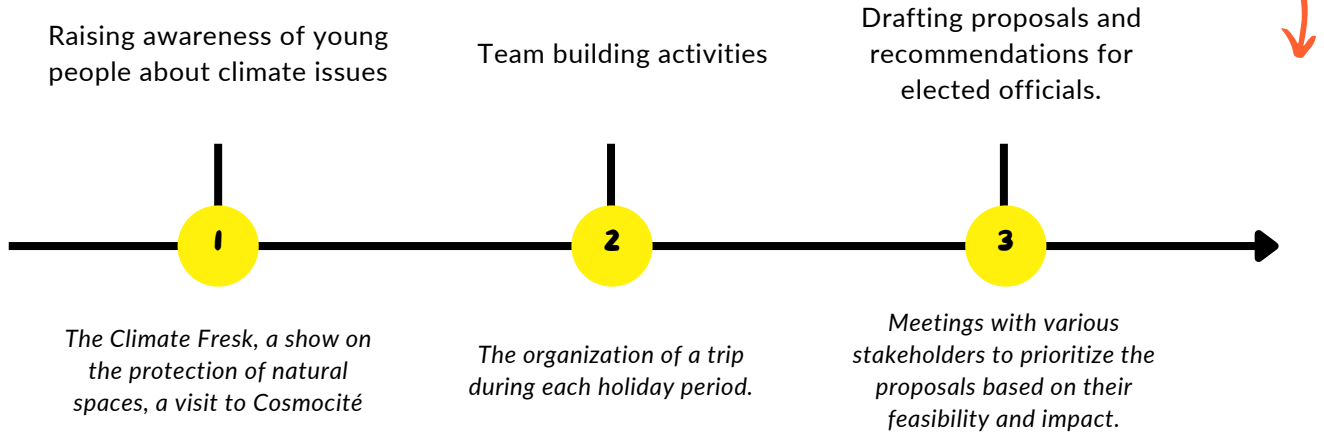
This first-of-its-kind initiative in France won the Territorial silver award in the "Governance" category for its innovative nature.



How did we engage and motivate participants in the long term ?

- This convention was structured around sessions combining leisure activities and work time. Its very low absenteeism rate is a testament to the participants' commitment, with almost all of them following the process through to completion.
- One of the key success factors was the organization of a trip to Paris at the end of the program, which provided additional motivation.
- A close connection with the families was maintained through regular communication and occasional meetings, thus fostering the engagement of the young participants.

How was the convention structured ?



What specific facilitation tools were used ?

- An alternation between work sessions and leisure time, promoting sustainable engagement.
- The diversification of decision-making methods to adapt to the needs and dynamics of the group.

What are the main proposals ?

There were two types of proposals:

- Awareness-raising actions to inform the population (especially students and middle schoolers) and encourage them to take action.
- Technical proposals in various areas of public action: transportation, energy, resource management, food, etc.

Which stakeholders were involved in supporting the young people ?

As part of their mandate, the young people had the opportunity to exchange with:

- Numerous institutional and territorial actors : elected officials and representatives from the city of Pont-de-Claix and the metropolitan area.
- The ambassadors of the Citizen's Climate Convention of Grenoble Alpes Métropole, enriching their reflections with testimonials and concrete feedback.



Have you seen any concrete commitments from decision-makers as a result of this work ?

Elected representatives have demonstrated a real commitment, both politically and financially, to supporting youth-led initiatives. Some proposals have already been studied in detail to assess their feasibility and impact on the city.

What lessons have you learned from this experience ?

- ✓ Young people's exemplary effect on the rest of the population.
- ✓ The importance of education and training to give credibility to their actions.
- ✓ The dynamic collaboration with various partners.

For more information



What next ? The climate ambassadors

To ensure the continuity and the concrete implementation of the proposals, a partnership has been established with Collège Nelson Mandela in Pont-de-Claix. Since the start of the 2024/2025 school year, 11 students, elected by their fellow students, have been tasked with carrying out the awareness-raising actions defined in the agreement.

They are **climate ambassadors and eco-delegates.**

The aim is twofold:

- To give life to the young people's proposals by carrying out concrete actions to raise awareness of the environment and climate.
- To pass on knowledge by training new participants in climate issues, enabling them to give talks to their peers and organize a travelling exhibition.



The Metropolitan Climate Convention (CCC) Grenoble Alpes Métropole

Where does it come from ?

This Convention is inspired by the national Citizens' Climate Convention.

What are the objectives ?

The aim of the Metropolitan Citizens' Climate Convention was to answer two questions: how can we reduce greenhouse gases by 2030? How can we achieve carbon neutrality by 2050?

Who were the participants ?

The Citizens' Climate Convention brought together 100 people drawn at random from the 49 municipalities of the metropolitan area. This group of individuals was as representative as possible of the diversity of the residents in the metropolitan territory.

How were they selected ?

1. The creation of a database of around 50,000 people living in the Grenoble metropolitan area.
2. Criteria were established to build a group of over 100 people, as representative as possible of the diversity of the metropolitan area's inhabitants.
3. More than 50,000 people were contacted, i.e. 1 in 9 residents, on the basis of the identified criteria.

This convention is the first of its kind on a national scale.



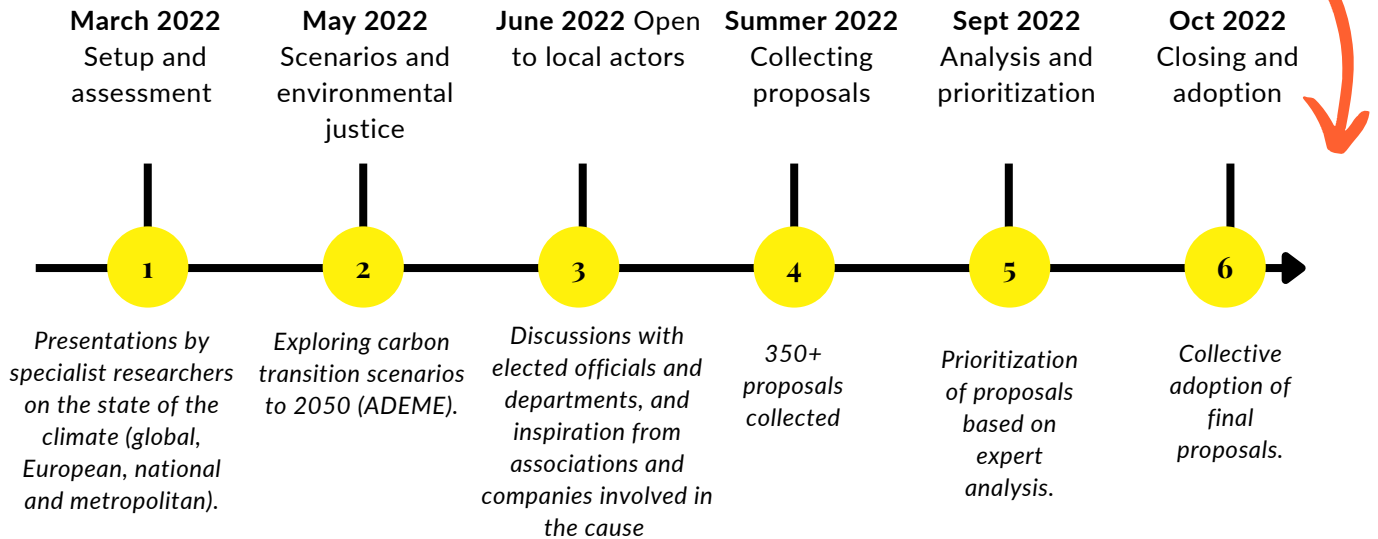
How did we mobilize and motivate participants in the long term ?

In recognition of the work carried out and to ensure a lasting commitment, Grenoble Alpes Métropole wished to compensate those involved (up to €350 per person for all sessions). In addition, Grenoble Alpes Métropole has assumed responsibility for :

- The cost of childcare, if required (€18/hour), to enable parents to take part in the work.
- Meals during the Convention's weekend meetings.
- Transportation to the Convention meetings.

The Metropole has also committed to following-up on the proposals.

How was the convention structured ?



Presentation of proposals to elected representatives at the Metropolitan Council in April 2023.

What are the main proposals ?

In October 2022, the Citizens' Convention presented 239 recommendations, 219 of which were deemed to be priorities. An in-depth analysis identified 190 recommendations relating to metropolitan responsibilities, of which 144 were already underway, but in some cases required reinforcement.

Some recommendations:

- The creation of a city-wide cycle track
- The gradual implementation of free public transport throughout the metropolitan area
- Creating a metropolitan moratorium on the use of phytosanitary products,
- To increase local solar energy production

Who was involved in accompanying the participants ?

- Researchers and scientific experts, who contributed their theoretical and methodological knowledge.
- Metropolitan departments played a central role in explaining the Plan Climat Air Énergie Métropolitain and framing discussions on the implementation of proposals.
- Committed associations and economic stakeholders shared their experiences and innovative solutions for accelerating the ecological transition.
- The development of facilitation methods and the facilitation of the sessions were largely conducted by a consulting firm specializing in consultation. 20 volunteer agents provided logistical and facilitation support during the convention sessions.

Do you have a tracking tool for implementation ?

The Monitoring Committee has three objectives:

- to ensure that the Convention's proposals are implemented,
- to disseminate and promote the work of the Convention within the region and in dialogue with partners,
- to contribute to the pursuit of citizen dialogue on the issues brought forth during the convention.

It is composed of CCC members, members of the Operational Committee, elected representatives, and representatives of other participatory bodies associated with metropolitan participatory democracy.

Have you seen any concrete commitments from decision-makers as a result of this work ?

In April 2023, the Metropole voted on several concrete commitments, including the development of a local plant-based industry, the evolution of the Urban planning framework (PLUi) towards a better integration of climate objectives, the creation of a peripheral bike route (Chronovélo), the reinforcement of renewable energies, as well as actions in favor of climate awareness and citizen participation. These proposals reinforce and accelerate local policies for ecological transition.

For more information



What next ? The climate debates

In 2024, the Grenoble Metropolitan Area launched the first edition of the Climate Debates. These will expand the circle of those who are developing collective competencies around climate issues and who engage in dialogue with the community to continuously adjust metropolitan policies from design to evaluation.

The 'Climate debates' aim to disseminate scientific knowledge and experiential insights, facilitate debates, and promote solutions that accelerate the implementation of the proposals from the convention.

The first topic of the debates directly stems from the proposals of the Convention: food. In 2024, the debates focused on how to eat less meat, how to support organic farming, and how to reduce food waste.



The Extra-Municipal Commission Meylan

Where does it come from ?

A Commission already existed in the previous mandate, and after an initial 2-year experiment, the city council renewed the mission and operation of this body as a laboratory for ideas, citizen debate and the construction of a collective voice on emerging or controversial subjects.

“This initiative allows us to renew the exercise by taking time and taking stock, in a voluntary approach that diversifies the profiles of the residents involved.”

Dominique Pernot

What are the objectives ?

The objective is to enable residents to work on a vision of Meylan that takes into account the ecological, societal, democratic and economic challenges facing the city and its stakeholders, while respecting the rights of nature and future generations. To give them the opportunity to experience long-term participatory democracy.

What challenges will this initiative address in the region ?

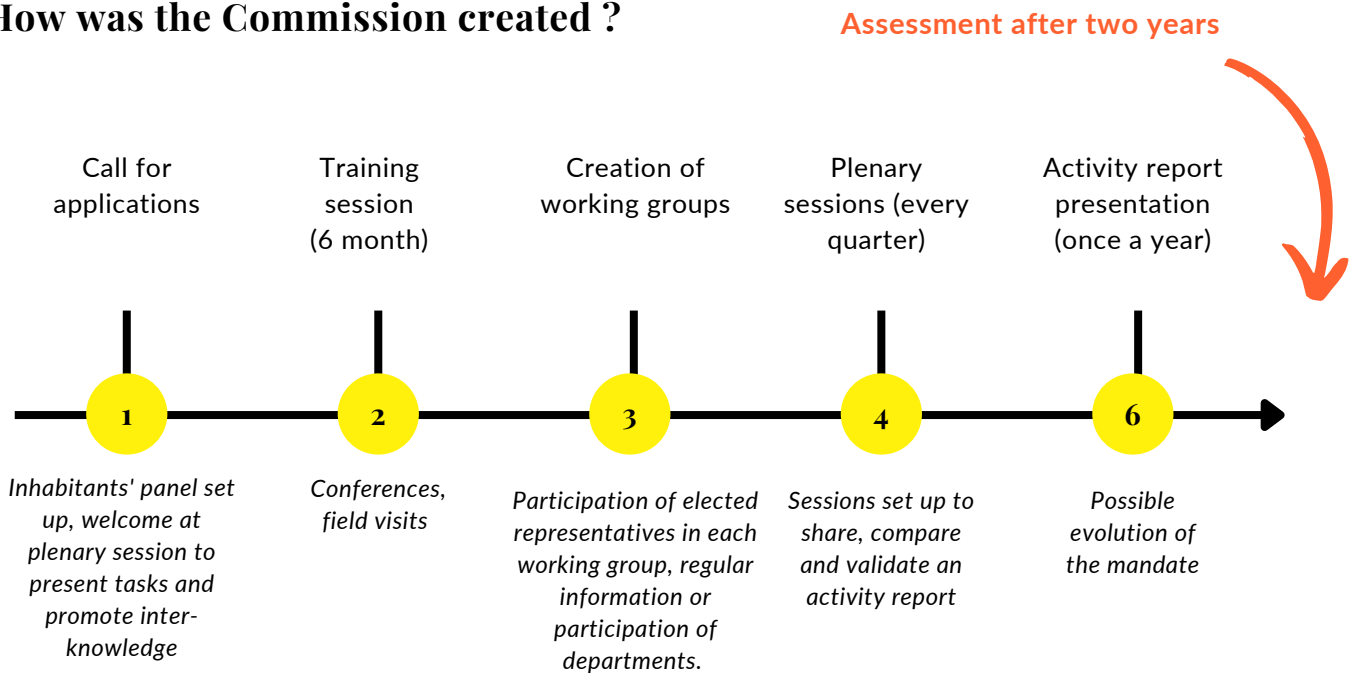
The commission will address possible pathways for driving the transition of the municipality, taking into account urban planning, biodiversity, climate adaptation, and social cohesion.



How did we mobilize and motivate participants in the long term ?

- For the launch of the volunteer call, a very large communication campaign was conducted, with information sent to all households, interviews, and posters throughout the city; topics that are easy to rally around; the commitment to providing training for all participants.
- Over time, a balance was maintained, prioritizing production work and group discussions, complemented by key moments in plenary sessions to share, learn (with external speakers), and on-the-ground activities to explore the territory... along with fostering a sense of community whenever possible.
- A significant source of motivation lies in the guarantee that the outcomes will be presented to the elected officials, particularly through a discussion during a Municipal Council meeting.

How was the Commission created ?



Who were the participants and how were they selected ?

Two profiles: volunteer residents and association representatives.

- After a call for volunteers and a characterization of the profiles, each person was given the opportunity to introduce themselves and express their motivation during a discussion with elected officials.
- A panel was then set up, with a balance of gender, age and neighborhood distribution.

What mobilization tools were used ?

- At launch: posters, flyers, website
- Over time: reports and resources available on Teams, and a dedicated space to highlight the work on the municipality's participatory platform.

Who was involved in accompanying the participants ?

- A steering committee of elected representatives: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, 1 or 2 elected representatives for each working group, 1 minority representative.
- Departments: Coordinated by a dedicated department within the city 'the Citizen Participation Mission' the services in charge of urban planning, ecological and climate transition provided technical support.
- External contributors: scientists, elected representatives and departments of the Métropole, Agence d'Urbanisme, consulting architect, etc., and a collective intelligence facilitator.

How did you ensure that the recommendations were taken on board by the institutions ?

- Participation of elected representatives in charge of these themes in working groups.
- Presentation of the work to the elected representatives' committee and to the Municipal Council.
- Framework and feedback guaranteed by the Chairman.

Have you seen any concrete commitments from decision-makers as a result of this work ?

In April 2023, the Metropole validated several concrete commitments, including the development of a local plant-based industry, the evolution of the Local Urban Plan towards better integration of climate objectives, the creation of a peripheral bike route, the reinforcement of renewable energies, as well as actions in favor of climate awareness and citizen participation. These proposals reinforce and accelerate local policies for ecological transition.

For more
information



Some recommendations:

- *To study the biodiversity potential of public and private spaces by using a tool developed by the Commission.*
- *To raise awareness of local authorities and associations events promoting biodiversity.*
- *To create a map of shaded and cool pedestrian pathways.*
- *To organize a key event to raise awareness amongst co-owners about energy-efficient renovations.*

What is Grenoble Alpes Metropole doing for climate democracy ?

In recent years, the Métropole has been at the forefront of the climate engagement by putting the **Climate Action plan as a cornerstone of all public policies with, among others, the commitment in the 100 climate-neutral cities initiative**. Consequently, GAM is engaging all its participatory processes towards that goal.

From the public consultations (Low Emission Zone, urban renewal consultations in Grand-Alpes, for e.g.), to the work the Development citizen council (C2D) conducted on forests and transport, the Metropole has decided to tackle the issue with a larger-scale citizen participation projects. The challenges of transition (mobility, industry, climate, etc.) are systematically integrated into every development project undertaken by the Metropole, whether regulatory or not.

The aim is to work on a **fair and just climate transition with and for the people living in our territory**.

Climate Democracy in Urban Planning Projects

- **Redevelopment of Cours Berriat:** Providing space for modal shift by promoting alternatives to individual car use.
- **Place de Metz:** Transforming a large paved area into a public garden to rethink urban space for more greenery and well-being.
- **Lavanchon:** Building a shared vision for the future of Lavanchon and creating a common territorial project that reconciles: the protection of property and people against floods, the preservation and restoration of aquatic environments, and the needs and practices of residents and local stakeholders.

Climate Democracy in Consultations on Metropolitan Planning Documents

- Metropolitan Climate Air Energy Plan (PCAEM)
- Intercommunal Local Urban Planning Plan (PLUi)
- Low Emission Zone (ZFE)

The Metropole's experiments

The Bioclimatic Garden

Located at the intersection of the Alpexpo – Alpes Congrès – Summum site, the "plaza" is a highly mineral, heavily frequented area marked by significant heat during the summer months. Awaiting its future redevelopment, the Metropolitan Area initiated an 18-month experiment to install a temporary garden providing shade and coolness.

Implemented Solutions:

- Seating system (benches),
- A temporary garden with 135 potted trees,
- A large canopy (agricultural structure providing shading).

Participatory Evaluation System:

- Qualitative observation: interviews and event programming.
- Quantitative evaluation using temperature indicators: sensors measuring thermal comfort.

Results: The intended uses, such as picnicking, were confirmed. New uses emerged: a place for studios or romantic meetings, and a space for bartering. Impact: Reduction in pedestrian traffic and slowing down of car movement.



Marbre d'Ici

"Marbre d'Ici" is an innovative artistic approach led by the artist Stefan Shankland, which transforms our relationship to waste. The concept involves recovering rubble from demolitions to recycle it into a colored concrete, thus creating a unique, local material within an artistic and participatory framework.

Associated Initiatives:

- Consultation and awareness-raising with children and residents on the concepts of waste, resources, circular economy, and collective memory work.
- Inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly young people from disadvantaged neighborhoods, through workshops and discussions around the approach.
- Mediation: educational support that fosters dialogue on reducing rubble volumes and reusing materials, thereby promoting a collective approach to social and ecological transformation.

An illustration of three people in a park setting. A woman on the left is holding a sign that says "Well? inspired?". A woman on the right is holding a sign that says "When...". A man in the foreground is holding a sign that says "...can we expect action?". The background features green trees, a blue sky with white clouds, and a field with flowers.

Well? inspired?

When...

...can we expect action?

Credits

City of Pont de Claix

- Simon PEYRACHE - Chargé de mission citoyenneté PEDT

Grenoble Alpes Metropole - Citizens' Climate Convention

- Marine FABRE - Chargée de mission Débats pour le climat - Participation et dialogue citoyen

City of Meylan

- Janig MOURO - Chargée de Mission Participation Citoyenne

Participation and Citizen Dialogue Department - Strategy, Innovation and User Relations Division (D-SIR) - Grenoble Alpes Métropole

The metropolitan participatory platform allows all residents of the 19 municipalities in the territory to express their views on metropolitan projects and public policies.



The C2D, Development Citizen Council, composed of 66 residents from the territory, produces forward-thinking reflections on the challenges of transition at the metropolitan level.