Terms of Reference
Climate Working Group (CWG)

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Background
In the last decade, the global climate crisis has prompted international and European institutions to shape a wider and more complex policy action.

Originally framed as an initiative of a few member Regions, in 2016 the CPMR General Assembly approved the creation of a Task Force on Climate issues. The Task Force met for the first time in Brussels in March 2017. Over the years, the number of CPMR members who expressed their interest in climate issues has significantly grown, and the Task Force has multiplied its think tank and lobbying activities by contributing to the production of political positions, and technical notes and to the organization of high-level events. In addition, each year peripheral maritime Regions are increasingly faced with growing and worsening natural disasters and extreme weather events.

In this context, to adapt its technical and policy reflection to the “new” challenges and to a rapidly changing legislative framework, the CPMR has decided to reinforce its climate action by turning the already existing Task Force into a permanent Working Group.

Meanwhile, as required by several members at the 50th General Assembly in October 2022, the CPMR decided to set up an ad-hoc Energy Working Group which, dealing with European Energy Policy, will be responsible for the energy transition dimension of the CPMR’s think tank and lobbying mission on climate change mitigation.

Due to this increased specialization, the Energy Working Group will act in a complementary way to the new Climate Working Group which will focus its mission much more on adaptation and on mitigation aspects that are not related to the energy transition aspects. The establishment of these two new Working Groups will allow for the better planning of CPMR actions as well as a more structured and efficient cooperation and coordination between member Regions and the CPMR decision-making bodies (the General Assembly and the Political Bureau).

This document presents the main objectives, the governance, the thematic scope of the mission and the main actions and operating rules of the new CPMR Working Group on Climate, hereinafter defined as the “Group”.
General Objectives

The Group will support the CPMR’s mission by:

- Engaging peripheral maritime Regions in the implementation of the Paris Agreement and European Climate Law;
- Understanding the economic, social and environmental impacts of climate change in peripheral maritime Regions, addressing different sectors: agriculture, coastal cities, maritime sectors, youth and unemployment, coastal/maritime tourism, etc.;
- Advocating for an ambitious international and EU Climate Policy that makes place-based and integrated approaches, as well as multilevel governance, its fundamental principles;
- Promoting and defending the key role that peripheral maritime regional authorities play daily to mitigate and adapt to climate change as well as considering their higher vulnerability and specific needs when it comes to EU action/policy;
- Ensuring a smooth political coordination among the CPMR’s decision-making bodies and the CPMR’s membership;
- Facilitating technical cooperation among CPMR members;
- Mobilising CPMR member Regions and their stakeholders to create partnerships for the submission of proposals under EU financial tools;
- Supporting CPMR member Regions to identify common needs and interests regarding climate change, based on regional policies and Smart Specialisation Strategies.

Governance

In its daily activities, the Group will be led by a Chairing Region on a rotation system with a fixed mandate period. In the case more than one region is interested in the Chairing of the Working Group and no political solution is reached, alternative solutions will be explored.

The Chairing Region shall be represented by a political representative with the support of one or more technical officers having expertise in Climate Policy according to the variety and highlights of particular sectors.

The CPMR General Secretariat will be in charge of the technical coordination, supporting the Chairing Region.

The Chairing Region and the CPMR Secretariat will liaise and be coordinated by the CPMR Vice-President in charge of Climate Affairs and Energy. They should jointly identify lobbying objectives, and potential cooperative projects and elaborate and discuss with the members of the Group a two-year Action Plan (having intermediate milestones).

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the Group are submitted to the CPMR Political Bureau for approval. Upon the renewal of the composition of the CPMR Political Bureau, the Chairing Region and the Vice-President for Climate Affairs and Energy will decide, by mutual agreement, whether an update to the ToRs is needed. The Action Plan will be in any case reviewed and updated every two years.

If needed and in an agreement between the Chairing Region, the CPMR General Secretariat and the CPMR Vice-President for Climate Affairs and Energy, taking advantage of the high level of experience and competencies of the CPMR member Regions, one or more Regions can be given the responsibility for coordination in a specific sub-topic addressed within the Group. This distribution of tasks should be related to concrete activities to be implemented in the framework of the Group’s Action Plan.
Thematic Scope of the Action

Generally speaking, the Group’s action will consist of:

- Enrolling the Regions in the implementation of the Paris Agreement and EU Climate Law and other related principles;
- Gaining a better understanding, in light of the experience of different Regions in climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Evaluating the economic, social, and environmental repercussions of climate change on the peripheral maritime Regions (e.g., sea-level rise, coastal erosion, wildfires, floods, drought, etc.);
- Ensuring synergy between work led by the Group and cooperation projects on climate issues;
- Promoting the implementation of cooperative projects.

With regards to mitigation of climate change, this shall consist of:

- Promoting the active role of regional authorities, businesses, research centres and in general the population of CPMR member Regions, in their climate transition, with a view to strengthening economic, social, and territorial cohesion in the EU and through interregional cooperation;
- Capitalising on the best forms of governance and participation allowing a higher acceptance of reduction of CO2 emissions in peripheral maritime economies;
- Contributing to the EU structured dialogue on the key role of carbon sinks played by oceans and seas;
- Monitoring the implementation of key EU actions and tools (e.g., implementation of the Social Climate Fund);
- Supporting synergies between Climate Policy and other EU policies (e.g., Maritime Spatial Planning; sustainable blue economy, etc.)
- Contributing to the achievement of the objectives set by the European Forestry Strategy;
- Promoting the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism between CPMR member Regions and territorial stakeholders, as part of the CPMR engagement undertaken in 2021 and the CPMR Climate Action Plan.

With regard to adaptation to climate change, this shall consist of:

- Collecting data to understand and share the consequences of climate change (e.g., sea-level rise, coastal erosion, wildfires, floods, drought, etc.) and the evolution of coastal areas as well as the capacity for action of authorities to meet these challenges. In this respect the Group will work daily to support the CPMR initiative “Regions Act!”;
- Monitoring the international and European debate on adaptation (e.g., under the COP and when it comes to the implementation of the EU Strategy on Adaptation);
- Advocating the full respect of the place-based approach and multilevel governance principle in the design and implementation of National Adaptation Plans;
- Ensuring that ambitious EU funding support might be ensured in favour of adaptation measures. In this respect, the Group will mainly focus on the European Solidarity Fund, the Climate mandate of the European Investment Bank as well as on funding support in favour of adaptation measures ensured through the Cohesion Policy Regional Operational Programmes.
- Enabling Regions to produce and/or have access to data, tools and information regarding adaptation policies and measures, as well as to implement joint projects.

**Activities**

In its daily mission, the Group will:

- Identify good practices and collect data on mitigation and adaptation regional strategies;
- Facilitate technical and political dialogue and cooperation among CPMR members on climate policies;
- Monitor international, European and national initiatives and analyse legislation, studies and results of projects to spark CPMR think tank and lobbying activities;
- Contribute to drafting CPMR political and technical positions;
- Provide input to support and advise the CPMR Vice-President for Climate Affairs and the Chairing Region in their think tank and advocacy mandate;
- Cooperate with European institutions (e.g., European Parliament, the Council, European Commission, Executive Agencies, Committee of the Regions, etc.) think tanks, international organisations and cooperation projects on climate issues;
- Co-organise with a host Region and/or support the host Region in the organisation of events and/or study visits;
- Cooperate with the CPMR Energy Working Group (from the angle of the reflection on the EU mitigation action) as well as cooperate and coordinate the climate reflection of relevant Working Groups of the CPMR Geographical Commissions;
- Support CPMR members to design and implement INTERREG/HORIZON EUROPE projects on adaptation/mitigation and to improve their own strategies;
- Promote the dissemination of project results during its meetings (e.g., Regions Act! Corner).

**Composition**

The Group will be composed of:

- The Chairing Region and its representative(s);
- The CPMR Vice-President in charge of Climate Affairs and Energy and/or their representative(s);
- The CPMR General Secretariat (ex officio);
- The Executive Secretaries of the CPMR Geographical Commissions (ex officio);
- CPMR member Regions with an interest in the objectives and thematic areas mentioned above and that have indicated their desire to take part in the Group (Regions shall appoint officers of their internal departments or agencies directly concerned by climate issues);
- External experts and Special Advisers, invited to participate as observers, if needed and on an ad-hoc basis.
Working Arrangements

The working language of the Group will be English. The CPMR will cover translation expenses for papers presented to the Political Bureau and General Assembly.

Meetings shall be organized in English. If simultaneous interpretation is considered necessary, the costs should be covered by the Chairing Region. The Region hosting the event will cover the catering and venue-related expenses of the Group meetings.

Each member of the Group shall cover their own travel and subsistence expenses relating to participation in the meetings and related events. Costs related to inviting experts from outside the CPMR or its member Regions (up to three per year) to a Group meeting or related event might, where necessary, be covered by the CPMR.

If it is deemed necessary to commission more sources of expertise requiring remuneration, the issue will be examined by the Region(s) concerned and the CPMR General Secretariat.

Meetings

The Group will meet at least twice per year depending on the EU and CPMR agendas concerning climate. In principle, the Group will meet in Brussels, a host Region and/or in a hybrid or online format.