

Trainer's Guide

Toolkit for Parliamentarians on Climate Change and Energy

Climate change is today's single most important challenge, yet most countries are still quite poorly equipped to deal with its increasingly profound impacts. Tackling climate change requires a good deal of foresight and medium to long term planning. Understandably, this does not come easily in a political environment that mostly rewards those who deliver quick wins and bite-sized success stories.

In the run-up to the Paris COP of 2015, however, the mood has started shifting. More and more people are aware of the dangers of climate change, and those tackling it are being given more political support, time and resources to do so. As the issue moves up on people's priority lists, parliaments and parliamentarians should embrace the momentum and build on the work that has been done.

This toolkit has been developed to facilitate trainings on climate change and energy for parliamentarians. It offers comprehensive introductions to the core issues and provides exercises, model parliamentary questions, suggested parliamentary action points and a list of relevant resources.

Parliaments and development actors are invited to select from this toolkit what is useful to them, and to employ its resources in their capacity-building efforts to strengthen climate action.

WHAT THIS TOOLKIT OFFERS

The objective of this toolkit is to empower parliamentarians to act on climate change. It does so by encouraging MPs to actively engage with the topics at hand, and by assisting them in developing appropriate action points.

The toolkit consists of 7 modules, which offer participants a solid understanding of the main challenges they face and the parliamentary action tools at their disposal:

- 1. Introduction to climate change: the science**
- 2. Law-making**
- 3. Representation**
- 4. Oversight**
- 5. Budgeting and climate finance**
- 6. The international action framework**
- 7. Climate change, energy and gender**

This toolkit is produced by the AGORA Portal for Parliamentary Development (www.agora-parl.org) with the support of the United Nations Development Project and the World Bank.

To make sure the information shared remains as relevant as possible, the online Climate Change & Energy Toolkit will share new updates, action points and resources on a regular basis.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit provides trainers with materials and guidelines to deliver an introductory course on climate change and energy for parliamentarians. With some adjustments, it can also be employed to train parliamentary staff, practitioners and policy-makers more broadly. Throughout the toolkit, links and further resources point trainers to additional learning materials that they may find useful.

Each module follows the following structure:

A. Area of Expertise

This section, based on the Areas of Expertise from the AGORA Climate Portal for Parliaments (www.agora-parl.org/climate), situates the topic and outlines the key points and challenges. It provides a more technical analysis of the topic and reviews the role parliaments can play.

B. Discussion questions and exercises

Discussion questions and exercises are provided to encourage active participation and stimulate debate. These questions will help MPs to familiarize themselves with the topic, and to explore how the issues discussed are affecting their country or community.

C. Parliamentary action points

This section will offer a set of ‘best practices’ from parliaments around the world, illustrating concrete parliamentary action on climate change and energy issues. These parliamentary action points will include pieces of legislation, policy recommendations, parliamentary questions and more.

D. Further reading and resources

For those looking for further information, a list of key resources and publications will be provided.

TIPS FOR THE TRAINER

The structure and content of this course were developed to deliver a comprehensive, accessible introduction for MPs with little or no prior knowledge on climate change. Trainers may choose to deliver the toolkit in its entirety, but they are strongly encouraged to tailor it to the specific needs of their target audience. The steps listed below offer some suggestions on how to maximize the learning potential of participants.

Know your audience

Knowing your target audience is critical for delivering an effective training. Start with the ‘who’. Are you training a parliamentary group, a parliamentary committee or simply a group of interested MPs? Are your participants experienced MPs, or are you dealing with newly elected Members? Are you working with a youth parliament, or a group of women MPs? What background do they have on climate change and energy? The more you can find out about your participants, the better you can tailor the content to their needs.

Next: the ‘why’. Was the training requested by the participants themselves, by the parliament, or by a development partner? Is it mandatory? Are there reasons behind its timing, such as the arrival of new Members following an election, the creation of a new committee or upcoming climate change negotiations?

These questions will tell you something about the political motivations behind the organization of the course, and about the individual motivation of the MPs taking it. It will also help you define the objectives of the course. Upcoming climate negotiations would mean you should elaborate on the international action framework. Upcoming budget sessions, on the other hand, could see you focus more on the oversight and climate finance sections.

Where possible, you may wish to ask participants in advance what they would most like to explore in the training. This can be helpful in getting a sense of the prevailing interests, but make sure to balance this with the needs and requirements identified by those commissioning the training.

TAILOR YOUR COURSE

Once you understand who will be taking the course and why, you can start tailoring the content and approach to maximize your participants’ learning potential.

To start with, familiarise yourself as much as possible with the existing legal framework on climate change. What legislation is already in place? What action has been taken by parliament, or by the MPs taking the course?

Drawing on the personal experiences of your participants will spark their interest, and will help lower the participation threshold. If there is little legislation or parliamentary action to draw on, refer to wider climate change or energy issues that have made the news, or that are of particular concern to those taking the training. MPs are more likely to engage in conversations about policies and issues they are familiar with; by tackling ‘real life’ cases, you create an environment that encourages them to take part and feel comfortable doing so¹.

¹ For suggestions, please check the ‘discussion questions’ at the start of each Module.

Once you have a good sense of the direction you will take, you can start preparing the course materials. A general rule of thumb is that involving participants is essential. The more actively engaged they are, the more they will take away from the course. By taking part in discussions and fleshing out proposals for action, they receive immediate feedback and further strengthen their understanding of the topic. They are also more likely to follow up on initiatives proposed during the training if they have had a say in outlining them and feel some ownership of the actions moving forward.

With this in mind, draw on your strengths when preparing course materials. Visual aids can be fantastic, but they are not for everyone - more often than not, they end up only distracting your audience. If you do use them, do so sparingly and make sure they offer added value. Few people can make truly interesting power point presentations; powerful photos or a short video may do more to engage your audience and convince them of the need for action. For a short list of videos, please [click here](#).

When it comes to engaging an audience, numbers and graphs are rarely your friend. If you do feel the need to share statistics, stick to the key figures. If you want to provide further details, you can share more extensive background materials through hand-outs or virtual resources.

The same goes for policies and legislation. While MPs may be familiar with specific laws and regulations, most of your participants will mainly want to get a general sense of the current policy framework and of the priorities at hand. Here, too, it is important to use examples and illustrations that are relevant to the situation of your participants. Discuss how climate change is impacting their country or community, why parliament has an important role to play, what legal action can be taken and so on. Details can be discussed when working on parliamentary action points.

Manage Expectations

It is important to stress that the prevailing political context will shape important parts of your training. What position does the parliament hold vis-à-vis the government, and what political appetite for climate change action exists? What kind of action has already been taken, and what's in the pipeline?

Engaging parliamentary staff and relevant legal experts can go a long way in helping you explore the legal context and flag sensitivities you should be aware of. This is particularly important when you take on the discussion questions and parliamentary action points. Are there any politically sensitive issues you should be aware of? What kind of social and political traction exists for strengthened action on climate change? What parliamentary action can realistically be achieved?

Lastly, throughout the course preparation and delivery, be careful not to create false expectations. Participants should be made aware of the tools and opportunities at their disposal, but the political and institutional limitations of parliamentary power should be borne in mind. With regard to climate change action or strategies moving forward, keep it practical. Interesting opportunities for parliamentary action ('low-hanging fruit') can be explored, but developing legislation should only be done with the support of all relevant stakeholders and in full transparency.

The Practicalities

As a trainer, you may not have control over the size of the group, the date or the location of the course you deliver. If you do, or if you have the opportunity to discuss these aspects with the organizers, the following tips are worth bearing in mind.

Firstly, timing is everything. Make sure your training does not clash with holidays or important points on the parliamentary agenda, and check that it is not scheduled for a time when most MPs will be in their constituencies.

Secondly, keep the group to a manageable size. A mix participants from different parties, groups and backgrounds can help break new ground for climate action across the political spectrum, but this might not be advisable in all cases. It can be particularly interesting to involve MPs and relevant parliamentary staff, as this can pave the way for stronger collaboration and improved working relationships.

Finally, it is important to strike the right tone with your audience. Unless you have worked with the parliament or participants before, it is important not to be too informal or direct, especially in the first interactive sessions. If and when there is room for more relaxed discussions, use it – but remain professional and impartial at all times.

EVALUATION & FOLLOW-UP

Experienced facilitators will know that it is crucial to adjust as you are going along. If you feel the case studies or questions you prepared are too technical, take a step back. If you can take a topic to a higher level, do not hesitate to do so – there is no point in rehashing things your participants already know.

As for participants' feedback, don't wait until after the course to get their input. You can solicit informal feedback by asking participants to share some thoughts on a piece of paper, or ask for comments and suggestions at the end of each day. Participants should be encouraged to review not only the quality of the course, the materials used and the teaching, but also their own contributions. What have they managed to take away from the training so far? How could they improve their participation? Are there any approaches or exercises that might improve their learning experience?

If there are any official evaluation requirements on the part of the course organisers, make sure you are aware of these in advance so that you can prepare accordingly. Also bear in mind that such a process offers a good opportunity to discuss the participants' performance, and potential needs for future trainings or further capacity-building activities.

Follow-up may be required, but this will depend on the topic and objectives outlined at the start of the training. Have any issues been identified that need exploring? Are participants planning parliamentary action on the issues discussed, and if so, what further assistance is required? Here, once again, it is important to bear in mind the political context and the space for further initiatives. There is (usually) no harm, however, in passing on participants' feedback to the course organisers.