

IVM Institute for Environmental Studies

Mapping the Institutional Architecture of Global Climate Change Governance

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Preface

This technical report has been written as part of the CONNECT project (Coping with Fragmentation: Assessing and Reforming the current Architecture of Global Environmental Governance), funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) under grant number 016.125.330. CONNECT will (1) take stock of the existing level of fragmentation across a number of issue-areas in global environmental politics (including climate change; biodiversity; marine governance and fisheries; forestry); (2) explain the causes of fragmentation of global governance architectures based on a carefully designed set of variables; (3) analyse the implications of fragmentation across different scales of governance (i.e. international, regional and domestic levels); and finally (4) suggest policy responses to increased fragmentation. Each analytical step is accompanied by a number of technical reports that explain the methodologies used for data-gathering and analysis. Important documents available are: a broad literature review; an analytical framework for measuring fragmentation; technical reports on our mapping methodology; technical reports on social network analysis and discourse analysis.

1 Introduction

Over the past 20 years, global efforts to combat climate change have expanded beyond the multilateral, state-led climate governance, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to include numerous cross-border initiatives comprising both state and non-state actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), firms, academia, cities, sub-national regions and international organizations (Biermann *et al.* 2009; Keohane and Victor 2011; Abbott and Snidal 2009; Bulkeley *et al.* 2014). The broader institutional setting has developed from a single regime to a regime complex (Keohane and Victor 2011), showing increasing signs of fragmentation and functional overlaps that threaten coherence and overall effectiveness (Biermann *et al.* 2009). Although fragmentation is largely accepted in theory as a ubiquitous phenomenon in global climate governance, few empirical studies exist that map institutional complexity and consequently attempt to measure degrees of fragmentation or coherence (Zelli and Van Asselt 2013).

This paper operationalizes an analytical framework based on Abbott and Snidal (2009) for mapping the institutional architecture¹ of global climate change governance. The goal is to take stock of key arrangements governing climate change, using the following criteria: institutions that are (i) international or transnational; (ii) display intentionality to steer the behaviour of their members; (iii) explicitly mention a common governance goal; and, (iv) have identifiable governance functions. Mapping the global climate change governance architecture involved two stages of data collection: (1) transnational institutions – relying on a review of previous case studies and desk research; and (2) inter-state regimes – sorting through an online database of International Environmental Agreements.

The paper consists of five sections: this brief **Introduction** provides some background on the climate change governance debate, and it is followed by an overview of **Concepts and Definitions** necessary to understand the methodology described on the third and main section of the document – **Mapping the Global Climate Change Governance Architecture**. Next, we present our **Results & Analysis** and summarize our findings, and ultimately the **Final Remarks**' section elaborates on future work.

¹ The full conceptual and methodological framework for mapping and measuring fragmentation in global governance architectures (Pattberg *et al.*, 2014) can be downloaded at: http://fragmentation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CONNECT_Conceptual-Framework.pdf.

2 Concepts and definitions

The term governance architecture is joined by a number of alternative conceptualizations, such as regime complex (Keohane and Victor 2011; Orsini, Morin and Young 2013) or institutional landscape (Shkaruba and Kireyeu 2013), which to a certain degree can be used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, we adopt the definition of governance architecture proposed by Biermann and colleagues (2009, p. 15): “overarching system of public and private institutions that are valid or active in a given issue area of world politics”. We consider a policy domain as a socially constructed “component of a political system that is organized around substantive issues” (Burstein 1991, p. 328) and their constituent parts as issue areas “sharing inherent substantive characteristics which influence how they are framed and dealt with” (ibid). Consequently, by referring to mapping governance architectures across policy domains, we attempt to map the “patchwork of international institutions that are different in their character (organizations, regimes, and implicit norms), their constituencies (public and private), their spatial scope (from bilateral to global), and their subject matter (from specific policy fields to universal concerns” (Biermann *et al.* 2009, p. 16). Thus, these arrangements fall within a specific architecture because they share an identifiable governance goal which addresses the issue at hand (e.g. mitigating climate change).

3 Mapping the Global Climate Change Governance Architecture

The operationalization of the mapping procedure comprises two steps: first, compiling a database that includes the majority of the empirical governance arrangements active at the time of the mapping exercise; and second, visualizing the overall architecture using a governance triangle (by zone = type of actors involved) and a governance decagon (by role = governance functions). The first step is described in the following sub-sections.

3.1 Criteria

In order to compile a database that represents a global governance architecture, clear and unambiguous criteria are required. We include: (i) international and transnational institutions, which not only have the (ii) intentionality to steer policy and the behaviour of their members or a broader community, but also explicitly mention the (iii) common governance goal, accomplishable by (iv) significant governance functions.

With nearly universal membership, the UNFCCC and its legally binding Kyoto Protocol dictate the goal of global climate change governance – stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

3.2 Governance triangle

Institutions that meet our criteria are placed in a governance triangle in accordance with the identity of their constituent actors² – *State*, *Firm* and *Civil Society Organization* (CSO) (Abbott and Snidal 2009). The placement of an institution is determined by judging each actor group’s approximate “share” in the governance of the scheme: in principle, the *State* category includes individual states and collections of states or international organizations (IOs) along with public bodies below the level of central states, e.g. cities and regions. Similarly, the *Firm* category includes individual business firms, groups of firms and industry associations; and ultimately, the *CSO* category includes individual CSO as well as CSO coalitions and networks. All three actor groups are defined broadly, so that among them they encompass virtually all participants in transnational governance.

The triangle is divided into seven *zones*, which represent the major combinations of actor *types*. Institutions in the vertex zones (1-3) are dominated by a single type of actor; those in the quadrilateral zones (4-6) involve two types of actors; and those in the central zone (7) involve actors of all three types. Additionally, the two dashed horizontal lines divide the triangle into three “tiers”, defined by the nature of government involvement – *state-led* (public institutions are dominant), *private-led* (Firms and CSO are dominant), and *hybrid* (government bodies share governance with firms and/or CSO in public-private partnerships).

² We focus on founding members and members with decision-making power within a scheme, not all of the actors that participate in a scheme’s programs in various roles.

Finally, the governance triangle also highlights the *role*, or governance function³, of each institution by means of color-coding – *standards & commitments* (red), *operational* activities (orange), *information & networking* (green), and *financing* (blue). These functions are not necessarily undertaken on an either/or basis as many governance schemes may engage in several activities at once. Rule-making and implementation schemes (*standards & commitments*) comprise mandatory compliance, standards for measurement and disclosure of activities, and voluntary commitments or RSS standards which govern the quality of projects. *Operational* schemes focus on, for example, technology research and development, pilot projects, demonstration and deployment activities, skills enhancement, and best practice dissemination (which may require some incidental standard-setting). *Financing* is a specific type of operational activity. Finally, forums for information-sharing and networking (*information & networking*) provide technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government.

3.3 Data collection

A comprehensive mapping of global climate change governance must include both international regimes and transnational institutions. Since both have already been mapped with some accuracy, this research relies heavily on a review and update of previous case studies (Abbott 2011; Bulkeley *et al.* 2012) according to our criteria.

The concept of a *regime complex* as introduced by Keohane and Victor (2011) takes the international state-based governance for the overall architecture while Abbott and Snidal (2009) on the other hand, focus on transnational arrangements. By combining both approaches, we intend to add the international regimes that somehow regulate climate change to the climate change transnational governance triangle.

3.4 Membership

Members are considered those actors with the formal position to influence the rules, norms, operations or performance of an institution. The members have access to the network an institution provides and benefit from its privileges, for instance, material or reputational benefits. Those actors that merely support an institution or ascribe to its values, rules, norms or mission, without the ability to influence the governance of the institution, are excluded in this analysis. Hence, actors that simply put their name under a commitment have not been included. In some cases, however, the delineation between what constitutes a member is not black or white and requires a judgement call from the researcher. To establish membership, we have examined the governance structures of the institutions and applied a conservative approach by attempting to only include core-members to the institutions.

³ We only consider the primary activity or in some cases two primary activities of a scheme, relatively to the way they pursue the climate change governance goal.

4 Results & analysis

As stated before, the second and last step of mapping the global climate change governance architecture is to visualize it, which already provides some results. Hereafter, we display two ways to visualize our data: one based on the type of actors involved in the governance arrangements – Global Climate Change Governance Triangle, and another built around the key governance functions of mapped institutions – Global Climate Change Governance Decagon.

For more detailed information: **Annex A** consists of the complete database of institutions present in the global climate change governance architecture; it includes acronyms, full names, homepages and year of creation, plus the information provided in both the triangle and decagon (zone, actors, type and role); **Annex B** includes brief descriptions of each institution.

4.1 Global Climate Change Governance Triangle

The extent and nature of the global climate change governance architecture is represented in Figure 1 using an adapted form of the transnational governance triangle proposed by Abbott and Snidal (2009), combined with the international regime complex approach from Keohane and Victor (2011).

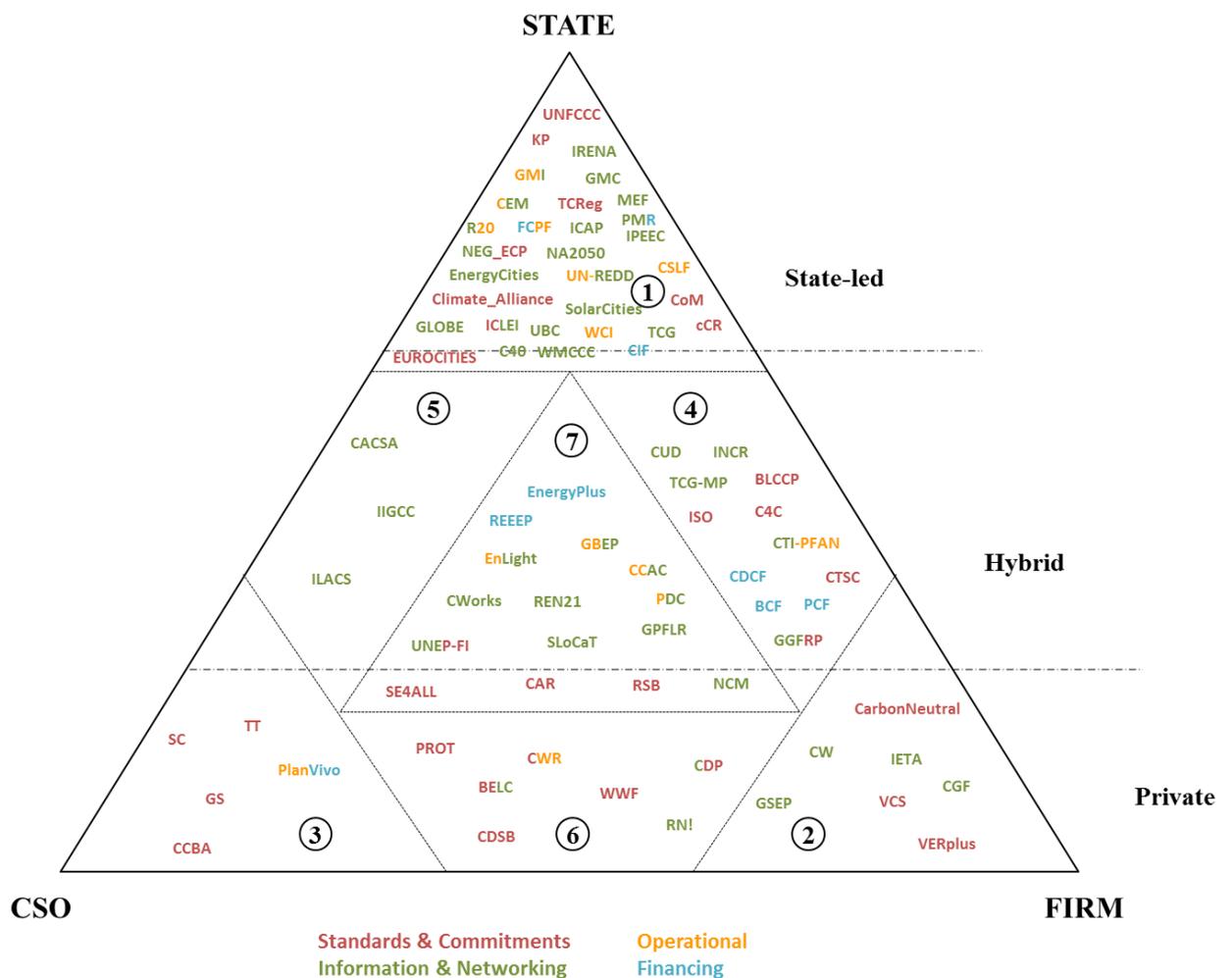


Figure 1 Global Climate Change Governance Triangle.

The triangle-shape highlights multiple forms of governance; by deconstructing the institutional complexity of global climate change governance at a certain moment in history, we get a snapshot of who is actually engaged in pursuing the climate governance goal at the time. Hence, we purport to take into account every relevant institution that satisfies our criteria, including transnational schemes that appear significant on public and policy discussions and the scholarly literature.

4.2 Global Climate Change Governance Decagon

An alternative way to display the global climate change governance architecture is based on the institutions' governance functions, and so we get to the decagon form illustrated in Figure 2.

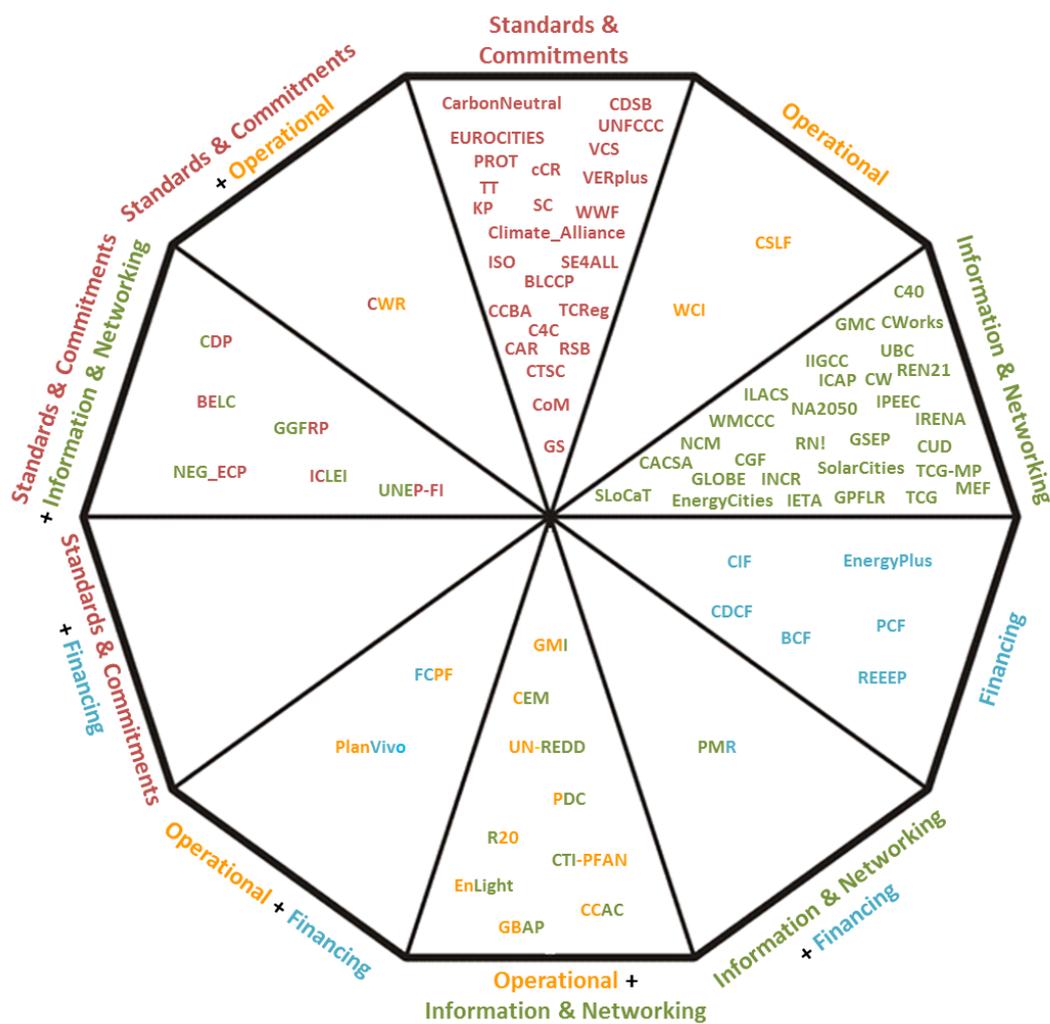


Figure 2 Global Climate Change Governance Decagon.

The decagon form is a crucial supplement of the governance triangle, since it shows who is doing what on climate change. There might be the case that even though complexity is high in terms of number of institutions within the climate governance architecture, they quite complement each other relatively to their governance function(s). Table 1 summarizes our findings.

Table 1 Total of global climate change governance institutions' per zone and per role.

	Standards & Commitments	Operational	Information & Networking	Financing	Standards & Commitments + Operational	Operational + Information & Networking	Information & Networking + Financing	Standards & Commitments + Information & Networking	Standards & Commitments + Financing	Operational + Financing	Total (Zone)	%
1	7	2	13	1	0	4	1	2	0	1	31	38.8%
2	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	8.8%
3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	6.3%
4	4	0	3	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	12	15.0%
5	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3.8%
6	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	7	8.8%
7	3	0	5	2	0	4	0	1	0	0	15	18.8%
Total (Role)	24	2	29	6	1	9	1	6	0	2	80	

The current global climate change governance architecture (final cut: April 2015) comprises 80 institutions; states participate in 61 arrangements (76%), 31 of which remain solely state/public-led and 30 constitute public-private partnerships, whereas the private tier is represented by 19 institutions in total. There is a significant expression of business actors (51%) taking on governance functions across the institutional structure of climate change governance, even though the majority of these arrangements partner with states (zone 4 and 7). Information and networking is the overall most common role (also when coupled with operational activities or standards and commitments), closely followed by exclusive standard-setting functions. It is interesting to see that most of the institutions that engage in standards and commitments are comprised of private actors or public-private partnerships, instead of just states. Financing is the least represented among climate governance arrangements, but the few that exist tend to be hybrid institutions and exclusively devoted to this role.

4.3 Membership

A total of 12,465 members have been identified in the institutions including 10634 unique entries. There are 8,650 cities and regions (81.3 %), 1293 companies (12.2 %), 196 states (1.8 %), 39 international organizations (0.4 %), 86 research related (0.8 %), 68 NGOs (0.6 %) and 302 "other" (0.6 %). The category "Other" includes organizations such as churches, national development agencies, and national development banks. The numbers should be considered approximates since some members could be considered for two or more categories. For instance, state owned companies are categorized as "companies", foundations as "Other", and institutes as "Research". The difference between the total number of members and unique number of members show that there is substantial overlap between the zones.

The average number of members across the whole set is 155 members but there are a few institutions with above-average membership numbers which somewhat skews the numbers. The most notable are the three city networks Covenant of Mayors (5,710 members), Climate Alliance (1,711 members), and ICLEI (1,082 members). Removing

these three outliers brings down the average number to 50 members. Moreover, due to the outliers, Zone 1 is by far the most populated with 10,113 members, which represents 80% of the total number. Zone 2 has 590 members, Zone 3 has 9 members, Zone 4 has 589 Members, Zone 5 has 123 members, Zone 6 has 78 members, and finally, Zone 7 has 963 members. Again, if we remove the outliers, the numbers even out somewhat; however, Zone 1 remains the largest one with 1,610 members.

4.4 Year of initiation

The data also includes year of initiation for each institution. The graph below shows the increase in new institutions over the years 1973 to 2014 based on the 80 entries in our dataset. The blue lines represent new institutions per year and the orange line shows the cumulative effect.

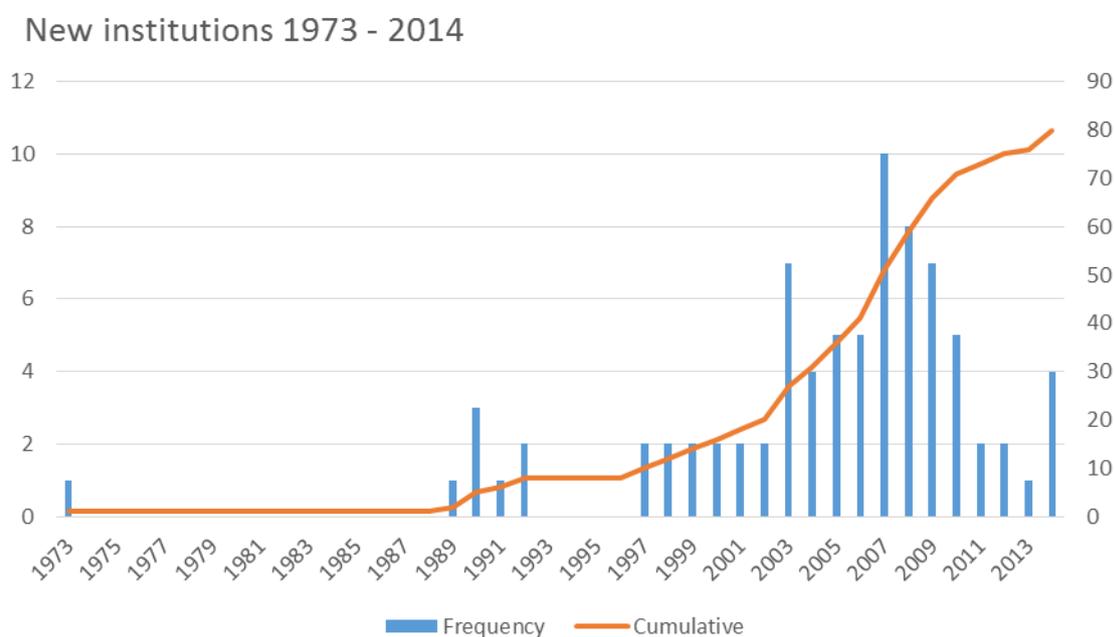


Figure 3 The increase in new institutions over the years 1973 to 2014.

Overall, the graph shows the step increase in institutions over the past 10 years, in particular since the beginning of the 2000's.

5 Final remarks

The institutional structure of global climate change governance is characterized by the shared relevance of state and private actors, particularly firms, engaged in information and networking and standards and commitments. However, this mapping exercise alone is not enough to support any substantiated arguments concerning the degree of fragmentation in global climate change governance.

Fragmentation represents a quality of a governance architecture and it is conceptualized along a continuum ranging from low to high, where low fragmentation equals an *integrated* or *coherent* system. To measure this quality, indicators of fragmentation/integration have been developed by Pattberg and colleagues (2014): actor constellations steaming from network analyses of memberships or hyperlinks; and, discursive fragmentation which we study through discourse analysis of the institutions' mission statements. Network analysis helps us connect the dots, i.e. it shows how countries, regions and cities within a governance architecture form a fragmented or integrated network of institutions and actors (Widerberg 2014); discourse analysis informs us about the coherence/incoherence of meta-discourses (or world views) and problem-framing adopted by different institutions and types of actors (Isailovic, Guerra and Pattberg, forthcoming).

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Annex A Global Climate Change Governance Architecture Database

ZONE	ACRONYM	NAME	DATE	MEMBERS	ACTORS	TYPE	ROLE
1	C40	C40	2005	75	State	State	3
1	cCR	carbons Climate Registry	2010	3	State	State	1
1	CEM	Clean Energy Ministerial	2009	22	State	State	6
1	CIF	Climate Investment Funds	2008	78	State	State	4
1	Climate_Alliance	Climate Alliance of European Cities with Indigenous Rainforest Peoples	1990	1711	State	State	1
1	CoM	Covenant of Mayors	2008	5710	State	State	1
1	CSLF	Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum	2003	23	State	State	2
1	EnergyCities	Energy Cities	1990	184	State	State	3
1	EUROCITIES	EUROCITIES	2008	45	State	State	1
1	FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility	2008	59	State	State	10
1	GLOBE	GLOBE International	1989	27	State	State	3
1	GMC	Global Mayors Compact	2014	9	State	State	3
1	GMI	Global Methane Initiative	2010	48	State	State	6
1	ICAP	International Carbon Action Partnership	2007	30	State	State	3
1	ICLEI	ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability	1990	1082	State	State	8
1	IPEEC	International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation	2009	16	State	State	3
1	IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency	2009	135	State	State	3
1	KP	Kyoto Protocol	1997	192	State	State	1
1	MEF	Major Economies Forum	2009	17	State	State	3
1	NA2050	North America 2050	2011	20	State	State	3
1	NEG_ECP	New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers' Annual Conference	1973	11	State	State	8
1	PMR	Partnership for Market Readiness	2010	33	State	State	7
1	R20	R20	2010	46	State	State	6

ZONE	ACRONYM	NAME	DATE	MEMBERS	ACTORS	TYPE	ROLE
1	SolarCities	Solar Cities	2003	5	State	State	3
1	TCG	The Climate Group States and Regions	2005	27	State	State	3
1	TCReg	The Climate Registry	2007	59	State	State	1
1	UBC	Union of Baltic Cities	1991	93	State	State	3
1	UN_REDD	The UN-REDD Programme	2008	72	State	State	6
1	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	1992	196	State	State	1
1	WCI	Western Climate Initiative	2007	5	State	State	2
1	WMCCC	World Mayors Council on Climate Change	2005	80	State	State	3
2	CarbonNeutral	CarbonNeutral Protocol	1997	1	Firm	Private	1
2	CGF	The Consumer Goods Forum	2009	416	Firm	Private	3
2	CW	ClimateWise	2006	31	Firm	Private	3
2	GSEP	Global Sustainability Electricity Partnership (formerly the E8)	1992	11	Firm	Private	3
2	IETA	International Emissions Trading Association	1999	126	Firm	Private	3
2	VCS	Verified Carbon Standard (formerly the Voluntary Carbon Standard)	2007	4	Firm	Private	1
2	VERplus	VER+	2007	1	Firm	Private	1
3	CCBA	Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCB Standard)	2003	5	CSO	Private	1
3	GS	The Gold Standard	2004	1	CSO	Private	1
3	PlanVivo	Plan Vivo	2008	1	CSO	Private	10
3	SC	SOCIALCARBON	2008	1	CSO	Private	1
3	TT	Transition Towns	2005	1	CSO	Private	1
4	BCF	BioCarbon Fund	2004	17	State/Firm	Hybrid	4
4	BLCCP	The Business Leadership Criteria on Carbon Pricing	2007	7	State/Firm	Hybrid	1
4	C4C	UN Global Compact Caring for Climate	2007	7	State/Firm	Hybrid	1
4	CDCF	Community Development Carbon Fund	2003	25	State/Firm	Hybrid	4
4	CTI-PFAN	Climate Technology Initiative PFAN	2006	91	State/Firm	Hybrid	6

ZONE	ACRONYM	NAME	DATE	MEMBERS	ACTORS	TYPE	ROLE
4	CTSC	Carbon Trust Standard for Carbon	2001	1	State/Firm	Hybrid	1
4	CUD	Connected Urban Development	2006	11	State/Firm	Hybrid	3
4	GGFRP	Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership	2002	37	State/Firm	Hybrid	8
4	INCR	Investor Network on Climate Risk	2003	109	State/Firm	Hybrid	3
4	ISO	ISO GHG Accounting Standards 14064-14065	2006	117	State/Firm	Hybrid	1
4	PCF	Prototype Carbon Fund	2000	21	State/Firm	Hybrid	4
4	TCG_MP	The Climate Group (Member Principles)	2004	146	State/Firm	Hybrid	3
5	CACSA	Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture	2014	45	State/CSO	Hybrid	3
5	IIGCC	Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change	2012	77	State/CSO	Hybrid	3
5	ILACS	International Leadership Alliance for Climate Stabilization	2006	1	State/CSO	Hybrid	3
6	BELC	Pew Business Environmental Leadership Council	1998	31	CSO/Firm	Private	8
6	CDP	Carbon Disclosure Project	2000	1	CSO/Firm	Private	8
6	CDSB	Climate Disclosure Standards Board	2007	8	CSO/Firm	Private	1
6	CWR	Carbon War Room	2009	1	CSO/Firm	Private	5
6	PROT	Greenhouse Gas Protocol	1998	2	CSO/Firm	Private	1
6	RN!	Refrigerants, Naturally!	2004	6	CSO/Firm	Private	3
6	WWF	WWF Climate Savers	1999	29	CSO/Firm	Private	1
7	CAR	Climate Action Reserve	2001	1	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	1
7	CCAC	Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants	2012	40	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	6
7	Cworks	Climate Works Best Practices Network	2008	12	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	3
7	EnergyPlus	International Energy and Climate Initiative	2010	1	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	4
7	EnLight	En.Lighten	2009	6	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	6
7	GBEP	Global Bioenergy Partnership	2007	37	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	6
7	GPFLR	The Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration	2003	34	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	3
7	NCM	Networked Carbon Markets Initiative	2013	1	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	3
7	PDC	Portfolio Decarbonization Coalition	2014	4	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	6
7	REEEP	Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership	2002	384	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	4

ZONE	ACRONYM	NAME	DATE	MEMBERS	ACTORS	TYPE	ROLE
7	REN21	The Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century	2005	41	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	3
7	RSB	The Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels (RSB Standard)	2007	106	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	1
7	SE4ALL	Sustainable Energy for All	2011	0	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	1
7	SLoCaT	Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport	2014	82	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	3
7	UNEP-FI	UNEP Finance Initiative	2003	214	State/CSO/Firm	Hybrid	8

Legend:

* Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

Date of creation of each institution (signature year for agreements and protocols).

Zone of the governance triangle; it is assigned according to Actors involved in founding and governing the scheme (adapted from Abbott and Snidal 2009): 1 = State; 2 = Firms; 3 = Civil Society Organizations (CSO); 4 = State + Firms; 5 = State + CSO; 6 = CSO + Firm; 7 = State + CSO + Firm.

Type of institution; it is assigned according to Actors involved in founding and governing the scheme, or Zone (adapted to Abbott and Snidal 2009): State = State (ZONE 1); Private = Firm (ZONE 2), CSO (ZONE 3) or Firm/CSO (ZONE 6); Hybrid = State/Firm (ZONE 4), State/CSO (ZONE 5) or State/Firm/CSO (ZONE 7).

Role or governance functions (adapted from Abbott and Snidal 2009): 1 = Standards and Commitments; 2 = Operational; 3 = Information and Networking; 4 = Financing; 5 = Standards and Commitments + Operational; 6 = Operational + Information and Networking; 7 = Information and Networking + Financing; 8 = Standards and Commitments + Information and Networking; 9 = Standards and Commitments + Financing; 10 = Operational + Financing.

Annex B Brief Descriptions of Global Climate Change Institutions (alphabetical order)

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
BCF	Public-private sector initiative mobilizing financing to help develop projects that sequester or conserve carbon in forest and agro-ecosystems. It has been a pioneer in this sector, developing the infrastructure needed to pilot transactions and paving the way for the growing land-use carbon market established to date.
BELC	Largest U.S.-based group of corporations focused on addressing the challenges of climate change and supporting mandatory climate policy. It is comprised of industry leading, mostly Fortune 500 companies across a range of sectors. Many different sectors are represented, from high technology to diversified manufacturing; from oil and gas to transportation; from utilities to chemicals.
BLCCP	The Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition brings together leaders from government, business, and civil society to share experiences and best practices in carbon pricing. By bringing diverse public and private sector backgrounds together, the coalition will help expand and improve the design and implementation of carbon pricing policies that can maintain competitiveness, create jobs, encourage innovation, and deliver meaningful emissions reductions.
C40	Network of the world's megacities taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is committed to implementing meaningful and sustainable climate-related actions locally that will help address climate change globally. Their global field staff works with city governments, supported by technical experts across a range of program areas, facilitating active exchange and collaboration across cities.
C4C	UN Global Compact, UNEP and the secretariat of the UNFCCC's initiative to advance the role of business in addressing climate change. It provides a framework for business leaders to implement practical climate change solutions and help shape public policy.
CACSA	The Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture is a voluntary alliance of partners, dedicated to addressing the challenges facing food security and agriculture by tapping the wealth and diversity of resources, knowledge, information and expertise, from and between its members, in order to stimulate concrete initiatives at all levels
CAR	Premier carbon offset registry for the North American carbon market; it encourages action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by ensuring the environmental integrity and financial benefit of emissions reduction projects. It establishes high quality standards for carbon offset projects, oversees independent third-party verification bodies, issues carbon credits generated from such projects and tracks the transaction of credits over time in a transparent, publicly-accessible system.
CarbonNeutral	Market leaders and pioneers in the world of carbon neutral certification and carbon reduction; it provides a robust framework and credible certification that a company, brand or product has reduced their carbon emissions to net zero.
CCAC	First global effort to address short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) as an urgent and collective challenge; it is a voluntary international framework for concrete and substantial action, aims to reduce emissions of methane, black carbon, and many hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in order to protect the environment and public health, promote food and energy security and address near-term climate change.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
CCBA	Unique partnership of leading international NGOs with a mission to stimulate and promote land management activities that credibly mitigate global climate change, improve the well-being and reduce the poverty of local communities, and conserve biodiversity. It brings together diverse stakeholders through a transparent and inclusive participatory process to develop standards that stimulate, identify and promote high quality multiple-benefit land management activities.
cCR	World's leading reporting platform to enhance transparency, accountability and credibility of climate action of local and subnational governments. It is designated as the central repository of the Compact of Mayors launched at the Climate Summit 2014.
CDCF	Multi-donor Trust Fund/public-private partnership administered by the World Bank; it extends the benefits of carbon finance to the poorest countries and poor communities in all developing countries, which would otherwise find it difficult to attract carbon finance because of country and financial risk. Contributors to the CDCF support projects that measurably benefit poor communities and their local environment and will receive in return, verified Kyoto-compliant emission reductions from these projects.
CDP	Largest collection globally of self-reported climate change, water and forest-risk data; through their global system companies, investors and cities are better able to mitigate risk, capitalize on opportunities and make investment decisions that drive action towards a more sustainable world.
CDSB	International consortium of business and environmental organizations committed to the integration of climate change-related information into mainstream corporate reporting. It advances its mission by acting as a forum for collaboration on how existing standards and practices can be supported and enhanced so as to link financial and climate change-related reporting and respond to regulatory developments.
CEM	Global forum to share best practices and promote policies and programs that encourage and facilitate the transition to a global clean energy economy. Its initiatives help reduce emissions, improve energy security, provide energy access, and sustain economic growth.
CGF	Global, parity-based industry network that is driven by our members. We bring together the CEOs and senior management of some 400 retailers, manufacturers, service providers, and other stakeholders across 70 countries, and we reflect the diversity of the industry in geography, size, product category and format.
CIF	Provides developing and middle income countries with urgently needed resources to mitigate and manage the challenges of climate change and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions; since 2008, it champions innovative country-led investments in clean technology, renewable energy, sustainable management of forests, and climate-resilient development.
Climate_Alliance	Association of cities, municipalities and districts committed to the protection of the global climate, aiming to reduce greenhouse emissions. For this, local climate strategies are developed and implemented, especially in the energy and transport sectors.
CoM	Mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources on their territories. By their commitment, Covenant signatories aim to meet and exceed the European Union 20% CO ₂ reduction objective by 2020.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
CSLF	Ministerial-level international climate change initiative focused on the development of improved cost-effective technologies for the separation and capture of carbon dioxide for its transport and long-term safe storage. Its mission is to facilitate the development and deployment of such technologies via collaborative efforts that address key technical, economic, and environmental obstacles.
CTI-PFAN	Multilateral public-private partnership, initiated by the Climate Technology Initiative and the UNFCCC, which connects clean energy businesses and projects with private sector financing. Through its network of private sector consultants, it provides targeted professional support and advice and technical assistance to selected projects on the preparation of commercially viable, sustainable and climate friendly business models for introduction to investors.
CTSC	World's leading independent certification of an organization's impact in respect of the three primary constituents of environmental sustainability: energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions, water usage, management and effluent, waste management and disposal.
CUD	It demonstrates how to reduce carbon emissions by introducing fundamental improvements in the efficiency of urban infrastructure through information and communications technology. It was born from Cisco's commitment to the Clinton Global Initiative to participate in helping reduce carbon emissions.
CW	Global insurance industry's leadership group driving action on climate change risk; it is facilitated by the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. The group leverages the insurance industry's expertise to better understand, communicate and act on climate risks. Members commit to action against the ClimateWise Principles and are independently reviewed against these annually.
Cworks	Non-governmental organization; team of researchers, strategists, collaborators, and grant-makers who are committed to climate action and believe in the power of collective philanthropy. It collaborates with funders, regional and research partners, and other climate leaders to strengthen philanthropy's response to climate change.
CWR	Independent non-profit that accelerates the adoption of business solutions that reduce carbon emissions at gigaton scale and advance the low-carbon economy. They generate business solutions by identifying specific pathways to accelerate the deployment of green solutions in the face of low expectations and weak mandates.
EnergyCities	European Association of local authorities in energy transition; its objectives are: to strengthen society's role and skills in the field of sustainable energy, to represent people's interests and influence the policies and proposals made by EU institutions in the field of energy, environmental protection and urban policy, and to develop and promote people's initiatives through exchange of experiences, the transfer of know-how and the implementation of joint projects.
EnergyPlus	Led by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the overarching purpose of the Energy+ Initiative is to contribute to providing access to efficient energy services to all by increased development of renewable energy and energy efficiency, and to mitigate energy's impacts on climate. It is an open partnership engaging, in particular countries in the developing world.
EnLight	Initiative by UNEP and GEF to accelerate a global market transformation to environmentally sustainable, energy efficient lighting technologies, as well as to develop strategies to phase-out inefficient incandescent lamps to reduce CO2 emissions and the release of mercury from fossil fuel combustion. It serves as a platform to build synergies among international stakeholders; identify global best practices and share this knowledge and information; create policy and regulatory frameworks; address technical and quality issues; and encourage countries to develop National and/or Regional Efficient Lighting Strategies.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
EUROCITIES	Network of major European cities; they offer members a platform for sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas. They influence and work with EU institutions to respond to common issues that affect the day-to-day lives of Europeans. Their goal is to reinforce the important role that local governments should play in a multilevel governance structure.
FCPF	Global partnership of governments, businesses, civil society, and Indigenous Peoples focused on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, forest carbon stock conservation, the sustainable management of forests, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (activities commonly referred to as REDD+). It has two separate but complementary funding mechanisms – the Readiness Fund and the Carbon Fund.
GBEP	Partnership that brings together public, private and civil society stakeholders in a joint commitment to promote bioenergy for sustainable development. It focuses its activities in three strategic areas: sustainable development, climate change and food and energy security.
GGFRP	The Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership (GGFR) is a public-private initiative comprising international and national oil companies, national and regional governments, and international institutions. GGFR works to increase use of natural gas associated with oil production by helping remove technical and regulatory barriers to flaring reduction, conducting research, disseminating best practices, and developing country-specific gas flaring reduction programs.
GLOBE	Legislators from the US Congress, European Parliament, Japanese Diet and the Russian State Duma founded it originally with the mission of responding to urgent environmental challenges through the development and advancement of legislation.
GMC	The Compact of Mayors is the world's largest cooperative effort among mayors and city officials to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, track progress, and prepare for the impacts of climate change. The Compact of Mayors will drive more aggressive city climate actions and reaffirm existing targets while capturing the significance of these efforts through a consistent, transparent public reporting of cities' climate data.
GMI	Only international effort to specifically target methane abatement, recovery, and use by focusing on the five main emission sources: agriculture, coal mines, municipal solid waste, oil and gas systems, and waste water. It promotes cost-effective, near-term methane recovery through partnerships between developed and developing countries, with participation from the private sector, development banks, and nongovernmental organizations.
GPFLR	Proactive network that unites governments, organisations, communities and individuals with a common goal: restoring world's degraded and deforested lands.
GS	To receive the stamp of approval, all Gold Standard projects must be implemented following best practice rules, consult with local stakeholders, continually reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve the environment and people's lives. Once certified, their projects are issued credits annually against independently audited climate and sustainable development outcomes. The purchase of these credits – by governments, business, impact investors and individuals – provides on-going funding to project activities.
GSEP	Not-for-profit organization whose members are the world's leading electricity companies. It promotes sustainable energy development through electricity sector projects and human capacity building activities in developing and emerging nations worldwide.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
ICAP	International forum for governments and public authorities that have implemented or are planning to implement emissions trading systems. It facilitates cooperation and best practices-sharing between countries, sub-national jurisdictions and supranational institutions that have established or are actively pursuing carbon markets through mandatory cap and trade systems.
ICLEI	World's leading network of over 1,000 cities, towns and metropolises committed to building a sustainable future. By helping Members to make their cities and regions sustainable, low-carbon, resilient, ecomobile, biodiverse, resource-efficient and productive, healthy and happy, with a green economy and smart infrastructure, they impact over 20% of the world's urban population.
IETA	Non-profit business organization created to establish a functional international framework for trading in greenhouse gas emission reductions. Membership includes leading international companies from across the carbon trading cycle; they seek to develop an emissions trading regime that results in real and verifiable greenhouse gas emission reductions, while balancing economic efficiency with environmental integrity and social equity.
IIGCC	Forum for collaboration on climate change for investors; it provides investors with a collaborative platform to encourage public policies, investment practices, and corporate behaviour that address long-term risks and opportunities associated with climate change.
ILACS	Public-private partnership that seeks to match island states and states, provinces or major cities of larger developing countries that seek to pioneer in Climate Protection initiatives with Research institutions, Universities, Religious groups, International agencies and Carbon offset groups in more affluent countries.
INCR	Network of more than 110 institutional investors representing more than \$13 trillion in assets committed to addressing the risks and seizing the opportunities resulting from climate change and other sustainability challenges.
IPEEC	Autonomous international forum that provides global leadership on energy efficiency by facilitating government implementation of policies and programs to yield energy efficient gains. It is dedicated to facilitating rapid deployment of clean energy technologies worldwide and promoting information exchange on best practices to facilitate initiatives that improve energy efficiency. It has been identified as the lead coordinating organization to carry out the G20 Energy Efficiency Action Plan.
IRENA	Intergovernmental organization that supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future, and serves as the principal platform for international cooperation, a centre of excellence, and a repository of policy, technology, resource and financial knowledge on renewable energy. It promotes the widespread adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy, including bioenergy, geothermal, hydropower, ocean, solar and wind energy in the pursuit of sustainable development, energy access, energy security and low-carbon economic growth and prosperity.
ISO	Greenhouse gases -- Part 1: Specification with guidance at the organization level for quantification and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and removals: it specifies principles and requirements at the organization level for quantification and reporting of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and removals. It includes requirements for the design, development, management, reporting and verification of an organization's GHG inventory.
KP	International agreement linked with the UNFCCC which commits its Parties by setting internationally binding emission reduction targets.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
MEF	17 major economies forum; it is intended to facilitate a candid dialogue among major developed and developing economies, help generate the political leadership necessary to achieve a successful outcome at the annual UN climate negotiations and advance the exploration of concrete initiatives and joint ventures that increase the supply of clean energy while cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
NA2050	The NA2050 include a group of U.S. states and Canadian provinces have formed the North America 2050 Initiative (NA 2050) to facilitate efforts to design, promote and implement cost-effective policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create economic opportunities. Main goals are to (1) to facilitate efforts to design, promote and implement cost-effective policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create economic opportunities; (2) Advocate for the most appropriate roles for federal, state, and provincial governments; (3) Achieve meaningful emission reductions; and, (4) Demonstrate the economic and job creation benefits of policies.
NCM	Through the Networked Carbon Markets Initiative, the World Bank Group is convening civil society, governments and the private sector to develop a framework for assessing climate mitigation efforts and infrastructure to support carbon market related functions. The end-goal is to facilitate linking or "networking" of heterogeneous carbon markets so that the linked markets will have greater liquidity and deliver climate-smart financing more efficiently.
NEG_ECP	Non-partisan association of the seven governors of Northeast states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont. It encourages intergovernmental cooperation on issues affecting the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Northeast. In the region, it is a forum for states to exchange information and undertake cooperative action on issues of mutual interest.
PCF	Partnership between 17 companies and 6 governments, managed by the World Bank; as the first carbon fund, its mission is to pioneer the market for project-based greenhouse gas emission reductions while promoting sustainable development and offering a learning-by-doing opportunity to its stakeholders.
PDC	Multi-stakeholder initiative that will drive GHG emissions reductions on the ground by mobilizing a critical mass of institutional investors committed to gradually decarbonizing their portfolios.
PlanVivo	Framework for supporting communities to manage their natural resources more sustainably, with a view to generating climate, livelihood and ecosystem benefits. Participants are rural smallholders and communities dependent on natural resources for livelihoods. Activities are implemented on smallholder or community land (owned or long-term user rights).
PMR	Forum for collective innovation and action and fund to support capacity building to scale up climate change mitigation. It provides support to prepare and implement climate change mitigation policies—including carbon pricing instruments—in order to scale up GHG mitigation. Serving as a platform to share lessons, countries work together to shape the future of cost-effective GHG mitigation.
PROT	Developed by World Resources Institute and World Business Council on Sustainable Development, sets the global standard for how to measure, manage, and report greenhouse gas emissions. Hundreds of companies and organizations around the world are using GHG Protocol standards and tools to manage their emissions and become more efficient, resilient, and prosperous organizations.
R20	To help sub-national governments around the world to develop low-carbon and climate resilient economic development projects. It aims to help build an effective green deal flow at sub-national level by connecting Regions, Technology and Finance to build sustainable low-carbon projects.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
REEEP	It invests in clean energy markets in developing countries to reduce CO2 emissions and build prosperity. Based on a strategic portfolio of high impact projects, it works to generate energy access, improve lives and economic opportunities, build sustainable markets, and combat climate change.
REN21	Global renewable energy policy multi-stakeholder network that connects a wide range of key actors from Governments, International organizations, Industry associations and Science and academia as well as civil society, to facilitate knowledge exchange, policy development and joint action towards a rapid global transition to renewable energy. It promotes renewable energy to meet the needs of both industrialized and developing countries that are driven by climate change, energy security, development and poverty alleviation.
RN!	Initiative of international companies taking action against global warming and ozone layer depletion. They replace harmful greenhouse gases in our point-of-sales cooling and freezing units with climate-friendly natural refrigerants. The goal is to make them the preferred cooling technology – in a safe, reliable and cost effective manner.
RSB	International multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together farmers, companies, non-governmental organizations, experts, governments, and inter-governmental agencies concerned with ensuring the sustainability of biomass and biomaterial production and processing. Their certification system is based on sustainability standards encompassing environmental, social and economic principles and criteria.
SC	Standard developed by the Ecological Institute that certifies emission reduction projects for their contributions to sustainable development. It is founded on the principle that transparent assessment and monitoring of the social and environmental performance of projects can improve their long-term effectiveness and thus add value to the emission reductions generated.
SE4ALL	Global initiative that brings together top-level leadership from all sectors of society – governments, business and civil society - to mobilize action from all sectors of society in support of three interlinked objectives: providing universal access to modern energy services, doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency, and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.
SLoCaT	Multi-stakeholder partnership of over 80 organizations (representing UN organizations, Multilateral and Bilateral development organizations, NGOs and Foundations, Academe and the Business Sector). It is a Type II Partnership under the UN, meaning that it is a non-legal and non-binding partnership, established to provide a global voice on Sustainable Transport.
SolarCities	International non-profit organization dedicated to promoting new urban policies, planning and practices that reduce city per capita greenhouse emissions to levels consistent with long term climate sustainability as estimated by the IPCC.
TCG	It brings together sub-national government leaders from around the world in a powerful, high-profile network that shares expertise, demonstrates impact and influences the international climate dialogue.
TCG_MP	The TCGs Membership Principles are a set of principles around which the TCG members need to adhere. For example by “Demonstrate our low carbon leadership by focusing our activities in a way that contributes to reducing emissions in the short, medium and long term.” (principle 1)
TCReg	Non-profit organization governed by U.S. states and Canadian provinces and territories. It designs and operates voluntary and compliance GHG reporting programs globally, and assists organizations in measuring, verifying and reporting the carbon in their operations so they can manage and reduce it.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
TT	A Transition Town also called a transition initiative involves community projects seeking to build resilience in response to climate change.
UBC	Voluntary, proactive network mobilizing the shared potential of its member cities for democratic, economic, social, cultural and environmentally sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region.
UN_REDD	UN collaborative initiative that supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ design and implementation.
UNEP-FI	Global partnership between UNEP and the financial sector. Over 200 institutions, including banks, insurers and fund managers, work with UNEP to understand the impacts of environmental and social considerations on financial performance.
UNFCCC	International environmental treaty with the objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system; it provides a framework for negotiating protocols that may set binding limits on greenhouse gases.
VCS	World's leading voluntary greenhouse gas program founded by a collection of business and environmental leaders who saw a need for greater quality assurance in voluntary carbon markets.
VERplus	The VER Plus (VER+) is a carbon offset standard and that follows the Kyoto Protocol's project-based mechanisms (CDM and JI). It was developed by TÜV SÜD.
WCI	Collaboration of independent jurisdictions working together to identify, evaluate, and implement emissions trading policies to tackle climate change at a regional level. This is a comprehensive effort to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, spur investment in clean-energy technologies that create green jobs and reduce dependence on imported oil.
WMCCC	Voluntary initiative of mayors and local authority representatives that aims to advance climate actions. By signing the Pact, signatories commit to 10 action points, including the reduction of emissions, adaptation to the impacts of climate change and fostering city-to-city cooperation.
WWF	Climate leadership programme that seeks to transform businesses into leaders of the low-carbon economy. Its intention is to inspire a change in thinking about climate solutions in companies and as agents of change within their sphere of influence. This leaves member companies better placed to avoid carbon-related risks while realizing opportunities within their long-term business strategies.

Note: These descriptions were put together by summarizing information present at each institution's homepage.