

Impact Evaluation Framework for Climate Assemblies

Christina Demski, Stuart Capstick & Mark Hessellund Beanland



KNOWLEDGE NETWORK ON CLIMATE ASSEMBLIES

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Christina Demski¹, Stuart Capstick^{1,2} Mark Hessellund Beanland³

¹Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST), University of Bath, UK

²Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Cardiff University, UK

³Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies (KNOCA) and Democracy x Foundation, DK

KNOCA is a European-based network that aims to improve the commissioning, design, implementation, impact and evaluation of climate assemblies, using evidence, knowledge exchange and dialogue. KNOCA documents climate assembly practice, identifies and disseminates best practice for impact and shapes future trends.

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Executive Summary

This Guidance Document presents a conceptual framework for evaluating climate assemblies. It is created on the premise that assemblies differ, and that evaluations should be systematically planned in accordance with the individual aims and context of an assembly. Navigating the complexity of evaluating impact first and foremost requires adequate resources, including expertise, funding, and time.

While this document is not designed as a step-by-step guide, we offer a conceptual checklist to help evaluators understand the scope of potential impact and proposals to navigate the challenges of interrogating the relationship between an assembly and its impact.

In **Part 1** we present the KNOCA Impact Evaluation Framework with nine categories intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the breadth of potential impact from climate assemblies. These categories are derived from three areas of impact in which three types of impact can be discerned. These areas are impacts on **state actors** (e.g., government or decisionmakers), **non-state actors** (e.g., media, businesses, public attitudes) and **systems and structures** (e.g., underlying drivers or paradigms that govern our systems). The three types of impact are:

- 1. Instrumental Impacts:** These involve direct changes to policies, strategies, legislation, or societal practices resulting from the activities or recommendations of climate assemblies.
- 2. Capacity Impacts:** These reflect changes in the resources, expertise, and institutional frameworks that support climate action. They include the establishment of new institutions, training programs, and networks.
- 3. Conceptual Impacts:** These capture shifts in understanding and perspectives on climate issues, influencing how actors approach climate action.

We offer these nine categories as a prism through which to understand impact while recognising the importance of looking for both intended and unintended consequences of climate assemblies and understanding the relationship between short- and long-term impact.

Part 2 elaborates on the categories of impact, providing examples to illustrate how impact has been seen to manifest in practice.

To effectively implement the KNOCA Impact Evaluation Framework, evaluators are encouraged to follow a systematic approach that includes identifying the impact areas most relevant to their assembly and determining specific indicators and impact pathways that show the relationship between the assembly and these impacts with corresponding sources of data.

It is our hope, that applying this framework can support a more rigorous understanding of the impact of climate assemblies, leading to a more informed debate about their value and place in society, and ultimately supporting more robust climate governance.

Introduction

Climate assemblies are organised with the explicit aim of influencing society's response to climate change. Their effects can manifest through a wide range of potential impacts on policy, political institutions, public engagement, the media and civil society¹. This KNOCA Guidance provides consistency and clarity on the types of impact such assemblies can achieve and how they might be evaluated. While climate assemblies are often set up to influence policymaking, a more diverse set of impacts can be attributed to them and may be used to appraise their usefulness. There is need to understand the different types of impacts and how they may come about (i.e., pathways to impact), so that climate assemblies can be better evaluated and allowed to reach their full potential.

This Guidance presents an Impact Evaluation Framework for climate assemblies, building on earlier work by KNOCA and others. It proposes an expansive range of potential impacts, together with a systematic approach for identifying the presence and drivers of these impacts. It is written with three key audiences in mind: (1) those involved in commissioning evaluations; (2) those evaluating climate assemblies; and (3) those organising and advocating for climate assemblies. Others may find this Guidance useful in better understanding how public participation in climate deliberation can support new types of action.

A Focus on Impacts of Climate Assemblies

The framework draws on established studies on deliberative democracy and best practice guidelines that have emerged from this². This work is important but tends to focus on design and process – for example, how well assembly members are engaged and the quality of deliberation – with only limited consideration of impacts of the processes themselves. Where impacts are considered, they have often been based on generic or topic-neutral criteria or tended to focus on serendipitous outcomes which may not have been the intended impact of the climate assemblies in the first place (e.g., changes in assembly members' views, media coverage) or focus on short-term or preliminary outcomes (e.g., dissemination of reports, responses from commissioning bodies) with only limited consideration of longer-term, more far-reaching and/or unintended impacts³.

The KNOCA Impact Evaluation Framework extends this work and applies it specifically to climate assemblies⁴. For climate assemblies to be valuable as a response to climate change, we need to understand whether and how they exert influence across climate governance, citizen engagement with the climate crisis, and civil society's capacity to advance climate action. Assessing impacts, comparing across cases and understanding the factors that may hinder or enhance impacts, is important for understanding their value and for applying learnings and improving future processes. Without a more thorough scrutiny of the impacts and pathways to accomplishing impacts, the risk is that the continuing wave of climate deliberation could be limited by repeating exercises which only effect change in rather narrow terms, which risk overstating or underrepresenting their capacity to bring about change, or which do not live up to their full potential⁵.



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Purpose of the Framework

The main objective of the framework is to draw attention to the breadth and diversity of possible impacts of climate assemblies.

In principle, climate assemblies can have significant and far-reaching impacts on different aspects of climate action. Such a process can influence laws and policies, shape public discourse and discussion, and even effect change to the deep-rooted societal and economic foundations that underpin the climate crisis. Most attention to date has been focused on policy change and the action of state actors as well as impacts on the relatively small numbers of people who participate in climate assemblies. In the context of climate change and climate action, however, transformative changes in society as a whole will be required to stay within internationally agreed emission reduction targets and to keep warming to below 1.5 or 2 degrees.

This means that action is required across scales and sectors, not only by governments, but also non-state actors like businesses, civil society groups, communities and households, media and so on. Addressing climate change implies fundamental changes to how we live, and how society operates – which in turn encompasses matters of climate justice and fairness, and to the political and economic paradigms that enable or inhibit the ways in which these might be addressed. To what extent are climate assemblies able to address, for example, hugely unequal usage of energy both within and between societies⁶ or the contemporary model of growth-based, consumer societies in the Global North that is implicated in current trends⁷? Emerging evidence suggests that citizens' assemblies tend to endorse policies designed to reduce absolute levels of consumption and production while prioritising wellbeing⁸ – so-called 'sufficiency' policies that at odds with much mainstream political

and economic policy. But can it be claimed that the endorsement of such approaches by climate assemblies has any direct influence upon whether such policies become a reality?

Whether or not climate assemblies help to bring about change of this kind – or, alternatively, find reasons to reject them and instead seek alternatives – this illustrates that the potential impacts of climate assemblies can span small incremental changes to new ways of thinking, new abilities and capacities, and new ways of taking action. The structure of the impact evaluation framework we propose attempts to capture this diversity of impacts to better understand if and how climate assemblies can help society address the climate crisis.

The framework is intended as a conceptual guide to enable evaluations of impacts.

In considering the full range of impacts that climate assemblies might have, we need to go beyond theoretical notions of impact, to examine what influence climate assemblies are actually having (or not). The framework is intended to provide a standardised framework for the purposes of data collection to better understand

how impacts unfold over time, and how they relate to the design, delivery and broader context of climate assemblies.

An evaluation of impact can also identify and trace pathways to impact, paying particular attention to factors which can enable or obstruct the desired impacts of an assembly process.

While the framework does not provide a detailed step-by-step guidance for evaluating a climate assembly, it does provide a clear set of conceptual and methodological considerations for collecting data and meaningfully assessing impacts. Of particular importance is the need to situate climate assemblies within a wider context when tracking and attributing impacts, considering them to be one among many possible influences upon society's response to climate change.

The framework is designed to draw attention to both intended and unintended consequences of climate assemblies.

The KNOCA Impact Evaluation Framework assumes that commissioning bodies will have particular aims or



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expectations in mind. The framework does not make assumptions about which of these are desirable, but it seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of possible impacts and to provide guidance on how to evaluate whether these are taking place.

Any evaluation of the extent to which the stated objectives of a process are met is important for holding its commissioners and practitioners accountable. Different climate assemblies will have different aims, and these initial aims should guide the evaluation process⁹. For example, where engagement with a wider public on climate policy is considered a key metric for success, then this should be one of the key elements evaluated. It is not uncommon for different actors involved in the organisation of an assembly to have different expectations. Being able to trace the impacts on these different expectations can help evaluate the effectiveness of an assembly.

Assembly processes may have impacts beyond their stated or expected aims (i.e., unintended impact) which evaluation processes should try to capture where possible. This can help demonstrate the potential wider value and influence of assemblies given the far-reaching

and significant societal changes needed to address climate change¹⁰. For example, even if the stated aim is policy development, evaluators may wish to investigate how climate assemblies impact communities or how they can influence the ways in which climate change is represented by the media and among civil society groups.

An additional group of unintended impacts may take the form of opposition to the assembly outcomes. In the French Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat such impact has been documented in the form of sectoral lobby groups working to block assembly recommendations¹¹. The direct and indirect influence of such barriers, when present, warrant investigation on equal terms with the impacts intended by organisers and commissioners¹².

This Guidance consist of Part 1 and Part 2:



Part 1

Understanding the Framework

Unpacks each of these key considerations in more detail, presenting a conceptual overview of the variety of impacts that are possible from climate assemblies, how they can be identified, approaches to data collection, and governance of evaluations.

Part 2

Implementing the Framework

Offers a more in-depth analysis of the types of impact that can be evaluated, drawing examples from previous assemblies.

10 Key Considerations for Evaluations of Climate Assemblies

Below we summarise 10 key considerations for evaluating climate assemblies which we will investigate in further detail throughout this Guidance document.

Conceptualising Impacts

1

Consider the breadth and diversity of possible impacts before planning the evaluation.

2

Consider equity and inclusivity in relation to the impacts of climate assemblies: how might the process affect or serve marginalised or under-represented communities? Alternatively, how might they entrench vested interests or business-as-usual?

Identifying Impacts

3

Understand the differences between short- and long-term impacts and consider how to trace impacts over time.

4

Consider the potential significance and reach of intended – as well as unintended – impacts.

5

Consider relevant pathways to impacts, including barriers and enabling factors for achieving these (e.g., design of assembly, political context).

Collecting Data for Evaluations

6

Use data collection methods suited to the impacts under consideration and triangulate across multiple data types and sources.

7

Collect data at multiple time points including before, during and after the assembly.

8

Collect contextual information to aid process tracing, including material about the assembly process itself, as well as political responses, linked events and coverage, and media representation of the climate assembly.

Governance of Evaluations

9

Designate an independent but integrated team of experts for planning and conducting the evaluation – alongside or in addition to any evaluation of the assembly process itself.

10

Ensure the evaluation team have the relevant expertise, resources and time to conduct the evaluation.

Part 1: Understanding the Framework

Part 1 of this Guidance unpacks each of the key considerations in more detail, presenting a conceptual overview of the variety of impacts that are possible from climate assemblies, how they can be identified, approaches to data collection, and governance of evaluations.

1.1 Conceptualising Impacts

Key Considerations

1

Consider the breadth and diversity of possible impacts before planning the evaluation.

2

Consider equity and inclusivity in relation to the impacts of climate assemblies: how might the process affect or serve marginalised or under-represented communities? Alternatively, how might they entrench vested interests or business-as-usual?

This section proposes a framework for categorizing potential impacts from climate assemblies, which can then be used to decide which impacts are to be the focus of any evaluation.

Table 1 presents a simplified version of this framework based on two dimensions of impact each broken into three subdivisions each. The first dimension captures the different areas in which climate assemblies can have impact: in relation to state action, civil society and structural/systemic changes. The second dimension captures different types of impact that climate assemblies can generate: instrumental, capacity and conceptual impacts¹³.



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Area of Impact

Impacts on **state actors**, including government decision-making across scales. Here key actors include policymakers, politicians, civil servants and parliamentarians. Specific examples of impact may include changes to policy or allocations of resources to progress climate action.

Impacts on **non-state actors** and civil society such as impacts on public discourse and broader societal climate actions. Here key actors include assembly members, the general public, media, businesses, third sector and advisory bodies. Specific examples may include community-based action, enhanced media coverage of climate change or changes in public opinion about climate action.

Impacts on **systems and structures**. This is included as a separate category to recognise the potential for impacts which challenge and alter the underlying drivers of climate change and of climate action. Examples could include fundamental changes to democratic and decision-making structures, changes to current economic paradigms (e.g., a move towards steady-state or sufficiency economics), impacts on economic or carbon inequality¹⁴, changes to national constitutions, or the relationship between citizens and the state.

Type of Impact

Instrumental impacts are direct influences on climate action. This encompasses effects on policy, behaviour and practices of key organisations, institutions and actors, which make positive climate action easier and inhibit unsustainable courses of action. An example includes citizen recommendations from France's climate assembly which led directly to a ban on some short-haul domestic flights.

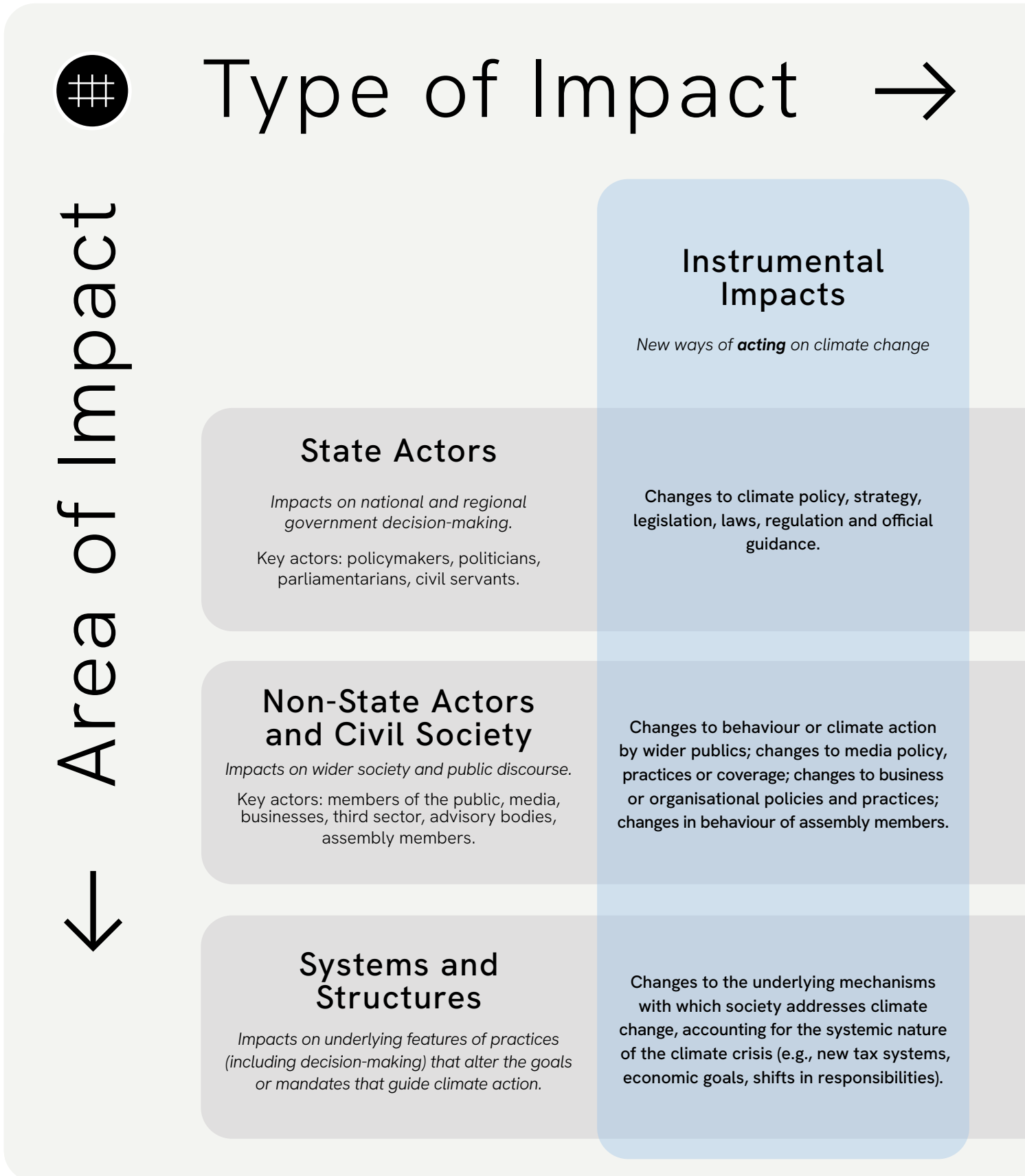
Capacity impacts are changes to expertise and prioritisation of resources within climate governance, particularly those which enhance the ability of actors to initiate or scale up climate action. Examples include increased budgets or staffing for pursuing courses of action, or the setting up of permanent oversight bodies designed to scrutinise and progress policymaking.

Conceptual Impacts are changes to how something is understood or thought about. This encompasses changes to knowledge, understanding and attitudes of actors, and therefore captures new ways of understanding climate change and climate action (e.g., how do people make sense of the issue and what options are available, what should be done, who should do what, etc?). Conceptual impacts can include incremental changes to understanding (e.g. heightened public concern) or more far-reaching shifts to the goals or paradigms that govern action. Examples include proposals for legal and political change that recognise the rights of nature or the crime of ecocide.



Part 2 provides a longer discussion with details and examples of these different categories of impact.

Table 1: Climate Assembly Impacts



Capacity Impacts

*New **expertise** and/or reprioritisation of **resources** for acting on climate change*

Changes in expertise and resources for climate action, including connecting climate deliberation and public engagement to policymaking.

Changes in expertise and resources for engaging in climate action by non-state actors, such as civil society initiatives to establish greater public contribution to climate action.

Changes in organising principles or in expertise and resources available to tackle the systemic nature of the climate crisis.

Conceptual Impacts

*New ways of **understanding** climate change and climate action.*

Changes to understanding of climate action by state actors, including role of public engagement and perspectives.

Changes to understanding of climate action by civil society, media and business organisations, including enhanced recognition of the importance of climate in their practices, and the role of public engagement and perspectives. This category also includes changes in understanding of climate action among assembly members, organisers and the wider public.

Changes to understanding of the climate crisis and climate action as a systemic issue (e.g., interconnected with other societal challenges). Fundamental shifts in shared understandings and norms governing climate action.

1.2 Evaluating Impact

Key Considerations



Understand the differences between short- and long-term impacts and consider how to trace impacts over time.



Consider the potential significance and reach of intended – as well as unintended – impacts.



Consider relevant pathways to impacts, including barriers and enabling factors for achieving these (e.g., design of assembly, political context).

The previous section has outlined the range of potential impacts of climate assemblies. In addition to understanding what impact is possible, it is also important to understand the nature of that impact in terms of the ways it can unfold and the significance of effects. This section considers how to address these points in relation to impact evaluations of climate assemblies.

1.2.1. Change Over Time

Any effects of climate assemblies are likely to evolve over time, starting with more immediate, short-term outcomes which are clearly linked to assembly processes, but which might then lead to longer-term impacts and legacies over time. It is therefore important to assess immediate impacts close to the time at which an assembly is held, but also to consider whether these are sustained over the longer-term, as well as whether they have helped to bring about more enduring change¹⁵. The following paragraphs provide illustrative examples, by type of impact, on why it is important to track change over time:

For **instrumental impacts**, evaluators should examine whether short-term outcomes (e.g., new policy proposals) lead to longer-term change (e.g., actual change in policy or law), and whether these policies are further amended or developed over time (e.g., triggering other legislation or by contrast, the watering down or weakening of policy). Similarly, short-term media coverage is likely to focus on the climate assembly and its recommendations; longer-term media coverage may endure with a changed focus on particular types of climate action, the profile of which

has been raised by a climate assembly – or by contrast may not change substantially. Assembly members may change behaviours as a consequence of taking part in the assembly process, but this change may not last or may lead to further behaviour change in the long-term (e.g., behavioural spillover).

For **capacity impacts**, it is also important to examine to what extent any new capacity that was created in the short-term is maintained, weakened or expanded. For example, new networks or partnerships may be created to improve an organisation's ability to address specific recommendations from the assembly and can become a permanent feature of activity or be dissolved once initial enthusiasm has waned.

For **conceptual impacts**, short-term outcomes are likely to focus on specific individuals who may make statements (e.g., in speeches, editorials, interviews) that reference their change in thinking; for example, politicians have often been surprised by the level of ambition and openness to radical change that has emerged from climate assemblies, leading to a change

in their perspective on the scope of what is possible or deemed acceptable to the public. Demonstrable change in emphasis in political or parliamentary speeches and debates may also be a sign that a climate assembly has changed thinking among policymakers. In the longer-term, further shifts may occur in thinking, or people may revert to their original positions. Other examples of more far-reaching impact could include instances where senior civil servants influence departmental-wide thinking about climate, assembly members bring about changes in their communities, or media editors influence practice in their organisations.



1.2.2. Significance and Reach

Significance and reach are two evaluative criteria currently being used by UK Research and Innovation (the non-departmental public body of the government that directs research and innovation funding) to assess impacts arising out of research activities, which are also useful for evaluating impacts from climate assemblies.

Significance relates to how important the impact is. For climate assemblies, a key consideration is the degree to which impacts are being felt in terms of climate action. This might include evaluating whether short-term outcomes (e.g., attention from policymakers) do in fact lead to long-term changes (e.g., changed policy). If impacts do not go beyond short-term, fleeting outcomes, the impacts of climate assemblies are ultimately quite limited. Evaluating significance also leads to consideration of the effectiveness of any changes. For example, a government may introduce a new policy that responds to a recommendation from a climate assembly, but this policy may be relatively ineffective in changing actual practices and behaviour.

Reach relates to how far impact travels. This will, to some extent, depend on the remit of the climate assembly and its sphere of influence. When considering both reach and significance, it is important to be realistic about how much change can feasibly be achieved. For example, an assembly that focuses on a specific region's climate policies and action would seek to have impact predominantly within that geographic region, whereas a national assembly might be evaluated in terms of its impact on national policy or public discourse. In other

words, in their own terms, a regional assembly may have more reach than a national one.

Another way of thinking about impact is the reach in terms of number of people that have been influenced (again considered relative to the scope of the assembly). For example, changes in attitudes and behaviours amongst assembly members are important to those people affected but is fairly minor in terms of overall reach if it has no impact on the attitudes and behaviours of broader publics and stakeholders. Reach may also be considered in policy terms. It is possible, for example, that significant changes are detected for a specific policy area (e.g., a new law banning petrol cars in a city centre which leads to detectable reduction in car use and health improvements among the local population), but other recommendations (e.g., for changes to food production) may be ignored.

The most significant and far-reaching impact of climate assemblies would arguably include changes to practices and behaviours of people and organisations that result in reduced carbon emissions, changes to social norms and culture that emphasise equitable low-carbon living, and changes to decision-making structures that support the emergence of sustainable societies. The impacts discussed under the systems and structures categories are, by definition, likely to be significant and far reaching. While these long-term impacts may be desirable, they are also likely to be the hardest to demonstrate in practice, especially from a single climate assembly.

1.2.3. Situating Climate Assemblies in their Wider Context

When evaluating and tracing impacts from a climate assembly, it is important to distinguish direct and indirect effects on climate policy and societal engagement¹⁶. This means accounting for contextual factors that shape the ways in which climate assemblies can have impact. Drawing out the specific influence of a climate assembly, and separating this from the myriad other influences, will inevitably entail a degree of uncertainty and estimation. This is particularly the case for longer-term and wider-ranging impacts¹⁷.

Expectations placed on the impact of climate assemblies are often unreasonably high. At the same time, just because a climate assembly makes a recommendation that later appears in policy does not mean that it is the assembly that caused the change: other actors and dynamics may be responsible.

Because of this complexity, contextual information needs to be collected to understand pathways to impact: the chains of cause and effect through which an assembly can exert influence. As well as being important for making causal claims or inferences, tracking the

wider context in which assemblies occur can also help with understanding the barriers and enabling factors that affect their ability to have an impact. These factors include design of the assembly process itself (e.g. quality, timing, link to decision-making powers/structures), the wider political context (e.g., the level of ambition of an incumbent government towards climate action), the specifics of recommended proposals (e.g. how radical, costs implied), and the extent to which climate assemblies are connected to wider societal engagement¹⁸.

These findings do not only have implications for evaluating impacts, but also for planning and creating the right context for them to emerge. For example, if it is hoped that there will be an impact on public engagement and media coverage of climate action, a suitable strategy needs to be in place alongside the delivery of a climate assembly to achieve these outcomes. The intended impact needs to be planned for in advance of holding the assembly itself¹⁹. Similarly, policy impacts need to be planned for in advance to ensure that recommendations can and will be embedded in decision-making²⁰.



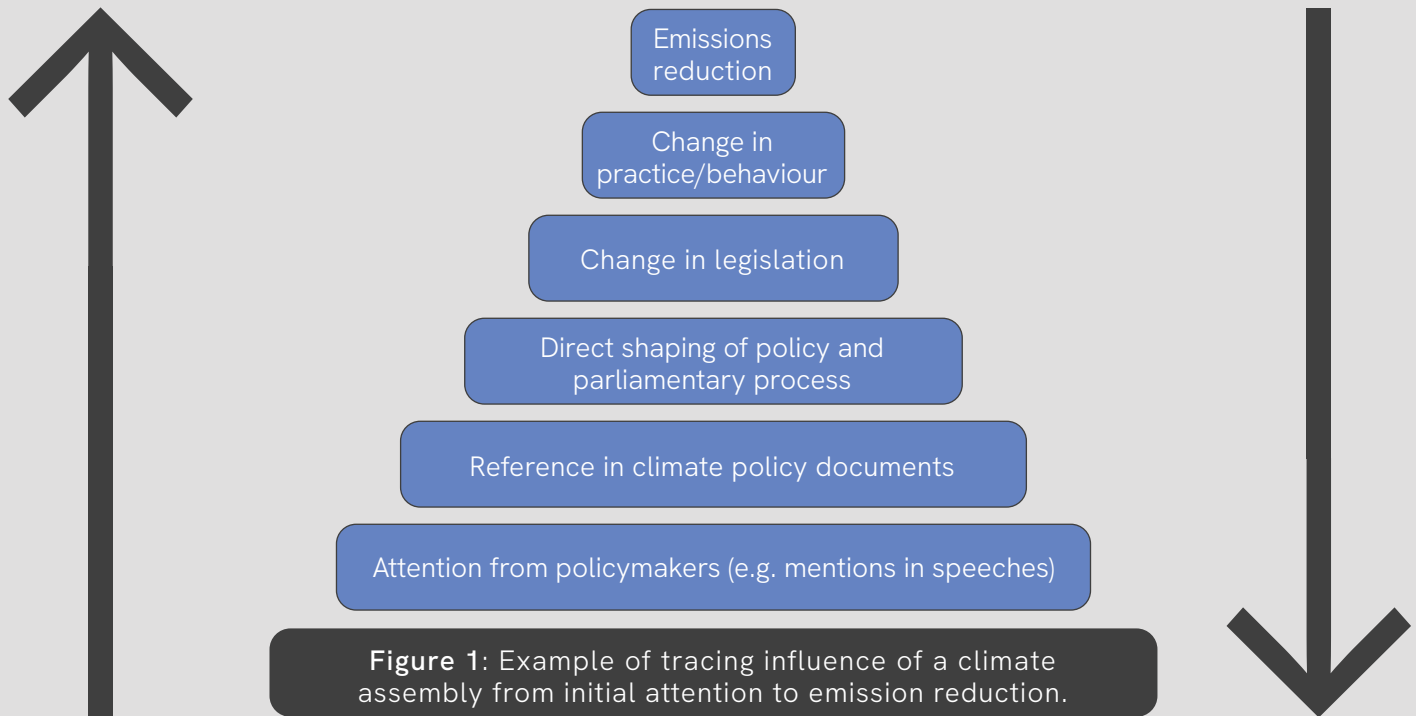
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Figure 1

In principle, a climate assembly may be shown to have led directly to changes such as a new law or new types of citizen engagement – with this in turn bringing about emissions reduction in a sector such as transport or diet. This would justify attributing impact at this higher level. Given the complexities of detecting such a change, however, multiple sources of evidence and interrogation of data would be required to make even a claim in this regard.

More significant/far reaching impact, longer timeframes; harder to trace, broader evidence range.

Less significant/far-reaching impact, shorter timeframes; easier to trace, discrete evidence.



1.2.4. Tracing Influence from Short-Term Outcomes to Long-Term Impacts

One of the main challenges for any evaluation of impact will be tracing influence from short-term outcomes to longer-term impacts, while connecting these directly to climate assembly processes and recommendations. Short-term outcomes are much more easily related to the outputs of climate assemblies²¹. This could include official responses from governmental departments and advisory bodies, or planned changes to policies; assembly members may set up an association to promote their ideas and monitor the actions of government; or the media may choose to report directly on the assembly process and its outputs. A change in emphasis in political debates may also be a sign that a climate assembly has changed thinking among policymakers.

Tracing references to the climate assembly and its immediate outputs is, however, limited because it will lead to a focus only on the most obvious and publicly available material. Less obvious and more subtle effects may emerge over time, which are harder to anticipate in advance. Figure 1 illustrates an example of instrumental, state actor impact from short-term outcomes (at the bottom) to longer-term significant and more far-reaching impacts (at the top). At the bottom of the pyramid, it may be relatively straightforward to connect a climate assembly to direct impact (in this case, attention to and mention of the assembly by policymakers). Towards the top of the pyramid, it becomes much harder to trace the influence of a climate assembly given the very large number of other influences on practices, behaviour and ultimately carbon emissions over long time periods.

1.3 Data Collection for Evaluating Impacts

Key Considerations

6

Use data collection methods suited to the impacts under consideration and triangulate across multiple data types and sources.

7

Collect data at multiple time points including before, during and after the assembly.

8

Collect contextual information to aid process tracing, including material about the assembly process itself, as well as political responses, linked events and coverage, and media representation of the climate assembly.

This section briefly discusses implications for data collection for evaluating impacts of climate assemblies. An important overarching point here is that data collection needs to be planned in advance. Too often evaluations are not commissioned until late in the process, by which time important data can no longer be accessed.

An evaluation should follow a systematic approach, which we outline in Box 1. Box 2 provides an example of potential impact indicators, with relevant evidence sources and content.

1.3.1. Collect Data Prior to the Assembly Processes

Collecting data prior to the assembly is particularly important to substantiate claims about change as a result of its activities. The types of impact that will benefit from comparing pre/post measures include understanding attitudes and perceptions of key actors towards the process, as well as assessing policies and legislation relevant to the assembly's remit.

1.3.2. Monitoring of Impacts/Collect Data at Multiple Time Points

To assess impacts of climate assemblies over time, data needs to be collected at multiple time points – for example, to assess immediate outcomes, change over a period of months, and ideally longer-term impacts over a period of years. Where an evaluation is tasked only with assessing the short-term outcomes of a climate assembly (as it too often the case), evaluations should be as transparent as possible to enable further tracking of impacts over time by other parties.

Box 1: A Systematic Approach to Impact Evaluation

For impact to be demonstrated, there should be evidence of a clear connection to the conduct of a climate assembly.

A range of evidence and sources can be used to assess such impact and your choices among these will inevitably orient your evaluation towards certain types of impact. To avoid blind spots or post-hoc rationalisation, it is important to systematically outline your approach to evaluation in advance of any attempt to trace specific impacts.

A four-stage process, to move from abstract notions of impact to more specific and detectable types of evidence could proceed as follows:

1

Identify which areas and types of impact are of interest to your evaluation (this has the potential to give rise to a complete set of nine impact categories, corresponding to each of the cells in Table 1)

2

Determine specific and discrete indicators of impact. What are your criteria and evidence for detecting impact for each case?

3

Determine which source(s) of evidence will enable you to trace each indicator of impact .

4

Decide content of evidence (data) required to demonstrate this impact in terms of being driven by the climate assembly.

1.3.3. Use a Variety of Methods to Collect Data

The use of multiple methods can help to capture the range of impacts outlined in the framework and to triangulate impacts (to use different types of data to assess an impact). Methods to consider include:

- Surveys and questionnaires for assessing changes in perceptions among assembly members, stakeholders and the wider public
- Interviews and focus groups for appraising organiser, specialist or stakeholder perspectives on impacts they expect and then perceive assemblies to have had
- Document analysis to examine if policies, aims or mission statements of key organisations have changed and/or reference the assembly
- Media and social media analysis of amount and type of content

Other methods that may be useful include ethnographic observations, mapping of key networks and engagement activities as well as process tracing (careful analysis of data to ascertain whether causal relationships exist between factors and an outcome²²).

1.3.4. Triangulate Data and Corroborate Claims of Influence

When assessing the influence of climate assemblies, particularly in relation to long-term impacts, evaluators should be mindful of bias that may lead to exaggeration or over-statement, being alert to instances of wishful thinking, creative accounting and post hoc story telling. This might occur because people have vested interests or are personally sympathetic towards deliberative processes (e.g., interviewees want to portray an assembly in a positive/negative light) but may also occur unconsciously because people seek to make sense of what has caused a particular change. Being aware of such biases is particularly important when there is missing data (e.g., no pre-assembly data) or evaluations rely on self-reported or retrospective explanations for change. To counteract these possible biases, it is recommended that evaluators always look for corroborating evidence, triangulating across multiple data sources.

1.3.5. Collect Contextual Data and Test Alternative Explanations

Collecting contextual data is important for understanding the extent to which an assembly and its outcomes have influenced a particular change or not. Alternative explanations for impact should always be tested (e.g., by asking if a particular change would have happened without the assembly or looking for negative as well as positive influences). Capturing as much contextual data as possible can help to ascertain which other external factors may have made the impact in question more or less likely. The aim of building a fuller picture of the wider context to a climate assembly is not to understand all possible influences, but to better trace the unique impact of climate assemblies in addition to other factors that may have made certain changes more or less likely.

Box 2: Example of Impact Indicators

This example is for **Instrumental Impacts** related to **State Actors**



Impact Indicators	Evidence Sources	Evidence Content	Example Cases for Impact Claims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New law and/or policy ▪ Proposals for law and policy ▪ New or amended targets and objectives ▪ Recommendations from formal advisory body ▪ Departmental strategy (e.g. transport, food and agriculture) ▪ Use of findings in parliamentary debates and committee processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parliamentary bills and advanced policy proposals ▪ National or sectoral emissions reduction strategy ▪ Advisory reports and documentation ▪ Departmental documents, press releases ▪ Questions and statements in official records of proceedings ▪ Civil servant / policymaker attribution of changes to climate assembly in evaluation interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Text in documentation that makes direct or indirect connection to outcomes of climate assembly ▪ Spoken reference to climate assembly in formal government proceedings ▪ Language that attributes change to climate assembly (e.g. 'because of', 'led directly to') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislation for ban on some short-haul flights in France traceable to climate assembly through policy documents and senior politician statements²³ ▪ Elected representatives reference climate assembly for more ambitious policy in parliamentary debates²⁴

1.4 Governance for Impact Evaluations of Climate Assemblies

Key Considerations



Designate an independent but integrated team of experts for planning and conducting the evaluation – alongside or in addition to any evaluation of the assembly process itself.



Ensure the evaluation team have the relevant expertise, resources and time to conduct the evaluation.

The OECD and other institutions already provide recommendations and guidelines for the governance of evaluations of citizen assembly processes²⁶. These include the importance of independence, transparency, evidence, accessibility, efficiency, and the allocation of sufficient resources. Building on this, we briefly highlight three aspects of governance for tracing the impacts of climate assemblies in particular.

1.4.1. Independent but Integrated Evaluation Teams

Because of the political importance of detecting and attributing impact to climate assemblies, it is advisable that those carrying out an evaluation have no real or perceived conflict of interest. Ideally, any evaluation process should be fully independent from those organisations and individuals commissioning, designing, carrying out, or affected by the outcomes of a climate assembly.

Those assessing the impact of a climate assembly should not only be alert to the beneficial outcomes of the process for climate action, but at the same time, be mindful of the wider reception of the recommendations arising – including for vested interests that do not want to see change or, by contrast, stakeholders who would like to see high levels of ambition on climate action.

Some actors will have high expectations that may be unfulfilled, or backlash may occur in response to certain recommendations, or simply to the nature of the process. For these reasons, evaluators who are separate from other aspects of a climate assembly are in a better position to present and defend their findings, than those who are intimately invested in the success of a process.

Nonetheless, evaluation teams need to be sufficiently integrated from the start of the process and have access to available data throughout and after the assembly. As such, a climate assembly governance structure should include evaluation teams and be sensitive to their needs including their rights to access protected databases and other material. This is particularly important for longer-term evaluation.

1.4.2. Inclusive Evaluations

The evaluation of climate assemblies is often quite technical and specialised, whether this is statistical analysis of changing public opinion or the assessment of an unfolding policy process. For these reasons, there may be a tendency to rely on a narrow focus on well-established institutions and experts for carrying out evaluations. This risks excluding a wider range of perspectives of other stakeholders and interests. Equity and inclusion should be considered as core values in evaluations, starting with the make-up of the evaluation team itself: diversity can be defence against groupthink. Careful consideration should be given to which organisations to include in data collection to ensure inclusion of the full range of perspectives on impacts. In relation to media coverage, an inclusive evaluation might seek to question which types of media coverage (e.g., legacy or social media, mainstream or targeted reporting) are most important to evaluate. Likewise, while emissions reduction may be considered an important metric of climate action, this may come about in ways which either heighten or exacerbate levels of carbon inequality (that is, the large differences in per capita emissions by wealth). A more inclusive assessment of impact will centre questions of climate justice and consider the consequences of emissions reductions for different groups²⁵.


1.4.3. Relevant Expertise and Sufficient Resources

A comprehensive evaluation will involve collecting and analysing evidence using a range of methods to ascertain potential influences of climate assemblies across society. This will require knowledge of different methodological approaches (such as expertise on process tracing or statistical analysis) and relevant disciplines that seek to understand policy, behaviour and organisational change, public engagement and deliberative democracy. Such expertise can help to inform which impacts might be expected and how to assess them. For example, environmental psychologists can help decide what psychological constructs to include on a public attitudes survey; policy analysts can help decide who to interview in government and which questions to include in an interview protocol.



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Part 2: Implementing the Framework



Part 2 offers a more in-depth analysis of the types of impact that can be evaluated, drawing examples from previous assemblies.

2.1 Descriptions and Examples of Impact Categories

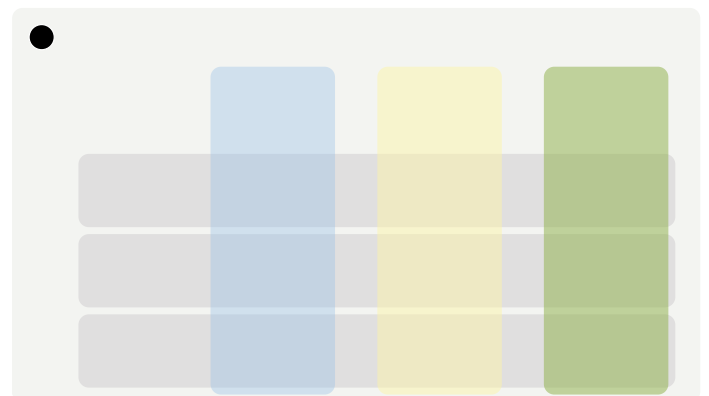
This section provides further details and examples for the nine categories of impacts identified in Part 1. When interpreting and applying the framework, the following issues should be considered.

Fluid Not Rigid Categories

The impact categories are not entirely distinct and rigid, and it is likely that some impacts will span more than one at a time. Nonetheless, the categories of the Impact Evaluation Framework are intended to be analytically useful as a structure that enables impacts to be more systematically considered and evaluated. Interconnections can be found between the rows and columns of Table 1. For example, specific recommendations from an assembly process may lead to policy change directly, and/or climate assemblies may change the thinking of third-sector organisations that go on to form new coalitions that apply pressure to government, which then leads to policy change. In the latter example, capacity and conceptual (non-state actor) impacts come prior to instrumental (state actor) impacts. The reverse may also occur, for example a policy recommendation from a climate assembly may lead to policy change (instrumental), which in turn leads to changes in social norms (conceptual).

Examples of Impacts

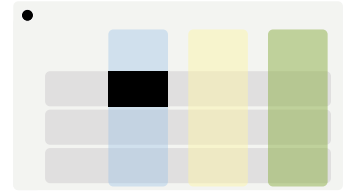
The Framework includes illustrative examples to contextualise and exemplify the types of impacts that may be achieved and evaluated. These are not exhaustive. The examples tend to come from a relatively small number of mostly national assemblies because these are the ones where impact evaluations have been undertaken. We also have more examples of impacts for state and non-state actors compared to the more challenging impacts on structures and systems because they tend to have been the primary focus of climate assembly processes and structural impacts are likely to take more time to realise. Sometimes one example may fit more than one category because multiple impacts are demonstratable.



See Table 1 on page 12-13.

2.1.1 Instrumental/State Actor Impacts

This category includes impacts on national and regional government decision-making in the form of changes to policies, strategy, legislation, laws, regulation, or official guidance. Changes to policy and legislation encompass a wide variety of potential effects on the entire policy cycle from agenda setting to implementation and evaluation. The type of changes will depend, in part, on the topic and focus of the assembly process, and the resulting recommendations. This may involve policy change to what should be done or how something is done (e.g., considering vulnerable groups in climate policymaking). Policy impacts are one of the most commonly studied impacts of climate assemblies.

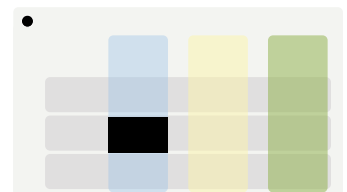


Examples from previous climate assemblies:

- The revised version of Luxembourg’s National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), submitted to the European Commission, included 197 measures, of which 57 can be traced back to recommendations of the Climate Citizens Council (Klima-Biergerrot). Among these, 5 measures can be considered as genuinely new and would probably not have been present without the citizen consultation²⁷.
- In Ireland, the majority of recommendations from the Citizens’ Assembly 2016-18 appear in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act (2021) and the recent Citizens’ Assembly on Biodiversity Loss helps secure government support for a National Nature Restoration Plan²⁸.
- The Climate and Resilience Act approved by French parliament²⁹ contains several recommendations made by the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat, although often in modified form. For example, the ban on short-haul flights is not as strict as the Convention recommended but has introduced a new principle into mobility policy³⁰.
- While evidence of the policy impact of Scotland’s Climate Assembly has been limited, recommendations on support for a new network of sharing libraries, increasing woodland creation and peatland restoration and integration of emission reduction topics into education programmes in Scotland have affected government policy³¹.

2.1.2 Instrumental/Non-State Actor Impacts

Instrumental impacts on non-state actors capture effects on public discourse and wider societal actions across media, businesses, third-sector organisations as well as assembly members and the wider public. Changes in media may include the amount and type of coverage, but also the way in which assemblies enable different voices to be represented or by more actively countering disinformation. Businesses and third-sector organisations may also change their policies and practice in response to recommendations from a climate assembly. The specific change will depend on the type of organisation, but changes may relate to specific climate actions (e.g., a business adopts eco-labelling as a result of an assembly’s recommendation) or more generally affect an organisation’s approaches to communicating, campaigning or advocacy.



This category also captures effects on assembly members and the wider public, who might alter their attitudes and behaviours in response to the climate assembly and its outputs. For example, assembly members may go on to change private sphere behaviours (e.g., changing travel modes for work) or public sphere behaviour (e.g.,

joining climate protests, setting up an association to communicate and lobby for their recommendations). Direct changes to the attitudes and behaviour of the wider public are also possible if climate assemblies are accompanied by relevant engagement and communication strategies.

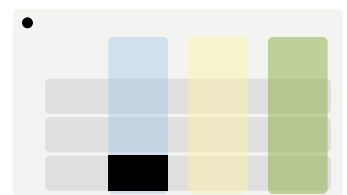
Examples from previous climate assemblies:

- Change in content and tone of media reporting on climate and biodiversity as a consequence of Ireland’s citizens’ assemblies.³²
- Traditional and new media facilitated an extensive public debate in France about President Macron’s reception of the recommendations and the extent to which they were (or were not) integrated into the subsequent climate law. A significant number of articles appeared in international media outlets³³.
- Members of the French Convention not only experienced transformations in their everyday behaviours but a number stood in local elections, motivated by their participation in the Convention, with one member elected mayor of her small town³⁴.
- A survey undertaken two years after Climate Assembly UK found that members had sustained and even increased their adoption of a range of pro-climate behaviours, from paying more attention to climate change in the news and discussing climate change more with people around them to reducing the amount of meat and dairy in their diets, reducing electricity use in the home and becoming involved in tackling climate change at work. Assembly members with very different backgrounds, experiences and opinions have made similar numbers of changes³⁵.
- The mainstream conservation organisations that commissioned the People’s Plan for Nature in the UK have actively integrated the Assembly recommendations and the voices of assembly members in their advocacy work. Assembly members have spoken at a range of events, from business conferences to Extinction Rebellion protests³⁶.

2.1.3 Instrumental/Structure and Systems Impacts

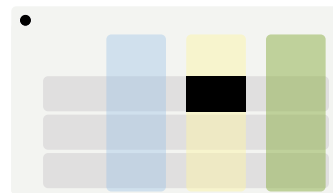
Instrumental impacts on structures and systems are changes with far-reaching consequences across different areas of policy and practice, which respond to the systemic nature of the climate crisis. This includes fundamental shifts in the way we govern and act on climate change including shifts in responsibility and accountability for action. This category overlaps to some extent with instrumental impacts for state and non-state actors but focuses less on the action of a specific group and instead captures more underlying shifts in structures and systems. This could include a shift in the economic paradigm – e.g., changes to reporting indicators of progress away from only narrow growth measures and towards those that capture not only reductions of carbon emissions but also interconnected challenges such as social injustice, biodiversity loss, etc.

Examples from previous assemblies of such deep-rooted changes to aspects of society are lacking. We have seen assemblies question the use of GDP (Scotland and France), propose exploration of degrowth (Spain) and recommend introducing rights for nature (Ireland). But the pathways to impact from such recommendations to structural and systemic change are challenging and will be slow to unfold. Most assemblies are not organised in a way that enables reflection on structural and systemic issues or with clear impact strategies for such shifts³⁷. Evaluations should be alive to the possibility of these sorts of impacts and should consider reporting on them, even if they are not forthcoming.



2.1.4 Capacity/State Actor Impacts

Capacity impacts for state actors capture changes to expertise or resources available for climate decision-making and policy, including for future climate deliberation and public engagement. For example, public authorities may establish new institutions in response to assemblies, training programmes on climate deliberation and participation for civil servants or creating new positions that address specific policy recommendations. In the political sphere, new political coalitions, networks or cross-party collaborations may be set up in response to a climate assembly or to tackle a specific topic or proposal.

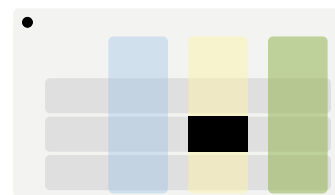


Examples from previous climate assemblies:

- The Brussels Capital Region and the Milan City administrations established permanent climate assemblies based on the experience of previous assemblies. These permanent assemblies integrated novel design features based on limitations of earlier ad-hoc practice. The Brussels assembly places agenda-setting in the hands of members from the previous year and gives members various rights to require information from policy officials about action on their recommendations. The Milan assembly supports the implementation of the city's climate plan³⁸.
- The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Climate Action in Ireland was established to consider the climate report of the Citizens' Assembly 2016-18 but was then converted into the permanent Committee on Environment and Climate Action, increasing the robustness of national climate governance³⁹.
- The Danish Climate Assembly was given the same status as (sectoral) social partnerships, which in principle means that its recommendations must be taken into consideration in the development of future policy and legislation⁴⁰.
- The French Convention led to the establishment of a number of local and regional climate assemblies and a national Convention on the End of Life. Following the French Convention, the CESE (France's third legislative chamber) was legally empowered to organise participatory and deliberative processes⁴¹.
- The French Convention forced reluctant politicians to discuss the state of climate policy⁴².

2.1.5 Capacity/Non-State Actor Impacts

Like state actors, capacity impacts for non-state actors capture changes in expertise and resources for engaging in climate action by businesses, civil society and other organisations. In media circles, examples may include new networks or training that facilitate the development of new formats for communicating public perspectives on climate action. Businesses and organisations may set up similar training, mentorships, networks or positions to support new policies and practices that they want to take forward because of assembly recommendations. This may include setting up new coalitions, groups or partnerships to exchange knowledge and resources on a particular issue, or to hold government accountable thus increasing advocacy around climate action.



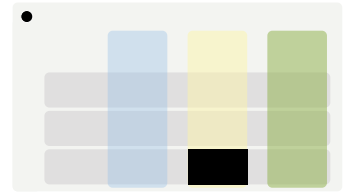
Capacity impacts may also focus on members of the public, or specific groups in society (e.g. young people, marginalised communities) to gain skills, knowledge and confidence to participate in decision-making more widely. These initiatives may be set up by members of the public themselves (e.g. former assembly members organise community engagement initiatives) or by government or civil society organisations to empower civil society to participate in social and political initiatives (e.g. by providing advice, resources, training and other forms of support). Further impacts may be achieved through changes in education programmes or initiatives that reach wider population groups over a longer time frame⁴³.

Examples from previous climate assemblies:

- On several occasions, assembly members have established associations to advocate for their recommendations and scrutinize and publicise government (in)action. Examples include Les 150 in France, the Civic Association for Climate Change in Spain and the Association of the Austrian Climate Council of Citizens⁴⁴.
- Their experience of providing funding for the French and UK climate assemblies, led to philanthropic foundations increasing their support for a number of other national and local assemblies across Europe, along with funding civil society organisations to engage with the processes. The European Climate Foundation has been particularly active, creating the Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies to build and sustain the community of practice.⁴⁵
- Following the experience of its Chief Executive, Chris Stark, taking on the role of Expert Lead for Climate Assembly UK, the Committee on Climate Change used the assembly recommendations in its annual assessment of UK government action and integrated deliberative methods into its work programme (e.g. on the decarbonisation of homes)⁴⁶.
- Following the Youth Climate Assembly in the oil shale producing region of Ida-Viru, Estonia, a new youth organisation; 'People with Purpose' was formed. The organisation now has a place on the 'Steering group of the Just Transition' which is responsible for monitoring the allocation of the European Just Transition funds in the coming years⁴⁷.
- In Skopje, North Macedonia, the recommendations of the municipal climate assembly were supported across political groups within the city legislature that have a history of non-cooperation⁴⁸.

2.1.6 Capacity/Structure and Systems Impacts

The broadening of capacity beyond state and non-state actors can embrace new ways of overcoming structural barriers to climate change mitigation as well as shifts in expertise and resources available to address the complex, systemic nature of the climate crises. As a conceptual category, it can encompass a broad range of new structures, systemic approaches or collaborations around climate change, for example shifts in mandates, decision-making power, financial prioritization or allocation, or new or hybrid types of governing structures (refs). This can also include the more systemic use of participatory and deliberative processes in ways that are robustly integrated into decision-making processes across political systems.



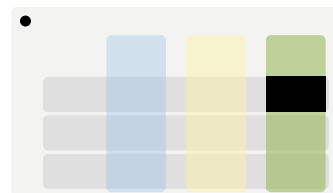
Examples from previous assembly processes are lacking. The emergence of permanent assemblies in a small number of municipalities (e.g. Brussels, Milan) may generate capacity impacts at the structural and systemic level over time as may the increasing focus on impact strategies by assembly practitioners. Analysis of the recommendations of the French Convention suggest that if implemented they would have structural and systemic impacts on, for example, mobility (IDRR). Academic analysis of the recommendations of several national assemblies indicate that they would represent a shift to more sufficiency and regulatory policies if implemented⁴⁹.



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2.1.7 Conceptual/State Actor Impacts

Conceptual impacts for state actors capture shifts in understanding and thinking on climate change and climate action. Climate assemblies may break political deadlocks on climate action, giving political leaders the confidence and willingness to advocate for action and a stronger social mandate. Climate assemblies may change policymakers' perspectives on what climate policy is suitable and desirable, as well as induce changes to understanding of, and attitudes towards, public engagement on climate change mitigation. The nature of change can be wide-ranging but may include, for example, a better understanding of how public attitudes can be integrated into policy, or greater awareness of how to respond to the different needs of groups in society.

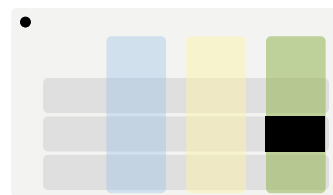


Examples from previous climate assemblies:

- The Irish Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss is recognised as shifting the relative political priority of the nature crisis vis-à-vis the climate crisis amongst politicians⁵⁰.
- The Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat acts as a catalyst for political leaders across Europe to embrace the idea of citizen deliberation. Both the perceived successes and limitations of the French approach are debated and influence future designs. President Macron characterises the Convention as advancing a "French model of the ethics of deliberation".⁵¹
- During the 2023 national election in Luxembourg, several parties positioned themselves on the question of citizen participation, sometimes directly referring to the Climate Citizens Council (Klima-Biergerrot) as an example in their manifesto⁵².

2.1.8 Conceptual/Non-State Actor

Conceptual impacts for non-state actors are similar for those mentioned for state actors, but focus on understanding of climate action by businesses, media, civil society organisations, as well as members of the public including assembly members and organisers. Evaluations may capture changed understanding of possible and desirable approaches for climate action, and identify new roles and responsibilities for businesses, media or civil society organisation (CSO) in mitigating and adapting to climate change. This category also captures impacts on assembly members and organisers, and on the wider public. This may include change in awareness, knowledge, perceptions or attitudes towards climate action and responsibility.



Examples from previous climate assemblies:

- Based on direct experience of assemblies, the attitude of many CSOs towards citizen participation on climate has become more positive. For example, the G5 CSOs (Greenpeace, WWF, SEO Birdlife, Friends of the Earth and Ecologists in Action) in Spain were sceptical about the national Climate Assembly but having participated in the expert advisory group, one of the G5 representatives talks of their transformation from critic to advocate of assemblies⁵³.
- Surveys in France and Austria provide evidence of knowledge of the national assemblies and support for many of their recommendations amongst the wider populations⁵⁴.

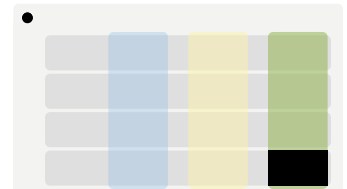
- In the wake of Climate Assembly UK, civil society groups report a heightened mandate and credibility for climate advocacy.⁵⁵
- The experience of CSO-organised assemblies in Germany, Sweden and the UK influenced the process design and impact strategy of the CSO-organised Norwegian assembly on fossil fuel profits⁵⁶.

2.1.9 Conceptual/Structure and Systems Impacts

Climate assemblies may shape understandings of the climate crisis as a systemic and structural issue that requires more than a piecemeal policy response. This may include shifts in the very understanding of how climate systems are interconnected with other societal challenges (e.g. health, justice, rights of future generations, biodiversity) and challenging of more foundational social norms and practices within society.

Examples from previous climate assemblies at this structure and systems-level are again relatively rare, although we can see traces of impact:

- Proposals for constitutional change by assemblies generate some public and political debate on ecocide (France) and rights of nature (Ireland)⁵⁷.
- New perspectives on achieving change through climate assemblies and understanding power, arising from conveners' direct experiences of the Global Assembly and national processes.⁵⁸
- Extensive discussion (and emerging action) amongst climate assembly practitioners on the significance of impact strategies and the potential of permanent assemblies and CSO-commissioned assemblies to enable more systemic change⁵⁹.



What Next?

This KNOCA Guidance does not provide a prescriptive, how-to approach to the evaluation of climate assemblies. Instead, our aim is to prompt critical thinking and timely decision-making around the evaluation of impacts. The questions that inform this Guidance, outlined under “Key Considerations for Evaluations of Climate Assemblies” (page 8), are presented to stimulate reflections on the design, timing and systematic approach to evaluation. Each assembly will present unique circumstances, and the answers to these questions will depend on the specific context. By addressing these questions, evaluators can conduct more nuanced and actionable assessments, leading to continuous improvements in the design and impact of future climate assemblies.

The ambition is for the Impact Evaluation Framework to serve as a useful conceptual tool that will foreground consideration of impact and broaden the scope, quality and rigour of future evaluations. The Framework is intended to evolve as evaluators apply it in the field, integrating new methods and insights. This, we hope, will help ensure that climate assemblies remain dynamic and continue to have a meaningful impact on global efforts to tackle the climate crisis.

Our hope is that evaluators of climate assemblies will use this framework to collect comparable evidence and data so we, as a community, are able to trace and track their diverse impacts, demonstrate how and to what extent they are advancing new approaches to climate governance, as well as better understanding their limitations. While this Guidance document provides some examples of impacts, this list will grow over time as new evidence and analyses are published.

Our next step as KNOCA will be to begin to collate the impact evaluations that emerge to further this collective learning. We are also considering developing a more robust and systematic set of indicators across the different categories of impact, following the illustrative approach laid out in Box 2 (page 24).

Ultimately, climate assemblies exist to impact society’s response to the climate crisis, and it is essential to appraise their role in addressing this multi-faceted, complex problem.



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Further Reading

In this section, we provide a curated selection of key documents that offer deeper insights into evaluation practices. The works below, produced by leading experts in their fields, will serve as useful tools for those looking to enhance their understanding of evaluation methodologies. While not exhaustive, this list points to some of the many valuable resources available that explore evaluation in various contexts or delve into specific aspects of the process.

On Evaluation Guidelines

[Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes, by the OECD.](#)

This report provides practical guidelines for evaluating representative deliberative processes. The purpose of the document is to help public authorities initiate and develop better processes and establish a minimum standard for their evaluation. The report includes example evaluation materials such as interview protocols and questionnaires.

On Equity in Evaluations

[Shifting the Evaluation Paradigm: The Equitable Evaluation Framework, by The Equitable Evaluation Initiative \(EEI\) and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations \(GEO\).](#)

This report focuses on equity in evaluation processes. It emphasizes the importance of integrating equity into all stages of evaluation, from design to implementation, and highlights strategies to ensure that marginalized voices are included and valued. The report also outlines key principles for equitable evaluation, such as community engagement, fairness, and addressing power imbalances. Additionally, it provides practical guidance for evaluators seeking to create more inclusive and just evaluation frameworks, making it a valuable resource for those working towards equity in policy and governance.

On Planning for Impact

KNOCA has commissioned and produced several Briefings that highlight the importance of planning for impact and what to think about in advance of holding an assembly, as well as effective follow-up processes. These focus specifically on climate assemblies and cover different forms of impact including embedding recommendations in the policymaking process as well as in wider societal discussions:

KNOCA Guidance	KNOCA Briefing No.2	KNOCA Briefing No.3	KNOCA Briefing No.5	KNOCA Briefing No.8
Key Drivers of Impact: How to Unleash the Potential of Climate Assemblies.	How Can Climate Assemblies be Integrated Into the Policy Process?	How Can the Legitimacy and Resonance of Climate Assemblies in Wider Society be Ensured?	Approaches to Evaluations of Climate Assemblies.	Designing the Follow-Up to Climate Assemblies: Embedding Recommendations Within the Public Administration

On Systemic Transformations and Citizens' Assemblies

[How Can Citizens' Assemblies Help Navigate the Systemic Transformations Required by the Poly Crisis?](#)
by Claire Mellier and Stuart Capstick.

These guidelines are intended for policymakers, practitioners, researchers and civil society actors interested in taking a systemic approach to the environmental and social crises facing the planet today. They explore how citizens' assemblies could generate a genuinely transformative response to such challenges by addressing underlying systemic issues. While not focused on impacts of climate assemblies specifically, it provides important food for thought for those interested in designing assembly processes with potential to have systemic and structural impacts.

Books on Citizens' Assemblies

[De Gruyter Handbook of Citizens' Assemblies](#) edited by Min Reuchamps, Julien Vrydagh and Yanina Welp.

The Handbook compiles a series of contributions that present a comprehensive and state-of-the-art overview of the ongoing scientific debate on citizens' assemblies (generically, not specifically on climate change). Part 3 focuses on assessment including evaluation of deliberative processes with several chapters discussing impacts on policy and wider society. Other chapters focus on the remit and scope of climate assemblies, which are also relevant for impact plans.

[We Need to Talk About Climate: How Citizens' Assemblies Can Help Us Solve the Climate Crisis](#) by Graham Smith.

This book explores the development of climate assemblies, their impact on climate governance and how that impact can be enhanced and sustained in the future. It summarises combined learning from KNOCA over the last years. Chapter 3 focuses specifically on impacts and how it is related to the design of the assembly and its follow-up processes.

Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to the Chair of KNOCA, Graham Smith and to the KNOCA community, whose active engagement with the Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF) has been invaluable. We also recognize the larger community of practice around KNOCA that organises climate assemblies, and whose ongoing work has provided the foundation for the climate assembly best practices on which this framework is based.

We deeply appreciate the individuals who have engaged directly with us around the refinement of the IEF, offering thoughtful reviews and feedback on various iterations of the framework. In particular, we are grateful to Nicole Amos, Ramon van der Does, Julien Vrydagh, José Luis Fernández-Martínez, Patrick Scherhauser, and Charlotte Kaste for their invaluable insights and contributions when reviewing the first version of the IEF and their proposals for revision. [The recording of the workshop in which the review of the first iteration was discussed is available online.](#)

We would also like to thank the evaluators and practitioners who have implemented the IEF in the evaluations of assemblies, and those who have drawn inspiration from its categories of areas and types of impact to shape the design and execution of evaluations. Their experiences have greatly enriched the further development of the IEF.

A special thanks is due to the European Climate Foundation, whose generous funding has not only supported numerous evaluations but also enabled the creation of the IEF itself. Additional time spent developing the second version of the IEF has also been contributed by CAST (Grant Ref: ES/S012257/1).

Notes

¹ See for example Thorman, D. and Capstick, S. (2022). [KNOCA Briefing No. 4: Planning and Assessing the Legacy and Impact of Climate Assemblies](#), KNOCA.

² OECD (2021). [Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes](#), OECD Publishing, Paris.
Elstub, S., Farrell, D. M., Carrick, J., and Mockler, P. (2021) [Evaluation of Climate Assembly UK](#), Newcastle: Newcastle University. This detailed evaluation of the UK Climate Assembly focussed primarily on process, with some consideration of its impacts on Parliament, policy, the public and media.

Falanga, R. and Ferrao, J. (2021). [The Evaluation of Citizen Participation in Policymaking: Insights from Portugal](#), Evaluation and Program Planning, 84, 101895.

van der Does, R. and Jacquet, V. (2023). [Small-Scale Deliberation and Mass Democracy: A Systematic Review of the Spillover Effects of Deliberative Minipublics](#). Political Studies, 71(1), 218-237.

Reuchamps, Min, Vrydagh, Julien and Welp, Yanina. [De Gruyter Handbook of Citizens' Assemblies](#), Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023.

Carrick, J. (2022). KNOCA Briefing No. 5: [Approaches to Evaluations of Climate Assemblies](#), KNOCA.

Fernández-Martínez, J.L., Bates, C. (2023). [Impact Evaluation of the Spanish Citizens' Climate Assembly](#).

³ See Jacquet, J. and van der Does, R. (2021). [The Consequences of Deliberative Minipublics: Systematic Overview, Conceptual Gaps, and New Directions](#), Journal of Representative Democracy, 57(1), 131-141. They show that research on impacts of mini publics (although not climate specific) tends to focus on proximate consequences and neglect more distant impacts.

⁴ <https://www.knoqa.eu/>.

⁵ Cherry, C., Capstick, S., Demski, C., Mellier, C., Stone, L., & Verfuerrth, C. (2021). [Citizens' Climate Assemblies: Understanding Public Deliberation for Climate Policy](#). [Project Report]. Cardiff: Cardiff University.

⁶ Oswald, Y., Owen, A. & Steinberger, J.K. (2020). [Large Inequality in International and Intranational Energy Footprints Between Income Groups and Across Consumption Categories](#). Nature Energy, 5, 231-239.

⁷ Mellier, C. and Capstick, S. (2024). [How Can Citizens' Assemblies Help Navigate the Systemic Transformations Required by the Poly Crisis?](#) CAST Guidelines. Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations.

⁸ Lage, J., Thema, J., Zell-Ziegler, C., Best, B., Cordroch, L. and Wiese, F. (2023). [Citizens Call for Sufficiency and Regulation — A Comparison of European Citizen Assemblies and National Energy and Climate Plans](#), Energy Research & Social Science, 104, 103254.

⁹ For a further discussion of the need to evaluate congruency between initial objectives and outcomes see Vrydagh, J. (2022). [Measuring the Impact of Consultative Citizen Participation/ Reviewing the Congruency Approaches for Assessing the Uptake of Citizen Ideas](#). Policy Science, 55, 65-88.

¹⁰ For a discussion of how two climate mini publics have had indirect impacts, see Wells, R., Howarth, C., and Brand-Correa, L. I. (2021). [Are Citizen Juries and Assemblies on Climate Change Driving Democratic Climate Policymaking? An Exploration of Two Case Studies in the UK](#). Climatic Change, 168(1), 1-22.

¹¹ Verheekes, L. and Petitjean, O. (2021) [Qui veut la peau de la Convention citoyenne pour le climat?](#) Paris: Observatoire des multinationales.

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⁴⁴ See [LES 150 L'association des Citoyens de la Convention Climat \(les150ccc.fr\)](#) and [Verein des österreichischen Klimarats der Bürger:innen \(klimarat-verein.at\)](#).

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