

GROUND UP, NATIONAL IMPACT

Making Town Hall COPs matter for
national climate action

9 July 2025
Daring Cities Virtual Forum

What we're doing today

1. **Introduction and what we've learned after the first Town Hall COPs**
2. **Scene setting - What does nationally relevant mean:** Kobie Brand, ICLEI Deputy Secretary General and Regional Director, ICLEI Africa Secretariat
3. **South African national perspective:** Pemy Gasela, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Government of South Africa
4. **South Africa case study and response:** Rabelani Tshikalange, Specialist for Environment, Climate Change & Sustainability, South Africa Local Government Association
5. **Australia case study and response:** HY William Chan, former City Councillor, Sydney, Australia and ICLEI Oceania advisor
6. **Connecting to COP30:** Yunus Arian, Director of Global Advocacy, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
7. **New tool for national engagement in Town Hall COPs**
8. Questions
9. Final roundtable and wrap-up

DARING CITIES 2025 **VIRTUAL FORUM**

DIVERSE TOPICS

Town Hall COPs

Climate-driven migration

Energy, mobility and finance

Nature and governance

Local disaster response

Just & equitable energy transition

Sustainability communication

...AND MORE

**DARING
CITIES
2025**

X



**EQUIPPING LOCAL LEADERS
AND THEIR COMMUNITIES
TO DRIVE CLIMATE ACTION
AT HOME **AND BEYOND****



The basics of the Town Hall COP initiative



The vision of Town Hall COPs

A proven mechanism to connect communities to climate action at all levels in an innovative and bottom-up format through easy-to-apply model and toolkit.

Our goal is to support communities wanting to engage residents on climate action and link to national and international climate processes.

Initiative launched: Earth Day, 22 April 2025

Photo from [Kampala's youth led local stocktake, a precursor to the Town Hall COP model](#)



Every Town Hall COP shares three fundamental principles

Town Hall COPs are community-led: They are built around the needs and priorities of each community and can be adapted to fit local goals.

Town Hall COPs are nationally relevant: Town Hall COPs can inform and be informed by new national climate plans.

Town Hall COPs are transformation-oriented: Town Hall COPs should highlight the real-world and daily-life connections between climate action and essential community priorities, like health, nature, justice, consumption affordability, jobs, and culture at the local level.

“In 2025, as countries develop their national climate plans, integrating local leadership and solutions will be essential. Engagement platforms that bring climate conversations and consultations to cities, towns, and regions can empower local governments to shape national climate strategies that reflect their communities’ needs.”

Simon Stiell | UNFCCC Executive Secretary



How to Host a Town Hall COP in 2025

- **Register your Town Hall COP with ICLEI.** Choose a tentative date – ideally before October 2025 – and submit your registration to get started.
- **Co-create an inclusive agenda and invitation list.** Identify and invite key stakeholders from local, subnational, and national levels to ensure diverse participation.
- **Prepare using the Town Hall COP toolkit.** Access guidance and templates to design an event that reflects your community's goals and priorities.
- **Convene your Town Hall COP.** Host the event, share climate strategies, and engage participants in meaningful discussions about future action.
- **Share and influence outcomes.** Report your key insights and priorities to your national government, ICLEI, and your local community.
- **Elevate your impact globally.** In collaboration with you, ICLEI will channel your outcomes to the UNFCCC process through the LGMA Constituency at COP30.

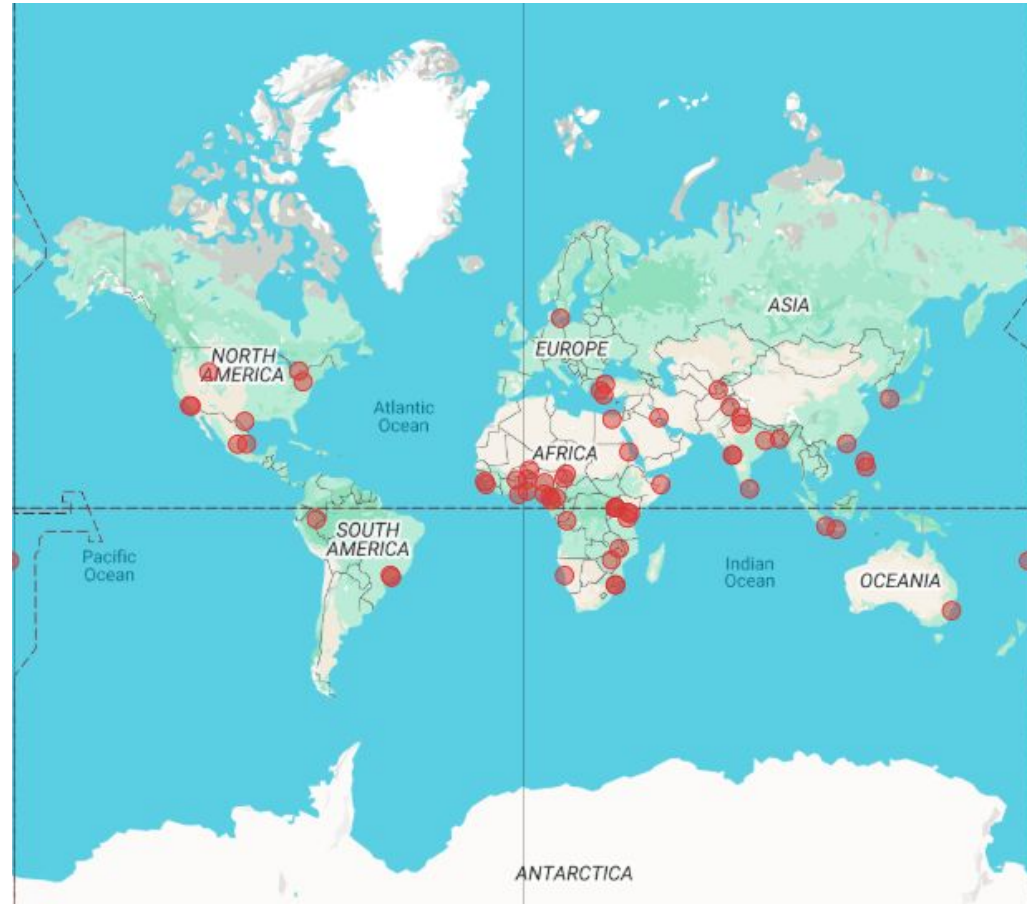


Initial learnings from the first Town Hall COPs



Where have Town Hall COP been registered?

+70 registered Town Hall COPs
+40 countries
9 different types of organizations

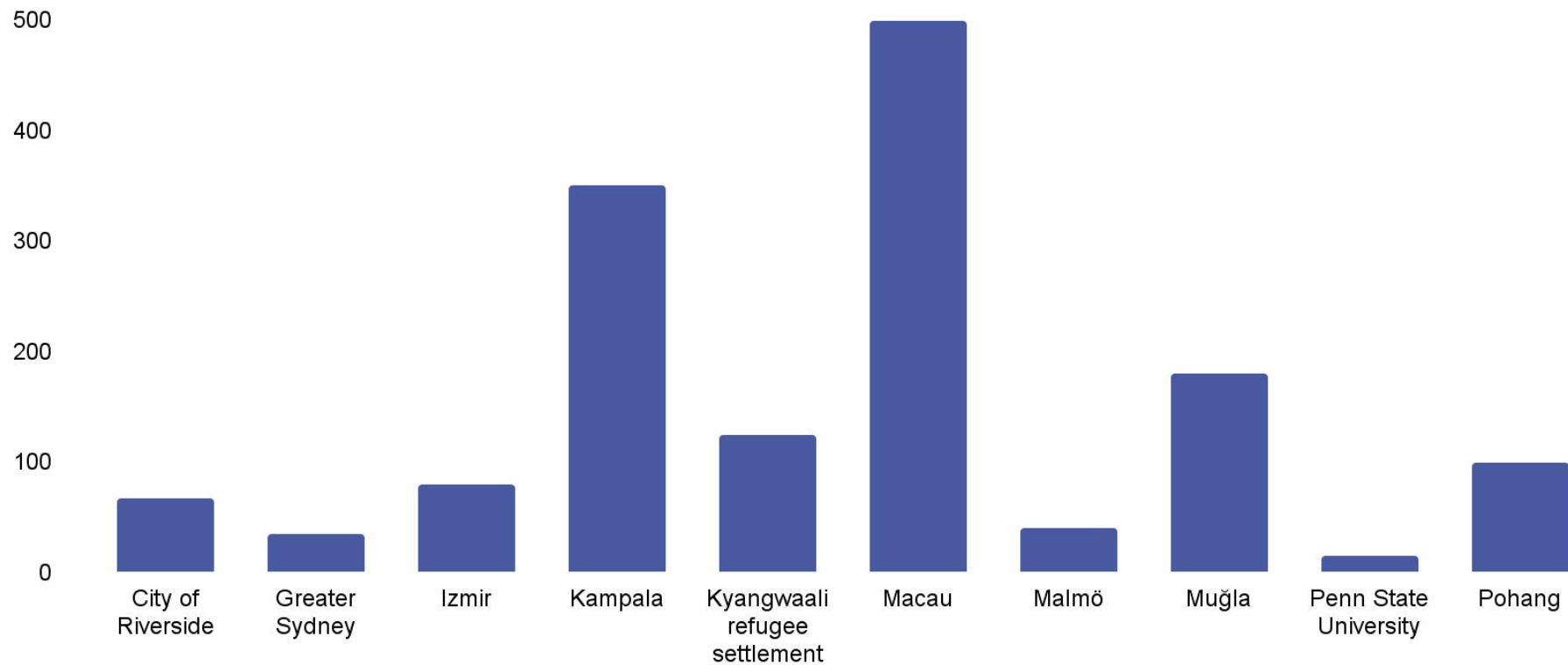




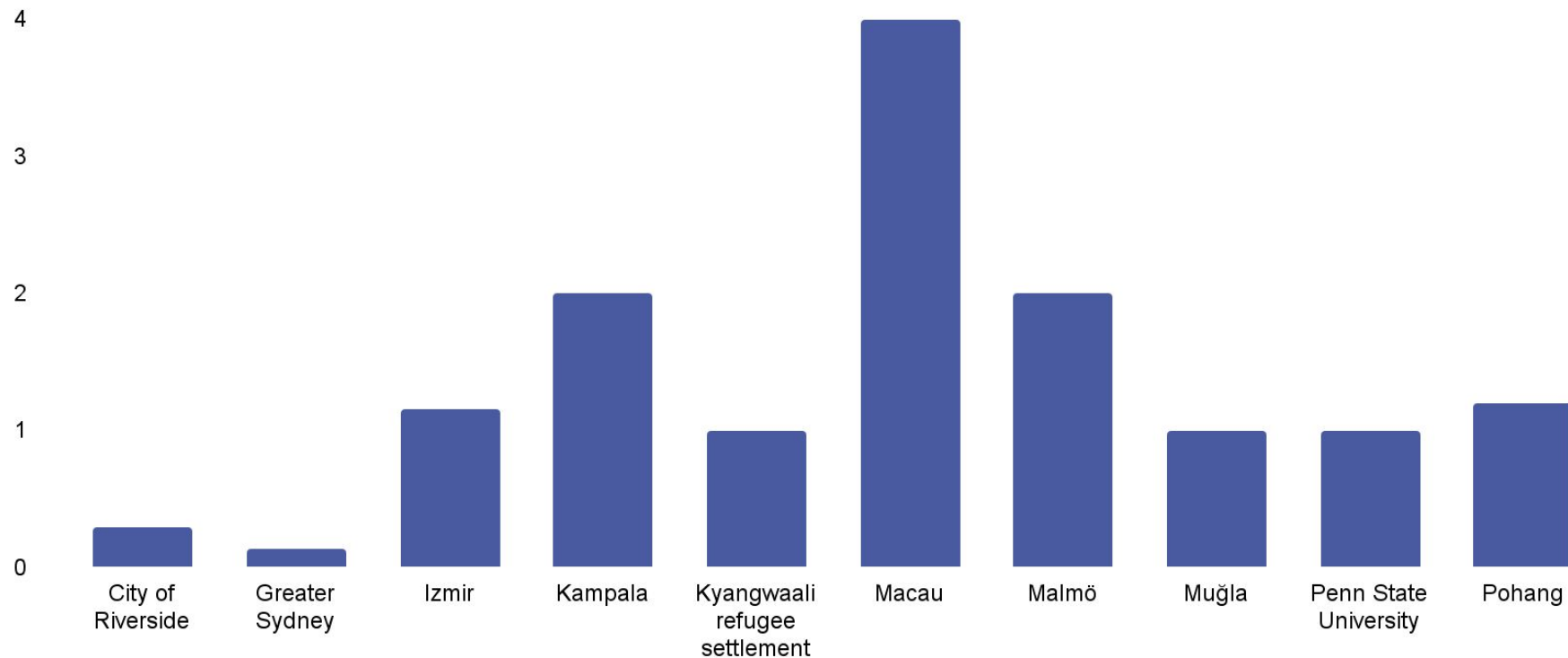
**Where have Town
Hall COPs taken
place?**



Number of participants



Length of Town Hall COPs (in days)



Formats & topics of discussion

Main event formats

- *Panel discussions*
- *Roundtables*
- *Public forums*
- *Workshops*

Main climate topics

- *Climate mitigation*
- *Climate adaptation*
- *Circular economy*

Other topics

- *Renewable energy*
- *Just transition*
- *Multilevel governance*
- *Capacity building*

Reporting from Town Hall COPs: National relevance

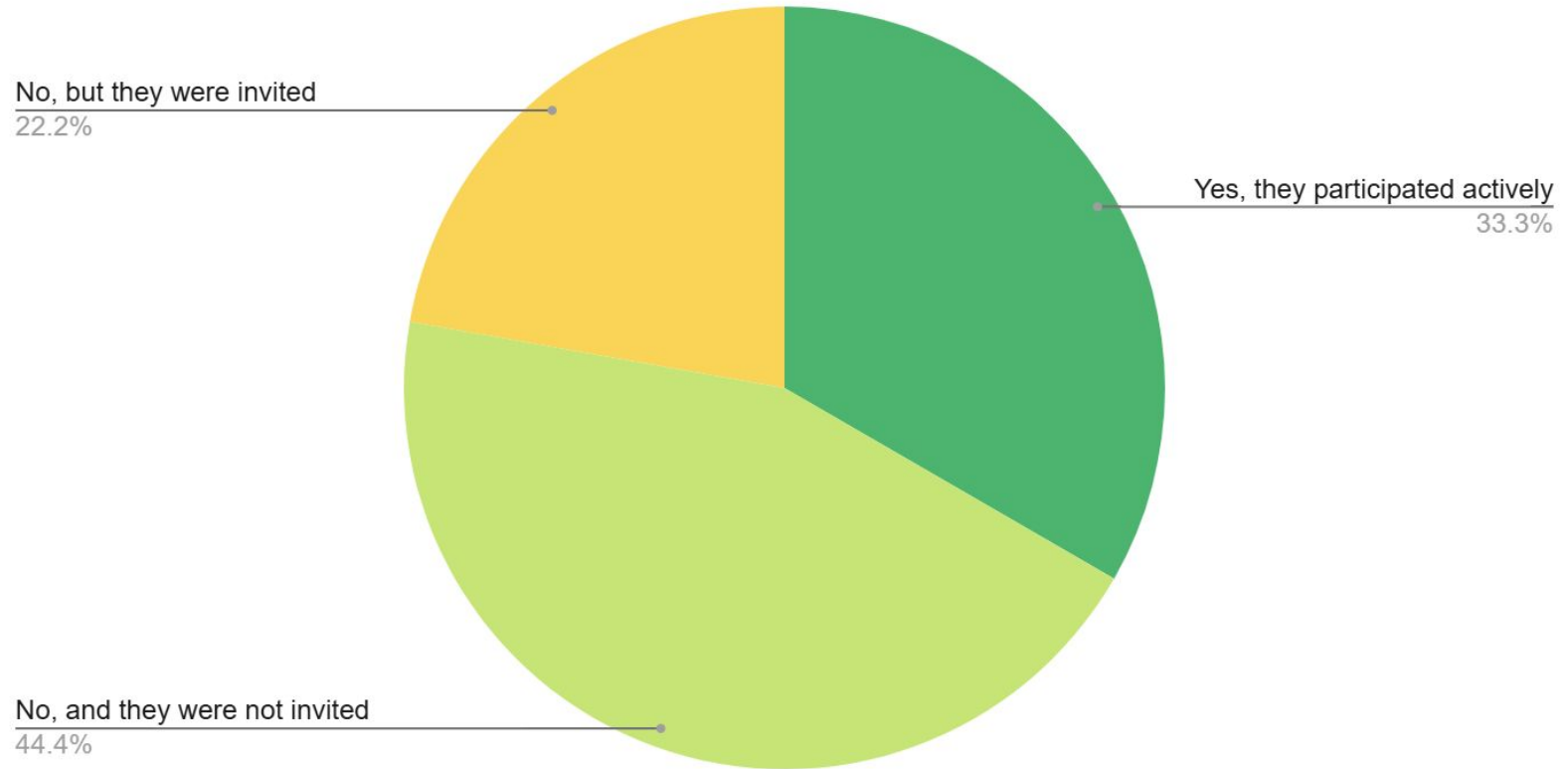
Focus of discussions in Town Hall COPs

- “How to sustain and scale our existing model of supporting small local governments in their climate policy and planning.”
- “Aligning with national climate goals”
- “How local policies can help build resilience to climate change impacts by promoting adaptation and mitigation efforts, such as developing National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)”
- “Creating a local NDC”

Concrete plans / ideas coming out of Town Hall COPs

- Reforestation plans
- Tying local work to the state climate action plans (in lieu of no national/federal support)
- Improved information access for citizens
- Establishing frameworks
- Sharing local Town Hall COP outcomes with national authorities

Reporting from Town Hall COPs: National representation / engagement



Reporting from Town Hall COPs: Connection to national governments

How Town Hall COPs contribute to NDC3.0

- *Provided new local data and insights*
- *Strengthened national-subnational collaboration*
- *Showcased scalable solutions*

Follow-up from national governments

- *Increased funding for local action*
- *More opportunities for local input in national plans*
- *Formal recognition of subnational climate leadership*

Today's roundtable



Today's roundtable

Kobie Brand

ICLEI Deputy Secretary General; Regional Director, ICLEI Africa Secretariat

Scene setting - What does nationally relevant mean?

Pemy Gasela

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Government of South Africa

South African national perspective

Rabelani Tshikalange

Specialist for Environment, Climate Change & Sustainability, South Africa Local Government Association

South Africa case study and response

HY William Chan

Former City Councillor, City of Sydney, Australia; Advisor, ICLEI Oceania Secretariat

Australia case study and response

Yunus Arikan

Director of Global Advocacy, ICLEI World Secretariat

Connecting to COP30





Towards COP30



The context of COP30

- National governments now have a **duty to implement multilevel action** (para. 161, COP28 outcomes)

Urges Parties and non-Party stakeholders to join efforts to accelerate delivery through inclusive, multilevel, gender-responsive and cooperative action

- Call for **Global Mutirão** by the COP30 Presidency

The Town Hall COP Initiative is a concrete embodiment of the “mutirão” spirit at the heart of COP30’s mobilization strategy as set out by the COP Presidency. Rooted in Brazilian culture, mutirão represents a spontaneous, bottom-up, community-driven mobilization - “people coming together to meet urgent needs through collective, self-determined action.”

- Supports delivery of COP28 CHAMP Initiative commitments, in countries where applicable

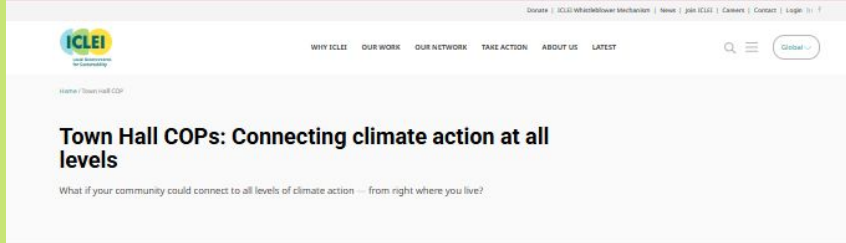
Feeding into the channels towards COP30

- Utilize the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency
- Connections to UNFCCC and UN-Habitat processes
- Engagement with national governments/parties
- Partner model for Town Hall COPs to bring out key outcomes and expand entry points

→ The more hosted Town Hall COPS and Town Hall COP reports we have, the better these channels can be utilized



New tools available for Town Hall COPs hosts



CONNECTING CLIMATE ACTION AT ALL LEVELS

What is a Town Hall COP?

Town Hall COPs are community-led climate dialogues designed to bring global climate goals home. Inspired by the structure of international UN Climate Change Conferences (COPs), these local events create an inclusive space to:

- ✓ Review local climate progress
- ✓ Align with national climate goals
- ✓ Identify actions that address real community priorities like health, justice, jobs, and nature

By connecting grassroots conversations to national climate plans (NDCs) and international processes like COP30, Town Hall COPs ensure that local voices shape global action.

Ready to get started? Register your Town Hall COP today!

Register



Every Town Hall COP shares three fundamental principles

✓ Community-led

The Town Hall COP model is built around the needs and priorities of each community and can be adapted to fit local goals.

✓ Nationally relevant

Town Hall COPs are a chance for communities to make sure their voices and priorities are included in national plans and implementation. The insights and outcomes from Town Hall COPs can directly inform national plans, support relevant efforts such as COP28 Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnership for Climate Action Initiative (CHAMP), and feed into global

National government outreach letter templates

What are they?

Four customizable letter templates that help local governments engage national ministries responsible for climate policy and NDCs.

What do they do?

- Introduce the Town Hall COP Initiative to national governments
- Promote multilevel dialogue and cooperation
- Offer to support both NDC development and implementation
- Invite national government representatives to engage before and after your Town Hall COP

→ *National gov outreach letter templates now available for all Town Hall COP hosts*

National government outreach letter templates

Four available versions:

- **Version 1 – Pre-NDC Submission Invitation:** For countries still preparing their NDC 3.0. Encourages early engagement with an invitation and offers local inputs.
- **Version 2 – Post-NDC Submission Invitation:** For countries that have already submitted NDC 3.0. Focuses on how Town Hall COPs can support implementation.
- **Version 3 – Post-Event (Pre-NDC):** To send after the Town Hall COP. Share outcomes for consideration in the upcoming NDC.
- **Version 4 – Post-Event (Post-NDC):** To send after the Town Hall COP. Share outcomes to support national implementation of the NDC.

→ *Target audience: The ministry or department responsible for climate policy or coordination of your NDC*



What's next for Town Hall COPs



What's next for Town Hall COPs

- Town Hall COP reporting form now available
- Deep-dive webinars to support the implementation / hosting of Town Hall COPs as part of the Daring Cities 2025 Virtual Forum
- Showcasing our first Town Hall COPs
- Offering a partnership model to support the initiative





Become a partner

Support communities
around the world to host
Town Hall COPs

- Organizations are invited to support the initiative within their communities and channels
- Partners can choose their level of engagement, from spreading the word to supporting individual communities to host Town Hall COPs



Express your interest in becoming a partner!

Coming up at Daring Cities 2025



Launch of ICLEI carbon Climate Center Academy Series

Empowering subnational governments
for sustainable change

16 July 2025 at 13:00 UTC+2

Registration link can be found in the chat

Thank you for joining us!