

# Toward Just Transitions: A Partnership for Addressing Equity and Justice within Municipal Climate Action Planning - *Call for Partners*



**THE CHALLENGE:** Municipalities and other local authorities play a critical role in achieving the targets of the 2016 Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Many have already developed comprehensive corporate and/or community climate action plans (CAP) that lay out specific steps for reducing GHGs across sectors. Known barriers to reaching the full potential of these plans include: contextual factors (e.g. provincial and federal policy, how municipalities are financed, etc.), limited administrative capacity, working in silos, a narrow focus on GHG emissions, and a reliance on conventional planning methods. Further, there can be unintended consequences of the climate actions prioritized by municipalities on our societal and ecological systems, especially within already marginalized communities. Existing inequities may actually be exacerbated rather than reduced. In addition, the potential for impactful co-benefits of climate action (e.g. creating new revenue streams for low income households) is often not being realized. Now, municipalities, their stakeholders and partners are taking steps to address this issue more systematically, including rethinking approaches to strategic planning and creating opportunities to develop more resilient communities.

**APPROACH & OBJECTIVES:** The Viessmann Centre for Engagement and Research (VERiS) at Wilfrid Laurier University has initiated a partnership designed to address equity and accessibility gaps within municipal climate action planning through collaboration among four key stakeholder groups: Municipal actors, equity-seeking groups, academics, and (social) innovators. The initial group of partners established recently received a highly ranked [Connection Grant](#) from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). This and other contributions will support a wider partnership development process at the core of which will be a series of three workshops that will be hosted online this fall. A much expanded group of Canadian and international partners will be convened to examine the current state of climate action planning in relation to equity and accessibility, examine barriers and challenges to their integration, explore opportunities for applying and testing innovative approaches to addressing complex challenges, and co-creatively develop a set of future objectives. Ultimately, this exchange is intended to set the foundation for the launch of a long-term applied research program led and supported by a diverse collective of committed partners. In February of 2021 we plan to submit a SSHRC [Partnership Grant](#) application to fund this larger project, while pursuing other sources of funding.

**WORKSHOP DETAILS:** The planned workshop series will be hosted virtually. Each event will have a distinct focus featuring one or two keynote presentations, panel discussions, and to encourage a deeper exchange, breakout discussions with a mix of representatives from each stakeholder group. To maximize the output and benefits of the workshops, participants will have the opportunity to provide input and feedback, and engage with other partners by leveraging an online engagement platform. The workshops will be facilitated at the following times:

- **Workshop #1** - Framing & Focusing: September 24<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 – 1:00 pm EST
- **Workshop #2** - Developing a Shared Research Approach: October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00 – 1:00 pm EST
- **Workshop #3** - Designing a Project Partnership & Governance Structure: November 12<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 – 1:00 pm EST

**YOUR INVITATION:** We are seeking Partners and Network Members from across the four identified stakeholder groups, who are interested in being involved in this project. Partners are expected to actively participate in the planned workshops and wider exchange of knowledge and information to be facilitated. Network members will have the opportunity to closely follow the project's development, provide input and listen in on keynote presentations delivered during the workshops. If you are interested in getting involved, please complete the registration form available by clicking on the following [link](#). If you have questions or would like more information please contact the Project Leads [Manuel Riemer](#), Director of VERiS or [Randy Sa'd](#), Executive Director of REFOCUS.

