



BUILDING CLIMATE POLICIES UNDER CONSENSUS: ARGENTINA'S NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET

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ACTION AREA: Cross-cutting

FOCUS AREA: Revising

COUNTRY: Argentina

SECTORS

INVOLVED: Cross-sectoral

TIMEFRAME: July 2016 - Ongoing

CASE SUMMARY: The Argentinean National Climate Change Cabinet (GNCC, for its Spanish acronym), created by Presidential Decree in 2016, is chaired and coordinated at a high political level by the head of the ministerial cabinet, and brings together representatives of approximately 12 ministries and government secretariats.

The GNCC is structured through periodic meetings of cross-cutting roundtables. It has established a working structure that is cross-sectoral and inter-jurisdictional in nature in order to articulate participatory and synergistic processes between the different areas of the national government, as well as between the national government, the provinces and the City of Buenos Aires (i.e. the subnational level). The aim is to integrate mitigation and adaptation actions into sectoral planning.

Since its creation, the GNCC has become a space for consensus at the highest political level in terms of climate policies. It has opened a space for synergies among the sectors, which has resulted in enhanced understanding and more involvement in climate action. The sectors are more supportive and committed, evidenced by the participation in meetings and the collaboration in developing the Sectoral Action Plans that entail mitigation and adaptation measures. The cabinet provides an institutionalised meeting space for all sectors and provinces to discuss and commit to climate action.

Argentina's GNCC qualifies as a good practice case as it is based on a high-level political buy-in and involves key ministerial stakeholders, the subnational level (representatives from the 24 provinces), as well as NGOs, environmental associations, academia, and the public and private sector, in the process. Through the multi-level governance process, GNCC secures a holistic implementation of its approach.





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BACKGROUND: Argentina's share in global GHG emissions in 2014 amounted 0.7%. Yet some sectors such as energy, agriculture and forestry have shown growing emissions in the last decade. In addition, the country's vulnerability to climate change has been evidenced by an increase in the average temperature (observed in large parts of Argentina), increased precipitation that causes floods with substantial adverse socio-economic impacts and an intensification of extreme events (heavy rains, floods, droughts, heat waves) with impacts on food production and supply (República Argentina, 2016).

Since the change in government at the end of 2015 and the start of the presidency of Mauricio Macri, climate change has taken a new dimension through a strategic approach, with strong political support and commitment to face the aforementioned challenges. In December 2015, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS, for its acronym in Spanish) was created, strengthening the institutional structure for the governance of climate change.

At the international level, Argentina decided to take active part in the fight against climate change, declaring its efforts through the presentation of its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC). This political commitment seeks to reverse the trend of increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the definition of a long term de-carbonisation strategy and the implementation of corresponding policies and actions.

To do so, the National Climate Change Cabinet (GNCC) was created by Presidential Decree in 2016, and currently comprises around 12 ministries and government secretariats. One of the first activities undertaken by the GNCC was the revision of Argentina's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) in response to the need for the country to strengthen the latter and deliver a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) that was sound and ambitious. In line with Argentina's broader goal to drive the climate change agenda further, the objective of the GNCC has been to achieve comprehensive, consensual and coordinated public policies for adaptation and mitigation.

The work of the GNCC was structured on the basis of regular meetings in working groups that included a political instance (high-level participation of ministries and government secretariats); a technical instance (participation of focal points from each ministry); provincial articulation (through the Federal Council of the Environment - COFEMA, for its acronym in Spanish); and extended thematic tables (participation of civil society, private sector, workers, academy and others).

When the cabinet was created, the government through the MAyDS began to work in close collaboration with COFEMA. This facilitated the identification of needs and opportunities to strengthen the work with the provinces in relation to climate change. The GNCC created a space for dialogue through regular meetings and capacity building over a 2-year period. As a result of this process, the provinces were able to identify measures that contribute to the goal of the NDC.

At the end of 2018 changes took place in the national government, turning many ministries into secretariats of government. One of the strengths of GNCC's structure is that it has stayed unaffected by the transformation of ministries into secretariats, because the GNCC comprises the highest authorities of each sector. Recently the MAyDS became a government secretariat - the Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development (SAyDS) - which has not impacted the Minister's relative rank.

ACTIVITIES: ————— The GNCC aims to articulate public policies with a strategic vision to reduce GHG emissions and generate coordinated responses for the adaptation of vulnerable sectors to the impacts of climate change. Likewise, it promotes the strengthening of capacities and broader societal awareness in the matter.

The head of the ministers' cabinet is the head of the GNCC. The ministerial tables (**POLITICAL INSTANCE**) are called by the Prime Minister's Office. The ministerial focal points and the sectoral technical tables work within the **TECHNICAL INSTANCE**. The focal points are convened by the SAYDS together with the Prime Minister's Office. The sectoral technical tables are jointly convened by the SAYDS and the relevant sector – yet each sector determines whom to call for each meeting (for example, the industry table is coordinated by SAYDS but called by the Ministry of Production who decided to include the industry chambers in the meetings). The **PROVINCIAL ARTICULATION INSTANCE** is convened by the SAYDS together with COFEMA, which is in charge of calling the provinces. **THE EXTENDED THEMATIC TABLES** are organised and called by the SAYDS.

The formulation of the Sectoral Action Plans is carried out and developed within the political and technical instances in articulation with COFEMA (in most cases). Within the Technical Instance, these plans are then consolidated. In some cases, such as the Sectoral Action Plan for Industry, the expanded tables were also part of the process together with business chambers in addition to the aforementioned tables. This decision has been made by the sector itself.

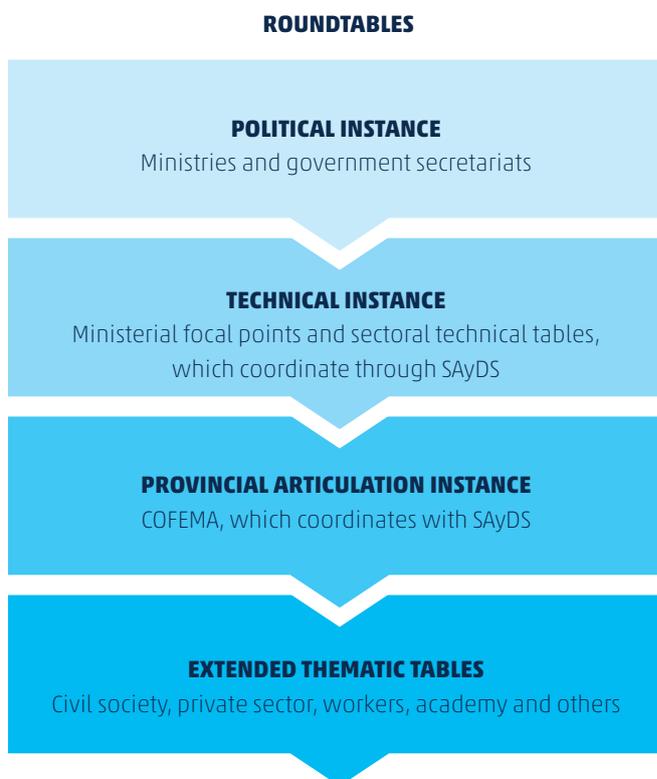


Figure 1: National Climate Change Cabinet Scheme (MAYDS, 2017)



As shown in Figure 1, the GNCC works through several roundtables:

1. POLITICAL: Comprises high-level ministries and government secretariats and meets twice a year. Here, the work plan and progress made by GNCC is presented.

2. TECHNICAL: Ministerial focal points and the sectors deepen the analysis and present the mitigation and adaptation measures as well as the indicators. Each sector determines who takes part in the meetings of its sectoral table.

3. PROVINCIAL: The SAYDS together with COFEMA meet to update the provinces on the progress made by the GNCC, validate information that has been presented by the other roundtables, and open the space to receive comments from the provinces, that are later raised to the other instances.

4. EXTENDED: These tables meet twice a year (in 2018 only once in November). They present an opportunity for dialogue and participation for members of civil society, NGOs, environmental associations, academia, and public and private sector representatives from the scientific and technological sectors to socialise and validate the mitigation and adaptation measures included in the sectoral plans.

The GNCC was created to give a comprehensive response to climate change. This requires the systematic integration of and coordination between different ministries to respond to the challenges of mitigation and adaptation within the framework of sustainable development. The GNCC recognised that the problems related to climate change require the intervention of multiple areas of the state, and consultation with experts from the public sector at different levels, the private sector, academy and civil society. Also, policies on climate change needed a forum in which their relevance could be articulated and through which awareness could be raised across society. To this end, the formation of an inter-ministerial body that allows for thematic in-depth discussions was essential.

The GNCC supported the process of signing and ratifying the Paris Agreement and led the process of reviewing the NDC during 2016. The first activity in 2016 was to review the iNDC (which was then presented at the COP22 in Marrakech) in addition to the development of sectoral plans. Argentina's NDC sets an absolute mitigation target and addresses adaptation as follows:

'Argentina shall not exceed a net emission of 483 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂eq) by the year 2030. The goal shall be achieved through several implementation means throughout the economy, focusing on energy, agriculture, forests, transport, industry and waste. Argentina presents an adaptation communication (...) which includes national circumstances, vulnerability and climate change impact, finished and on-going efforts, as well as concrete needs that come up from the national process within the framework of the National Climate Change Cabinet. (...) Argentina is preparing the design and implementation of a National Adaptation Plan (PNA) before 2019' (República Argentina, 2016, p. 2).

Sectoral Action Plans

To date, five Sectoral Action Plans (energy, forests, transport, agriculture and industry) have been completed. The Infrastructure and Land Action Plan will be ready by 2019. These plans will be periodically updated to modify assumptions and parameters for emission reduction calculations and to increase technology penetration rates.

The plans include mitigation and adaptation measures, with each measure presenting a roadmap, its impact on emission reductions, barriers to implementation, instruments and tools to leverage finance, and the monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system for each measure. These plans are conceived as "live" documents.

Notably, the Industry Action Plan is a deliverable of a highly participatory process under the GNCC for which an extended thematic table (see Figure 1) was established. Several business chambers participated in the meetings of the tables, contributed data and identified possible mitigation measures.

INSTITUTIONS

INVOLVED: ————— The GNCC arises from a proposal of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS), nowadays the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development (SAyDS). SAyDS is responsible for the technical coordination of the cabinet. The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for the political coordination. The number of ministries that make up the cabinet varies; some are ministries, while others are government secretariats. When the GNCC was created in 2016, 12 ministries participated in the process.

COOPERATION WITH: ———

- The United Nations (United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UN-Environment) through the UN-REDD project
- UNDP, through the Low Emission Capacity Building (LECB) project in Argentina

FINANCE: ————— Annual funding required has not been calculated for the operation of the GNCC. Most financing comes from the SAyDS. The UNDP LECB project provided USD 1.2 million for two phases, of which the second phase directly supported GNCC's work (UNDP LECB Project Report for Argentina, 2018).

IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES: ——— Impacts of the aforementioned activities include:

- **REVIEW OF THE NDC, PRESENTED DURING COP22 IN MARRAKECH:** The NDC was widely consulted on and agreed upon across the sectors;
- **PREPARATION OF SECTORAL ACTION PLANS** that together cover 90% of the country's emissions, including roadmaps for their implementation;
- **CAPACITY BUILDING AND INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF THE SUBNATIONAL LEVEL,** including their concerns in decision-making on climate change policies;
- **HIGHER LEVEL OF MINISTERIAL SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE ACTION;**
- **INCREASED INVOLVEMENT OF MINISTRIES AND GOVERNMENT SECRETARIATS,** both in the identification of the mitigation measures, and in their future implementation;
- **ENHANCED CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN NATIONAL PROCESSES:** Instances of dialogue and participation were created with members of civil society, NGOs, environmental associations, academia, and public and private sector, through meetings of the extended thematic tables. There the proposals of the different sectors were socialised and validated.

WHY IS IT

GOOD PRACTICE: ————— Argentina's approach to building consensual mitigation and adaptation strategies through the GNCC presents a good practice as it is backed by the highest political level, driven by diverse stakeholder inputs and realised on multiple governance levels.

- **POLITICAL BUY-IN:** Since the change in government, climate change has moved up the political agenda. This is partly manifested in the creation of the GNCC which is enshrined in law and convenes the highest level authorities. In addition, there has been renewed interest by the international donor community following the 'opening' of the Argentinean government for these issues, which has resulted in higher support of the work of the GNCC.



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- **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:** Since the creation of the GNCC, citizen participation is considered fundamental. The process has been institutionalised through the participation of civil society representatives in periodic meetings of the 'expanded cabinet' to share and socialise the outcomes and progress, which has encouraged stakeholders from different organisations to be involved in the process.
- **MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE:** The GNCC operates at different levels, involving parties at the sectoral level and subnational level (provinces), as well as civil society and the private sector. This increases the transparency of the policies being developed, and also facilitates their implementation. Through the GNCC, a multilateral relationship between the different ministries was established by creating dialogue between the different areas and levels of government. Further, the process has stimulated enhanced exchange between ministries and other stakeholders.

SUCCESS FACTORS: — The main success factors for establishing and making the most of the GNCC include:

- **HIGH-LEVEL MANDATE:** The GNCC was established by mandate at a high political level to work jointly with other ministries and government secretariats - which have their own development strategies - and provide a space to discuss policy convergence.
- **TRANSPARENCY:** The GNCC process has been marked by a high level of transparency, which is evidenced through the way in which stakeholders have been involved at all decision-making levels.
- **PROPER TIMING:** By 2016 information regarding the Paris Agreement was widely spread. Thus, the public was more informed and aware of international action to mitigate and adapt to climate change at the time when the GNCC was created. The success of the GNCC was to realise that moment, seize it and use it.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS / CHALLENGES: —

WHAT WERE THE MAIN BARRIERS / CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY?

CAPACITY AND STAFF AVAILABILITY:

A major challenge was how to involve ministries at the highest level that have other priorities and are also undergoing major changes. Also, officials involved needed to dedicate hours of their time to these issues in the absence of a budget assigned to the GNCC.

LOGISTICAL:

It proved to be difficult to allow for participation of stakeholders in remote parts of the country, as GNCC offices are located in Buenos Aires.

HOW WERE THESE BARRIERS / CHALLENGES OVERCOME?

By getting involved in the activities of GNCC, ministers and officials were shown that climate policies need to go hand in hand with sectoral policies.

Eventually sectors developed a greater understanding of mitigation and adaptation, and were able to see the potential climate benefits and opportunities for their sector more clearly.

Financing so far comes mainly from the SAyDS and through projects such as LECB (UNPD) and UN-REDD.

The solution was to carry out the meetings of the 'expanded cabinet' allowing for remote attendance through teleconferencing for those stakeholders located further away.

LESSONS LEARNED: — In terms of what can be learned from the case, the following lessons have been identified:

- **UNLOCK POLITICAL WILL TO PRIORITISE CLIMATE CHANGE:** Political will in the government to prioritise climate change and comply with international commitments as a country provides a strong basis for setting up institutional arrangements such as the GNCC.
- **LET CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATE:** Participation of stakeholders from civil society is crucial. Institutionalising participation is necessary in order to ensure continuity. A participatory mechanism needs to be established, which is permanent and meets regularly.
- **SPUR CAPACITIES FOR EQUITABLE MEASURES:** Capacity on climate change cannot be built rapidly, but is essential for the process of identifying adequate and equitable mitigation and adaptation measures.

HOW TO REPLICATE

THIS PRACTICE: — Key steps other countries need to take to replicate this practice are:

- **FIND THE RIGHT MOMENT TO PUSH FOR ACTION:** The first thing is to have a decision and a mandate at the highest level possible. This can be achieved by having a concrete proposal ready for when the political window of opportunity opens. In the case of the cabinet, as soon as climate change was prioritised in the public agenda, its formation was established by Presidential Decree. This is fundamental.
- **TEACH AND RAISE AWARENESS AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL:** Continuous teaching and raising awareness on climate change is important for each ministry to understand its implications, and what the international commitments mean at the sectoral level. From 2016 on all stakeholders were shown how GHG emissions were calculated, where the data came from, and how the policies they were carrying out had an impact on the GHG inventory and on other development policies. This continuous process of joint learning is vital.

CONTACT FOR

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FURTHER KEY

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· Sectoral Action Plans:

- Republic of Argentina (2017a). National Energy and Climate Change Action Plan. Available at: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/03_energia_info_ingles_v05.pdf
- Republic of Argentina (2017b). National Forest and Climate Change Action Plan. Available at: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/02_bosques_info_ingles_v08.pdf
- Republic of Argentina (2017c). National Transport and Climate Change Action Plan. Available at: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/04_transporte_info_ingles_v05.pdf



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WEBSITES: ———— · The Argentinian government on the GNCC:
<https://www.argentina.gob.ar/ambiente/sustentabilidad/cambioclimatico/gabinetenacional>

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CASE STUDY

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