

CLIMATE ASSEMBLIES – KEY FEATURES

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KNOCA is a European network for sharing best practice on the commissioning, design, implementation and impact of climate assemblies. The network hosts events and produces a range of practical resources, as well as coordinating knowledge development activities. We welcome individuals and organisations with experience or interest in either commissioning, running or analysing these processes and their outputs in Europe and beyond. Please reach out to us to share, discuss and inform best practice and new developments in climate assembly design, delivery and analysis. For more details of KNOCA and to join the network, see <https://knoca.eu/>

This document is regularly updated. We would appreciate feedback on how it could be improved, both in terms of structure and content. Please provide thoughts via info@knoca.eu

What is a climate assembly?

A climate assembly brings together randomly-selected everyday people to learn, deliberate, and make recommendations on aspects of the climate crisis.

The term “climate assembly” is used in different ways. Institutions with titles such as citizens’ assemblies, citizens’ juries and consensus conferences have similar features, combining random selection and deliberation. The 2020 OECD report [Catching the Deliberative Wave: Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions](#) provides an overview of the development of these bodies. A [2021 update](#) is available drawing on new data.

KNOCA is initially using the term “climate assemblies” in a broad sense to include any participatory process that combines random selection, deliberation, and decision-making on climate issues.

Climate assemblies share several key features, summarised in Table 1 below. In this report, we describe these features and explain how, in practice, they have differed across assemblies.

Table 1. Characteristics of Climate Assemblies

- Purpose	- Structure	- Public engagement
- Commissioning	- Facilitation	- Oversight of official response
- Task	- Evidence base	- Impact
- Commitment to respond	- Developing recommendations	- Evaluation
- Governance	- Decision-making	- Budget
- Delivery bodies	- Final report	
- Participant recruitment	- Communication	
- Duration		

The report draws primarily on the experience of national-level climate assemblies, summaries of which can be found under "[National Climate Assemblies](#)" on the KNOCA website (available for download in English, German and Spanish).

- The Irish Citizens' Assembly 2016-2018
- La Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (CCC) in France
- Climate Assembly UK (CAUK)
- Scotland's Climate Assembly
- Danish Climate Assembly
- Finland's Citizens' Jury on Climate Action
- German Citizens' Assembly on Climate
- Jersey's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change

Where relevant, practice from sub-national assemblies is considered.

Purpose

Climate assemblies are organised for different reasons. Most assemblies have been organised to contribute to the development of climate change mitigation policy, although the model is suitable for consideration of adaptation policy and strategy.

Climate assemblies have typically been commissioned to generate policy proposals. However, they can be used at other points in the policy cycle – for example to scrutinise proposals. Finland's Citizens' Jury is an example of a scrutiny body which appraised 14 government policy proposals.

The extent to which assemblies are empowered, varies. The French CCC was empowered to develop proposals to submit to a referendum, vote in parliament or direct regulatory application. However, most assemblies are more explicitly consultative in nature, providing recommendations to public authorities.

The primary purpose of assemblies tends to be to inform government policymaking. However, CAUK's primary objective was to inform parliamentary scrutiny of government policy, and the purpose of the civil society-led German assembly was to put pressure on political parties to commit to more stringent action on climate during the federal election campaign and subsequent government coalition negotiations.

Polish practice is unusual: municipal citizens' assemblies have been empowered to make policy and law. Mayors agree to implement any decisions that receive more than 80% support amongst assembly members.

Commissioning

Climate assemblies are typically commissioned (or sponsored) by public authorities at different levels of governance. This is often the executive (e.g. President Macron for the CCC; government ministry for the Danish CA), although the Irish CA was established by parliament and the CAUK by six parliamentary select committees.

The German climate assembly is unusual in that it was commissioned by the civil society organisation Bürgerbegehren Klimaschutz (BBK, Citizens' Climate Protection Initiative).

Task

Climate assemblies work on a particular task that frames their learning, deliberation, and recommendations. Ensuring a clear and answerable question is critical if an assembly is to function effectively.

The tasks of climate assemblies have tended to be quite similar, asking a broad question about climate policy and focusing primarily on mitigation.

The French CCC and CAUK were asked questions about achieving set reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. In the UK, to achieve its legislative commitments: "How can the UK reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050?". In France the reduction target was explicitly linked to social justice: "How to reduce greenhouse gases by at least 40% by 2030 (compared to 1990) in a spirit of social justice?".

The German assembly was also target-focused, with specific reference to how Germany can fulfil its contribution to the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement; limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees, and if possible, to 1.5 degrees.

The Irish and Jersey climate assemblies asked more general questions. The Irish climate assembly considered "How can the State make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change?". The Jersey climate assembly addressed "How should we work together to become carbon neutral?".

The Scottish climate assembly's task opened up broader issues of social change and adaptation: "How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?".

A second difference with the Scottish question is how it was decided. In all the other assemblies, the commissioning body set the overarching task. In Scotland, the question was decided through a facilitated deliberative process in the Stewarding Group (see governance arrangements section), with the Group asked to bear in mind Scotland's legislative commitments.

Commitment to respond

The commissioning body generally makes a public statement when establishing the assembly as to how it will respond to the recommendations. This will typically include a time frame within which it will consider the assembly's report and provide a public response to how it will deal with recommendations.

When establishing the CCC, President Macron stated that there would be "no filter" to the transmission of the recommendations to the Parliament (law), to the general population (referendum) or for direct regulatory application. This commitment helped raise the profile of the Convention, although different interpretations emerged as to what "no filter" means in practice (see "Impact") and to whether Macron kept his commitment.

In Ireland, Parliament committed to consider the recommendations of the assembly through a joint committee of both Houses. In Scotland, the government committed to making a formal response

within six months of receiving the recommendations. In the UK, chairs of select committees committed to use the CAUK recommendations to shape future committee inquiries.

Governance

Climate assemblies need to put robust governance arrangements in place to ensure that they are seen as independent from the commissioning body and other vested interests. Different forms of governance have emerged: in Ireland and Scotland seconded civil servants played a central role; in France an independent Governance Committee was appointed; and in the UK and Denmark, the delivery body (see next section) took on significant governance responsibilities in close collaboration with public officials.

The model of the Irish Citizens' Assembly 2016-18 has been adopted and further developed in Scotland. An independent chair was appointed in Ireland, and joint chairs in Scotland. A secretariat was established, consisting of seconded civil servants. A steering or stewarding group was then appointed by the secretariat, constituted by representatives of different interests potentially affected by the assembly and specialists in democratic engagement. A second body, an expert advisory group, provided technical expertise on aspects of climate change. Once the assembly was up-and-running, a members' reference group was established to ensure input into governance from the members of the assembly.

In France, President Macron passed responsibility to host and organise the CCC to the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC). A Governance Committee was established, with 15 people with different types of expertise (climate, economy and society, participatory democracy) appointed by the Environment Minister, plus two rotating members of the Convention. Three independent guarantors were appointed by ESEC and the two chambers of the French parliament to provide oversight of the process.

In Denmark and the UK, much more responsibility for governance was placed in the hands of the delivery organisation – Danish Board of Technology (DBT) in Denmark and Involve in the UK. In Denmark, the process was overseen by the two lead facilitators from DBT, a lead civil servant from the Environment Ministry and 5 citizens randomly selected from the Assembly. In the UK, Involve held regular meetings with the chairs and clerks of the parliamentary committees that had commissioned the assembly and worked with four Expert Leads who had technical expertise in different aspects of climate change and an advisory board that provided independent oversight and advice on aspects of design.

At municipal level, Polish assemblies have adopted a formalised model of arbitration to deal with any conflicts that may emerge between different governance actors.

Delivery organisations

Delivery organisations are generally independent organisations with expertise in the design and facilitation of participatory and deliberative processes, recruitment, and public communications. They are usually appointed through a tender process by the commissioning body or its alternate.

In the UK, the tender process was run by clerks of the parliamentary committees; in Denmark by the government ministry; in France by the Governance Committee; and in Ireland and Scotland by the

Secretariat. The German case differs because it was the commissioning civil society organisation who put out the tender.

The structure of the tenders in Denmark and the UK gave the delivery organisations significant control over design and facilitation. The delivery organisations in the UK were also responsible for recruitment, whereas this was undertaken by the Statistics Agency in Denmark.

In other assemblies, the delivery organisation has worked more closely with the governance committee or secretariat to co-design the process. For example, in France, the Governance Committee established the parameters of the CCC, leaving the delivery organisations, Missions Publiques and Res Publica, to design the specifics and facilitate the sessions. In Scotland, Involve and the Democratic Society worked closely with the Secretariat in designing the process, with the two delivery bodies taking responsibility for facilitation.

Participant recruitment

The aim of assemblies is to recruit and retain members who reflect a diversity of characteristics of the broader society from which they are drawn. This is the reason why citizens' assemblies are referred to as "mini-publics". The recruitment process is resource-intensive (both in terms of finance and time) to ensure a robust process of random selection and attendance by the people selected.

While the term "citizen" is used in the title of citizens' assemblies and juries, their constituency tends to be all residents. Some processes have included foreign residents. Thus, the French CCC included people residing in France (of French or other nationality) and one member residing in another European country because of the draw method based on telephone numbers.

Climate assemblies typically aim to engage larger numbers than many other deliberative mini-publics: between 99 (Ireland) to 150 (France) in the national assemblies. The outlier is Finland, which was a smaller process, involving less than 40 participants. Local climate assemblies typically recruit around 40 to 50 participants, and local climate juries are generally smaller still.

The selection process favoured by most recent citizens' assemblies is some form of civic lottery. This is a two-stage process.

In the first stage, an invitation letter is sent to a random selection of thousands of households or individuals or random phone numbers are selected. Using letters enables organisers to target particular localities where response rates are known to be low – this approach was taken in CAUK and in Scotland. Respondents who are interested in participating reply to express their interest and provide basic information about themselves.

In the second stage, members of the assembly are selected using a stratified random sampling process from the pool of people who accepted the invitation. Criteria from the information collected in stage 1 are applied to ensure that members reflect key characteristics of the broader population generally including: age; gender; education, income and/or employment; geography, for example urban/rural. Ethnicity (CAUK, Scotland) and disability (Scotland) have also been applied. The assemblies in Jersey, Scotland and the UK applied a measure of attitude to climate change to ensure that members reflected the diversity of perspectives on the issue within their populations.

Ireland used a different strategy. A market research company approached randomly selected households to recruit assembly members using a set of criteria: age, gender, social class, and regional

spread. Some concerns have been raised about the extent to which this process is as robust as the civic lottery.

Generally, assemblies will recruit substitutes to replace members who do not turn up or drop out. Decisions need to be made as to how far into the process replacements can be included. In France, new members were added up to Session 4. Most other assemblies have an earlier cut-off point.

Significant resources are required to ensure that those individuals selected attend the assembly. For face-to-face assemblies, this includes arranging their travel and accommodation as well as providing other logistical and personal support that is needed (e.g., caring responsibilities, translation, signing, etc.). For online assemblies, resources need to be targeted to overcome aspects of the digital divide, ranging from access to equipment and the internet through to competence and confidence.

Many assemblies pay an honorarium to recognise the civic work of participants – and to incentivise the engagement of those who may not otherwise participate. The Irish Citizens' Assembly 2016-2018 did not offer an honorarium and suffered higher levels of drop-off. Of 99 assembly members, 40 replacements were made during the life of the assembly (which covered more issues than climate change). In comparison, other climate assemblies have had impressively high retention rates, especially CAUK and Scotland, where only 2 and 3 members, respectively, dropped out during the assembly process.

Although a daily payment was made, the Danish Climate Assembly suffered significant drop-off. Of the 99 members that were invited, only 59 completed the first phase. This was attributed, in part, to the necessary change from a face-to-face assembly which had been promised in the invitation, to an online process in the wake of Covid-19. Both CAUK and the French CCC were forced to run some of their sessions online without a similar effect on participant retention. However, members had already experienced face-to-face interactions and were committed to continuing the process. Other assemblies in Germany, Jersey and Scotland have been designed from the start to be fully online and this was made clear in the recruitment.

Duration

Most of the climate assemblies have been “one-off” initiatives. Denmark's climate assembly is unusual in having two phases that tie in with the annual climate policy planning cycle. Active discussions are underway as to whether climate assemblies will become an established part of the Danish climate planning process. Whether and how climate (and other citizens') assemblies can become a more institutionalised part of the political system is a topic of heated debate amongst practitioners and academics. Irish and Scottish governments have committed to regular use of citizens' assemblies across a range of policy issues and the Spanish government has signalled its intention in the recent climate law to organise future climate assemblies.

Climate assemblies need to be given enough time to deal with the task they have been asked to consider. Typically, national assemblies take place over a number of weekends, although the Danish assembly combined full weekend and evening sessions; the German climate assembly evenings and single days only. Local assemblies vary in this aspect of their design.

Because of Covid-19, assemblies have gone online and organisers have had to reconsider how to arrange working patterns – long and intensive face-to-face weekends are more difficult to replicate online.

It is difficult to judge precisely how much time is needed for a climate assembly to do its work effectively. The OECD recommends at least 40 hours for this type of deliberative process, but much will depend on the scope of its task and the expectations in terms of output – whether the Assembly is asked to craft its own recommendations or review existing proposals (see “Developing recommendations”).

In recognition of the complexity of climate change, several assemblies have been quite long. The French CCC and Scotland’s climate assembly have been the most extensive: 7 in-person weekend sessions and one online weekend for the CCC, plus an additional weekend to review the response by government and parliament; and 7 full weekends plus an additional review weekend online in Scotland (see “Oversight of official response”).

The Irish assembly and Finnish jury spent the least time on their topic – two full weekends in Ireland and 2.5 days in Finland. In contrast, the Irish assembly had 5 weekends to tackle the constitutional status of abortion. The two-weekend model has been widely adopted by many local authorities, typically because of the costs of longer processes.

In almost all climate assemblies, members have wanted more time. In a couple of cases – France and Scotland – an extra weekend was added at the request of members.

Structure

Climate assemblies need to be organised so that they make best use of the time available to respond to the task. In several assemblies, this has involved breaking the assembly into workstreams to deal with different aspects of climate policy. This could indicate that more than one assembly may be needed to deal with this complex policy area.

The Irish and Jersey assemblies and Finnish jury were unusual in their structure in that they worked as a single group on the same issues throughout their deliberations. Compared to other climate assemblies, they did not have much time to learn, deliberate and come to recommendations.

In other climate assemblies, the members learned about more general issues of climate change together and then broke into randomly allocated workstreams. For example, CAUK learned about the science and ethics of climate change as a full group and developed a series of guiding principles before breaking into three workstreams: how we travel; in the home; what we buy, and land use, food and farming. The full assembly reconvened to consider where electricity comes from and greenhouse gas removals. The French CCC divided into five groups: transport; food; consumption; work and production; housing. Scotland broke into four workstreams: diet and lifestyle; homes and communities; work; and travel.

Denmark is unusual in the autonomy granted to members to decide the topics of the relevant workstreams. In all the other assemblies, it is the designers of the process that have decided how to break climate change into topic areas. In the first phase of the Danish assembly, this was decided through a brainstorming process after members of the assembly had learned about climate change and the challenges facing Denmark; in the second phase, an even more bottom-up process was adopted with members selecting priorities without expert input.

Before the Spanish Climate Assembly began its work in December 2021, the Expert Group opened a consultation on the assembly website enabling the public to rank by importance issues relating to

transport, agriculture and the food system, nature conservation, consumption and energy. The intention was for the results to feed into the organisation of the work programme of the assembly.

Facilitation

Two philosophies of facilitation have been used across climate assemblies: directive table facilitation and self-organisation by citizens. Debates amongst practitioners and academics continue as to the merits of these different facilitation styles.

Ireland, Scotland and UK adopted directive table facilitation. Small tables of members were guided by a facilitator who was responsible for ensuring they stay on task and fairness in proceedings (speaking time, etc.). The membership of different tables was regularly rotated.

In Denmark and France, more emphasis was placed on self-organisation by members. Groups were generally left to themselves to develop their own working patterns and divide responsibilities for developing different recommendations. Facilitators intervened when problems within the group dynamics emerged.

Evidence base

The organisers of climate assemblies aim to ensure that members receive balanced information on the issues they are considering from a range of witnesses. An expert advisory group typically provides recommendations on the nature of relevant evidence and suitable witnesses. Witnesses may include scientists, policy experts, interest groups, politicians, as well as people with direct experience of the impacts of climate change. To cover the range of topics and perspectives, many different witnesses are often involved. For example, the French CCC received evidence from close to 140 experts.

The task set for a climate assembly informs the type of evidence and witness input that is necessary. For example, where the assembly is asked how to achieve a particular reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, assembly members need to hear from proponents of different approaches to realising that reduction.

Witnesses will typically give presentations either in person or through videos, with supporting written evidence, and will generally answer questions from members.

All assemblies begin with expert witnesses educating members on the nature of climate change and its impacts and, where relevant for the design, the workstream topics. Decisions on who the assembly should hear from in the early part of assemblies typically rests with the designers – for example, the Governance Committee in the French CCC; and the Expert Leads in CAUK. The extent to which members are able to call their own witnesses varies. For example, in Denmark, members were provided with lists of potential witnesses to select from. In all designs, an expert support group is needed to be able to respond to member's questions as they arise.

Typically, organisers are careful to ensure a clear distinction is drawn between the provision of evidence by experts and the role of citizens in deliberating and crafting recommendations (more below). In both Denmark and Scotland, experts reviewed proposals and provided feedback on how they might be redrafted to be more effective, but the decision on whether to adopt this advice rested with the members (see "Developing recommendations"). In the French CCC, this distinction was less

tightly drawn, with scientific, policy and legal experts working closely with members of the CCC in developing recommendations.

The Irish and French assemblies were both open to outside groups and individuals to offer ideas to the assembly through their dedicated websites. Summaries of this evidence was provided to members.

Developing recommendations

The national climate assemblies have each produced a set of recommendations. A distinction can be drawn between assemblies that engage in “policy development”, where members are empowered to generate their own recommendations, and “policy appraisal”, where members consider options or scenarios developed by government or experts. Final recommendations are generally decided by a vote.

In most of the national assemblies, members crafted their own proposals. How this was realised differs. The more open French CCC provided opportunities for experts to work closely with members in the development of proposals. Other assemblies have been more structured to ensure that experts are only able to give their evidence and answer questions so that members are the sole authors of proposals.

In policy development assemblies, proposals are drafted by small groups of participants. Feedback mechanisms are put in place so that other members can learn about and offer suggestions to those drafting the proposals. In France, for example, on two occasions during the development of proposals, open sessions were organised where members could visit tables where the authors of proposals explained their ideas and proposals. A presentation and debate on the proposals of each thematic workstream was also organised in a plenary session. Similar processes were put in place in Scotland and Denmark.

In Denmark, two policy experts reviewed draft proposals, providing feedback on how they might be better worded to have impact on the political system. In France, legal experts helped draft “legal transcripts” of the proposals so that they were in a suitable format to be considered as new laws, regulations, or referendums.

CAUK adopted a different approach. For the policy areas it covered, the Expert Leads developed scenarios and policy options which the members considered in their deliberations and decision-making. Members primarily chose between different options offered by the Leads, although they had the opportunity to add additional recommendations.

Finland’s Citizens’ Jury took an explicit “policy appraisal” approach, where the members were asked to evaluate 14 policy proposals prepared by the Environment Ministry.

Decision-making

Assemblies need a process to confirm adoption of proposals as their final recommendations. These are often proposals that have been drafted by smaller groups of members. The process is generally a simple majority vote.

Climate assembly organisers have had to consider how to deal with the issue that members will often be voting on recommendations for which they have not heard the evidence that informs the proposal.

In most cases, time has been put aside for members to present and learn about the final recommendations from different workstreams before voting (see “Developing recommendations”). CAUK was unusual in deciding that only the members who worked on specific workstreams should vote on those specific recommendations. The organisers felt there was not enough time for everyone to hear and learn about the recommendations from other working groups. Where the whole assembly worked together on recommendations, all members of CAUK voted on them.

Final reports

The final reports of climate assemblies differ depending on whether the assembly engaged in policy development or appraisal. The majority of the text of the former assemblies will generally be authored by the members themselves; the latter primarily by the lead delivery body, although incorporating statements authored by the members. Typically, the level of support for each recommendation is provided.

The 459-page report of the French CCC contains the 149 recommendations agreed by the Assembly in the form of draft referendums, laws, and regulations.

The 556-page CAUK report not only contains the recommendations agreed by assembly members but also verbatim quotes that give an insight into the reasons members gave for supporting or opposing particular proposals collated from the table discussions.

The 101-page report from the German climate assembly presents the recommendations proposed and approved by the participants.

Communication

Communication is critical to the transparency of climate assemblies. Typically, climate assemblies have dedicated websites that explain the details of the process, in particular the evidence that has been provided to members. Plenary sessions and evidence presentations are generally livestreamed, with recordings and briefings made publicly available. The deliberations amongst members are generally private to ensure that they do not feel the pressure of the public gaze and to protect them from being targeted by interest groups. Some assembly websites include a portal where the public and interest groups can upload ideas and evidence (see “Public engagement”).

The media and observers are typically given access to the assembly. The degree and form of access varies, with organisers taking different approaches to the protection of the identity of members.

The French CCC has been the most open of climate assemblies with several members engaging enthusiastically with the media. In comparison, other assemblies have been much more protective of members and limited the extent of media contact. For example, during CAUK, the media and observers were largely kept separate from the assembly members, being able to observe sessions from designated areas. Some members of CAUK, volunteered for, and gave, media interviews.

Public engagement

The form of the recruitment process (based on random selection) means that interested organisations and individuals cannot volunteer for places within the assembly. A number of assemblies have incorporated dedicated public engagement processes into their design.

Assemblies have varied in their degree of outreach to the public. Some assemblies enabled the public and interest groups to make written submissions of ideas and evidence. The French CCC and the Irish climate assembly provided a portal on their websites to facilitate submissions.

The Jersey and Scottish climate assembly have been the most active in broader public engagement. In the six-week period in the run up to the start of its assembly, the Government of Jersey ran a public “Climate Conversation” in which members of the public were encouraged to provide their views and ideas on action that Jersey should take in response to the climate emergency. The summary of all the ideas submitted were provided to the members of the Citizens’ Assembly and were discussed when the recommendations were considered. Scotland’s Climate Assembly is notable for its engagement with young people through a collaboration with the Children’s Parliament. Over 100 children aged 7-14 years, from 10 schools across Scotland, attended workshops to explore age-appropriate evidence on climate change and provided their views via surveys. The results were submitted to Scotland’s Climate Assembly and included in its interim and final reports.

The Spanish Climate Assembly is unusual in holding a public consultation prior to beginning its work. Members of the public were able to rank climate-related issues by importance, with the results feeding into the organisation of the work programme of the assembly.

Oversight of official response

One of the perceived weaknesses of the climate assembly model is the lack of oversight of the commissioning body once it receives the recommendations. Typically, the production of recommendations signals the end of the assembly process for members.

The French CCC and Scotland’s Climate Assembly both recognised this weakness and instigated an additional session for members a few months after the government received and responded to their reports. This enables the assembly to provide commentary on progress and exert political pressure. The French CCC met 8 months after its report was received by President Macron and made a public statement in which members expressed their disappointment in the extent to which their recommendations had been adopted or modified.

The French CCC is again relatively unusual in the extent to which members have engaged with public authorities and taken a proactive stance to promote their recommendations. Members have been invited into official workshops with ministers and civil servants on the implementation of proposals. Several members also created the association Les 150 to raise the profile of the assembly and provide ongoing oversight of the extent of adoption of its proposals.

Impact

The primary purpose of climate assemblies has generally been to affect government policy - or in the case of CAUK, the capacity of parliamentarians to hold the government to account on its climate policy. The outlier is the German assembly which was organised independently by civil society

organisations to influence the federal election campaign and the subsequent government coalition negotiations.

It is too early to judge this form of impact across all the assemblies. In Ireland, most of the recommendations were adopted in a recognisable form by the joint parliamentary committee and have been included within the government climate action plan. Similarly, a non-negligible number of the proposals of the French CCC appear in the Climate and Resilience Act. The findings of CAUK have informed the launch of several parliamentary select committee inquiries. In all these cases, there is evidence that current climate policy and oversight is more progressive than it would likely have been without the assembly.

In all cases, however, we find public authorities being selective in the proposals they adopt. In Ireland, the controversial recommendation of an agriculture tax was dropped, with no explanation offered. In France, the CCC and Les 150 have criticised the extent to which many of its proposals have been watered down or ignored. In the UK, a general election just before the assembly began meant that some chairs and members of the commissioning select committees changed, with some less committed to following up the assembly's recommendations.

Direct impact on policy processes is not the only impact that can be discerned. In the UK, for example, it is another public body – the influential Climate Change Committee – that has arguably responded most significantly to CAUK. The Committee's Sixth Carbon Budget draws on the findings of CAUK in modelling its expectations of government policy. This was an unintended consequence of CAUK, enabled in large part by the Director of the Committee being an Expert Lead in the process.

Another form of impact is on the broader public. The French CCC distinguishes itself in this regard. A combination of profile afforded by its very public sponsorship by President Macron, along with the openness of the process to the media, means that the French public has high levels of awareness of the Convention process. It has been the subject of extensive media and public attention and debate, not least as to whether Macron has fulfilled his commitment for “no filter” for the Convention proposals. The evidence suggests significant support amongst the public for the Convention's recommendations.

The level of recognition amongst the general public of other assemblies is more limited and, in some cases, almost non-existent.

While the primary purpose of climate assemblies has generally been to influence national climate policy, the extent to which they need to adopt strategies to ensure wider recognition and support amongst the public is an ongoing debate.

Budget

The budget of climate assemblies has varied radically. Without a suitable level of funding, the assembly will not be able to meet enough times or provide the necessary support to members.

The French, Irish and Scottish assemblies were fully funded by their respective governments, with budgets over €1 million. The French provided the most generous funding of €5.5 million.

The German Citizens' Assembly on Climate budget was over €1.9 million, financed by donations and funding from foundations, including, the Schöpflin Foundation, Open Society Foundations, GLS Treuhand and the German Postcode Lottery Foundation.

While CAUK received limited funding from the parliamentary committees, most of the costs were covered by two philanthropic organisations: the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the European Climate Foundation. In Denmark, the Danish Board of Technology had to cover much of the costs of the process, and in Finland, two academic research centres covered much of the costs. This is not a sustainable approach in the long-term.

Evaluation

Ensuring robust and independent evaluation is important in securing systematic learning from assemblies so that practice can be improved. The national assemblies to date are early pioneers, so there is much to learn to enhance the quality of future initiatives.

Scotland's Climate Assembly and CAUK commissioned formal university-led, independent evaluations.

The French Convention took a different approach. It accredited 40 researchers who were given access to the process. In Denmark, several academics have engaged with the process in different ways.

The more systematic evaluations tend to follow formats adopted by other citizens' assemblies. An issue that KNOCA intends to consider is whether additional evaluation criteria need to be added that relate to the content of climate assemblies – for example, the capacity of members to engage with the complexity and long-term nature of the climate crisis.

Further details on climate assemblies

KNOCA aims to collate existing and future evaluations of climate assemblies and to commission its own knowledge development on different aspects of climate assembly practice. KNOCA has commissioned four research briefings that touch on various characteristics of climate assemblies, namely:

- The framing of climate change within climate assemblies
- The integration of climate assemblies into the policy process
- The legacy and impact of climate assemblies
- The legitimacy and resonance of climate assemblies in wider society

These briefings can be found under the "[Advancing Practice](#)" section of the KNOCA website.

To support further knowledge development on critical aspects of climate assembly practice, KNOCA is funding a series of Knowledge Development Projects (KDPs), which will deliver practical and creative resources and guidance for those commissioning, organising and evaluating assemblies. The first wave of KDPs are:

- KDP1. Framing climate within assemblies
- KDP2. Attitudes of climate policy actors
- KDP3. Pathways to impact
- KDP4. Landing assemblies

Further details of these KDPs can be found under the [“Advancing Practice”](#) section of the KNOCA website.

