

INTERNATIONAL PHILANTHROPY COMMITMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Implementation Guide

Funded by the European Union

Philea Philanthropy Europe Association

WINGS ELEVATING PHILANTHROPY

VERSION 1.0 - MARCH 2022

Author: Nick Perks

WINGS is grateful to the Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change for making the structure and format of their national implementation guide available for adaptation. We would also like to thank everyone who helped with the development of this guide, including Alice Amorim, Beatrice de Montleau, Benjamin Bellegy, Dana Decent, Henrike Doebert, James Magowan, Karalyn Gardner, Kathrin Dombrowski, Nadya Hernandez, Max von Abendroth.

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of WINGS and PHILEA and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

The International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change is a call to all foundations, regardless of their mission, status and geographic location to act on the climate emergency. Signatories to the International Commitment pledge to take action under the seven pillars of the Commitment. The International Commitment exists in tandem with a number of national philanthropy commitments around the world. Together these form the global #PhilanthropyForClimate movement which already includes around 500 foundations worldwide.

This Implementation Guide outlines suggested actions against each of the seven pillars of the International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change. This Guide is designed to inspire and support foundation signatories as they embark on their own journey of change. If your foundation is not yet signed up to the International Commitment but considering doing so, this Guide will give you a clearer idea of the type of actions that foundations can take to implement the International Commitment. The national philanthropy commitments on climate are providing additional resources to support the implementation by foundations in their countries.

This Guide is divided in seven sections, one for each pillar. Each section includes some additional detail on why it is important, and then suggests actions at three levels: Getting Started, Building Momentum, and Demonstrating Leadership. **These are offered as a menu of options, not a list of requirements.**

Philanthropic organisations have different sizes, governance structures, culture of work and resources. Not everything in this guide will be relevant or appropriate for every signatory. **Use whatever is useful to you.** Furthermore, the list is not exhaustive; we encourage you to develop your own actions and share your ideas and experiences with your peers.

We know that signatories are at different stages on their journey of climate action. Signatories who are new to climate action may want to start with one or two activities in the first level, or to concentrate on one or two pillars to start with. Signatories who already have a track-record of climate action may already be working across all of the pillars but will hopefully still find something in this Guide to raise their ambition further.

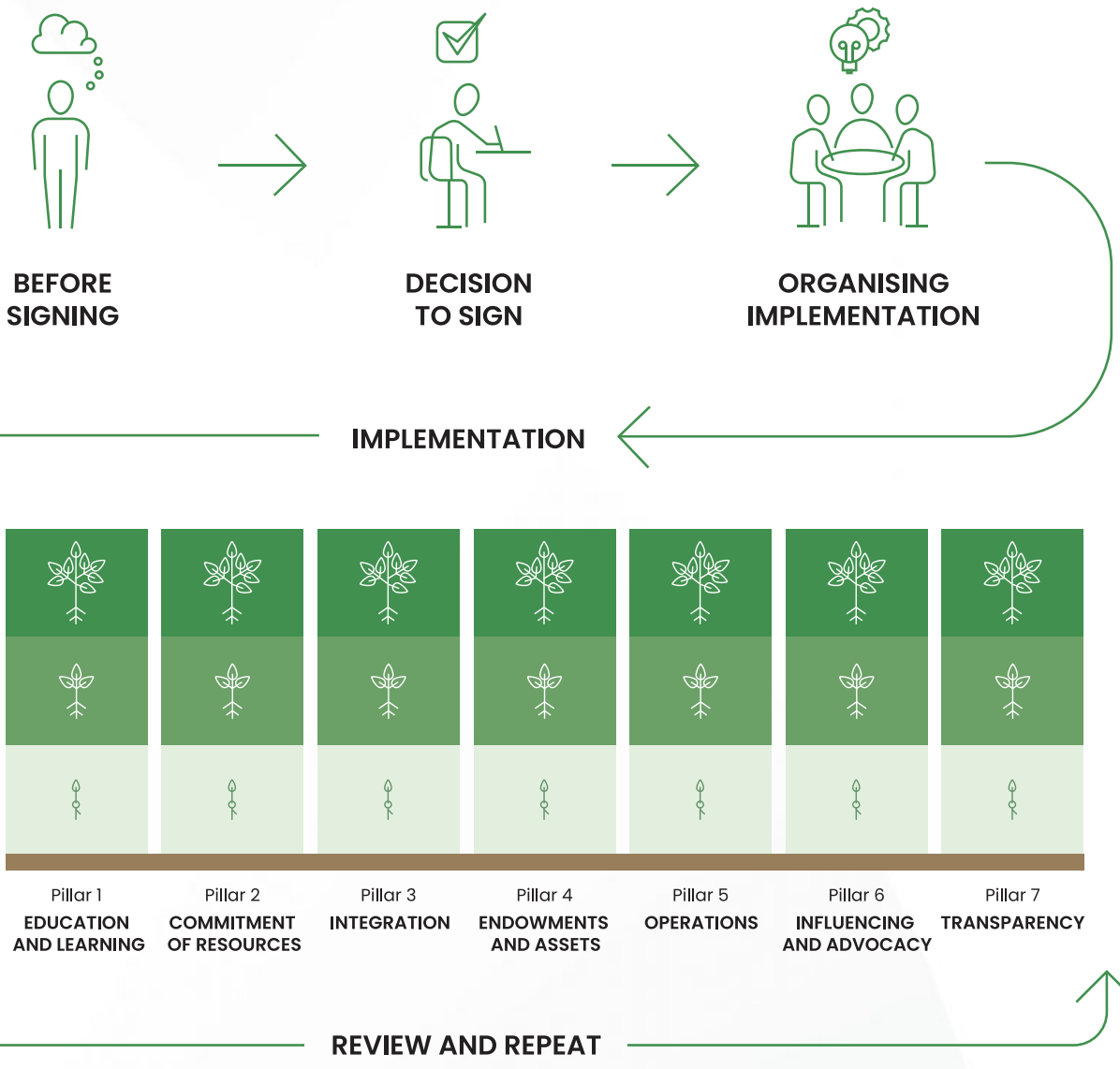
Other useful resources for the implementation of the commitment can be found at philanthropyforclimate.org/other-resources

WINGS is currently developing a simple, annual reporting framework for signatories of the International Commitment. (Signatories to national philanthropy commitments on climate should refer to their national guidance instead). The primary objective of the reporting process will be to facilitate learning, share good practices and allow signatories to identify areas for self-improvement.

We all need to take the next step; please be as active and ambitious as you can! Climate change cannot be addressed purely as a 'technical fix' in isolation from other important issues, such as equality or development. Keep your values and mission firmly in mind as you act on climate.

We welcome feedback on this guide, news about your activities, and suggestions for future editions. Please contact climatecommitment@wingsweb.org

YOUR CLIMATE JOURNEY



YOUR CLIMATE JOURNEY

There is no "one size fits all" method for a philanthropic organisation to implement the International Commitment, but the following stages may be a helpful framework to understand the steps of this journey.

1. BEFORE SIGNING

Your organisation doesn't need to make any preparations before signing the International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change. **All you need is willingness to act to tackle the climate crisis.**

The first step is to ask questions. What is the connection between climate and your primary philanthropic mission? What are other partners doing to tackle the climate crisis? What can we learn from this? What would it mean in practice to make a public commitment on climate?

2. DECISION TO SIGN

Signing the International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change is a public commitment which needs to be taken at the most senior level, usually by the organisation's Board. Remember that signing the commitment does not make any claim about your existing level of climate action, but it does commit you to taking action after signing and sharing information about what you do.

Before signing the international commitment, check if there is a national commitment in your country

3. ORGANISING IMPLEMENTATION

Once you have signed, it is useful to consider your overall operations and look into the Implementation Guide to see from where you want to start. You can take action in many pillars simultaneously (programmes, operations and investments) or can choose to start with only one. **The decision about how to start the implementation is fully yours according to your priorities and available capacity.**

4. IMPLEMENT

There are many different routes to implementation. The speed of action depends on you. One approach might involve first measuring the climate footprint of your whole organisation and its activities, and setting targets for emission reduction. This could even represent reduction of operational costs, if you adopt energy efficiency measures, for instance. Another approach could be to look at your programmatic area, see how it intersects with climate change and consider some adaptations to your programme to incorporate a climate lens.

Whether you undertake a full carbon footprint or focus on a thematic strategic approach, it is worth thinking carefully about **where you can make the most difference in the field and where you can also benefit the most. This journey is an opportunity to unlock efficiency and innovation in your work and make it more climate resilient.**

5. REVIEW AND REPEAT

One thing is important: Don't lose track of monitoring and evaluating your progress. Learning in the process is very important to sustain the impact of your commitment in your field over time.

Make sure that you have a system for reporting progress to your Board, or other forms of internal accountability. This will also mean that you are well prepared for external sharing with other Signatories of your action and learning from them.

Pillar 1. EDUCATION AND LEARNING

FROM THE COMMITMENT:

"We will ensure that our boards, investment committees, staff, volunteers and stakeholders are informed about the systemic causes, impacts and solutions of climate change, and the implications for our work".

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

Implementing the Commitment effectively requires the support and involvement of people in every role within signatory organisations, and also working with partners. We can't assume that everyone already knows what needs to be done. We need to build up the climate literacy of our organisations and partners if we are to take effective action.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS



LEVEL 1: **GETTING STARTED**

- Invite speakers to address your Board on the links between climate change and your philanthropic goals.
- Organise an introductory climate change workshop for your staff and volunteers. Consider opening this up to external stakeholders.
- Gather and regularly circulate news and resources on climate change in your internal communications.
- Take up opportunities to meet and learn with other foundations that have signed a climate commitment.
- **In all of these activities**, seek to listen to a range of different expert voices (including those with practical or community experience), ensuring gender balance and other forms of diversity.

LEVEL 2: **BUILDING MOMENTUM**
In addition to actions at Level 1

- Arrange a training programme for all staff, volunteers and board members and other internal roles to ensure they have a good basic knowledge of climate change.
- Offer support to grantees or partners organisations to access similar climate awareness training.
- Encourage Board members to participate in an external climate event or conference.

LEVEL 3: **SHOWING LEADERSHIP**
In addition to actions at Level 1 and Level 2

- Integrate climate literacy into board, volunteer and staff recruitment and development (e.g. board skills audit, job descriptions, induction, annual appraisal).
- Review research that is publicly available on the links between climate and your philanthropic goals, and commission additional research to fill gaps as needed. This could include making information relevant to your local context or considering the needs of those who are marginalised or overlooked in existing materials.
- Offer high-quality, relevant, climate related training or advice to your grantees or partners (this might range from energy efficiency in building projects, to sustainable agriculture methods, and many other examples).

Pillar 2. COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

FROM THE COMMITMENT:

"Recognising the urgency of the situation, we will commit resources to accelerate work that addresses the root causes of climate change or adaptation to its impacts. If our governing document or other factors make it difficult to directly fund such work, we will find other ways to contribute, or consider how such barriers might be overcome".

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

Addressing climate change needs large scale, urgent action – replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy, and towards more sustainable management of land. While the resources of governments and commercial companies are necessary to bring about these changes, philanthropic organisations must also play a vital role. Signatories will also need to devote some internal resources in order to implement the Commitment effectively.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS



LEVEL 1: **GETTING STARTED**

- Give a person (or group) formal responsibility for coordinating your work on implementing the Commitment. This might involve a new staff post or adding a responsibility to an existing post. Ensure that your climate lead has sufficient seniority and budget.
- Consider how your Board will bring time and expertise to supporting the Commitment (e.g climate as a stranding item on Board agendas, recruiting climate expertise to your Board).
- Fund at least one project, organisation, award, partnership or other external action that clearly shows your intention to tackle climate change.

LEVEL 2: **BUILDING MOMENTUM**
In addition to actions at Level 1

- Allocate a proportion of your programmatic or grant spend towards climate action within your overall mission, whether through a new programme, or developments in current activities.
- If your organisation is already funding climate-related activities, consider how you might increase the size and impact of your programmatic or grant spending.
- Fund collaboratively with other donors through a pooled climate fund or other mechanism.
- Where available, become an active member of a philanthropy network that is also active on climate.

LEVEL 3: **SHOWING LEADERSHIP**
In addition to actions at Level 1 and Level 2

- Deepen your internal capacity (e.g. additional staff, knowledge) to help make the connections between climate and your other philanthropic goals.
- Consider the potential for committing greater resources now, as part of a strategy of greater overall spend or spending out.
- Devote a significant proportion of your overall resources and spending towards action on climate in the longer term, alongside your other philanthropic goals.

Pillar 3. **INTEGRATION**

FROM THE COMMITMENT:

"Within the design and implementation of our programmes, we will seek opportunities to contribute to a fair and lasting transition to a net zero world, and to support adaptation to climate change impacts, especially in the most affected communities".

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

The causes and solutions of climate change interact with many other fields of society, such as scientific research, poverty and development, health, inequality, education, and arts and culture. Philanthropic organisations can build on their existing expertise and networks, to make productive links across different fields, and to foster positive action on climate in their own priority areas.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

LEVEL 1: **GETTING STARTED**

- Seek out resources on the links between your mission, climate change, and a just transition to a net zero world.
- Organise a climate strategy session for programmatic staff.
- Review your existing grants or programmes to assess and understand whether you are already supporting climate positive action.
- Assess the risks that climate change poses to your mission, programmes and beneficiaries.
- Ensure that any planned new programme design or existing programmes review also actively consider opportunities to support a just transition.

LEVEL 2: **BUILDING MOMENTUM**
In addition to actions at Level 1

- Meet with your grantees or partners - particularly those from vulnerable communities - to identify what resources they need to help them reduce emissions and to adapt to climate impacts (e.g. capital grants to improve the energy efficiency of community buildings, digital capacity to replace physical travel, nature-based flood controls etc).
- Collaborate with other funders and organisations in your field to highlight and integrate climate change into thinking and action in your area (for example bringing together climate and health, climate and development, or climate and human rights).
- If partnering with large institutions, build climate factors into your due diligence requirements.

LEVEL 3: **SHOWING LEADERSHIP**
In addition to actions at Level 1 and Level 2

- Redesign your overall strategy to place climate change alongside your other philanthropic goals.
- Review your programmes goals and plans in the context of increasing climate impacts, the need for adaptation and a just and rapid transition.
- Phase out funding or support for activities that are not consistent with rapid decarbonisation.

Pillar 4. ENDOWMENTS AND ASSETS

FROM THE COMMITMENT:

"We will consider climate change in relation to the source and management of our operational and any endowed funds. We will seek to align our investment strategy and its implementation with a rapid and just transition to a net zero economy."

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

Climate change has been widely recognised as a systemic risk to assets. Shifting the financial system to phase out polluting practices and incentivise cleaner approaches and technologies is vital to tackling climate change. Philanthropic organisations, many of which steward significant assets, need to show leadership in this area.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS



LEVEL 1: **GETTING STARTED**

- Identify and secure suitable internal capacity in your finance team and/or external advice to develop your approach to climate in your endowments and assets.
- If using external fund managers, ask them to address climate risk and report their activity to you.
- Become a signatory to the Principles for Responsible Investment (www.unpri.org).
- Identify other finance providers over which your organisation has some control or influence (e.g. operational bank accounts, corporate donors or partners, staff pension provision etc).

LEVEL 2: **BUILDING MOMENTUM**
In addition to actions at Level 1

- Measure your portfolio's climate impact.
- Move to only use fund managers and advisers that integrate climate risks and opportunities into their investment approach.
- Review your investment strategy and guidelines to take into account climate change risk, and opportunities for a just transition.
- Instruct your fund manager to vote for all climate resolutions at Annual General Meetings (or explain if not).
- Divest from fossil fuel companies, and screen out other high carbon investments.
- Seek opportunities to influence other finance providers to your organisation, such as banking services, corporate donors or staff pension scheme, as identified under Level 1.

LEVEL 3: **SHOWING LEADERSHIP**
In addition to actions at Level 1 and Level 2

- Move to a 1.5C consistent and net zero portfolio with clear targets and milestones.
- Within risk tolerances invest heavily in the low carbon transition.
- Work with other asset owners in coalition to compel companies to act for the climate and a just transition.
- End relationships with financial providers that do not themselves demonstrate sufficient action on climate.

Pillar 5. **OPERATIONS**

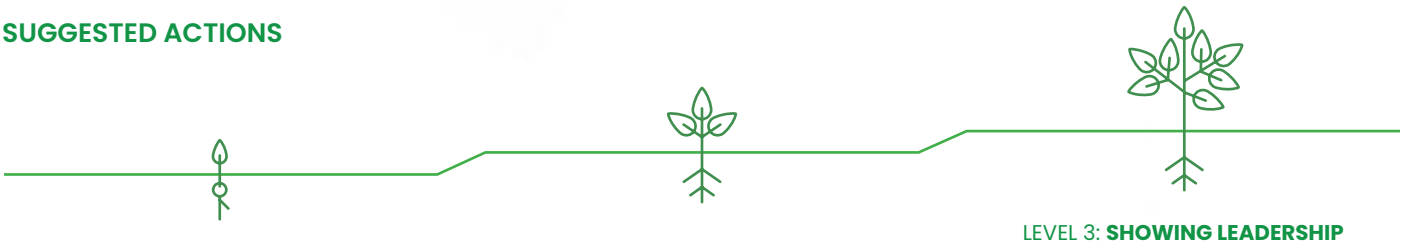
FROM THE COMMITMENT:

"We will take ambitious action to minimise the climate impact of our own operations, which may include for example travel, buildings and procurement."

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

'Getting our own house in order' is essential if we are to have integrity when working with others on climate change.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS



LEVEL 1: **GETTING STARTED**

- Commission or carry out an assessment or inventory of how your operations contribute to climate change. Identify in which areas you have the highest emissions and most scope for cutting emissions.
- Embed ongoing monitoring of emissions (e.g. by recording travel, energy use) in your internal systems.
- Assess the risks to your operation from climate change impacts (e.g. How vulnerable is your organisation to climate shocks?).

LEVEL 2: **BUILDING MOMENTUM**
In addition to actions at Level 1

- Engage with your staff to identify priorities for cutting operational emissions.
- Set a date by which your operational footprint will reach net zero, and interim targets for reductions.
- Develop or update relevant policies to implement emissions reductions – e.g. sustainable travel policy, procurement policy, catering policy.
- Design a climate adaptation plan for your organisation.
- Support grantees and/or partners to evaluate their own carbon footprint and climate vulnerability.

LEVEL 3: **SHOWING LEADERSHIP**
In addition to actions at Level 1 and Level 2

- Extend your carbon footprint exercise to include Scope 3 emissions (i.e. from your supply chain and external activities) (ghgprotocol.org).
- Continue to drive year-on-year progress in cutting your operational emissions (e,g. through awards or incentives for leadership in this area).
- Offset any residual emissions through a reputable and certified provider.
- Alternatively to offsetting, internally impose a price per unit of emissions, aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and invest these funds as additional grant funding for climate mitigation projects (see examples here and here).

Pillar 6. INFLUENCING AND ADVOCACY

FROM THE COMMITMENT:

"We will seek opportunities to work with others, to amplify the voices of frontline communities, and to encourage and support more ambitious action on climate change by our key stakeholders, partners and audiences; these may include businesses, local or national governments, multilateral organisations, donors and funders, individuals or civil society movements."

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

Climate change is a systemic issue that can only be effectively addressed by cooperation and collaboration, informed by the established scientific evidence. Philanthropic organisations are often well placed to bridge across different sectors, groups or countries, and to provide a platform for people that are otherwise excluded from decision making.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

LEVEL 1: **GETTING STARTED**

- Add a public statement to your website to say that you have signed the International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate and to explain why this is important to your organisation.
- Seek opportunities to meet and engage with frontline communities and other organisations advocating for climate action in your area of work and/or the country in which you are based.
- Analyse the suitability of your communications strategy towards this Pillar.

LEVEL 2: **BUILDING MOMENTUM**
In addition to actions at Level 1

- Actively promote the Commitment to the philanthropic community in your country or region.
- In your external communications, provide opportunities for people and communities most at risk from climate change to speak directly about their experience and views (e.g. by commissioning a video or blog, or loaning your social media channels).
- Add your voice and support to climate advocacy efforts in your country or region.

LEVEL 3: **SHOWING LEADERSHIP**
In addition to actions at Level 1 and Level 2

- Identify a climate advocacy goal – linked to your philanthropic mission. Seek out existing campaigns, diverse organisations and frontline communities which can further this goal, and work together for an effective advocacy effort.
- Host at least one meeting or event each year for non-signatories to encourage them to explore and support the #PhilanthropyforClimate movement.

Pillar 7. **TRANSPARENCY**

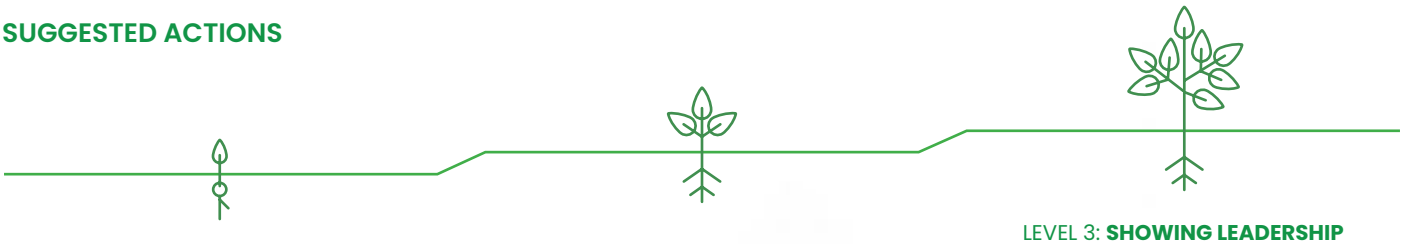
FROM THE COMMITMENT:

"We will collect and publish information annually on the actions we have taken against the six pillars listed above to share our progress and identify areas for improvement. We will continue to develop our practice, to collaborate, and to learn from each other."

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

By sharing learning, signatories can help each other to work more effectively, to address the scale and urgency of the climate crisis. The transparency pillar also gives an additional incentive to deliver on our commitments.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS



LEVEL 1: **GETTING STARTED**

- Use a blog, media article or other public channel to share a story about the action you are taking on climate.
- Take part in a peer-to-peer climate philanthropy event.
- Complete reporting to WINGS on an annual cycle.

LEVEL 2: **BUILDING MOMENTUM**
In addition to actions at Level 1

- Establish a mechanism to report publicly each year on your progress under the Commitment (building on your annual reporting to WINGS).
- Establish a mechanism to support organisational learning and impact management with regards to climate action.
- Develop indicators (KPIs) by which you will measure your progress across each of the pillars.

LEVEL 3: **SHOWING LEADERSHIP**
In addition to actions at Level 1 and Level 2

- Seek external, independent verification or certification of your progress under one or more of the above areas.
- Actively offer help to other funders that are seeking to take action on climate change.