

CLIMATE CHANGE

40/2026

Implementation Concept for *Action for Climate Empowerment* in Germany

Enabling Society to Protect the Climate

by:

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On behalf of the German Environment Agency

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Abstract: The Implementation Plan for Action for Climate Empowerment in Germany

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) illustrates how society as a whole can be actively engaged in climate protection and empowered to contribute effectively. This implementation plan outlines how ACE can be advanced in Germany between 2026 and 2030. It presents a five-year roadmap with clear annual priorities: establishing foundations (2026), building networks (2027), institutionalization (2028), upscaling and outreach (2029), and evaluation (2030). The framework is structured along five key dimensions: overarching structures, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, policy coherence, coordination, and tools and support. The overarching aim is to create conditions that allow citizens, institutions, and organizations in Germany not only to respond to the climate crisis but also to actively shape the transformation towards a livable climate future.

Kurzbeschreibung: Die Gesellschaft befähigen das Klima zu schützen: Das Umsetzungskonzept für Action for Climate Empowerment in Deutschland

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) verdeutlicht, wie die gesamte Gesellschaft aktiv in den Klimaschutz eingebunden und befähigt werden kann, ihn wirksam voranzutreiben. Das vorliegende Umsetzungskonzept zeigt auf, wie ACE in Deutschland im Zeitraum 2026 bis 2030 gezielt vorangebracht werden kann. Es legt einen fünfjährigen Fahrplan mit klaren Jahresschwerpunkten vor: von der Schaffung erster Grundlagen (2026) über den Aufbau von Netzwerken (2027) und die Institutionalisierung (2028) bis hin zur Skalierung (2029) und Weiterentwicklung (2030). Grundlage sind fünf Zielebenen, die übergreifende Strukturen, Monitoring, Politikkohärenz, Koordination sowie praxisnahe Unterstützung umfassen. Ziel ist es, die Rahmenbedingungen so zu gestalten, dass Bürger*innen, Institutionen und Organisationen in Deutschland nicht nur auf die Klimakrise reagieren, sondern die Transformation aktiv mitgestalten können.

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1 The Foundation of a Climate-Empowered Society

The climate crisis is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Yet in Germany, as in many parts of the world, there is a clear gap between people’s concern about the climate and their actual engagement in taking action. Closing this gap requires structures that enable, inform, and involve both individuals and institutions. This is precisely where *Action for Climate Empowerment* (ACE) becomes relevant.

ACE provides the international framework for actively involving the whole of society in climate action. Its goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to addressing the climate crisis – through knowledge, skills, and the ability to act. The six key areas of action – education, training, public awareness, access to information, participation, and international cooperation – form the foundation. When these conditions are in place, citizens are not only able to respond, but to take initiative and help shape change: in municipalities, in schools, in associations, in businesses, and in politics.

The legal basis for this is provided by Article 6 of the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change and Article 12 of the 2015 Paris Agreement. These state:

„Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.“

Figure 1: Paths of Active Climate Protection

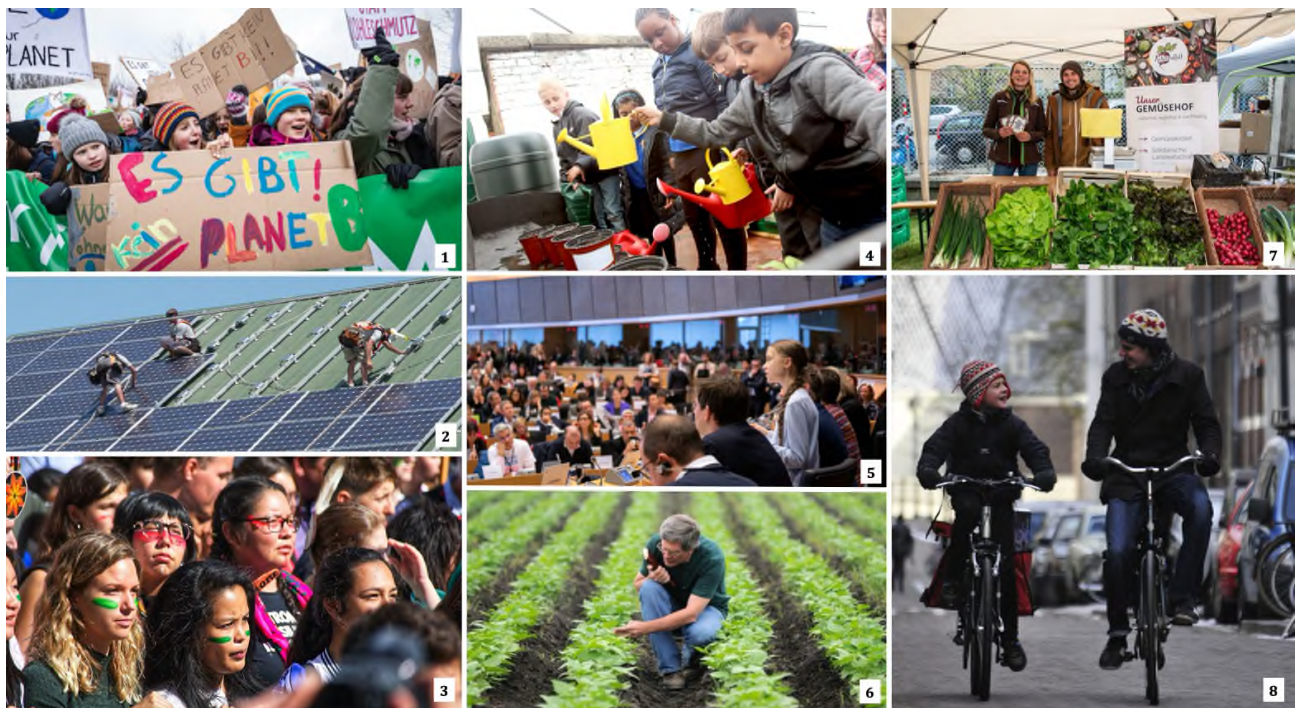


Figure: The photographs depict people who are engaged in climate action in a variety of ways.

Sources: (1) Jörg Farys / Fridays for Future, CC BY 2.0; (2) US Department of Agriculture, Public Domain; (3) Pascal Bernardon, Unsplash Lizen; (4) 10:10, CC BY 2.0; (5) European Union 2020 – Source: EP, CC-BY-4.0; (6) Neil Palmer / CIAT, CC BY-SA 2.0; (7) Boku University, 5. Boku-Nachhaltigkeitstag, CC BY-ND 2.0; (8) Marc van Woudenberg, CC BY-SA 2.0.

The present implementation concept outlines how *Action for Climate Empowerment* can be advanced in Germany during the years 2026–2030. It is not intended as a final master plan, but

rather as a roadmap for the next five years: to establish initial structures, strengthen existing approaches, and pave the way for a long-term, participatorily developed *ACE strategy*. The objective is to create the conditions that enable people in Germany not only to experience the transformation, but to actively shape it.

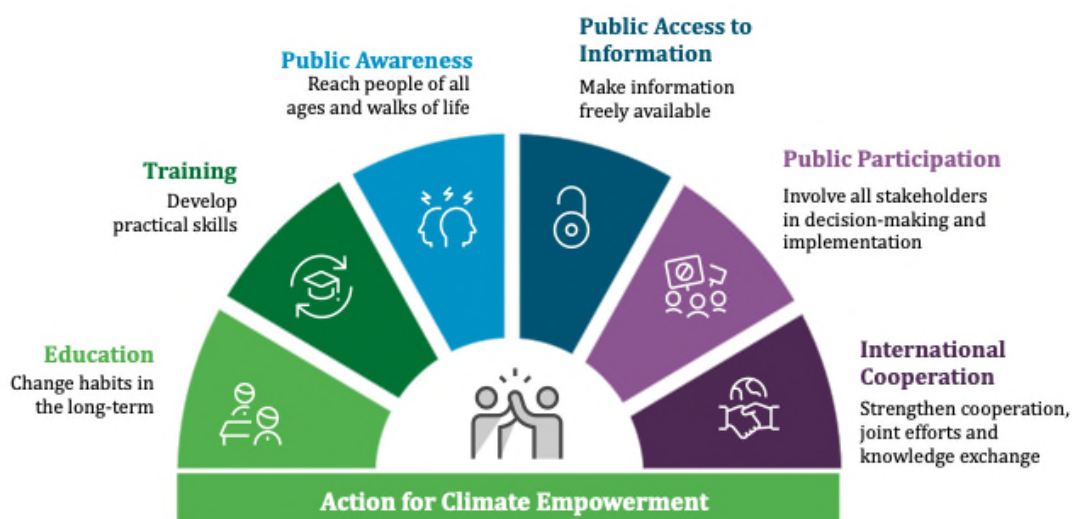
1.1 Focus and Target Groups of the Implementation Concept

The *implementation concept* is initially directed at the two **German ACE Focal Points**. They serve as national contact persons within the UNFCCC processes and coordinate the implementation of ACE in Germany. The concept is intended to provide them with a concrete framework for action and strategic orientation to guide their work in the coming years.

At the same time, the implementation of ACE is a societal task that extends far beyond the responsibilities of the Focal Points. Accordingly, this concept also addresses a broader range of relevant stakeholders — including ministries and federal state representations, municipalities, educational and research institutions, civil society, the media, and the private sector. It invites all those who see themselves as part of the ACE community and wish to contribute to building a climate-resilient and climate-competent society.

A key focus of the implementation concept lies at the **process level**: it outlines how the necessary structures and procedures can be established to ensure that ACE becomes sustainably embedded in Germany. These processes are designed to support the more targeted, coordinated, and effective implementation of the six thematic areas of ACE (see Figure 2). The substantive objectives are presented in summary form in Table 1 and revisited in Table 3 at the end of the document.

Figure 2: Overview of the six thematic areas of ACE



Source: own illustration, ConPolicy with Napkin.ai and MS PowerPoint.

Differentiation between the terms ACE implementation concept and ACE strategy

In this paper, the terms “ACE implementation concept” and “ACE strategy” are understood to mean the following:

- ▶ **ACE implementation concept:** This document is the ACE implementation concept: it sets out how ACE can be promoted, developed, and consolidated in Germany over the next five years.

It is intended as a roadmap that prepares activities and structures, without being an all-encompassing master strategy.

- **ACE strategy:** When this document refers to the ACE strategy, it means a national strategy that is to be developed as part of a participatory process with active stakeholders. It is to be launched within the five-year plan.

Table 1: Descriptions of the six thematic ACE areas

ACE areas and their levers for change	Description and vision
<p>Education</p> <p>Change habits in the long-term: Education enables people to understand the causes and consequences of climate change, to make informed decisions and to take appropriate actions to address it.</p>	<p>Education seeks to achieve profound, long-term changes in understanding, particularly among young people. It involves developing educational curricula, training of trainers and teachers and adequate pedagogies. The results of a successful programme would ultimately be a population whose deep-seated appreciation of the climate challenge leads to greater national action and commitment.</p>
<p>Training</p> <p>Develop practical skills: Training provides the core technical and soft skills as well as advanced knowledge needed to support the transition to green economies and sustainable, inclusive climate-neutral and resilient societies.</p>	<p>Training programmes seek to spread specific practical skills that can have an immediate practical application. Examples include the ability to gather and interpret climate data, conduct inventories of national emissions, and identify climate-friendly technologies. Training is about learning by doing – individuals, communities and organizations can all benefit from ongoing learning.</p>
<p>Public Awareness</p> <p>Reach people of all ages and walks of life: Successful public awareness campaigns engage communities and individuals in the common effort needed to foster climate-friendly behaviour, sustainable lifestyles and implement national, regional, sectoral and international climate change policies.</p>	<p>Many governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations and UN agencies have already launched major public awareness programmes. But there remains an enormous unmet need for more outreach. Creating a successful outreach programme that truly changes behaviour involves targeted and systematic communications.</p>
<p>Public Access to information</p> <p>Make information freely available: Public access to information strengthens connections between knowledge production, knowledge sharing and decision-making, and provides people with the tools they need to play an active role in addressing climate change.</p>	<p>Programmes to engage citizens and CSOs in addressing climate change can be improved by ensuring that information is freely available. This is crucial in order to develop and implement effective policies and to engage people actively in implementing these policies. Technologies such as databases and the internet facilitate the provision of climate information, data and statistics to all citizens.</p>
<p>Public Participation</p> <p>Involve all stakeholders in decision-making and implementation: Public participation ensures ownership by encouraging people to be more attentive to policy-making and participate in the implementation of climate policies.</p>	<p>By ensuring that people can participate effectively in climate change decision-making and implement climate mitigation and adaptation activities, governments should seek to integrate civil society perspectives and mobilize the general public. In some places, this will prompt profound changes to how political leaders and civil servants are accustomed to working and encourage people to be more attentive to policy-making.</p>

ACE areas and their levers for change	Description and vision
<p>International Cooperation</p> <p>Strengthen cooperation, joint efforts and knowledge exchange: These five elements can all be strengthened through international cooperation. Governments and organizations can support each other with resources, technical expertise, ideas and inspiration for developing climate action programmes.</p>	<p>International cooperation and exchange can play a major role in strengthening ACE efforts. Many governments and relevant stakeholders need access to expertise and financial and technical resources so they can develop their own climate change programmes. All countries can benefit from sharing success stories, exchanging personnel and strengthening institutional capacity.</p>

Source: Table compiled from UNESCO (2020) and UNESCO & UNFCCC (2016).

1.2 Current Status of ACE Implementation in Germany

Before presenting the strategic recommendations for the structural implementation of ACE in Germany, the **current status** is summarized below. The presentation provides an overview of existing strengths, gaps, and challenges. A detailed analysis of the status quo is documented in the interim report “*Action for Climate Empowerment in Germany*” and can be found there.

Germany is active in many areas of climate education, communication, and participation – yet the **term** that brings these strands together under one umbrella, *Action for Climate Empowerment*, **remains little known**. Even among experts, awareness of ACE’s history, scope, and added value is limited. As a result, much of what substantively falls under ACE is not explicitly implemented under this label but is instead embedded in *Education for Sustainable Development* (ESD), civil society engagement, climate communication, or general climate policy.

Germany’s **federal structure** creates both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, fragmented responsibilities and significant differences in resources between federal states and municipalities lead to **unequal conditions** for coherent ACE implementation. Smaller and financially weaker municipalities in particular often reach their limits when tasks such as climate education or participation are added. On the other hand, federalism enables experimentation: states and municipalities can test new approaches that, if successful, can be transferred to other or higher levels. However, for this bottom-up learning process to unfold its full potential, stronger coordination is required (see also Schlacke et al., 2025).

In the field of **education and training**, Germany benefits from robust structures through its ESD architecture. The National Platform, expert forums, and the youth panel (youpan) are well-established formats, and the monitoring conducted by the Institut Futur is extensive. At the same time, ESD is often treated in practice as an “additional task,” and teacher training remains a weak point (Holst et al., 2024). It also remains unclear to what extent the tertiary education sector – both academic and vocational – currently prepares people adequately for action in the context of the climate crisis.

Public awareness of climate protection is high but, compared to issues such as health, education, or economic stability, has declined in relative importance. Studies such as the Environmental Awareness Study and the PACE survey provide valuable insights (Betsch et al., 2025; Frick et al., 2025), yet they also reveal that many people underestimate the actual level of societal support for climate protection (Andre et al., 2024).

Progress has been made in **public access to information**, for example through the portal *umwelt.info*. Projects such as *gutesklimafuer.nrw*, the *Klimafakten Academy*, *Netzwerk Klima*, and *Germany Talks Climate* demonstrate ways to improve accessibility. At the same time, many challenges remain: Experts emphasize that citizens are often faced with too much fragmented

information that is difficult to integrate into their everyday life. However, it is important to distinguish that, for science, open access is a key component in promoting transparency, increasing data availability, and ultimately providing a more reliable basis for public information. Another challenge is that misinformation and disinformation in social media are widespread: Studies show widespread exposure, with 61 percent of German adolescents reporting encounters with disinformation on social media within a single month (Global Witness, 2024; mpfs, n.d.).

Participation is regarded by many citizens and experts as essential, and experiences – for instance with citizens’ assemblies – are generally evaluated positively. Germany is considered an international frontrunner because a relevant number of lottery-based assemblies were hosted (BUW, 2024). Nevertheless, systematic support, diversity, and binding follow-up of results are often lacking (Peucker et al., 2020). Promising initiatives such as the new Youth Act in Brandenburg or local energy cooperatives show potential but are not yet established on a broad scale.

In terms of **international cooperation**, initiatives such as the *ACE Hub* (UNFCCC, 2025) and the support of youth delegations already build valuable bridges. The International Climate Initiative is a key instrument in this regard. These experiences can serve as inspiration for the national level.

Beyond the six substantive areas, the current status can also be viewed through the lens of the *Glasgow Work Programme*. Introduced at COP26 in 2021, the programme complements the implementation of the six ACE areas with a structural perspective. It focuses in particular on structural, procedural, and instrumental gaps in previous implementation and has defined four priority areas.

The four priority areas of the Glasgow Work Programme

These priorities were set out in the Glasgow Work Program (UNFCCC, 2021):

Policy Coherence

The objective of this area is not to treat the various elements of ACE in isolation, but to integrate them into the political framework at all levels—national, regional, and local. This means that strategies, laws, and programs should be designed in such a way that they systematically take into account ACE elements such as education, participation, and access to information, rather than treating them as an afterthought.

Coordinated Action

The aim is to promote partnerships and cooperation across sectors and levels. Various actors—governments, local authorities, civil society, academia—should work together to pool resources, knowledge, and responsibilities and implement measures jointly.

Tools and Support

This area focuses on providing tools, methods, materials, and support services to enable stakeholders to take action. This includes training opportunities, toolkits for climate communication or participation, open data portals, and assistance to enable individuals and organizations to implement ACE elements.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

This area aims to systematically track progress and evaluate the implementation of ACE. This means developing indicators and metrics, producing regular reports on the six ACE elements, and using feedback cycles to reflect on experiences and adapt processes.

With regard to the *Glasgow Work Program*, the following picture emerges for Germany: Initial steps toward **policy coherence** are visible, primarily through ESD structures (national platform, expert forums, youth panel *youpan*). Nevertheless, ACE has not yet followed a cross-departmental common thread, and links to climate policy tend to arise on an ad hoc and project-specific basis rather than through strategic planning.

There are isolated **coordination** hubs, such as the close-knit structures of the energy agencies in Baden-Württemberg. What is lacking is a national “backbone” that systematically connects the federal government, states, and municipalities across all ACE elements.

There are numerous **resources** available, such as teaching materials (*Umwelt im Unterricht*), open data via *umwelt.info*, practical toolkits such as *Germany Talks Climate*, and international training courses (*ACE Hub*). However, the range of resources on offer is difficult to navigate and there is a lack of financial support.

With its national **monitoring** of ESD (*Institut Futur*), Germany has an established and comprehensive system that evaluates input, processes, and outcomes. Studies such as the *Environmental Awareness Study* and *PACE* also provide valuable data on public awareness. However, there is a lack of systematic monitoring, evaluation and reporting for ACE as a whole.

In summary, to date Germany lacks an overarching structure that brings together all six ACE areas and coordinates them reliably. Much of the work is project-based, decentralized, and often temporary—but there is no stable foundation for coherent, long-term ACE implementation. This is precisely where the implementation concept steps in: it aims to create the necessary structures, close gaps, and pave the way for ACE to become a central component of climate policy in Germany.

Conclusion: The added value of the ACE perspective in Germany

In Germany, there are already a number of activities that promote *Action for Climate Empowerment*. However, there has been a lack of holistic coordination and a lack of an overarching overview of these efforts. A holistic view of activities can increase their effectiveness, clarify political priorities, and identify less useful measures more quickly. This is precisely where the added value of a joint ACE perspective lies: it enables the many individual strands of climate competence and climate action to be viewed under one umbrella, gaps to be systematically identified, and synergies between the different emphases to be promoted. It is crucial that not only knowledge is communicated, but above all that concrete action is initiated and facilitated—because action changes attitudes and knowledge more persistently than pure information. Institutions at all levels must therefore be empowered to implement practical measures. Moreover, systemic solutions — such as low-meat meal options in public canteens — must make climate-friendly behavior significantly easier for individuals. The current situation is that many people find individual climate action difficult due to the lack of systemic support. Climate-friendly choices must become the default in many areas.

2 The implementation concept

In order to meet the challenges posed by the climate crisis, it is crucial to inform, involve, and empower society as a whole to actively participate in finding solutions. This is precisely where *Action for Climate Empowerment* comes in: education, training, public awareness, participation, and access to information form the basis for a climate-conscious and empowered society.

ACE is therefore not only a tool for implementing climate goals, but also a cornerstone of democratic participation. Only when people are informed, their voices are heard, and they have the necessary skills can they actively take responsibility for shaping a sustainable future.

Further information on the concept

To develop a comprehensive strategy for ACE, which is in line with the overall ACE philosophy, a broad participatory process involving all relevant stakeholders is required. Countries such as Chile have demonstrated how participatory processes can work. This document is therefore not intended to be a definitive, all-encompassing master plan, but rather a roadmap for the next five years. The aim is to initiate, establish and consolidate national activities, processes and structures for ACE. Following this initial implementation phase, an iterative process will begin: the strategy will be evaluated, adapted to new circumstances and further developed.

This implementation concept focuses primarily on the national level. Although the opportunities and added value of international cooperation are also addressed in individual sections, this area is deliberately kept in the background, as the focus is on domestic structures, processes and actors.

Methodology for developing this implementation concept

The implementation concept was developed methodically in close alignment with the approach used in the status quo analysis of ACE (see interim report '*Action for Climate Empowerment in Germany*'). It was based on a combination of different sources and perspectives: First, **expert interviews** were conducted, which provided valuable insights and identified concrete measures to strengthen ACE in Germany. This was supplemented by a **literature review** to fill gaps in the interviews and provide additional information. **International good practices** served as inspiration, with a particular focus on identifying which of the tried-and-tested approaches could be meaningfully transferred to the German context (see interim report). Finally, the **expertise of the research team** was incorporated, bringing the various strands together and consolidating them into a coherent overall concept.

2.1 Guiding principles for the implementation of ACE in Germany

This implementation concept is based on a series of guiding principles that serve as a framework for the implementation of ACE in Germany.

Figure 3: Guiding principles for ACE implementation

Source: own illustration, ConPolicy.

1. ACE as a cross-section of climate policy

Action for Climate Empowerment must become a headline of climate policy. ACE can bridge the gap between social participation and political climate policy – provided it is taken seriously and consistently considered in all areas.

It is not crucial that the term ACE becomes widely known to the general public. Rather, it is about mainstreaming its content. Climate protection should no longer be viewed as an isolated issue or an ‘add-on’, but should be systematically and naturally incorporated into various policy areas and stakeholder groups. The *Health in All-Policies* approach can serve as a model.

2. Establishing permanent structures

The progress of ACE should not depend solely on individuals, temporary projects or informal networks. It requires permanent institutional structures that function independently of personnel changes and continuously channel expertise and resources.

3. Strengthening local implementation

Climate awareness and participation arise primarily at the ground level. Therefore, ACE activities must be strengthened particularly at the municipality level and close to people's everyday realities – meaning where people can be directly addressed, involved, and empowered to take action.

4. Building on existing networks and structures

ACE should build on existing networks and structures of stakeholders in a constructive manner. There are already some established structures (particularly in the field of ESD) that can be linked to.

5. Inclusion of marginalised groups

A key prerequisite for the effectiveness of ACE is the active participation of disadvantaged and marginalised groups. The UNFCCC processes and documents explicitly emphasise the importance of a gender and intergenerational approach, in which both gender equality and intergenerational dialogue play a central role. This approach should be extended to include diverse marginalised groups (‘climate justice’).

6. Focus on ACE areas with little support to date

While established structures already exist in the area of ESD, comparable support is still lacking in other ACE areas. In addition to continuing and consolidating existing structures, the focus should therefore be placed on strengthening *public awareness*, *public access to information* and *public participation* in order to establish robust structures in these areas as well and complete the overall implementation of ACE in Germany.

7. Maintaining a systemic perspective

The ACE framework carries the risk of emphasising individual climate protection too strongly. Effective climate protection requires profound systemic changes, not just individual behavioural changes or factual knowledge. Climate policy must target particularly emission-intensive industries. For such measures to be democratically viable, a better understanding of public attitudes is needed. Behavioural research can help promote support for systemic interventions such as carbon pricing and ensure that changes are designed to be fair and effective. To this end, climate communication must focus much more strongly than before on explaining the necessary measures for society as a whole in an understandable way, emphasising what they mean for individuals, how and how well they work, and to what extent they ensure social equality (Betsch et al., 2025).

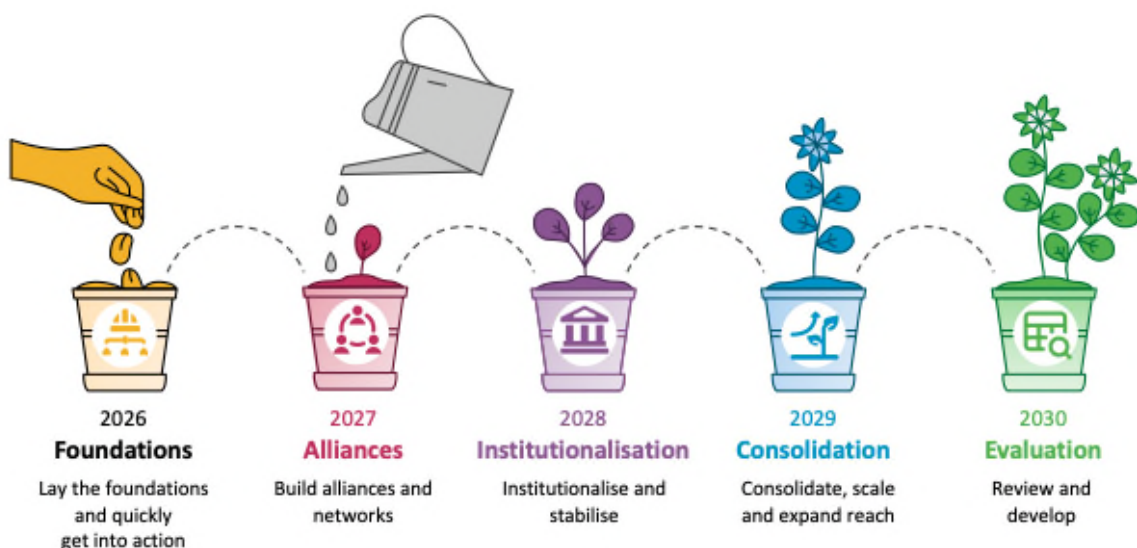
2.2 Overview of the implementation concept

The implementation concept for *Action for Climate Empowerment* in Germany is designed to run for a period of five years and comprises five target levels, i. e. one overarching level and the four priority areas of the Glasgow Work Programme.

2.2.1 Focus of the five years

Each year has a clear focus that structures the next steps and drives the development of ACE forward.

Figure 4: The 5-year plan for ACE in Germany



Source: Own illustration, ConPolicy with Napkin.ai and MS PowerPoint.

In the first year (2026), the focus will be on establishing the foundations and moving quickly into action. Existing structures will be reviewed, gaps identified, and initial support measures tested.

In the second year (2027), the emphasis will be on building alliances and networks, as well as engaging multipliers. The objective is to strengthen practice-oriented partnerships and increase the visibility of existing initiatives.

In the third year (2028), efforts will concentrate on institutionalisation and long-term consolidation. Pilot projects and tested approaches are to be transformed into permanent structures to ensure the lasting implementation of ACE. During this year, the participatory consultation process for the development of the national ACE strategy will also be initiated.

In the fourth year (2029), the focus will shift to consolidation, scaling, and outreach. Successful approaches will be further developed, expanded, and transferred to new contexts.

In the fifth year (2030), the established structures and processes will be evaluated and refined. The experiences gained during the first implementation phase will feed into the development of the national ACE strategy, enabling proven approaches to be strengthened and new needs to be identified.

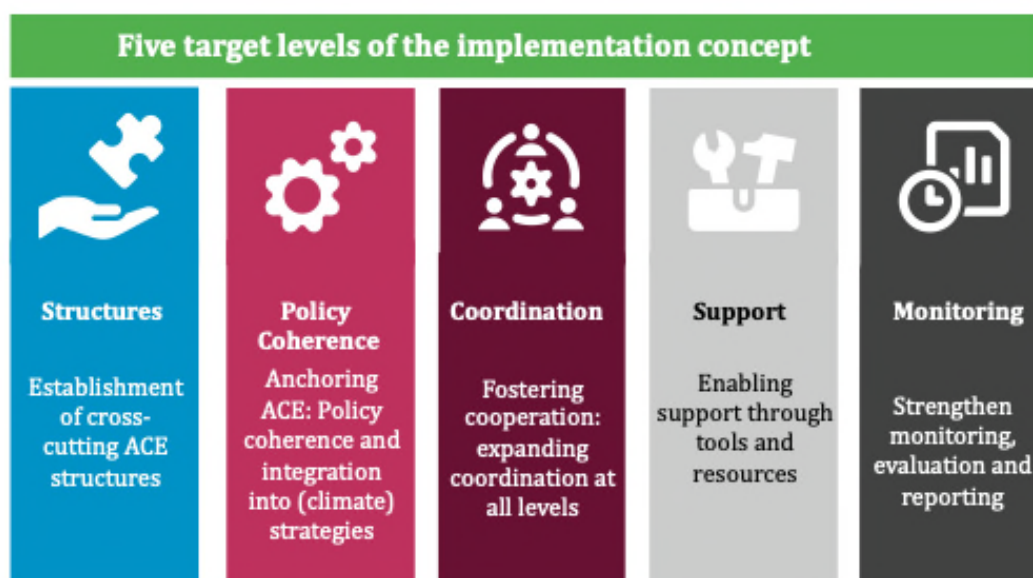
2.2.2 Target levels of the implementation concept

The implementation concept is structured around five target levels, which together form the basis for the successful implementation of ACE in Germany. One of these levels is cross-cutting, while the other four target levels address the priority areas of the *Glasgow Work Programme*.

The **five target levels** are:

- ▶ Establishing Cross-Cutting ACE Structures (see chapter 2.3)
- ▶ Anchoring ACE: Policy Coherence and Integration into (Climate) Strategies (see chapter 2.4)
- ▶ Fostering Cooperation: Strengthening Coordination at All Levels (see chapter 2.5)
- ▶ Enabling Support through Tools and Resources (see chapter 2.6)
- ▶ Enhancing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (see chapter 2.7)

It is important to note that the boundaries between the separate levels are not strictly defined. Measures that are located at one level may also appear in parallel at another level. During the implementation process, these levels should therefore be considered together and integrated in order to create synergies.

Figure 5: Overview of the five target levels

Source: Own illustration, ConPolicy with Napkin.ai and MS PowerPoint.

Table 2: Main goals of the target levels

Target level	Main goals of this level
Establishing Cross-Cutting ACE Structures (see chapter 2.3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long-term anchoring and institutionalisation The aim is to establish permanent, person-independent structures, including a coordination office, which will secure ACE in Germany in the long term. 2. Maintaining a strategic overview It is important to gain an overview of all ACE activities. Initially, the ACE focal points will be responsible for keeping track of the overall situation, identifying structural and thematic priorities, and linking the work in Germany to the international framework. Their role is likely to change over the years, depending on the willingness of other actors to take on ACE responsibilities. Non-governmental actors should also be involved here in order to gain a broader perspective with the necessary critical and constructive distance from the governmental sector. 3. Initiating a participatory process for a new ACE strategy A key overarching goal is to pave the way for a new national ACE strategy. To this end, a participatory vision-finding process is to be initiated, involving relevant stakeholders from politics, administration, civil society, science, education, business and, in particular, young people. This process should serve to develop a shared vision and define the future priorities of ACE in Germany, ensuring that the strategy is both broadly supported and forward-looking. The aim is for Germany to have an updated, broadly supported ACE strategy for the period after 2030.
Anchoring ACE: Policy Coherence and Integration into (Climate) Strategies (see chapter 2.4)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anchoring ACE structurally and legislatively The aim is to firmly anchor ACE in Germany at all levels – EU, federal, state and local. ACE should not be seen as an add-on, but as a cross-cutting task that is naturally incorporated into climate, education and financial policy. 2. Fostering policy coherence through mechanisms for dialogue and exchange A cross-border exchange mechanism will be established to highlight good practices and share them between the federal, state and local governments. This will enable successful approaches to be transferred and policy coherence to be systematically strengthened.

Target level	Main goals of this level
	<p>3. Integrating ACE prominently into the NDCs A key objective is to incorporate ACE clearly and bindingly into the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) so that it is also recognised internationally as part of German climate policy.</p> <p>4. Making the legal basis transparent Based on the monitoring, a mapping will be created showing in which documents, coalition agreements or laws ACE is already mentioned. This will form the basis for identifying gaps and anchoring ACE more firmly in the relevant legal frameworks.</p> <p>5. Systematically integrating social and communication expertise Communication expertise and social science expertise should be considered from the very outset of the development of political climate measures and policies. This ensures that measures can be implemented effectively not only from a technical perspective, but also in terms of their societal impact.</p>
<p>Fostering Cooperation: Strengthening Coordination at All Levels (see chapter 2.5)</p>	<p>1. Strengthening Coordination between the Federal Government, Federal States, and Municipalities Build and strengthen structures and networks between the federal government, the federal states, and municipalities, with a particular focus on the local level. This includes establishing an interministerial working group on ACE, as well as setting up a regular federal–state exchange format on ACE — or linking to existing formats that can be expanded to include ACE-related topics.</p> <p>2. Building Bridges: Fostering and supporting Civil Society Alliances Support existing civil society and non-governmental alliances and establish new ones where gaps exist. This approach helps strengthen connections between climate actors and other stakeholders. The objective is to build and reinforce a nationwide network of alliances, including welfare organisations, churches, fire brigades, and community associations.</p> <p>3. Establishing Cross-Sector Partnerships Establish and promote cross-sector partnerships between government, the private sector, and civil society in order to combine expertise, resources, and legitimacy.</p> <p>4. Strengthening and Institutionalising ACE Focal Points Relieve and strengthen ACE Focal Points by creating dedicated contact persons, working groups, and coordination bodies to ensure their structural anchoring.</p>
<p>Enabling Support through Tools and Resources (see chapter 2.6)</p>	<p>1. Securing financial and personnel resources Particularly at the local level, permanent funding and positions are needed to ensure continuity and reliability in the implementation of ACE. Only in this way can measures have a long-term effect, rather than remaining dependent on short-term projects.</p> <p>2. Providing spaces, tools and communication services Stakeholders must have access to the necessary tools, spaces and support services so that their commitment can have an impact. This includes practical materials, support services and low-threshold communication platforms.</p> <p>3. Supporting and Recognising Voluntary Commitment Volunteers play a central role in the implementation of ACE. To strengthen their contribution, supportive measures such as volunteer leave or academic credit should be introduced. Equally important are social appreciation and visible recognition of their commitment.</p> <p>4. Building Competence in Climate Communication Effective climate communication is essential to counter misinformation and to foster trust in climate action. Therefore, communication competences should be systematically strengthened to ensure that climate policy is conveyed from the outset in a clear, fact-based, and people-centred manner.</p>

Target level	Main goals of this level
Enhancing Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (see chapter 2.7)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connecting Existing Monitoring Systems The goal is to strengthen the links between existing monitoring entities and to facilitate the exchange of data and results. To achieve this, systematic networks should be established, and processes for automated and simplified data exchange implemented. 2. Creating New Monitoring Structures Where Gaps Exist In areas that are currently insufficiently covered, complementary monitoring structures should be developed. Initial steps may include low-threshold approaches such as expert consultations and pilot projects, before establishing systematic monitoring in the long term. 3. Fulfilling International Reporting Obligations It is also essential to ensure that Germany meets its international obligations under the UNFCCC. Monitoring and reporting systems should be designed in such a way that they can also serve international reporting requirements.

2.3 Establishing Cross-Cutting ACE Structures

The objective at this level is to establish permanent, person-independent structures that ensure the long-term anchoring of ACE in Germany. The main goals of this structural level are summarised in Figure 6. The following sections provide a detailed breakdown of the specific objectives and measures for each year of the five-year roadmap.

Figure 6: Main goals of the structural level



The detailed descriptions of the main goals are available in Table 2.

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2.3.1 Year 2026: Laying the foundations and taking immediate action (structural level)

The first year will focus on laying the foundations for the successful implementation of ACE in Germany and taking immediate action. Low-threshold structures will be set up, initial communication channels established, and key stakeholders involved.

Target 1: Establish a low-threshold coordination centre

The two ACE focal points establish a visible and accessible coordination centre. This includes:

- ▶ A main email address (e. g. acefocalpoints@uba.de),
- ▶ a basic information page where essential content and updates are accessible,
- ▶ as well as the introduction of a newsletter through which the Focal Points can pass on specific information to the core target group.

Cooperation can be useful in establishing this communication structure – for example, with the existing *ACE Hub* or by linking to established newsletters and channels that can serve as multipliers..

Target 2: Compliance with international reporting requirements (see Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting)

It must be ensured that Germany fulfils its international reporting obligations (e.g. within the framework of *National Communications* to the UNFCCC) in the first year. The focal points are responsible for compiling the necessary information for this purpose.

Target 3: Establishing structures and securing contact with key stakeholders (see coordination level)

Across the thematic areas of the Glasgow Work Programme, the necessary structures are to be developed and initial direct contacts established with key stakeholders. To support this process, an initial stakeholder mapping may be conducted, building on the results of the status quo analysis (see interim report)¹. These contacts include, for example, the established structures of ESD, from which valuable lessons can be drawn for the ACE context. The objective is to create a low-threshold entry point and to involve relevant individuals and institutions at an early stage. At least one online meeting should be organised with the aims of (1) introducing ACE and its benefits to key stakeholders and (2) inviting these stakeholders to become part of the ACE network.

Target 4: Preparation of practice-oriented alliances (see also coordination level)

As a preparatory step for the second year, initial discussions with potential alliance partners and networks are recommended, providing a foundation for further development and consolidation in year two. To this end, initial cooperation opportunities will be explored, needs identified, and potential multipliers mapped. Particular attention should be given to actors operating within municipal structures, close to people's everyday lives.

¹ The initial status quo analysis primarily focused on ACE activities and actors that contribute broadly and across the six thematic ACE areas, such as education, participation, and public awareness. However, it became evident that numerous ACE-related activities and actors also operate within specific sectoral and emission-relevant fields — such as energy, buildings, food, and transport. These sectors likewise influence climate awareness and climate education and should therefore be included in future assessments.

2.3.2 Year 2027: Establishing alliances and networks (structural level)

Following the establishment of initial foundations in the first year, the focus in the second year will be on building robust alliances and networks. The objective is to strengthen the anchoring of ACE in Germany, create synergies, and promote reliable cooperation between policy, practice, and civil society.

Target 1: Establish a low-threshold advisory committee

Based on the key stakeholders identified in the first year, a low-threshold advisory committee will be established. It will be composed of experts and practitioners from all ACE areas and will meet regularly, e.g. twice a year.

- ▶ The meetings serve to strategically develop structures in order to avoid duplication of work and strengthen synergies.
- ▶ The committee should also take on a role in the monitoring process (see Monitoring section).
- ▶ In the field of ESD, it is essential to involve people from the national ESD process, while in other ACE areas such established bridge structures still need to be created.
- ▶ The working group is primarily intended to help the ACE focal points maintain an strategic overview and stay informed about developments in the ACE area.

Target 2: Systematically share information with the ACE community

The existing information channels (newsletter, website) are used to keep the ACE community up to date on current developments, projects and international processes. At the same time, these channels can also be used to gather information from the ACE community in order to feed specific needs and experiences back into the work.

Target 3: Connecting to existing structures and networks

In the second year, ACE focal points and participating actors are to increase their participation in relevant conferences, networking events and alliances. The aim is to link the work to existing structures (e.g. ESD process) and to be visibly present in the discourse. As a supplementary format, a networking online meeting with key multipliers could be organised to build bridges between different areas.

Target 4: Launch of pilot projects for practice-oriented alliances

The focus is on establishing new alliances through pilot projects. These are designed to bring together actors with resources and infrastructure (e.g. churches, trade unions, practical actors in local communities) with civil society groups and those active in climate protection. The aim is to create spaces and resources for engagement and to test cooperation between established institutions and committed groups in practice. The focus should also be on encouraging people to get involved in the places where they are already active.

2.3.3 Year 2028: Institutionalisation and preparation of long-term structures (structural level)

In the third year, the focus will be on institutionalising ACE structures. At the same time, the foundations will be laid for a broad consultation process to prepare for the development of a national ACE strategy.

Target 1: Continuation of low-threshold structures

The information and exchange formats established in the early years (newsletter, website, network, working group) will be continuously maintained and expanded. They remain the basis for communication and networking and ensure that the exchange with the relevant actors is maintained.

Target 2: Preparation of the consultation process for developing an ACE strategy

An extensive consultation process is to be prepared for the participatory development of an ACE strategy. Important guidelines for the consultation process are (see also UNESCO & UNFCCC, 2016, p. 41):

- ▶ The process must be well planned, continuous, and transparent—in other words, it should not be a one-off event, but rather an ongoing participatory process.
- ▶ The basis for this is careful identification and analysis of stakeholders.

The process involves three steps:

- ▶ **Information:** Inform the public and stakeholders about procedures and content at an early stage.
- ▶ **Participation:** Mutual exchange, incorporation of expertise and perspectives,
- ▶ **Consideration:** Clear integration of results into the strategy.

Stakeholders and the public require sufficient time and access to relevant information in order to participate meaningfully. The results of the consultations must be documented transparently and presented in a public summary to ensure acceptance and legitimacy.

Good Practice: The strategy process in Chile

Chile had already announced the development of a strategy for capacity-building and climate empowerment in 2020. With support from the EU programme EUROCLIMA+, this process was carried out through a multi-stakeholder participatory approach. The result: in 2024, the Chilean government published a *National Strategy for Climate Empowerment*. (UNFCCC, 2024)

2.3.4 Year 2029: Conducting the consultation process, consolidating structures (structural level)

In the fourth year, the focus will be on conducting the broad-based consultation process. In parallel, existing structures will be consolidated and their outreach expanded to support the process and ensure broad legitimacy for the forthcoming national ACE strategy.

Target 1: Consolidation of low-threshold structures

The existing instruments such as newsletters, information pages, and networks will be stabilized and expanded. They will now serve not only to facilitate the flow of information, but also as accompanying platforms for the consultation process (e.g., publication of consultation papers, feedback opportunities).

Target 2: Implementation of the consultation process on the national ACE strategy

The process prepared last year is now being implemented.

2.3.5 Year 2030: Evaluation and future development (structural level)

The fifth year will focus on critically reviewing the structures and processes that have been established, drawing lessons from the consultations and pilot projects, and systematically incorporating these into the new national ACE strategy.

Target 1: Continuation of established structures

Structures that have already been introduced will continue to be used as in previous years.

Target 2: Evaluation of processes and structures

All structures established since 2026 (coordination office, network, working group, information channels) will be evaluated. In particular, the evaluation will assess whether these structures function independently of individuals, efficiently, and in the long term. Special attention will be paid to whether the created structures offer real additional value—or whether they ultimately generate additional work without significantly supporting the implementation of ACE.

Target 3: The consultation process will be completed and a new ACE strategy will be adopted

The consultation process carried out in the year 2029 will be systematically evaluated. This process will also examine the role of the ACE Focal Points to date and, if necessary, redefine their role for the coming years. Results from the other target levels will also be incorporated into the new ACE strategy.

2.4 Anchoring ACE: Policy Coherence and Integration into (Climate) Strategies

The objective at this level is to establish ACE as an integral part of Germany's climate policy and to ensure policy coherence across all levels of governance. ACE should not be regarded as an additional task, but as a cross-cutting responsibility that is inherently integrated into climate, education, and financial policy. The main goals of this level are illustrated in Figure 7. The following sections describe the specific objectives and measures for each year of the five-year roadmap.

Figure 7: Main goals of the Policy coherence level

The detailed descriptions of the main goals are available in Table 2.

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2.4.1 Year 2026: Laying the foundations (policy coherence level)

In the first year, the focus will be on establishing a solid knowledge and decision-making basis. The objective is to analyse the relevant processes, documents, and legal frameworks.

Target 1: Analysis of the process for integrating ACE into the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

It is to be determined how the process of integrating ACE into the *Nationally Determined Contributions* is carried out in practice.

- ▶ **Identify cooperation partners:** This includes clarifying which federal ministries and which European institutions need to be involved.
- ▶ **Understanding the process:** Examination of the formal procedures for creating and revising NDCs in order to determine where ACE can be thematically anchored.

The result is a roadmap that outlines the necessary steps, actors, and timelines for integrating ACE into the next NDCs.

Target 2: Mapping relevant documents and laws

Systematic collection and analysis of laws, regulations, strategies, and plans in which ACE or its individual thematic areas are already anchored. This work can build on the status quo analysis already conducted and be complemented by a detailed legal and strategic mapping. This mapping is closely linked to the monitoring processes at the monitoring level and can be enriched through the expertise of the monitoring team. A project to conduct a detailed analysis of the existing legal framework at the federal and state levels should be launched. The focus will be on identifying where existing laws and regulations (e.g. Building Code, environmental law, nature conservation law, education and youth legislation) already contain entry points for ACE. In addition, gaps will be identified where ACE is currently missing or only implicitly addressed. A legal expert opinion will be prepared as a basis for policy recommendations aimed at strengthening the legal anchoring of ACE.

Good Practice: Legal provisions at state level

Two positive anchors at the state level are:

- ▶ **Citizen Energy Act in North Rhine-Westphalia:** The law obliges wind turbine operators to offer residents and local authorities opportunities for financial participation.
- ▶ **Children and Youth Act in Brandenburg:** The state's own Children and Youth Act (BbgKJG) was introduced on August 1, 2024, and guarantees young people the right to participate.

2.4.2 Year 2027: Political integration and initial alliances (policy coherence level)

The second year is about transferring the foundations laid in the first year into practice. This includes initial steps toward integrating ACE into national and international strategies, an in-depth legal analysis, and the establishment of alliances between the federal government, states, and municipalities, including clarification of mandates, responsibilities, and financing.

Target 1: Start of implementation of the roadmap for integrating ACE into the *Nationally Determined Contributions*

Building on the roadmap developed in the first year, the integration of ACE into the NDCs will be actively advanced. Initial discussions with the relevant (EU) institutions will be initiated. Concrete text proposals and recommendations will be developed on how ACE commitments can be incorporated into the NDCs.

Target 2: Strengthen dialog and alliances with federal and state representatives and share best practices

Establishment of an exchange with representatives from various federal ministries and the federal states. The aim is to promote policy coherence for ACE and to prevent the creation of parallel or contradictory structures or a diffusion of responsibilities. Good practices will be systematically collected and shared within this exchange to initiate mutual learning processes between the federal states. Organising joint workshops or forums in which representatives from the federal, state, and municipal levels exchange good practices and discuss potential scaling approaches would be one possible option.

Target 3: Ensuring policy coherence with other climate stakeholders

Systematic dialogue with climate action stakeholders who have so far been less engaged with ACE. The objective is to strengthen the integration of ACE elements into their strategies and programmes and to demonstrate the added value of doing so. Joint workshops or consultation rounds may be organised to identify interfaces and potential areas for cooperation.

2.4.3 Year 2028: Institutionalisation and preparation of long-term structures (policy coherence level)

In the third year, the focus will be on consolidating and sustaining the processes that have been initiated.

Target 1: Continued work on the implementation of ACE in the NDCs

The work on integrating ACE into the NDCs will continue until it is firmly established.

Target 2: Gap analysis based on legal examination

Building on the legal expert opinion developed in the previous year, the identified gaps and potentials in existing legislation will be highlighted. The focus will be particularly on legal and policy areas where ACE is currently missing or insufficiently represented. These findings can be incorporated into the broader exchange and into the ACE consultation process (see structural level).

Target 3: Strengthen and institutionalise the exchange of good practices

The exchange of good practices between the federal government, the states, local authorities and non-governmental actors that has already begun will be continued.

Target 4: Integrating social and communication sciences into policy development

An essential element of effective climate policy is that political measures are not only economically and technically feasible, but also communicatively viable. To avoid communication failures, communication expertise grounded in social science should be systematically integrated into the early stages of legislative and strategy development processes. This includes involving experts from social and environmental psychology, behavioural research, and communication sciences already in the initial planning phases of climate action measures. Such expertise helps to consider public perception and acceptance of new measures from the very beginning. During this year, the focus will be on developing concrete approaches for how this integration can be effectively implemented. Existing structures, such as the *Behavioural Insights Connect* network on sustainability established by the *Federal Ministry for Digital Transformation and Government Modernisation*, can be drawn upon.

Target 5: Ensuring policy coherence with other climate stakeholders

The systematic dialogue with climate protection stakeholders is to be continued.

2.4.4 Year 2029: Expanding policy coherence (policy coherence level)

In the fourth year, the focus will shift to broader policy coherence with other climate actors. The aim is to anchor ACE more firmly as a cross-cutting issue in existing climate protection and adaptation processes.

Target 1: Continuation of ongoing efforts

The processes to date – in particular the work on anchoring ACE in the NDCs and the institutionalised exchange of good practices – will be continued on an ongoing basis.

Target 2: Institutionalisation of communication expertise in advisory bodies

Building on the initial steps taken in the third year, the integration of communication and social sciences into climate policy advisory bodies should be consolidated. Experts from these disciplines are to be systematically appointed in order to assess, at an early stage, the societal, behavioural, and public discourse impacts of planned measures — before legislation is implemented. Existing structures, such as the Division “Citizen-Centred Government, Strategic Foresight, and Science Networks” at the *Federal Ministry for Digital Transformation and Government Modernisation*, should serve as a foundation for this work. In this way, communicative viability becomes a standard element of policy design. (This step is closely linked to the *support level* but is included here, as it primarily concerns the systematic integration of expertise into legislative processes.)

Target 3: Ensuring policy coherence with other climate stakeholders

2.4.5 The systematic dialogue with climate protection stakeholders is to be continued.

2.4.6 Year 2030: Evaluation and further development (policy coherence level)

In the fifth year, the focus will be on critically reflecting on the efforts made to achieve policy coherence, analysing their effectiveness and existing barriers, and drawing lessons for the coming years of ACE implementation.

Target 1: Continuation of ongoing efforts

The efforts already initiated will be continued this year.

Target 2: Evaluation of policy coherence measures to date and integration of experience into the next ACE phase

Systematic evaluation of the last four years:

- ▶ Which measures have effectively integrated ACE into strategies, NDCs, laws, or programmes?
- ▶ Identification of success factors (e.g. institutionalised exchange, transfer of good practices) and obstacles (e.g. lack of legal basis, unclear responsibilities, political resistance).
- ▶ Documentation of *lessons learned* and integration of these insights into the next phase of ACE implementation.

2.5 Fostering Cooperation: Strengthening Coordination at All Levels

The objective at this level is to strengthen the coordination of ACE in Germany so that the federal government, federal states, municipalities, and non-state actors can work together effectively and in a coordinated manner. While the policy coherence level focuses on ensuring that all relevant actors pursue a common political direction, the coordination level concentrates more on practical cooperation: it establishes structures that enable actors to work together purposefully, support one another, and pool resources. Both levels are closely interlinked and naturally overlap in several areas.

The main goals of this level are listed in Figure 8. The following sections describe the specific objectives and measures for each year of the five-year roadmap.

Figure 8: Main goals of the coordination level

The detailed descriptions of the main goals are available in Table 2.

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2.5.1 Year 2026: Laying the foundations and taking immediate action (coordination level)

In the first year, the focus will be on establishing basic structures. The aim is to initiate contact with relevant stakeholders, systematically identify key networks, and build trust and a foundation for sustainable cooperation through personal dialogue.

Target 1: Engaging key stakeholders

The ACE Focal Points will initiate initial contact with relevant counterparts in other federal ministries and at the state level. The objective is to establish a low-threshold coordination network that can serve as the foundation for more permanent structures in the future.

Target 2: Mapping of stakeholders and networks

Building on the existing status quo analysis, a systematic “Who’s Who” mapping will be developed. This will identify key actors, networks, and relevant events already active in the climate field — including, for instance, organisations from the field of *Education for Sustainable Development* or actors such as the *Climate Alliance*. Other relevant stakeholders, such as welfare associations, churches, fire brigades, and trade unions, can also be identified as potential partners.

This mapping will serve as a foundation for avoiding duplication and highlighting synergies. At the same time, it will help identify key actors who can function as bridges to groups that have so

far had limited engagement with climate issues — for example, within sports, culture, or social organisations.

Target 3: Initial personal engagement

In addition to the structural mapping, initial personal meetings will be held with key stakeholders. The aim is to build trust, gain an understanding of their needs and interests, and lay the foundation for sustainable cooperation in the coming years.

2.5.2 Year 2027: Building Alliances and Networks, Identifying Multipliers (Coordination Level)

In the second year, the focus will shift to building and strengthening alliances.

Target 1: Laying the Groundwork for an Interministerial Working Group

At the federal level, preparations will begin for establishing an interministerial working group (see also the recommendation in Schlacke et al., 2025). This aims to ensure that ACE is more effectively integrated into other climate and social policy areas. It will be essential to clearly communicate the added value of ACE to other ministries. In parallel, options will be explored for establishing ACE focal points or coordination offices at the state level, and for assessing whether similar formats, such as interministerial working groups, could be appropriate in this context.

Target 2 : Strengthening Vertical Coordination between the Federal, State, and Municipal Levels

Existing federal–state working groups may be expanded, or new coordinating bodies established. These structures are intended to ensure early and strategic alignment, avoid duplication, and make better use of existing synergies.

Target 3: Building Practice-Oriented Alliances

A particular focus will be on linking actors in rural areas and groups with strong practical roots — such as volunteer fire brigades, churches, trade unions, and welfare associations — with climate action stakeholders. The aim is to build cross-cutting alliances that make climate protection more tangible in everyday life and connect actors with substantial resources to those with fewer capacities. These alliances can also contribute to financial and structural consolidation and help reach population groups that have so far paid little attention to climate issues. The guiding principle is not to create artificial parallel structures, but to strengthen, connect, and increase the visibility of existing initiatives.

Practice-oriented actors for strong alliances

For successful ACE alliances, it is crucial to involve practitioners who are already active locally, have the trust of the community, and have access to spaces and resources:

- ▶ **(Voluntary) fire departments and Federal Agency for Technical Relief:** They experience the consequences of the climate crisis (e.g., increasing forest fires) directly. They can be partners in raising awareness about the dangers of the climate crisis, especially since they hold a high level of trust among the population.
- ▶ **German Red Cross and other aid organizations:** They are already dealing with climate-related challenges such as heat-related deaths and weather-related emergencies. They are important partners for prevention and education.
- ▶ **Daycare centers and educational institutions:** They have direct access to families and children and can teach skills for dealing with climate impacts.

- ▶ **Climate protection managers in municipalities:** They combine municipal strategies with local practice and can act as multipliers.
- ▶ **Trade unions** (e.g., trade union youth): Although they have only been weakly involved so far, they could play a key role by integrating sustainability and climate protection more strongly into operations and training systems.
- ▶ **Churches and welfare organizations (e.g., Caritas, Diakonie):** They have a wide reach in communities, offer spaces and social structures, and can build bridges to society at large as valuable partners.
- ▶ **Healthcare institutions and the *German Alliance for Climate Change and Health (KLUG)*:** Health is a valuable gateway to engage people with the topic of climate protection, as climate change directly threatens their health. Moreover, KLUG is a nationwide, practice-oriented, existing network.

Key questions for creating networks:

- ▶ Where is the impact of climate change particularly evident?
- ▶ Where is a willingness to act?
- ▶ Where are spaces and resources available that can be used for ACE actors?

Target 4: Identifying and Strengthening Multipliers

In the second year, specific efforts will focus on identifying and supporting multipliers so that they can also serve as visible role models. This includes, on the one hand, groups that already act as multipliers — such as the Climate Alliance, youth associations, or KLUG — and, on the other hand, new groups that can gradually grow into this role. For example, ACE youth delegations could take on an even more developed role as active multipliers in the future.

Target 5: Increasing the Visibility of Networks and Launching Initial Networking Formats

In addition to participating in existing conferences and network meetings, the ACE Focal Points will organise an initial online networking event. This event will bring together actors from various sectors — governmental, civil society, and municipal — to develop initial joint approaches and lay the groundwork for a long-term network structure.

2.5.3 Year 2028: Institutionalisation and Preparation of Long-Term Structures (Coordination Level)

The structures and alliances established in previous years will be consolidated and institutionally secured. At the same time, new partnership fields — such as the media, the private sector, and international cooperation — will be more strongly integrated in order to increase the reach and impact of ACE.

Target 1: Consolidating and Institutionalising Ongoing Efforts

The coordination structures initiated in previous years (e.g. working groups, networks, municipal alliances) will be consolidated and transformed into permanent formats. A particular focus within the local alliances will be on strengthening participation at the community level — enabling people to engage where they are already active, such as in schools, associations, fire brigades, or municipalities.

Target 2: Expanding Cooperation with the Media

Cooperation with media organisations will be strengthened. The need for additional capacity-building among media professionals in the field of climate protection will be addressed by supporting actors already active in this area.

Target 3: Engaging Businesses as Partners

Collaboration with the private sector will be intensified in order to harness its innovative potential. Businesses can serve as valuable partners, as many are already advanced in implementing climate-relevant measures. At the same time, approaches will be developed to build alliances between companies and civil society, while strengthening existing initiatives in these fields.

Target 4: Mainstreaming the International Dimension of ACE

The global dimension of ACE will be further emphasised and made more tangible for different target groups.

- ▶ Strengthen and expand international cooperation (e.g. through contacts established in the UNFCCC processes).
- ▶ Highlight global disparities and interconnections.
- ▶ Motivate young people and hard-to-reach groups by communicating international linkages in accessible ways, for example through direct exchanges with climate actors from other countries.

Target 5: Preparing the ACE Consultation Process through Coordination Networks

The existing and newly established coordination networks will be strategically used to prepare the national consultation process for an ACE strategy. This includes involving relevant stakeholders, identifying suitable consultation formats (e.g. workshops, online dialogues, round tables), and ensuring that all key groups — including youth, civil society, academia, and municipalities — are engaged at an early stage.

2.5.4 Year 2029: Consolidation, Scaling, and Outreach (Coordination Level)

The structures, alliances, and networks established in previous years will be consolidated, expanded, and placed on a broader foundation. The goal is to systematically strengthen synergies among actors, increase outreach, and flexibly respond to emerging needs.

Target 1: Continuing and Enhancing Existing Structures

All coordination structures established so far (working groups, networks, alliances) will be maintained and continuously improved in terms of quality. The focus will be on reliability, continuity, and institutional anchoring within the participating organisations.

Target 2: Ensuring Effective Networking

Efforts will be made to enhance networking among relevant actors — both horizontally (between actors operating at the same level) and vertically (between the federal, state, and municipal levels). Targeted synergies will be created by connecting actors whose needs, competencies, and resources complement one another. Where necessary, specific networking meetings will be organised.

Data collected through monitoring and evaluation processes will also be used to identify new alliance needs at an early stage. This will make it possible to strategically expand existing networks or establish new connections where gaps are identified.

2.5.5 Year 2030: Evaluation and Further Development (Coordinatino Level)

In the fifth year, the focus will be on reflection: the established structures and processes will be systematically reviewed, their effectiveness evaluated, and recommendations for the next ACE strategy developed on this basis.

Target 1: Evaluating Established Structures and Forms of Cooperation

A comprehensive assessment will examine which coordination and alliance formats have proven effective and where adjustments are needed. The analysis will also explore how cooperation has evolved at the municipal, state, and federal levels.

Target 2: Developing Recommendations for the Next ACE Strategy

Based on the experiences gained, concrete recommendations will be formulated, consolidating lessons learned on resources, coordination, and stakeholder engagement, and defining the framework for the next strategy phase.

2.6 Enabling Support through Tools and Ressources

The objective at this level is to provide the necessary resources and tools that enable actors at all levels to act effectively. This includes securing financial and human resources — particularly at the municipal level — expanding practical support services and communication platforms, providing targeted relief and recognition for voluntary engagement, and systematically building competences in climate communication. The overarching goals of this level are summarised in Figure 9. The following sections outline the specific objectives and measures for each year of the five-year roadmap.

Figure 9: Main goals of the support level

The detailed descriptions of the main goals are available in Table 2.

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2.6.1 Year 2026: Laying the Foundations and taking immediate Action (Support Level)

In the first year, the focus will be on rapidly establishing effective foundations: existing resources and gaps will be systematically assessed, initial forms of support for volunteers will be tested, and practical training in climate communication and participation skills will be launched.

Target 1: Mapping and Gap Analysis of Existing ACE Resources and Support Structures

A systematic assessment will identify which tools, funding programmes, structures, and communication platforms already exist, and where gaps remain. This will also include structures that currently have little direct connection to ACE but could serve as potential anchors — for example, municipal service centres. The status quo analysis can serve as a basis for this work.

In addition, existing online repositories will be reviewed to determine whether they can provide a suitable overview of ACE resources or whether a new structure would be required — similar to the Austrian website www.klimaaktiv.at.

Existing Support Structures with Potential for Further Expansion

Examples of existing structures include:

- ▶ **Support structures in Baden-Württemberg:** Baden-Württemberg has established a support system that extends almost to the level of administrative districts. The regional energy

agencies provide a well-developed network and support structure. More information: <https://www.kea-bw.de/kommunaler-klimaschutz/regionale-energieagenturen>

- ▶ **Service and Competence Centre for Municipal Climate Action:** Provides coordination, training, and funding opportunities for municipal climate action managers. More information: <https://difu.de/projekte/servicestelle-kommunaler-klimaschutz>
- ▶ **RENN Offices – Regional Hubs for Sustainability Strategies:** Support the dissemination and implementation of sustainability strategies across regions. More information: <https://renn-netzwerk.de>

Target 2: Establishing Initial Low-Threshold Support for Volunteers

To strengthen voluntary engagement in climate action, there is a need for flexibility, practical support offers, and visible societal recognition. As early as 2026, initial steps should be piloted — for example, initiating dialogue with federal states and employers to test models for volunteer leave or time-off arrangements, initially in pilot municipalities or with selected employers. A nationwide volunteer card compatible with existing state-level schemes and complemented by local recognition formats (e.g. certificates or small benefits) could also help increase visibility and appreciation. To further relieve and empower volunteers, targeted training and qualification programmes should be supported. Finally, volunteering should be integrated into everyday education: an annual “Volunteering Day in Schools” could give young people the opportunity to learn about youth associations and initiatives and explore concrete pathways to engagement.

Target 3: Launching Training Programmes on Communication Support and Participation Skills

To embed climate action more effectively across society, initial training courses should be introduced that connect the “*technical climate bubble*” — such as climate action managers and administrative teams — with the social science perspective of ACE. The focus will be on the fundamentals of accompanying climate communication for concrete measures (e.g. highlighting co-benefits and local relevance), effective use of social media and rapid monitoring, and practical approaches to participatory design at the local level. This will be complemented by modules on addressing resistance and misinformation. The main target groups include municipal teams working in construction, transport, and environmental departments, climate action managers, associations, NGOs, and volunteers. Civil society organisations such as Klimafakten or More in Common may be involved in the delivery of these training activities.

2.6.2 Year 2027: Building Alliances and Networks for Resource Development (Support Level)

In the second year, the focus will shift to building alliances and networks that strengthen resource availability and long-term support structures.

Target 1: Clear Presentation of Existing Support Offers

Building on the mapping analysis conducted in the previous year, a concept will be developed to ensure that the various support offers can be easily accessed — particularly through online channels. It will be assessed whether these offers can be integrated into a clearly structured information platform, or whether existing systems can be improved without creating unnecessary duplication.

Target 2: Financing Pilot for Municipalities

To address the persistent challenge of limited resources in many municipalities — especially in structurally weak regions — a pilot programme will be launched to finance additional staff positions, such as further climate action managers. In parallel, discussions will be initiated with the federal and state governments on how to ensure more stable and long-term ACE funding at the municipal level — whether through direct financing mechanisms or by moving beyond the current reliance on short-term project funding.

Target 3: Consolidating Support for Volunteers

The efforts initiated in the first year to relieve and recognise voluntary engagement will be continued and consolidated — for example, through expanding time allowances, qualification opportunities, and recognition formats.

Target 4: Developing Concepts for Sustainable Support Structures

As ACE-related activities expand, a growing amount of valuable data will be generated and collected — including monitoring data (see Monitoring Level), social science studies, and analyses of social media and AI-based trends. A concept will therefore be developed on how these findings can be systematically processed and made usable for municipalities and volunteers.

One potential approach could involve establishing specialised *Climate Communication Units* within existing state or district-level climate and energy agencies. These units would have the capacity to collect ongoing data and support local actors in public communication — for example, by providing insights into current societal trends or assisting in dealing with misinformation and disinformation.

Target 5: Creating Flexible Support Offers

Through close monitoring, good-practice exchanges, the advisory board, and participation in networking events, the ACE Focal Points will maintain a clear overview of current needs (see also the other levels). Based on this, flexible support formats will be developed — ranging from short-term training opportunities to targeted actor matching. Topics that prove to be particularly relevant and recurring can gradually be integrated into more permanent support structures.

Target 6: Establishing Exchange on Disinformation

Given the growing importance of climate-related disinformation, a structured exchange will be established with key actors to develop strategies and support mechanisms for addressing it. The objective is to enable municipalities, volunteers, and associations to identify and respond to disinformation at an early stage, and to make their own communication more resilient as a result.

2.6.3 Year 2028: Institutionalisation and Consolidation (Support Level)

In the third year, the focus will be on institutionalisation and long-term consolidation. Following the pilot projects and initial support measures implemented in previous years, these efforts will now be systematised, structurally embedded, and — where appropriate — transferred into permanent institutions.

Target 1: Consolidating and Systematising Ongoing Efforts

Ongoing initiatives and activities will be continued and further structured to ensure continuity and long-term effectiveness.

Target 2: Institutionalising Support for Volunteers

The measures initiated in previous years will be continued and, where possible, embedded in permanent structures. This includes systematically promoting frameworks that facilitate and recognise voluntary engagement — for example, through pilot programmes for volunteer leave (analogous to educational leave), workload adjustments for teachers, or ECTS credits for students. The overarching goal is to establish binding long-term standards that both relieve and acknowledge civic engagement for climate action and sustainability.

Target 3: Assessing and Preparing the Establishment of a Central Support Institution for ACE

An assessment will be carried out to determine whether and how a permanent institution could consolidate ongoing ACE efforts under a common framework. One proposal is the creation of an independent *Competence Centre for Action for Climate Empowerment*. Such a centre could serve as a central service hub, processing and providing applied expertise on climate communication and participation, and acting as an interface between science, civil society, business, and government institutions. This would establish a lasting foundation for translating knowledge into practice and supporting local actors. Alternatively, options will be explored for systematically embedding ACE within existing structures. Reactivating the Competence Centre for *Education for Sustainable Development* could also be considered.

2.6.4 Year 2029: Consolidation, Scaling and Outreach (Support Level)

In the fourth year, the focus will be on consolidation, scaling, and outreach. The aim is not only to continue the approaches and pilot projects tested in previous years, but also to institutionalise them and transfer them to new contexts.

Target 1: Consolidating and Transferring Pilot Projects to New Contexts

The pilot projects developed in previous years — for example, in the areas of volunteer support or communication training — will be systematically expanded. This also includes transferring successful models to other federal states, municipalities, or target groups in order to achieve a broader impact.

Target 2: Professionalising and Expanding Support Structures; Securing Key Structures for the Long Term

Overall, the existing support offers will be further professionalised, improved, and expanded to reach relevant target groups more effectively. In addition, ACE support structures that have proven to be essential will be permanently implemented to ensure their long-term continuity.

2.6.5 Jahr 2030: Evaluation and Further Development (Support Level)

In the fifth year, the focus will be on review and further development. While proven support measures will be continued, particular attention will be given to a systematic evaluation of all established structures.

Target 1: Securing Ongoing Support Measures

The established structures and support mechanisms — ranging from volunteer promotion and communication training to financial assistance for municipalities — will be continued to ensure continuity and reliability for all actors involved.

Target 2: Systematic Evaluation of Existing Structures

All established offers and programmes will be assessed for their effectiveness. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be used to analyse which approaches have proven successful, where adjustments are required, and which measures have not achieved the intended impact.

Target 3: Input for the ACE Strategy

The results of the evaluation will be used to strategically improve and further develop existing support structures. Successful approaches will be embedded in the long term, while less effective projects will provide concrete lessons for the future. The insights gained will directly feed into the further development of the national ACE strategy, ensuring that only successful and effective support measures are carried forward and that the strategy continues to evolve on an evidence-based foundation.

2.7 Enhancing Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

The aim of this level is to expand monitoring, evaluation, and reporting so that ACE activities in Germany can be systematically recorded, evaluated, and further developed. This includes improving the networking of existing monitoring systems, the targeted establishment of new structures in areas that have been poorly covered to date, and the fulfillment of international reporting obligations. The overarching goals of this level are summarized in Figure 10. The specific goals and measures are described in detail for each year of the five-year roadmap below.

Figure 10: Main goals of the monitoring level

The detailed descriptions of the main goals are available in Table 2.

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Recommended reading: Guidance on Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on ACE

A valuable resource on monitoring, evaluation, and reporting in the field of ACE has been developed by the international Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Communication and Education (MECCE) Project (mecce.ca, see document [here](#)). The project brings together over 100 stakeholders from political parties and non-governmental organizations, including the UNFCCC,

UNESCO, and IPCC on its advisory board. The aim is to strengthen the quality and quantity of ACE worldwide and to close the existing data gap for benchmarking and target setting (MECCE, 2023).

2.7.1 Year 2026: Establish low-threshold structures and exchange formats for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (monitoring level)

In the first year, the focus will be on creating low-threshold structures and exchange formats for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, which will lay the foundation for more systematic data collection and dissemination.

Target 1: Mapping of existing monitoring-tools

In the first year, a systematic mapping of the monitoring instruments and procedures currently in use in the relevant areas (education, participation, public relations, training, etc.) is to be carried out. This can build on the status quo analysis that has already been carried out (see interim report). The aim is to provide an initial overview of what data is already available, which indicators are used, and where there are overlaps or gaps.

Target 2: Establishing contact and exchanging information with existing stakeholders

In parallel, the key players behind the monitoring tools will be identified and brought into contact with each other. Targeted exchange formats (workshops, bilateral discussions, online meetings) will be used to jointly reflect on the current gaps in monitoring and evaluation and how synergies can be created.

Good Practice: National ESD monitoring of the Institut Futur

In German-speaking countries, the ESD monitoring system developed by the Institut Futur already provides an established structure that can serve as a model for methodology, data processing, and reporting. At the same time, however, there are considerable gaps in other ACE areas, particularly with regard to participation and climate communication, for example.

Target 3: Establish an email network of relevant stakeholders and experts

To ensure a continuous flow of information, a low-threshold email network will be established with relevant stakeholders, experts, and institutions. Initially, this network will serve less for systematic monitoring in the narrow sense and more for gathering and sharing activities, experiences, and data sources. On this basis, a more structured monitoring system can be developed in the medium term, and until then, these contacts can be used to support reporting. (We have heard of such an approach being used in other countries.)

Target 4: Creation of a simple information page with accompanying newsletter for reporting purposes

In the first year, a simple, publicly accessible information page will be established, on which the current activities of the ACE Focal Points will be presented in a transparent and clear manner. As mentioned, an annual newsletter will be set up to inform relevant stakeholders about the most important developments, projects, and progress in the field of ACE. The focus in designing this structure is not on creating an additional reporting burden, but rather on providing a low-threshold communication tool: the Focal Points will be given a platform to showcase their activities, and interested stakeholders will have easy access to information and the opportunity to stay in touch.

Target 5: Fulfilling international reporting obligations

The *National Communications*² to the UNFCCC are supposed to provide a comprehensive overview of ACE activities. Since the last *National Communication* was submitted in early 2023 (with a request at the end of 2022) and Annex I countries are required to submit a new *National Communication* every four years, the Focal Points will have to report on ACE again this year. The report can be based on: the status quo analysis that was carried out, all monitoring activities that were initiated, relevant information and feedback from the email network, newsletters, and exchange formats.

2.7.2 Year 2027: Develop pilot projects and new monitoring approaches (monitoring level)

In the second year, the focus will be on testing initial pilot projects and innovative monitoring approaches. Some of the measures build directly on the foundations laid in the previous year and continue to develop them in a targeted manner.

Target 1: Pilot projects for monitoring in ACE areas that have been little covered to date

In the second year, targeted pilot projects are to be launched to establish monitoring in areas that have not yet been adequately covered. One possible focus is participation—an area in which there is currently little systematic data available. Similar to ESD monitoring, various levels are to be included in the monitoring: the input, process, and outcome levels, which are to be collected using various methods such as surveys and document analyses.

The feasibility of monitoring social media trends could be tested as part of a pilot project. The aim is to gain initial experience in how ACE-relevant developments can be recorded in the online space and to examine the extent to which such monitoring can be integrated into long-term structures in the future (see year 2028).

Target 2: Consolidation of exchanges with existing monitoring actors

The contacts established with monitoring bodies (e.g., in the field of ESD) in the first year are consolidated through regular exchange meetings—for example, once a year in the form of a round table or workshop. These meetings not only serve to promote networking and mutual reinforcement, but also to support the pilot projects: experiences can be shared, synergies identified, and common standards for data collection and evaluation discussed.

Target 3: First transfer of monitoring tasks to network actors

The (email) network of relevant stakeholders and experts established in the first year is now being actively used to gather information on current activities. The focal points are thus increasingly taking on the role of a collection point and coordination body, while initial monitoring tasks are being delegated to other levels (e.g., federal states, specialist institutions, networks). This makes it possible to maintain an overview of a growing number of projects without having to collect all data centrally.

Target 4: Establish monitoring of the needs of climate activists, committed individuals, and volunteers

Particularly ambitious and committed target groups (e.g., climate activists, NGOs, municipal initiatives) require continuous monitoring of their needs for effective climate action. Low-threshold monitoring should be established here—for example, through regular surveys or

² *National Communications* (NCs) are regular reports that must be submitted by parties to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). They contain information on national greenhouse gas emissions, climate protection and adaptation measures, research, and also *Action for Climate Empowerment*.

automated queries. The aim is to systematically record needs (e.g., for space, resources, training, support) and develop tailored support services. Such monitoring can take the form of large-scale surveys or low-threshold polls shared via the Focal Points' (annual) newsletter. It is important that monitoring also keeps a close ear to the needs of the actors who are involved.

Target 5: Systematic feedback of the compiled monitoring results into political processes

The insights gained from the monitoring processes should now also be communicated much more closely to key political figures (this is particularly crucial for monitoring fast-moving social media processes). The results should be prepared in regular briefings for ministries, state representatives, and ACE focal points and thus fed directly back into political processes. The briefings could, for example, be the result of an exchange between existing monitoring actors.

Target 6: Preparation for a publicly accessible monitoring dashboard (optional)

During the second year, initial considerations for the development of a monitoring dashboard can be initiated, which should be publicly accessible in the medium term. This will be based on the results of the pilot projects, data from the email network, and demand surveys. The dashboard could create transparency regarding reach, target groups, and stimuli to action.

2.7.3 Year 2028: Expanding and consolidating structures for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (monitoring level)

In the third year, the focus is on consolidating the previously tested monitoring and evaluation approaches and embedding them institutionally.

Target 1: Paving the way for long-term, person-independent monitoring and evaluation structures in all ACE areas

In the third year, the focus will be on laying the foundations for permanent and robust monitoring structures that are not dependent on individual persons or projects. The aim is to develop cost-effective but comprehensive procedures that ensure both comparability and practical relevance. The lessons learned from the pilot projects in the second year will be systematically evaluated and used as the basis for a uniform monitoring model. Close cooperation with existing monitoring actors (e.g. ESD monitoring, scientific institutes, federal states) will be continued in order to exploit synergies and avoid duplication of structures. Initial structural proposals (e.g., establishment of an advisory board or independent evaluation groups) will be prepared and tested.

Proposals for permanent structures are:

- ▶ **ACE indicator:** An ACE indicator could be implemented in the German Sustainability Strategy. This could supplement the existing ESD indicator.
- ▶ **Development of interdepartmental monitoring for social media, AI, and online spaces:** In view of the growing importance of social media and AI for public opinion formation and social participation, an interdepartmental, automated monitoring system should be established in the long term, e.g., to identify trends and discourses, or to identify anti-democratic disinformation and polarizing developments at an early stage.

Target 2: Design of an automated reporting mechanism

In order to efficiently fulfill international reporting obligations (e.g. within the framework of *National Communications*), a concept for automating data collection and reporting will be developed in the third year:

- ▶ Consideration of how ACE-relevant projects can be collected on an ongoing basis without creating additional burdens for the actors involved.
- ▶ Possible approach: annual standard queries to ACE contact persons in the federal states and relevant federal ministries, with the results flowing directly into a central collection point.
- ▶ Examination of whether this data collection can be integrated into long-term monitoring structures in the medium term in order to avoid duplication of work.

Target 3: Continuation of low-threshold monitoring approaches

Since establishing permanent structures takes time, the low-threshold formats established in years 1 and 2 (e.g., newsletters, needs surveys, email network) will be consistently continued. They serve as a bridge until institutionalized monitoring and reporting systems are established and ensure that a continuous flow of information is guaranteed even during the transition phase.

Target 4: Consolidation of feedback mechanisms in political processes

Building on the experiences of the second year, the focus in the third year will be on consolidating feedback mechanisms that ensure that results from monitoring and data analysis are continuously incorporated into political decision-making processes. This task could be taken on, for example, by the Ministry of Digital Transformation and State Modernization in the context of the modernization agenda. In doing so, fast-moving information channels such as social media, AI monitoring, and traditional survey data should be more closely integrated. The goal is to develop a process in which political decision-makers are regularly and frequently informed about current moods, trends, and social needs so that they can respond appropriately. The results of the monitoring and data analysis must then also be used by the target audience—i.e., political decision-makers at various levels. A feedback process must therefore be implemented to ensure that the results are perceived as more trustworthy and relevant than data and information from other sources and that they reach political actors at all levels (including local decision-makers) in a comprehensible manner.

Target 5: Systematically feed back results from monitoring and evaluation into practice

Monitoring and evaluation should not be an end in themselves, but must actively contribute to improving the quality and effectiveness of ACE measures. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on developing ways in which the findings from the monitoring processes can be fed back into practice.

Proposals:

- ▶ **Process results and present them on the online platform:** Monitoring data and evaluation findings should be condensed in such a way that they are understandable and usable for practitioners, local authorities, NGOs, and educational institutions.
- ▶ **Highlight gaps:** Monitoring should specifically identify areas where there is a lack of action and make recommendations on how these gaps can be closed.
- ▶ **Disseminate good practices:** Particularly successful regional projects and innovative approaches should be systematically documented and disseminated using appropriate formats (e.g., newsletters, practical guides, workshops).

2.7.4 Year 2029: Consolidation and scaling of monitoring, evaluation, and reporting structures (monitoring level)

In the fourth year, the focus will be on continuing and expanding previous efforts. Low-threshold monitoring approaches are to be continued and further developed where gaps still exist. At the

same time, the design and testing of more automated reporting will be continued so that these processes can increasingly become part of regular operations. These measures are now ongoing and are no longer listed as separate objectives.

Target 1: Consolidation of monitoring and evaluation structures

The monitoring approaches developed in previous years will now be transferred to permanent, person-independent structures. This could include the establishment of a coordinated advisory board or working group to ensure monitoring standards, review progress, and guarantee the quality of data collection.

2. Ziel: Strengthening feedback into practice

The results of monitoring and evaluation will be increasingly reflected in practical formats: workshops, guidelines, collections of good practices, and targeted networking meetings. The aim is to close the learning loop between data collection, evaluation, and concrete improvements in practice—to identify gaps, highlight good practices, and address risks at an early stage. These can be presented on the ACE information portal.

2.7.5 Year 2030: Review and further development of established structures for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (monitoring level)

In the fifth year, the focus will be on critically reviewing, further developing, and updating the monitoring, evaluation, and reporting structures. In addition to continuous implementation, the effectiveness of the structures themselves will be reviewed and international reporting requirements will be prepared

Target 1: Continuity of established monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems

The systems developed in previous years continue to run smoothly. Regular data collection, needs monitoring, exchange formats, and reporting will be continued to ensure continuity and reliability.

Target 2: Review of ACE structures

In addition to analyzing the content of ACE topics, targeted monitoring and review of the structures themselves will be carried out for the first time:

- ▶ Have the structures that have been established (e.g., advisory boards, networks, portals) actually contributed to anchoring and perpetuating ACE?
- ▶ Where are structures successful and where are they not?
- ▶ What adjustments are needed to make them more effective, inclusive, and sustainable?
- ▶ Have the willingness to take action on climate protection and climate protection behavior increased?

This is done, for example, through evaluations, stakeholder surveys, and external reviews, as well as the monitoring of individual and collective climate protection behavior via the Environmental Awareness and PACE studies.

Target 3: Compliance with international reporting requirements

As the next National Communication to the UNFCCC is due, a key objective is to prepare the report on ACE activities:

- ▶ Compilation of all monitoring and evaluation data from recent years that has already been collected,

- ▶ Preparation of the results for the UNFCCC reporting formats,
- ▶ Involving relevant stakeholders from the federal government, the states, and civil society in the preparation process.

Target 4: Updating and further developing the ACE strategy

The results of the structural monitoring will be incorporated into the ACE strategy for the coming years, which will be revised iteratively, and *lessons learned* will be recorded.

3 From concept to action

This implementation concept for *Action for Climate Empowerment* sets out a roadmap for the years 2026 to 2030. It describes how structural anchoring, better coordination, resource development, and targeted monitoring can create the basis for effectively empowering people in Germany to take action on climate protection and adaptation.

The five-year implementation phase is deliberately designed as an intermediate step: it aims to create structures, gather experience, and build alliances that will subsequently lead to a comprehensive national ACE strategy. This strategy is to be developed in a participatory process with all relevant stakeholders and build on the lessons learned from this implementation concept. The perspective should be broadened to include the development of goals for the six thematic ACE areas. (For a more detailed look at the possible objectives of the six ACE areas, see Table 3 in the appendix.)

Ultimately, even the most elaborate implementation concept remains nothing more than a piece of paper if it is not brought to life. That is why the most important step now is to take immediate action.

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5 Appendix: Objectives of the six thematic areas of ACE

Table 3: Long-term targets and visions for strengthening the six thematic areas of ACE, compiled from UNESCO (2020), UNESCO and UNFCCC (2016).

ACE areas and their levers for change	Description and vision	General goals
<p>Education</p> <p>Change habits in the long-term: Education enables people to understand the causes and consequences of climate change, to make informed decisions and to take appropriate actions to address it.</p>	<p>Education seeks to achieve profound, long-term changes in understanding, particularly among young people. It involves developing educational curricula, training of trainers and teachers and adequate pedagogies. The results of a successful programme would ultimately be a population whose deep-seated appreciation of the climate challenge leads to greater national action and commitment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Promote, facilitate, develop and implement formal, non-formal and informal climate education programmes that encourage climate-friendly behaviour, focusing on both mitigation and adaptation; ▶ Include climate change at all levels and across disciplines in both school and higher education curricula, as well as in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and adult education, addressing the entire population; ▶ Develop pedagogical resources/material that take into account different knowledge systems, including indigenous knowledge, as well as local languages; ▶ Implement quality pre-service and in-service teacher training focused on climate change.
<p>Training</p> <p>Develop practical skills: Training provides the core technical and soft skills as well as advanced knowledge needed to support the transition to green economies and sustainable, inclusive climate-neutral and resilient societies.</p>	<p>Training programmes seek to spread specific practical skills that can have an immediate practical application. Examples include the ability to gather and interpret climate data, conduct inventories of national emissions, and identify climate-friendly technologies. Training is about learning by doing – individuals, communities and organizations can all benefit from ongoing learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify and anticipate current and future skills and training needs for the green transition, taking into account different population groups and ensuring equitable access; ▶ Integrate and mainstream climate change learning into the curricula of institutions that provide formal training at all levels, including professional bodies, apprenticeship programmes and trade bodies; ▶ Develop training materials in accordance with national circumstances, sectoral approaches and the cultural context; ▶ Cooperate in, promote, facilitate, develop and implement training programmes (including training of trainers) focused on climate change for groups with a key role, such as policy and decision makers, scientific, technical and managerial personnel in the public and private sectors, journalists, women, youth and community leaders at the local, national, subregional, regional, sectoral and international levels; ▶ Facilitate non-formal training through the engagement and participation of youth in local and national climate change events, and build the capacity of youth as future leaders.

ACE areas and their levers for change	Description and vision	General goals
<p>Public Awareness</p> <p>Reach people of all ages and walks of life: Successful public awareness campaigns engage communities and individuals in the common effort needed to foster climate-friendly behaviour, sustainable lifestyles and implement national, regional, sectoral and international climate change policies.</p>	<p>Many governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations and UN agencies have already launched major public awareness programmes. But there remains an enormous unmet need for more outreach. Creating a successful outreach programme that truly changes behaviour involves targeted and systematic communications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cooperate in, promote, facilitate, develop and implement inclusive public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects at the local, regional and national levels as appropriate; ▶ Create key messages that make it simple and fun for people to take climate action and develop and implement action campaigns to encourage people to do small, easy things that can lead to lasting change, such as reducing their personal water or electricity use; ▶ Encourage, by means of popular media, personal action and contributions to address climate change, support climate-friendly policies and foster behavioural changes, noting the important role that social media and digital platforms and strategies can play in this context; ▶ Collaborate with civil society and private sector partners to ensure wide dissemination of public awareness-raising activities and limit the spread of ‘fake news’ and disinformation campaigns; ▶ Conduct surveys to establish a baseline of public awareness, which can serve as a basis for further work and support the monitoring of the impact of activities; ▶ Recognize and engage youth as knowledge holders and support the participation of youth as agents of change and/or trainers in public awareness campaigns.
<p>Public Access to information</p> <p>Make information freely available: Public access to information strengthens connections between knowledge production, knowledge sharing and decision-making, and provides people with the tools they need to play an active role in addressing climate change.</p>	<p>Programmes to engage citizens and CSOs in addressing climate change can be improved by ensuring that information is freely available. This is crucial in order to develop and implement effective policies and to engage people actively in implementing these policies. Technologies such as databases and the internet facilitate the provision of climate information, data and statistics to all citizens.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Guarantee public access to information and related data on good practices, climate change initiatives, policies and results of actions, so that the public can understand and respond to climate change. This effort should harness new information technologies, taking into account factors such as quality of Internet access, literacy, gender and language issues.

ACE areas and their levers for change	Description and vision	General goals
<p>Public Participation</p> <p>Involve all stakeholders in decision-making and implementation: Public participation ensures ownership by encouraging people to be more attentive to policy-making and participate in the implementation of climate policies.</p>	<p>By ensuring that people can participate effectively in climate change decision-making and implement climate mitigation and adaptation activities, governments should seek to integrate civil society perspectives and mobilize the general public. In some places, this will prompt profound changes to how political leaders and civil servants are accustomed to working and encourage people to be more attentive to policy-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Foster the participation of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), regional and local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations, as well as the private and public sectors, in order to raise awareness and increase understanding of the causes and impacts of climate change, as well as solutions that lead to measurable outcomes; ▶ Create and support open and accessible multi-stakeholder platforms for public participation and dialogue engaging youth, civil society, academia and the private sector in order to reach whole-of-society consensus on climate action and NDC ambition; ▶ Promote social dialogue and inclusive public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and in developing adequate responses, by facilitating feedback, debate and partnership in climate change activities and in governance, noting the important role that social media platforms and strategies can play in this context; ▶ Strengthen the science, policy and society interface by encouraging the participation of citizens as co-producers of knowledge (citizen science).
<p>International Cooperation</p> <p>Strengthen cooperation, joint efforts and knowledge exchange: These five elements can all be strengthened through international cooperation. Governments and organizations can support each other with resources, technical expertise, ideas and inspiration for developing climate action programmes.</p>	<p>International cooperation and exchange can play a major role in strengthening ACE efforts. Many governments and relevant stakeholders need access to expertise and financial and technical resources so they can develop their own climate change programmes. All countries can benefit from sharing success stories, exchanging personnel and strengthening institutional capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Foster subregional, regional, sectoral and international cooperation in undertaking activities within the scope of ACE to enhance the collective ability of Parties and non-Party stakeholders to implement the Convention and the Paris Agreement; ▶ Document and share knowledge between countries regarding experiences, lessons learned, good practices and challenges in the implementation of ACE and promote peer-learning, so that Parties, IGOs and NGOs that have the resources to do so might effectively target their efforts at providing appropriate support; ▶ Develop and encourage international exchange programmes between government professionals, teachers, students and researchers with respect to training on climate change.

Source: The texts have been compiled from UNESCO (2020) and UNESCO & UNFCCC (2016).