MAKING TRANSFORMATION HAPPEN

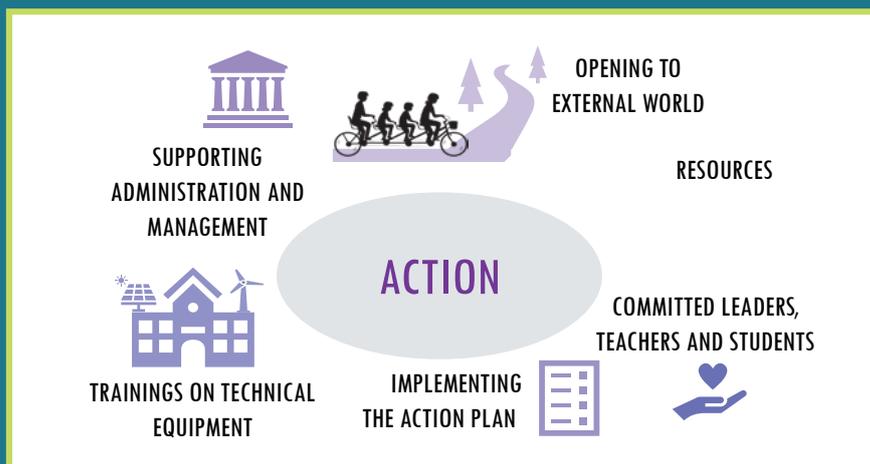# LET'S ACT FOR
SUSTAINABILITY!

You have engaged with sustainability values, explored the complex connections between people, systems, and the environment, and envisioned alternative futures by identifying possible pathways for change. Now, it's time to move from intention to implementation—this is the moment to act and make transformation happen.

This final area in the ECF4CLIM Roadmap focuses on turning ideas into action—real, measurable, and meaningful steps that lead to tangible change.

But action isn't just about doing something. It's about doing the right thing, at the right time, with the right people. It's about aligning your values with your behaviours and making sure your actions contribute to a more sustainable world.

By the end of this guide, you'll be able to:

•Translate sustainability visions into concrete, measurable actions.

•Understand the role of political agency, collective action, and individual initiative in driving change.

•Engage with community representatives and decision-makers to co-create sustainable solutions.

•Identify enablers and constraints that affect sustainability efforts at individual, collective, and institutional levels.

•Use tools and strategies to implement, evaluate, and scale sustainability initiatives in real-world contexts.

SUPPORTING ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

OPENING TO EXTERNAL WORLD

RESOURCES

ACTION

COMMITTED LEADERS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

TRAININGS ON TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN

SO… READY TO TURN IDEAS INTO IMPACT?

LET'S STEP INTO **ACTION**—AND LEAD THE TRANSFORMATION TOWARD A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

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THE ECF4CLIM ROADMAP: ACTIO[
GREENCOMP COMPETENCE AREA[

ADVOCACY
STEERING EDUCATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY AND EXPANSION OF ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY

Acting for sustainability isn't just about personal choices—it's about influencing the systems that shape those choices. Advocacy is the ability to understand, navigate, and influence political and institutional structures to drive sustainability forward.

Whether it's advocating for greener school policies, participating in local decision-making, or holding leaders accountable, advocacy empowers learners to become active citizens—not passive observers.

What Is Advocacy?
Advocacy is the capacity to positively influence the collective future by engaging with political systems and decision-makers to promote sustainability. It's about more than just voting—it's about understanding how power works, identifying who holds it, and knowing how to mobilise others to create change.

While GreenComp refers to "political agency" as the capacity to positively influence the collective future by engaging with political systems and decision-makers to promote sustainability, the ECF4CLIM Roadmap expands and operationalises this idea through the concept of Advocacy. In the Roadmap, advocacy is not only about influencing policy or decision-makers, but also about steering education itself towards sustainability and extending transformative action beyond the boundaries of the school or university.
Advocacy means empowering educational communities to actively participate in shaping institutional practices, policies, and partnerships that support sustainability—both within and outside educational settings. This involves mobilising stakeholders, building alliances, and ensuring that sustainability becomes a shared responsibility and a lived reality, rather than a theoretical goal. By emphasising advocacy, the ECF4CLIM Roadmap highlights the importance of collective action and systemic change, positioning learners and educators as proactive agents who drive sustainability forward in their communities and beyond.

Advocacy includes:
• Understanding how political and institutional systems function—locally, nationally, and globally.
• Identifying key stakeholders—such as government departments, political parties, civil society organisations, and private sector actors.
• Demanding accountability—from those responsible for unsustainable practices.
• Proposing and supporting policies that align with sustainability goals.

Advocacy empowers learners and educational communities to become agents of change, capable of championing new norms, influencing regulations, and shaping institutional commitments. Whether through civic participation, policy advocacy, or community organising, advocacy is essential for steering education towards sustainability and expanding transformative activities beyond the school or university. This collective and outward-looking approach is central to the ECF4CLIM Roadmap's vision for a just and sustainable future.

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ON—AND IS GROUNDED IN THE
A "ACTING FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

Real-Life Example: Youth Voting for Climate

In recent European elections, youth-led campaigns encouraged first-time voters to support candidates with strong climate agendas. These initiatives didn't just raise awareness—they shifted political conversations and influenced policy platforms.

What made it work?
•Clear messaging about climate urgency
•Peer-to-peer engagement
•Linking personal values to political action

This example demonstrates how young people can exercise their political agency by participating in democratic processes and advocating for sustainability through their voting choices. It also highlights the importance of civic education and access to reliable information in empowering youth to act.

PLAY VIDEO ▶

What about you?

•Who makes decisions that affect sustainability in your school, organisation, or community?
•What sustainability issues do you care about most?
•How can you influence those in power?
•What would a more sustainable political system look like to you?
•How can you hold decision-makers accountable for their environmental promises?

REAL EXAMPLES

Spain: From student evidence to advocacy-driven institutional change

•**What happened (CHANGE to ACTION):**

Students monitored campus waste, co-designed improvements with technicians, and replaced desk bins with selective eco-points per floor. The pilot worked so well that, through advocacy and collaborative engagement, the rectorate adopted the model across the institution—a shift from a local initiative to a university-wide transformation inspired by active advocacy.

• **Who makes decisions that affect sustainability?**
University executives (e.g., rectorate), faculty boards, facilities/procurement teams. In Spain's case, the rectorate ultimately scaled the pilot to policy.

• **What issues do you care about most?**
Waste prevention, correct sorting, and procurement rules that lock in better practices.

• **How can you influence those in power?**
Gather **before/after data**, run a monitored pilot with students, and present clear operational benefits (fewer bins, cleaner streams, compliance).

• **What would a more sustainable political system look like?**
Campus-level **rules** (e.g., eco-points + guidance) that standardise behaviour, plus procurement that supports the system (bin specs, cleaning contracts).

How can you hold decision-makers accountable?
Publish **regular waste metrics**, schedule review points with the rectorate/facilities, and track replication to other faculties.

Romania: Energy prosumer pathway

What happened (CHANGE to ACTION):

Schools moved from a solar-thermal idea (which had a seasonal mismatch) to photovoltaics with prosumer status. Through advocacy and collaborative engagement, they secured approvals, connected to the grid, and integrated a live monitoring app into lessons. This advocacy-driven process resulted in both infrastructure and curriculum change, cushioning energy-price shocks and transforming real-time data into meaningful learning.

• Who makes decisions that affect sustainability?
School leadership, municipal backers, **electricity provider/regulator** (for interconnection), and teachers who integrate the data.

• What issues do you care about most?
Clean energy, energy costs, and authentic data for teaching.

• How can you influence those in power?
Prepare a **costed solar panels proposal**, a permit checklist, and a learning plan that shows how **students will use the data**—then present to the head/municipality and the grid operator.

• What would a more sustainable political system look like?
Prosumer-friendly rules, small-grant windows, and simplified interconnection that allow schools to generate and share clean power.

How can you hold decision-makers accountable?
Display **public dashboards** of generation/consumption, tie targets to budget lines, and review results each term with stakeholders.

What's one bold step you could take this term—drawing on the 22 ECF4CLIM Demonstration Site examples—to turn your sustainability ideas into real change?

MORE INFO ▶

WHY COLLECTIVE ACTION MATTERS

Sustainability is not a solo journey. It requires people coming together—students, teachers, families, communities, and institutions—to co-create solutions that are inclusive, fair, and impactful. Collective action is about recognising that we are stronger when we act together.

This competence stems from the understanding that communities and civil society organisations play a fundamental role in achieving sustainability. It calls for coordination, collaboration, and cooperation among peers. When people work together toward a shared goal, they can overcome challenges, amplify their voices, and contribute more effectively to solving sustainability problems—locally and globally.

Collective action also develops learners' ability and will to take part in democratic processes concerning how we use and depend on natural resources. It's about building coalitions, creating shared visions, and acting in line with common values.

How to Engage with Community Representatives

Engaging with community representatives is essential for building inclusive, effective sustainability policies. It's not just about inviting people to the table—it's about co-creating solutions that reflect local knowledge, values, and needs.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 🎥

1. IDENTIFY THE STAKEHOLDERS
Start by mapping out who has a stake in the issue. **This could include:**

•Local government officials
•Business leaders
•Community organisations
•Educators and students
•Environmental NGOs
•Citizens and youth groups

Tip: Don't forget informal leaders—people who may not hold official titles but have influence in the community.

2. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
Take time to understand stakeholders' perspectives, values, and concerns. **This can be done through:**

•One-on-one meetings
•Focus groups
•Community forums or town halls

Why it matters: Trust is the foundation of collaboration. Listening builds credibility and opens the door to long-term partnerships.

3. ESTABLISH CLEAR GOALS
Define what you want to achieve together. **Goals should be:**
•Specific and measurable
•Aligned with sustainability values
•Co-created with stakeholders

Example: "Reduce school energy use by 20% in one year through student-led initiatives."

4. DEVELOP A CO-CREATION PROCESS
Design a process that is:
•Transparent
•Inclusive
•Collaborative

This might include:
•Joint workshops
•Working groups
•Online platforms for feedback

Outcome: A shared sense of ownership and commitment to the solution.

5. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
Keep everyone informed and engaged. **Use:**
•Regular updates
•Visual summaries
•Open channels for feedback

Remember: Communication is a two-way street. Make space for questions, concerns, and new ideas.

6. IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE TOGETHER
Once the policy or initiative is launched:
•Monitor progress
•Celebrate milestones
•Adjust based on feedback

Best practice: Use evaluation frameworks that are co-designed with the community to ensure relevance and fairness.

REAL EXAMPLE

Students from a Finnish School, describe the actions they undertook within their school as part of the ECF4CLIM project—actions that helped drive meaningful change.

Activity
1. Map the Power for Advocacy
Create a visual map of decision-makers and influencers in your school or local community. **Include:**
•School leadership (e.g., principal, board members)
•Local government officials
•Environmental NGOs
• Student councils or youth groups

Discussion prompt:
Who has the power to make or block change? Who could be an ally in your sustainability advocacy efforts? How might you engage or influence these actors?

2. Advocacy Pitch
In small groups, draft a short proposal for a sustainability policy (e.g., banning single-use plastics, installing bike racks, or introducing a green procurement policy). Present it to a mock "school board" or "municipal council" and defend your ideas.

As a climate advocate or sustainability leader, you may have the opportunity to meet with decision-makers—whether at the school board, city council, national ministry, or even international forums. These meetings are powerful moments to influence policies and co-create solutions.

Here's how to prepare and make the most of them:

Before the Meeting

•**Contact:** Find out the best way to reach the person. Who can help you set up the meeting?

•**Courtesy:** Acknowledge that your issue may not be their top priority—yet.

•**Timing:** Is this the right moment to ask for change?

•**Clarity:** Be clear about what you want from them.

Prepare Your Message

•**What are their interests?** Can your proposal align with their goals?

•**Who should attend?** Can you include people directly affected by the issue?

•**Are you legitimate?** Bring evidence and represent your community.

•**Are you convincing?** Show how your proposal makes a real difference.

•**Do you have a Plan B?**
Be ready for surprises—different people, less time, or a changed agenda.

Awareness Campaigns and Youth Voices

Raising awareness is a powerful form of collective action. Campaigns that use posters, social media, public events, or even art can shift mindsets and inspire behaviour change.

Example: UNICEF and Fridays for Future partnered to amplify youth voices through the "Voices of Change" video series. Children from around the world shared their messages to world leaders ahead of COP27, calling for urgent climate action.

Climate change is not just about science—it's about people, justice, and the future.

PLAY VIDEO ▶

DID YOU KNOW ?

In Finland, students and teachers co-organised four sustainability campaigns, including Earth Hour. These campaigns were not only awareness-raising events but also platforms for student-led planning and execution. Over 1,000 students and 29 teachers participated, and the campaigns became part of the school's annual calendar

Lesson: When students are trusted to lead, they create lasting cultural shifts in their schools.

See the examples

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PLAY VIDEO ▶

INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE
BECOMING A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Why Individual Initiative Matters

Sustainability begins with awareness—but it thrives through action. Individual initiative is about recognising your power to make a difference and choosing to act, even when the path is uncertain. It's about being proactive, persistent, and willing to lead by example.

This competence is grounded in the belief that every person has a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of society and the environment. It's not just about knowing what to do—it's about having the confidence and motivation to do it.

What YOU can do about climate change

PLAY VIDEO ▶

What It Means to Take Initiative

Taking initiative means:
•Understanding the types of actions that are possible
•Believing in your ability to influence change (internal locus of control)
•Being willing to act, even in the face of uncertainty
•Inspiring others through your example

It also means recognising that inaction is a choice—and often a costly one. The impacts of climate change, social inequality, and environmental degradation are too urgent to ignore.

Acting Before It's Too Late: The Precautionary Principle

Sometimes, waiting for perfect evidence can be dangerous. The precautionary principle reminds us that when there's a risk of serious or irreversible harm—to people, ecosystems, or the climate—we should act, even if all the data isn't in yet.

This principle is especially important in sustainability, where the consequences of inaction can be devastating and long-lasting. From biodiversity loss to climate-induced disasters, the cost of doing nothing is often far greater than the cost of acting early.

Example: Choosing to reduce single-use plastics in your school or community—even before a formal policy exists—can prevent long-term pollution and inspire broader change.

The Precautionary Principle - Climate Change Debate

PLAY VIDEO ▶

What is the Precautionary Principle, and is it Good or Bad?

PLAY VIDEO ▶

Use the ECF4CLIM Tools to Empower Individual Action

The **ECF4CLIM** project developed a suite of digital tools to help learners understand, measure, and improve their sustainability impact. One of the most engaging tools is the **ECF4CLIM Learning Game**, designed to simulate real-world sustainability challenges through interactive storytelling, quizzes, and decision-making tasks.

How it works:

Players will manage a community mall, making choices that reflect their values and knowledge.

The game includes:
•Mini-games (e.g., drag-and-drop, true/false, decision trees)
•Knowledge centres with curated learning content
•Story-based missions that mirror real-life dilemmas

Why it matters:

The game helps learners:
•Recognise their potential to act
•Practice decision-making in safe, simulated environments
•Build confidence in their ability to influence change

PLAY GAME ▶

DID YOU KNOW ?

In Andalusia, the Ecf4clim game was tested in six schools. Students reported feeling more confident about their role in sustainability and were more likely to take initiative in their daily lives—like organising recycling drives or proposing energy-saving ideas to teachers.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EVERYDAY IMPACT

Every individual has a responsibility—not just to themselves, but to society and the planet. This sense of social responsibility is rooted in the idea that our actions should benefit the common good. It's about balancing personal freedom with civic duty, and economic growth with environmental and social well-being.

Taking initiative for sustainability means:

•Caring proactively for the planet and others
•Recognising that inaction is also a choice
•Understanding that small actions can lead to big change

Choosing to walk or bike instead of driving may seem minor, but when multiplied across a community, it reduces emissions, improves health, and fosters a culture of sustainability.

DID YOU KNOW ?

In **Finland**, students used the ECF4CLIM self-assessment tool to reflect on their personal sustainability habits. This led to a school-wide campaign encouraging reusable water bottles and reducing single-use plastics. The initiative started with a few students but quickly gained momentum, showing how individual reflection can spark collective change.

Lesson: Tools that help individuals understand their impact can empower them to act—and inspire others to follow.

PLAY VIDEO ▶

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN:
FROM VISION TO ACTION

The final area of the ECF4CLIM Roadmap—ACTION—focuses on turning plans and visions into concrete, contextually relevant sustainability actions. This means moving beyond planning to implementation, using the knowledge, values, and systems understanding developed in previous phases. Effective action for sustainability is grounded in:

• Shared values and principles
• Systems thinking and problem framing
• Visioning sustainable futures

To realise these visions, it is essential to:

• Develop and implement strategies and action plans
• Engage in advocacy to steer education and community practices toward sustainability
• Mobilise collective and technical resources
• Assess and reflect on the outcomes of actions

This process builds sustainability competences—knowledge, skills, and attitudes—by empowering individuals and communities to make their actions effective, meaningful, and adaptable to their unique context. Through advocacy, collaboration, and continuous evaluation, educational communities can drive real transformation and contribute to a just and sustainable future.

DID YOU KNOW ?

EU international collaboration to protect our planet

The EU works with countries and organisations around the world on major environmental challenges like climate change, air and water pollution, wildlife trafficking, deforestation and delivering the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

PLAY VIDEO ▶

Fighting climate change, preserving our environment, acting against global warming… Climate action has been at the heart of the EU's mission for decades. Let's take a look at some milestones.

PLAY VIDEO ▶

1.STRUCTURES FOR ACTION

How do we organise ourselves to support sustainability? This includes leadership, governance, and institutional frameworks.

2.CREATING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLANS

What are our goals, and how do we get there? This involves setting priorities, timelines, and responsibilities.

3.RESOURCES FOR ACTION

What do we need to succeed? This includes funding, time, tools, and human capacity.

These themes are informed by crowdsourced insights, project documentation, and the **ECF4CLIM Roadmap for Sustainability Competences**

CONSTRAINTS AND ENABLERS OF ACTION

When ideas meet reality, **contradictions** often surface—e.g., a school designs a circular-economy programme, but the local waste contractor cannot collect separated fractions. In **ACTION**, these tensions are not just obstacles; handled well, they become signals for **system redesign** (policies, contracts, routines) and stepping-stones to wider change. Keep learning loops open: **pilot - evidence - adjust - scale.**

INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCES

Constraints:
•Overload and time pressure: core duties crowd out follow-through on projects.
•Competing priorities or role ambiguity: unclear "who does what" in delivery.
•Limited peer reinforcement: acting alone reduces persistence and quality.

Enablers:
•Role clarity and micro-ownership: define a named lead and deputies for each action.
•Capability building on demand: short, targeted training/surgery sessions (e.g., procurement basics, data capture, safe piloting).
•Wellbeing & motivation practices: celebrate quick wins, rotate tasks, and build reflection time into schedules.

COLLECTIVE COMPETENCES

Constraints:
•Insufficient institutional sponsorship: no visible authorising environment.
•Priority conflicts: timetables, exams, or budget cycles undermine delivery windows.
•Stakeholder gaps: families, facilities, or external partners not brought into the loop.

Enablers:
•Visible sponsorship & governance: a steering group with authority to unblock issues; meeting cadences and decision logs.
•Protected time & space: scheduled planning sprints; cross-team workshops tied to the school calendar.
•Participation architecture: clear roles for students/staff; co-design sessions
•Evidence routines: brief, regular check-ins using simple indicators to learn and adapt.

TECHNICAL MATERIAL COMPETENCES

Constraints:
•Inadequate infrastructure
•Lack of funding for facilities (e.g., recycling bins, bike racks)
•Corruption or inefficiency in administration
•Data blindness: no easy way to capture and share results

Enablers:
•Resources for change planned up front: time, funding lines, tools, and people—not just kit.
•Modular, adaptable solutions: choose equipment and layouts that can evolve (e.g., eco-points, dashboards, plug-and-play sensors).
•Procurement that embeds the practice: include service levels (e.g., collection specs, maintenance), not just hardware.
•Lean monitoring: a handful of meaningful indicators (baseline — 30/60/90-day reviews) to guide iteration and scaling.

WRAPPING UP THE ECF4CLIM ROADMAP:
LEARNING TO LEAD ACTION

The ECF4CLIM Roadmap is more than a framework—it is a call to action. It invites learners, educators, and communities to step into their power, reflect deeply, collaborate boldly, and act with purpose. Across its four interconnected areas—Engagement, Connections, Change, and Action—the roadmap guides us through a transformative journey towards sustainability.

ENGAGEMENT:
STARTING WITH WHAT MATTERS

We begin by listening to ourselves, to one another, and to the world around us. We explore our values, challenge assumptions, and create space for inclusive dialogue. Engagement reveals that sustainability is not merely a topic—it is a shared responsibility rooted in care, justice, and participation.

"CHANGE BEGINS WHEN WE ASK:
WHAT DO WE TRULY CARE ABOUT?"

CONNECTIONS:
SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

Next, we learn to view the world as a web of interdependencies. We connect the dots between climate, equity, economy, and culture. We realise that no issue stands alone—and neither do we. Systems thinking empowers us to understand complexity and respond wisely.

> "WHEN WE SEE HOW EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED, WE UNDERSTAND HOW POWERFUL OUR ACTIONS CAN BE."

CHANGE:
IMAGING WHAT'S POSSIBLE

With clarity and courage, we envision better futures and challenge the present reality. Change is about using knowledge, creativity, and collaboration to shape a future that is sustainable, just, and full of possibility. It means combining imagination with strategy, and values with evidence, to move from "what if" to "what's next."

> "**THE FUTURE IS NOT SOMETHING WE ENTER.** IT'S SOMETHING WE CREATE—TOGETHER"

ACTION:
MAKING TRANSFORMATION HAPPEN

Finally, we act. We design strategies, build partnerships, and take steps—both small and bold—towards sustainability. We learn from experience, adapt when needed, and celebrate progress. Action is not a destination; it is a practice. It is about turning ideas into impact, aligning our values with our behaviours, and making sure our actions contribute to a more sustainable world.
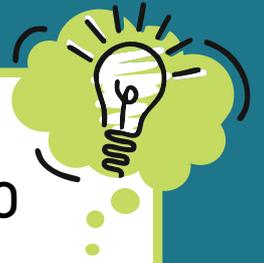
"THE MOST POWERFUL THING YOU CAN DO FOR THE PLANET IS TO BEGIN."

The ECF4CLIM Roadmap reminds us that education is not just about acquiring knowledge—it is about shaping futures. It empowers individuals to care, to connect, to imagine, and to act.

Whether you are a student planting a tree, a teacher rethinking your curriculum, or a policymaker designing inclusive strategies—your role matters. Your voice matters. Your actions matter.

LET US WALK THIS PATH TOGETHER. LET US TURN LEARNING INTO LEADERSHIP. LET US MAKE SUSTAINABILITY NOT JUST A GOAL, BUT A WAY OF LIFE.

ACTION

MAKING TRANSFORMATION HAPPEN

Ecf4clim