

# Nordic Network on Climate Change Governance



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## Nordic Workshop

### Whither the Nation State?

#### The Changing Role of the State in Climate Change Mitigation Governance

22-23 May 2019 – Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Oslo, Norway

### Call for Papers

The Nordic Network on Climate Change Governance (NordClimGov) welcomes abstracts for the second NordClimGov workshop on “*Whither the Nation State? Changing Configurations of Authority in Climate Change Mitigation Governance.*”

The workshop is funded by the Joint Committee for Nordic research councils in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NOS-HS) and the Independent Research Fund Denmark, and is organised by the University of Copenhagen, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), University of Eastern Finland (UEF) and Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI). This call invites scholars from institutions in the Nordic region and neighbouring countries to submit papers.

#### Background and objectives

NordClimGov aims to establish a new Nordic research network of scholars on the governance of adaptation and mitigation to climate change, bringing together scholars from a variety of disciplines, including geography, political science, law, policy sciences and development studies.

Understanding and improving different forms of multi-actor and multi-level governance to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change is an urgent challenge and warrants a coordinated research approach in the Nordic region. Nordic countries play a vital role in pioneering new governance approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation, involving governmental and non-governmental actors at multiple levels and across borders. Yet there is a need to better understand these governance approaches, as well as their interactions. The workshop will contribute to this objective by bringing together a multidisciplinary group of researchers to form a network of scholars in climate change governance, which has been notably absent in the Nordic region. It follows up on the workshop “*Climate Change Adaptation and Loss & Damage after Paris – Bridging Different Levels of Governance*”, which was held in Copenhagen in May 2018.

Beyond establishing a network, the workshop will result in a policy brief outlining a Nordic research agenda on the changing role of the nation state in global climate governance. The workshop will also allow for the discussion of joint research proposals and other network activities.

#### Shifts in global climate governance and the role of the nation state

Legal and policy responses to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects have evolved rapidly over the past two decades. The rush to implement meaningful responses has resulted in a complicated governance web, involving multiple actors working at and within, as well as across and beyond different levels and national boundaries.

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At the international level, the response has largely focused on the regime established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). With the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, the UNFCCC has become more ‘bottom-up’, with five-yearly pledges by states—in the form of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)—assuming greater importance. The evolving international governance framework has drawn new attention to the diversity of policy responses at the national and subnational levels. National-level governance offers key opportunities for public policy and actors to interact in novel ways with each other and with governance structures at the international and regional levels to deliver and report on emission reductions.

But the nation state is clearly no longer the only actor in global climate governance. The number of transnational governance initiatives—which often include public actors at the national and subnational levels, as well as private actors such as businesses, investors, and civil society—has increased rapidly, with new initiatives covering issues such as city-level climate action, standards for greenhouse gas accounting and carbon markets, and the disclosure of climate-related information, or branching out to new areas that had remained hitherto under the radar, such as short-lived climate pollutants.

Notwithstanding the increasing relevance of non-state and subnational actors in global climate governance, nation states continue to play a major role in global climate governance. After all, it was intergovernmental negotiations that led to the Paris Agreement; and the Agreement’s NDCs are governmental action plans. Yet in the post-Paris era, it is important to better understand how the activities by national governments work in conjunction with other actors and forms of governance. For instance, to what extent do non-state and subnational actors fill the gaps in ambition and implementation left by nation states? While the ‘We Are Still In’ coalition emerging following the announcement by US President Donald Trump that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement may suggest that non-state and subnational action may help in bridging the ambition gap, it remains to be seen whether such actions can thrive without state support and control. As another example, in the area of technology development a better understanding is still required of the role of the ‘entrepreneurial state’ vis-à-vis the role of the private sector in driving innovation, market development and investment in low-emissions technologies. Furthermore, states may also actively ‘orchestrate’ the emergence and functioning of new initiatives involving non-state and subnational actors, but little is still known about which states do so, why, and with what effects.

Against this background, this workshop seeks to further a research agenda on the governance of climate change mitigation by bringing together scholars from political science, law, public administration and related social sciences to discuss the (changing) role of the state in climate change mitigation governance.

Themes to be addressed in the workshop include but are not limited to:

- **Legal and governance innovations:** Promising innovations and developments that can be observed in national and subnational climate change governance—for instance in the form of new types of climate change legislation, new governance approaches such as climate budgeting and reporting approaches, or the introduction of new institutions; and lessons learned concerning public acceptance of climate policies, as well as on their adoption or implementation and policy feedback of governance innovations.
- **National governance challenges:** Interactions between different branches—executive, legislative, judicial—of national government; the extent and effect of climate change litigation and possible concerns about separation of powers, and how specific cases (e.g. Urgenda in the Netherlands) have

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dealt with this question; challenges of integrating climate and energy policy; how to design effective climate policy portfolios, while accounting for policy feedback and instrument interactions; the legitimacy and social acceptance of national climate policies, and policy options to address negative consequences of low-carbon transitions.

- **Polycentric governance.** The influence of international (e.g. Paris Agreement) and supranational (EU) governance on domestic climate politics (e.g. through empowering or disempowering certain constituencies); mechanisms through which subnational and non-state action affect the climate change mitigation ambition of national governments; the division of labour between nation states and subnational initiatives, and legal and policy mechanisms that can be used by national governments to stifle or support action by subnational authorities; interactions between national governments and non-state actors in the implementation of climate change mitigation policy instruments; the conditions for, and effects of orchestration of non-state and subnational actors by nation states; and the role envisaged for non-state and subnational actors in implementing and achieving NDCs.

## Workshop logistics and financial support

The workshop starts on 22 May in the afternoon and concludes on 23 May after lunch. It will be held at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo, Norway.

The funding for the workshop is aimed primarily at **scholars based at Nordic universities and research institutes**. Early-career scholars are particularly encouraged to participate.

Funding is provided to cover the costs of accommodation and meals. In some cases, travel support to Oslo may be offered. Please state in your submission if you wish to apply for such support as well as where you would be travelling from, and estimated travel costs. No per diem is offered.

## Abstract and paper submission

- Paper proposals should include:
  - The name, current position and affiliation of the paper presenter.
  - A max. 300-word abstract.
  - A max. 2-page CV.
  - An indication of which stream(s) your abstract addresses.
- The deadline for the submission of abstracts is **28 February 2019**.
- Selected participants will be notified by **15 March 2019**.
- If your abstract is accepted, you will be asked to submit a paper related to the workshop theme by **1 May 2019**

Abstracts should be sent to [harro.vanasselt@uef.fi](mailto:harro.vanasselt@uef.fi) and [thinderberg@fni.no](mailto:thinderberg@fni.no).

Organizing committee:

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- Dr. Tor Håkon J. Inderberg (FNI)
- Prof. Morten Broberg (University of Copenhagen)
- Dr. Åsa Persson (SEI)