**2023 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region**

**VNR-VLR studio "Evidence-based approaches to the development of the Voluntary Local Reviews: experiences and best practices"**

**30 March 2023 from 13:10 to 15:00 CET (Geneva)**
**Conference Room H-207, H building, Palais des Nations, Geneva (Switzerland)**
**And online in Ms Teams, here is the connection link**

**Language:** English only

The 2023 RFSD will be held on **29-30 March 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland**. The theme for this year's Forum will focus on "**Ensuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the ECE Region in times of multiple crises**". To participate in the Forum, please register online at Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region (29-30 March 2023): Registration · Indico.

The VNR-VLR studio "Evidence-based approaches to the development of SDG Voluntary Local Reviews: experiences and best practices" will be held as a side event to the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region (RFSD). Both in-person and online participation will be possible.

The VNR-VLR Studio is organized by the UNECE Forests, Land and Housing Division in cooperation with UN DESA, UN-Habitat and Union of Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the partners in the project "Voluntary local reviews: evidence for greener, resilient, and sustainable urban recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition"[1]; University of Geneva.

The VNR-VLR Studio will provide an opportunity for a discussion between local and national governments in the UNECE region on (1) experiences with the processes of collection of local data for the development of the VLRs/smart sustainable cities profiles and VNRs; and (2) the use of the collected data for the evidence-based policymaking, for instance, for the development of city action plans, programmes and projects. The participants will discuss how the evidence-based approach helps to accelerate achieving the SDGs on local level and support the improvement of the quality of life of people, especially vulnerable groups.



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[1] The project on voluntary local reviews is supported by the 14th tranche of the UN Development Account (UNDA) and includes development of SDG voluntary local reviews for four pilot cities in the UNECE region, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Dushanbe, Tajikistan; Nis, Serbia; and Tbilisi, Georgia; in accordance to the updated Regional Guidelines for the Voluntary Local Reviews in the UNECE Region.

**Expected outcomes:**

It is expected that the VLR-VNR Studio will: (1) Identify key challenges in regard to the collection and utilization of the data for the SDG reporting and propose actions to overcome the challenges; (2) Facilitate peer learning between the national and local governments on mechanisms and processes of collection of the data for the VLR (for the reporting on the SDGs) and utilization of these data to improve quality of life of people.

**Registration:**
Please note separate registration links for the Regional Forum and this side event:
**To participate in this side event**, please register online at https://indico.un.org/event/1004139/. The Ms Teams connection link will be sent to registered participants.

**To participate in the RFSD, please register** at the Forum web page.


## Draft programme

*Welcome coffee and refreshments will be offered in the Amphitheatre area, H building, Palais des Nations starting from 12:45 p.m.*

### 13:10-13:25 Opening and introduction into the event
- *Paola Deda, Director, UNECE Forests, Land and Housing Division*
- *Shipra Narang Suri, Chief, Urban Practices Branch, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat*
- *Sara Hoeflich, Director for Learning, UCLG World Secretariat*
- *Jurgen Gafke, Senior Programme Management Officer on Capacity Building, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (pre-recorded presentation)*

### 13:25-13:40 Information on the project and framing the discussion
- *Martino Miraglia, Project Coordinator, "Voluntary local reviews: evidence for greener, resilient, and sustainable urban recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition", UN-Habitat*
- *Spiro Pollalis, Head of Zofnass Programme, Harvard University, USA*

### 13:40-14:10 The case study of the collaboration between the national and local government in Switzerland on data collection/analysis for review of achieving the SDGs
Moderator: Alexandre Hedjazi, University of Geneva

**Questions to presenters:**
o   What is the impact of the evidence-based decision making in cities on the quality of life of all inhabitants in your city? - Where is the evidence-based planning working best?
o   What are the key pre-requisites for the evidence-based policy making?
o   What support (methodological, thematic studies and analysis, exchange of experiences etc.) could cities need for the development of the VLRs to report on achieving the SDGs?

Presenters (online)
- *Marika Codoni, Head of Sustainability and Social Cohesion Department and Viola Ferdani, Consultant; City of Castel San Pietro, Ticino, Switzerland*
- *Anne Bösch, co-leader of the Multitopic Monitoring group, former project manager of Cercle Indicateurs*

Questions and answers

**14:10-14:20 The case study of the data collection and analysis for the development of the VLR of the city of Madrid**
Moderator: Martino Miraglia, Project Coordinator, UN-Habitat

Presenter (in person, 10 min)
- *Nicolas Gharbi, Principal Advisor on International Affairs of the Madrid City Council, City of Madrid, Spain*

**14:20-14:50 Roundtable of representative project pilot cities and relevant national authorities**
Moderator: Matteo Tarantino, University of Geneva and Catholic University of Milan

**Questions to presenters:**
o   What have been the critical challenges in completing citywide sustainability assessments, such as, for instance, preparation of a smart sustainable city profile using the KPIs for smart sustainable cities?
o   What have been the areas which required more efforts to gather needed quality data? How did you address these challenges?
o   What preparations is your city making to start collecting data for the VLR assessment?
o   What do you expect will be the main challenges for your city in gathering the data for VLRs and monitoring the efforts afterwards[2]?

Presenters (in person, 5 min interventions)
- *Tanja Obradovic, city government of Nis, Serbia*
- *Meerim Kydyralieva, city government of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan*
- *Vakhtang Lomjaria, city government of Tbilisi, Georgia*

Short comments by representatives of the national governments' representatives (in person, 5 min)
- *Siniša Trkulja, Chief, Sector for Spatial and Urban Planning, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of Serbia*
- *Aisuluu Amanova, Head of Strategic Development, Ministry of Economy and Commerce of Kyrgyzstan*
- *Natia Tsikardze, Head of Strategic Planning and Coordination Unit at Administration of Government of Georgia*

**14:50-15:00  Reflections on the discussions and next steps**
Moderator: Gulnara Roll, Secretary to the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management

- *Spiro Pollalis, Head of Zofnass Programme, Harvard University, USA*

**15:00   Adjourn**

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[2] For instance, consider the Global Urban Monitoring Framework https://unhabitat.org/the-global-urban-monitoring-framework