



# REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

13 – 14 MARCH 2024 | HYBRID EVENT | GENEVA & ONLINE

## SIDE EVENT CONCEPT NOTE

---

Event title

---

### **Closing the SDGs action gap – from “monitoring hype” to multi-level action**

---

Background and Rationale

---

There is an urgent need to close the action gap towards the SDGs. The [Sustainable Development Report Europe 2023/24](#) demonstrates that progress in Europe is still too limited, and highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach to achieve the green, social and international dimensions of the SDGs (SDSN, 2024).

Cities play a critical role in reconciling sustainable development needs while dealing with multiple crises. Demands on local governments are at an all-time high, yet expectations are often topping the resources at hand. How can this be changed? What kind of tools and frameworks do cities need to deliver on global agendas?

By analysing the actions cities take to deliver on the SDGs, we can better understand where local governments currently focus their efforts to achieve impact, and what the gaps and most urgent needs are. Stakeholders at all levels can use this information to strengthen dialogue and cooperation and – ultimately – governance for sustainable development.

In this session - for the first time - the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) will share their new research designed to help making informed decisions about local SDGs implementation, drawing on a global analysis of cities’ Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). The presentation will kick-start a discussion about the challenges and opportunities for cities to go beyond the “monitoring hype” and focus on actions to achieve significant SDGs impact. Drawing on the work by the UN Environment Programme’s technical assistance to cities, the panellists will further discuss existing institutional arrangements which support the engagement of subnational actors, including ways to strengthen multilevel governance approaches.

---

Session objectives and expected outcomes

---

#### **Objective:**

- Discuss priorities for stakeholders at all levels to work together to close the SDG action gap, using real examples of actions taken by cities.



# REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

13 – 14 MARCH 2024 | HYBRID EVENT | GENEVA & ONLINE

## Expected outcomes:

- Gain understanding how benchmarking and analysis of cities' SDG actions can lead to better decision-making and multi-level governance mechanisms to accelerate action on SDGs.
- Gain perspectives from different local contexts and challenges.

---

## Organizers

---

**Lead organizers:** City of Tallinn

**Contributors:** European Commission's Joint Research Centre, UNEP Economy Division, City Of Tbilisi, Georgia

**Focal points:** Stina Heikkilä, Sustainability Governance Advisor, Tallinn

**E-Mail:** [Stina.Heikkila@tallinnlv.ee](mailto:Stina.Heikkila@tallinnlv.ee)

---

## Agenda and Structure

---

13:15 Welcome words

13:20 Demonstration of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre's new global research and prototype dashboard analysing SDG actions reported in cities' Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). **Dr. Iraklis Stamos**, Joint Research Centre, European Commission.

13:40 Q&A with the audience

13:50 Reflection from the perspective of **Ms. Gulnara Roll**, Head of Cities Unit at Energy and Climate Branch, Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme.

13:55 Reflection from the perspective of **Ms. Krista Kampus**, Head of EU and International Relations, City of Tallinn, Estonia.

14:00 Reflection from the perspective of **Mr. Vakhtang Lomjaria**, Head Municipal Department of Economic Development, Tbilisi City Hall, Georgia (TBC).

14:05-14:25 Panel discussion and interaction with the audience. What does it take to close the SDGs action gap?

14:25-14:30 Wrap up and closing.



---

## List of Panellists

---

Speakers and panellists:

Dr. Iraklis Stamos, Joint Research Centre, European Commission.

Ms. Krista Kampus, Head of EU and International Relations, City of Tallinn, Estonia.

Ms. Gulnara Roll, Head of Cities Unit at Energy and Climate Branch, Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme

Mr. Vakhtang Lomjaria, Head Municipal Department of Economic Development, Tbilisi City Hall, Georgia (TBC).

Moderator: Ms Stina Heikkilä, Sustainability Governance Advisor, City of Tallinn, Estonia.

---

Sign-up / Registration Link

---

[The UNECE Regional Forum - Tallinn Euroopa roheline pealinn \(greentallinn.eu\)](https://greentallinn.eu)