

UN Development Account Tranche 14

## **Voluntary local reviews: evidence for greener, resilient and sustainable urban recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition**

### **Online Workshop**

December 6, 2022, 09:00 CET to 12:30 CET

**Registration [LINK](#)**

#### **Workshop at a glance**

The technical workshop is part of the project *Voluntary Local Reviews: Evidence for Greener, Resilient and Sustainable Urban Recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian Countries in Transition*. The project aims to advance socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and SDG localization in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition by harnessing the potential of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

The aim of the workshop to kick-off the implementation of the project. Implementing partners will present the project's objective, approaches, and roadmap. In addition, all cities and partners involved will also have the possibility to present their work in implementing the SDGs and advancing local/urban development processes in their territories.

The workshop wants to be an occasion for all implementing partners, pilot cities, countries and interested stakeholders to meet and share views and objectives for the upcoming joint work.

The pilot countries and cities joining the project are Georgia/Tbilisi; Kyrgyzstan/Bishkek; Serbia/Nis; Tajikistan/Dushanbe.

The project implementation is led by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in close collaboration with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and United Cities Local Governments (UCLG).

## Objectives of the Workshop

- Kicking-off the implementation of the project
- Presenting the project's objective, approach, and roadmap
- Sharing the pilot cities' experiences on the SDGs and expectations from the project
- Connecting all partners involved in the process

## Expected outcome

- All partners agree on the project's objectives, outputs and roadmap
- All partners get to know each other and their respective responsibilities in advancing the implementation of the project's activities

## Draft Agenda

December 6, 2022 09:00 – 12:30 CET	
Time	Activity
Moderator: <b>Martino Miraglia</b> , Human Settlements Officer, SDG Localization and Local Governments, UN-Habitat	
09:00 – 09:20 20 minutes	<b>Introductory remarks</b>  <b>Shipra Narang Suri</b> , Chief of the Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat <b>Gulnara Roll</b> , Regional Advisor, UNECE Forests, Land and Housing Division UNDESA UCLG
09:20 – 09:40 20 minutes	<b>Tour de Table</b>  Introduction of the participants attending the workshop
09:40 – 10:00 20 minutes	<b>Overview of project: objectives, outcomes and roadmap</b>  <b>Katja Schaefer</b> , Inter-Regional Advisor, UN-Habitat <b>Martino Miraglia</b> , Human Settlements Officer, UN-Habitat
10:00 – 10:50 50 minutes	<b>The pilot cities and countries</b>  Presentation by the pilot cities and countries on their national and territorial context and on their work on the SDGs and local/urban development

	<p><b><i>Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)</i></b>  <b>Timur Abylaev</b>, Deputy Director of the Agency for the Bishkek City Development and Investments Promotion under the Bishkek City Mayor's Office</p> <p><b><i>Dushanbe (Tajikistan)</i></b>  <b>Manuchehr Rakhmonov</b>, Partnership and Development Finance officer, UN Resident Coordinator's Office  <b>Kamoliddin Bozi</b>, Head of Regional Development, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade</p> <p><b><i>Niš (Serbia)</i></b>  <b>Tanja Obradović</b>, Chief City Planner, City of Niš  <b>Siniša Trkulja</b>, Advisor, Spatial and Urban Planning, Ministry Of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure  <b>Francoise Jacob</b>, UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia</p> <p><b><i>Tbilisi (Georgia)</i></b>  <b>Vakhtang Lomjaria</b>, Head Municipal Department of Economic Development, Tbilisi City Hall</p>
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**Coffee Break**

<p>11:00 – 12:00 60 minutes</p>	<p><b>The project tracks</b></p> <p>Presentation by the implementing partners (UN-Habitat, UNECE, UNDESA and UCLG) followed by Q&amp;A</p> <p><b><i>Voluntary Local Reviews and SDG Localization Track</i></b>  The VLR global movement and global guidelines on VLRs  UNECE Regional Guidelines on VLRs  Rapid response and recovery  Overview of the project's VLR methodology</p> <p><b>Key document: <i>VLR plan and milestones</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Learning Track</i></b>  SDG Localization Learning Module 2.0  UNECE Online training programme on VLRs  UNDESA capacity building</p> <p><b>Key document: <i>Learning tools and plan for 2023</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Advocacy Track</i></b>  ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the Forum of Mayors  High-Level Political Forum and the SDG Summit 2023  UN-Habitat Assembly, Urban October and World Urban Forum 12  The Local Governments Constituency engagement</p>
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	<b>Key document: <i>Advocacy plan for 2023</i></b>
12:00 – 12:20 20 minutes	<a href="#">Comments by the UN Resident Coordinator Offices</a>
12:20 – 12:30 10 minutes	<a href="#">The way forward, wrap-up &amp; closing</a>  <b>Martino Miraglia</b> , Human Settlements Officer, SDG Localization and Local Governments, UN-Habitat

**List of Participants**

The workshop will gather representatives of the **implementing partners**

- UN-Habitat
- UNECE
- UNDESA
- UCLG

Representatives from the **pilot cities and pilot countries**

- Bishkek / Kyrgyzstan
- Dushanbe / Tajikistan
- Tbilisi / Georgia
- Nis / Serbia

Representatives from the **UN System at both the regional and country level**

- UN Regional Commissions
- UN Resident Coordinator Offices

**Background**

**Responding to both COVID-19 and the SDGs have strong local dimensions.** Since COVID-19 affects urban neighborhoods and groups of people in cities differently, addressing it requires a granular, localized understanding of cities and local realities. Measures to reduce virus transmission, including the implementation of lockdowns, are also highly localized and economic recovery strategies are locally designed and implemented. Meanwhile, according to the OECD, at least 105 of the 169 SDGs targets (62 per cent) will not be reached without proper engagement and coordination with local and regional governments. Thus, effective recovery from COVID-19 coupled with the achievement of SDGs requires increased localized action. SDG localization is hence understood as the process of transforming the Global Goals into reality at the local level, for local communities and their environments, in coordination with national frameworks; it is a two-way process where the local meets the national and the global and vice-versa, and where all parts of society come together, joining hands, visions and resources towards a common objective – the achievement of sustainable, inclusive and resilient development.

**Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) represent a unique tool to foster the link between the SDGs and the COVID-19 recovery.** VLRs are a powerful accelerator of SDG localization: they have the

potential to reinforce data environments at the local level; to bring residents, including marginalized groups, closer to decision-making processes; to strengthen multilevel governance and inform the elaboration of Voluntary National Reviews; and to foster local planning, while providing evidence for the design of COVID-19 recovery plans and priority interventions both at local and national levels.

**The project objective is to advance socio-economic recovery and SDG localization in Eastern Europe and Central Asian countries in transition by harnessing the potential of Voluntary Local Reviews.**

It proposes to do so by connecting the expertise, approaches and work of key international partners that have been working to promote VLRs and SDG localization in the past years: UN-Habitat; UNECE; UNDESA and UCLG.

Pilot cities and countries will be directly supported to **develop their VLR and to pilot the [Global Urban Monitoring Framework](#)** – the UN framework to monitor the local implementation of the SDGs and New Urban Agenda. The VLR will be “recovery” oriented, being inspired by [the Rapid Response project](#) and methodology led by UNECE and the UNRECS, with the support of UN-Habitat and UNCDF.

The VLR will be the basis to **launch the SDG localization process within the cities, specifically inspired by the [SDG Cities cycle](#)** aimed that links VLRs with City Development Strategies, projects development and investments.

In addition, local and regional representatives from pilot cities and countries will be part involved in **capacity building process** based on the [SDG Learning Modules](#) led by UCLG, UN-Habitat and other implementing partners.

Last but not least, through the project, pilot cities and countries’ representatives will be **participating (virtually or in person) to the key regional and international events** on Sustainable Development including the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, the UN-Habitat Assembly, HLPF, the SDG Summit and World Urban Forum 2024.

## Resources

### Online platforms on VLRs and SDG localization

UN-Habitat VLR platform: <https://unhabitat.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews>

UNDESA VLR website: <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews>

UCLG GOLD: <https://www.gold.uclg.org/report/localizing-sdgs-boost-monitoring-reporting>

### VLR Guidelines

Updated UNECE Regional Guidelines for VLRs:

<https://unece.org/isu/documents/2022/07/session-documents/updated-guidelines-development-voluntary-local-reviews-ece>

UN-Habitat-UCLG Global Guidelines Vol.1

([https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/07/uclg\\_vlrlab\\_guidelines\\_july\\_2020\\_final.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/07/uclg_vlrlab_guidelines_july_2020_final.pdf))

and Vol.2 ([https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/07/vlrguidelines\\_vol2.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/07/vlrguidelines_vol2.pdf))

UNDESA VLR Guiding Elements : [https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/GlobalGuidingElementsforVLRs\\_FINAL.pdf](https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/GlobalGuidingElementsforVLRs_FINAL.pdf)

### **Learning and Capacity Building**

UCLG SDG Localization Learning Modules: <https://learning.uclg.org/localizing-the-sdgs/>

### **Events and advocacy**

ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development: <https://regionalforum.unece.org/#>

UN-Habitat Assembly: <https://unhabitat.org/governance/un-habitat-assembly>

High Level Political Forum: <https://hlpf.un.org/>

SDG Summit: <https://hlpf.un.org/sdg-summit>

World Urban Forum: <https://wuf.unhabitat.org/>