

7th OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the Sustainable Development Goals

29 May 2024



7th OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the SDGs

Wednesday 29 May 2024 | 09:00 – 17:00 (CEST)

Tabakalera, San Sebastián (Spain)

[Register here](#)

The Roundtable will bring together key stakeholders from cities, regions, national governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, philanthropy and international organisations to:

- **Discuss** the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalisation for the localisation of the SDGs, including specific applications of AI in different urban contexts, opportunities and future scenarios
- **Identify** solutions to mobilise public and private financing for the localisation of the SDGs
- **Analyse** the impact of decentralised development co-operation and city-to-city partnerships on the achievement of the SDGs, including in the framework of the EU Global Gateway
- **Shape** a roadmap and ways forward for the localisation of the SDGs, the next steps of the OECD Programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs and its contribution to the High-Level Political Forum, the Summit for the Future and other global agendas.

High-Level Opening: 09:00 – 09:30 CEST

- Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation or Minister of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda, Spain
 - President of the Basque Country, Spain
 - Mayor of San Sebastián, Spain
 - High-level representative from the OECD
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Session I: 09:30 – 11:00 CEST

Artificial intelligence for localising the SDGs

As cities grapple with a variety of challenges, ranging from persistent inequalities and a lack of affordable housing to environmental hazards, both national and local governments are seeking innovative and efficient solutions to shape sustainable and resilient cities. Leveraging digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) to optimise infrastructure, public services and resources can offer an answer among others to tackle some of the most pressing challenges and accelerate progress towards the SDGs. At the same time, AI does not automatically benefit the SDGs. Research shows that AI may act as an enabler for 79% of all SDG targets, but it may also have a negative impact on 35%, for example through risks of displacing workers, increasing carbon emissions from running AI models, or amplifying existing digital and other divides.

The session will:

- Explore innovative uses of digital technology and artificial intelligence to address urban and regional development challenges
 - Discuss strategies and enabling conditions for harnessing the potential of AI to achieve the SDGs while avoiding potential pitfalls
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Coffee break: 11:00 – 11:30 CEST

Session II: 11:30 – 13:00 CEST

Financing the localisation of the SDGs

Cities and regions are critical actors in driving the SDGs. About 105 of the 169 SDGs targets will not be reached without the engagement of, and co-ordination with local and regional governments. However, many cities and regions are confronted with a persistent lack of financial resources to invest in SDG efforts. The global SDG financing gap is estimated at an annual USD 3.9 trillion. Recent global initiatives, such as the SDSN Global Commission for Urban SDG Finance, have shed further light on SDG financing needs in cities and regions. Local and regional governments need new tools and mechanisms to scale up the localisation of the SDGs and finance the cities of tomorrow, including to tap into sustainable finance, municipal bonds, public-private partnerships and other types of financing from the private sector. They also require tools to monitor the effective use of different financing instruments.

The session will:

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- Analyse local and regional governments' funding needs for sustainable urban development and the 2030 Agenda
 - Discuss innovative solutions to help local and regional governments access the funding needed for the localisation of the SDGs
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Lunch break: 13:00 – 14:30 CEST

Session III: 14:30 – 16:00 CEST

Deploying decentralised development co-operation and city-to-city partnerships for the SDGs

Decentralised development co-operation (DDC) and city-to-city partnerships can propel major global agendas such as the SDGs forward. An increasing number of DDC initiatives are focusing on strengthening local governance, for example through peer-to-peer learning, and achieving the SDGs in both promoter and partner countries. In 2021, local and regional governments allocated the most of their DDC budget in 2021 to government and civil society, followed by City-to-city partnerships can also turn into a powerful tool to mobilise public and private investment for sustainable urban development and the localisation of the SDGs, including in the framework of the EU Global Gateway, a major investment strategy launched in 2021 to address global challenges around combatting climate change, improving health systems, and increasing competitiveness and the security of global supply chains.

The session will:

- Investigate how DDC and city-to-city partnerships can contribute to advancing global agendas such as the SDGs and strengthen local governance in promoter and partner countries, for example via peer-to-peer learning
 - Discuss how DDC and city-to-city partnerships can help implement the EU Global Gateway
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Session IV: 16:00 – 17:00 CEST

Ways forward

Halfway since the establishment of the OECD Programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs in 2018 and the end point of the SDGs in 2030, this session will explore possible ways forward for the programme. The session will use a world café format to discuss future priorities for the localisation of the SDGs and feed into the elaboration of a roadmap and the next steps of the OECD programme, including its contribution to the 2024 editions of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Summit for the Future.

The session will:

- Take stock of recent trends in localising the SDGs globally to determine future priorities for cities, regions and national governments
 - Co-create the roadmap and ways forward for the localisation of the SDGs, the next steps of the OECD programme and its contribution to the HLPF, the Summit for the Future and other global agendas
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