



## Call for Participants

### Connective Cities Regional Virtual Event

#### *Climate Resilient Urban Development in Southeast Europe (SEE)*

8-19 June 2020

The international cities platform, **Connective Cities** and its initiators, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the German Association of Cities (Deutscher Städtetag) and Engagement Global GmbH with its Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW), cordially invite urban practitioners from Southeast Europe to take part in the Connective Cities Virtual Event dedicated to “**Climate Resilient Urban Development in Southeast Europe**” from 8 to 19 June 2020. The virtual event supports transforming innovative ideas into digital solutions especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak, as this latter continues to impact heavily the lifestyle at all levels including the sustainable urban development workers and we need to adapt to more innovative and agile ways of working for future crises responses.

Bring your initial urban project idea and we will incubate it within 2 weeks of **digital experience** where you can expect to listen to **inspiring Keynote presentations** from leading European scientists and share insights with your peers in carefully curated **Peer2Peer collaboration and exchange** formats. During this asynchronous and synchronous workshop, you will learn how to collaborate digitally and get acquainted with some tools, methods and the overall mindset **Design Thinking** that helps you to be more innovative by merging the user’s perspective with what is feasible from a technological perspective viable from an organizational perspective.

This invite is predominantly open to the countries fitting under the EU’s regional dimension of Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans: **Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine.**

#### ***Background for Climate Resilient Urban Development in Southeast Europe (SEE)***

In recent years it has been increasingly understood that rapid urbanization and climate risks mean greater vulnerability to urban development. Many cities worldwide face significant challenges arising from natural hazards. This is evident in the increased number of urban disasters such as extreme weather events, storms, flooding, fires, landslides and water shortages in many less-developed and

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developing countries. To deal with these challenges, it is of great importance to take into consideration the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the New Urban Agenda (UN-Habitat) shaping more sustainable and resilient urban development pathways at global levels.

The Southeast European region is no exception, whereas the climate resilient urban development becomes a central pillar of local sustainability policies. Most of the countries in the region continue to face challenges arising from its dual transition from a planned to a market economy and from a rural to an urban economy. This transition is often accompanied by an increased regional disparity coupled with environmental and climate change challenges. In response to that, some cities and municipalities in the region have joined the EU Covenant of Mayors committing themselves to take measures to implement EU climate and energy objectives in their local constituencies. Nevertheless, the signatory cities often struggle with accomplishing their pledges and promoting reduction of targeted national and subnational emission levels.

The core problem lies in the level of preparedness of local urban practitioners to develop locally adapted solutions for climate challenges. On the other hand, there are already cities with significant experience in developing successful possible options that can offer their knowledge and skills. In exchange with each other there is a high potential to learn from peers and develop jointly appropriate solutions for these challenges.

### ***Thematic Focus of the Virtual Event***

In order to be able to accommodate the discussions under the heading of “**Climate Resilient Urban Development**” and achieve the objectives of the Virtual Event, three specific topics have been identified:

1. **Actions towards reducing climate change impacts that include adaptation and mitigation** – strengthening institutional capacities, building socio-economic and ecological resilience, facilitating information, monitoring, reporting and knowledge management systems (i.e. UNFCCC/EU commitments, MRV set-up etc.);
2. **Effective risk management and green pandemic recovery integrated into the urban development process** – COVID-19 impact on municipal vulnerability and enhancing disaster risk reduction (DRR). Effective health protection and disease control embedded into the urban planning. How to mainstream green urban recovery in the aftermath of global flue pandemic?
3. **Mainstreaming an awareness of climate change processes into urban development planning** - addressing the specific regulatory frameworks in order to support urban planners and practitioners to re-think their approaches and to incorporate climate mitigation and adaptation measures into their everyday business.

*Gender aspects and questions of **gender sensitivity** included in the proposed urban project ideas are highly encouraged. An integrated gender perspective in any planning process can offer a better and a more inclusive opportunity to solve the challenges of climate change and disease control. A more socially inclusive and gender sensitive urban planning approach will lead to healthier and climate friendly cities.*

## ***Objectives and Methodology***

The overarching objective of Connective Cities is to promote the exchange of municipal expertise and to mediate between supply of and demand for practical experience by mobilising urban practitioners. The project further seeks to build a network of urban players, which will provide a systematic access to practice-oriented solutions for sustainable urban development by facilitating change and providing mutual support.

The aim of the Virtual Event is to contribute to this overarching objective and to get to know **good practices from municipalities** in SEE region with different local conditions via applying innovative digital solutions in the era of COVID-19. Here, the interest is mainly in pragmatic solutions and approaches that can be **applied or adapted to the different regional/local contexts**. Furthermore, the event will offer a virtual platform to discuss the challenges around the theme of climate resilient urban development and support municipalities in **developing new project ideas** among peers that can be further implemented in the respective home communities or in the framework of existing or new thematic municipal partnerships.

### *The work process involves the following steps:*

1. Content preparation and **production of the virtual event materials** (e.g. podcasts, videos, interviews...) and the embedment of the content into the online platform coupled with instructing the participants with online tool management.
2. Thematically focused input and **good practice examples** of approaches and technologies that facilitate climate resilient urban development;
3. During peer-to-peer consultations, colleagues will diagnose, discuss and advise to **define potential strategies and lessons learnt**. Inspired by keynotes, the consultation is based on short inputs by participants on current concrete challenges in their municipalities.
4. Action planning, focusing on **future project ideas** of climate resilient urban development in Southeast Europe.
5. Selected project ideas developed as part of this event will have the chance to be **further supported by Connective Cities through a follow-up activity** such as an expert mission or a local project workshop, study tour and through advice on options for project financing.

## ***Participation and Contact***

Should you be interested in participating in the Virtual Event, we warmly invite you to apply for a participant spot. Prospective participants are expected/encouraged to provide **a good practice example** they implemented or are currently implementing fitting the thematic focus of the event to enrich the knowledge exchange. A short project idea addressing challenges or relevant current issues in the represented municipalities/cities will be conceptualized through the different elements of the virtual event.

We welcome the participation of municipal delegations of two experts respectively working in the environmental, planning as well as relevant energy & climate departments (dependent on their

internal structure) to present their project cooperation. One of the participants may also represent other relevant urban actors from civil society, private sector or academia. Successful participation in the virtual event will also be awarded with the GIZ issued certificate.

Please be aware that you do not need an app or other installations to participate in the virtual events, but

- A reliable internet connection
- A desktop/pc with the latest version of Chrome or FireFox
- A head-set (recommended)

Please send us an application/email with your function and organisation as well as with a short description of the project you would like to showcase on the following e-mail address: [irakli.samkharadze@giz.de](mailto:irakli.samkharadze@giz.de). The deadline for the application is **17 May 2020**.

Concerning the questions from international applicants on the event and the participation process, please contact: **Mr. Irakli Samkharadze**, GIZ Regional Network Coordinator Connective Cities – Southeast Europe. Tbilisi, Georgia ([irakli.samkharadze@giz.de](mailto:irakli.samkharadze@giz.de), +995 577 595829). The online tools will be announced at a later stage and the participants will be instructed accordingly.

Interested German experts should contact **Ms. Alice Balbo**, Connective Cities Project Manager at the German Association of Cities ([alice.balbo@staedtetag.de](mailto:alice.balbo@staedtetag.de), +49 221 37 71 573).

### ***Connective Cities at a glance***

The international exchange platform Connective Cities has been bringing together international urban practitioners from city administrations, civil society, academia and the private sector since 2013. Connective Cities is a cooperation project of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the German Association of Cities and Engagement Global with its Service Agency Communities in One World.

For more information on past and upcoming activities please visit our website: <https://www.connective-cities.net/en/>.

### ***Factsheet: All information at a glance***

<b>Type of Event</b>	Virtual Event
<b>Date &amp; Place</b>	8-19 June 2020, <i>online</i>
<b>Duration</b>	Within two weeks six webinars of 1,5h each. Prospective days: Friday – 5 <sup>th</sup> , Monday – 8 <sup>th</sup> , Wednesday – 10 <sup>th</sup> , Friday – 12 <sup>th</sup> , Monday – 15 <sup>th</sup> , Thursday – 18 <sup>th</sup> , Friday – 19 <sup>th</sup> . Individual, asynchronous work in between of approx. 7h, total 16h.
<b>Thematic Focus</b>	<b>Climate Resilient Urban Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actions reducing climate change impacts that include adaptation and mitigation to climate change</li> <li>- Effective risk management and green COVID-19 recovery integrated into the urban development process</li> <li>- An awareness of climate change processes into urban planning</li> </ul>

<b>Participants</b>	A total of approximately 35 participants, including 30 representatives from 15 municipalities in the Southeast European Cities and 2-3 experts.
<b>Criteria for Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practical perspective and first-hand experience in municipal strategies and projects in climate change mitigation and adaptation;</li> <li>- Willingness to present the good local practice example;</li> <li>- Readiness to engage in a virtual exchange during the event and improve the digital literacy</li> <li>- a virtual platform to share files, photos and videos, to work, chat and discuss before, during and after the conference</li> </ul>
<b>Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Webinar format, which will explore and exchange good practices among participating urban practitioners in an interactive manner;</li> <li>- Virtual interactive group discussions (break-out groups and collaborative tools), which will focus on peer-to-peer consultation on actual challenges;</li> <li>- Action planning to formulate a concrete project idea for further development.</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	The event is to be held in English.
<b>Cost sharing</b>	All event related costs will be covered by Connective Cities for urban practitioners from Southeast European cities.
<b>Contact</b>	<p>Mr. Irakli Samkharadze (<a href="mailto:irakli.samkharadze@giz.de">irakli.samkharadze@giz.de</a>) for international participants</p> <p>Ms. Alice Balbo (<a href="mailto:alice.balbo@staedtetag.de">alice.balbo@staedtetag.de</a>) for German participants</p>