# Strengthening the local implementation of SDGs through local reviews and monitoring

Connective Cities virtual Dialogue Event in cooperation with the City of Bonn

## Overview

Local and regional governments are essential partners for monitoring and reporting on progress in localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 2018, more and more cities and regions have started to develop Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) based on local data and localised indicators. They aim to shed light on their local efforts to implement the SDGs in order to contribute to and complement the information and data provided by their national governments to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

The Connective Cities virtual dialogue event on 26, 27 and 29 April 2021 facilitated the exchange of experience on this topic, with almost 60 participants from 19 countries from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The event's three main topics dealt with

1. data availability and data collection systems for SDG monitoring,
2. data-driven policy development and contribution to different levels of governance and
3. quality citizen dialogue and stakeholder engagement.

The dialogue event was held in partnership with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and PLATFORMA and co-hosted by the City of Bonn.

## Program

At the core of the event were

1. the exchange of good practice examples,
2. peer to peer consultations about the major challenges municipalities face regarding monitoring and reporting on the SDGs and
3. the joint development of some of these challenges and solution approaches into project ideas.

This work in four breakout groups was complemented by various speeches and presentations. In her welcome message, the mayor of the City of Bonn, Katja Dörner, explained why it is not a coincidence that the City of Bonn suggested the topic of SDG monitoring and local reviews for an international dialogue event: It issued one of the first VLRs worldwide in 2020 and is a forerunner in SDG implementation, communication and monitoring.

In their speeches, Ainara Fernández Tortosa (United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG), Edgar Pacheco (City of La Paz in Bolivia), and Sabine Drees (Association of German Cities) stressed that monitoring and reporting are essential parts of the SDG implementation process. However, they depend on data that are not always, or not readily, available.

Sarah Bentz (PLATFORMA) presented the results of a survey on SDG localisation, which reveals that out of seven countries that submitted a Voluntary National Review to the United Nations High-Level Forum in 2020, six involved local governments in drafting their reviews.

Dr. Costanzo-Sow (UNSSC Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development of the United Systems Staff College) presented their work on local SDG implementation and monitoring and how the UNSSC Summer Academy can support cities and city networks in their SDG monitoring work.

Finally, Sara Hoeflich de Duque (UCLG) and Shipra Narang Suri (UN-Habitat) noted that networking, partnerships and stakeholder involvement are key for raising awareness for the SDGs, developing suitable indicators for measuring SDG implementation and for identifying and collecting the necessary data. In addition, implementing the SDG would not happen overnight and municipalities should make use of the multiple support offered by various institutions.

Agenda (PDF)

Concept paper (PDF)

Virtuelle Site Visits – City of Bonn (PDF)

## Keynotes

### Welcome

Alice Balbo, Connective Cities
Katja Dörner, Mayor of Bonn (video message)
Stefan Wagner, Head, Department of International Affairs and Global Sustainability, City of Bonn

### Keynotes / Inputs

Ainara Fernández Tortosa, Research Officer, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
Edgar Pacheco, Director of Research and Municipal Data, City of La Paz
Sabine Drees, Senior Advisor for International Affairs, Association of German Cities
Sarah Bentz, SDG Officer, PLATFORMA
Dr. Simona Costanzo-Sow, Learning Portfolio Manager at UNSSC Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development
Salomé Bravo Ortega, Connective Cities
Sara Hoeflich de Duque, Director, UCLG Learning, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
Shipra Narang Suri, Chief of the Urban Practices Branch and Senior focal point for local governments, SDG Localization and VLRs, UN-Habitat

## Presentations

Participants had the opportunity to exchange on good practice examples through presentations and in different working groups:

Group A: Data availability and data collection systems for SDG monitoring
(Berlin – District Office Treptow-Köpenick, Germany / City of Thessaloniki, Greece / City Institute Lviv, Ukraine / City of Bonn + University of Applied Sciences H-BRS, Germany)

Group B.1: Data-driven policy development and contribution to different levels of governance
(PLATFORMA / City of Stuttgart, Germany / Oforikrom Municipal Assembly, Ghana)

Group B.2: Data-driven policy development and contribution to different levels of governance
(Association of German Cities – DST, Germany / City of Mannheim, Germany / City of Strasbourg, France)

Group C: Quality citizen dialogue and stakeholder engagement
Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft Agenda 21 NRW e.V., Germany / (City of São Luís, Brazil / City of Bonn, Germany / City of Mixco, Guatemala)

Further information:

Voluntary Local Review Stadt Bonn (EN)

Sustainability Report 2016 – 2018 City of Bonn (German)

Sustainability Strategy City of Bonn (German)

Roadmap for localizing the SDGs: implementation and monitoring at subnational level (EN)

Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews (EN)

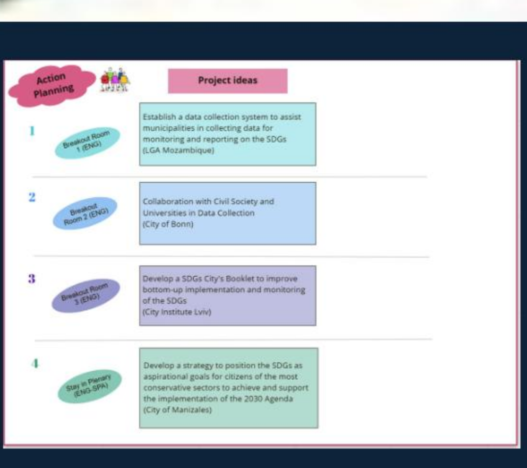
## Results

Participants agreed that the following items were key in defining suitable indicators for monitoring and reporting SDG implementation, in developing data-driven policies and in engaging a broad range of stakeholders:

- Municipalities have to strengthen their skills to better identify and utilise existing data.
- Monitoring should link the local, national and global levels, but does not necessarily have to align local with national indicators.
- If traditional data sources are not available, municipalities should search for innovative sources and create customised indicators that are suitable for local conditions.
- Networking and multi-stakeholder cooperation are key; academia and civil society should be particularly involved in indicator development and data collection.
- Municipalities should start small by only addressing those SDGs that are most relevant to their local context and later extend their focus and develop policies on a stepwise basis.
- Each municipality has its unique starting point, challenges and objectives. It is therefore not possible to use a blueprint for localising the SDGs. However, examples of good practice can often be easily adapted.
- Innovative marketing tools, including infotainment formats, are very suitable for local promotion of the SDGs. An approach which has proved its worth is to bring the SDGs to the people (at large events) and not wait for people to come to the SDGs.

Based on an analysis of key challenges, participants developed pragmatic solutions and approaches for four sample cases:

- Establishing a data collection system for the National Association of Municipalities of Mozambique (ANAMM) to assist local and regional governments in collecting data for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs.
- Drafting a strategy for the City of Bonn on improving the involvement of academia and civil society in SDG monitoring, reporting and data collection.
- Producing a booklet for the City of Lviv (Ukraine) with key information about the SDGs to increase stakeholders' awareness of sustainable development and to build a better understanding of the 2030 Agenda.
- Developing a strategy for the Columbian city of Manizales to convince its more conservative citizens of the 2030 Agenda's added value and to gain their support for SDG implementation and monitoring.

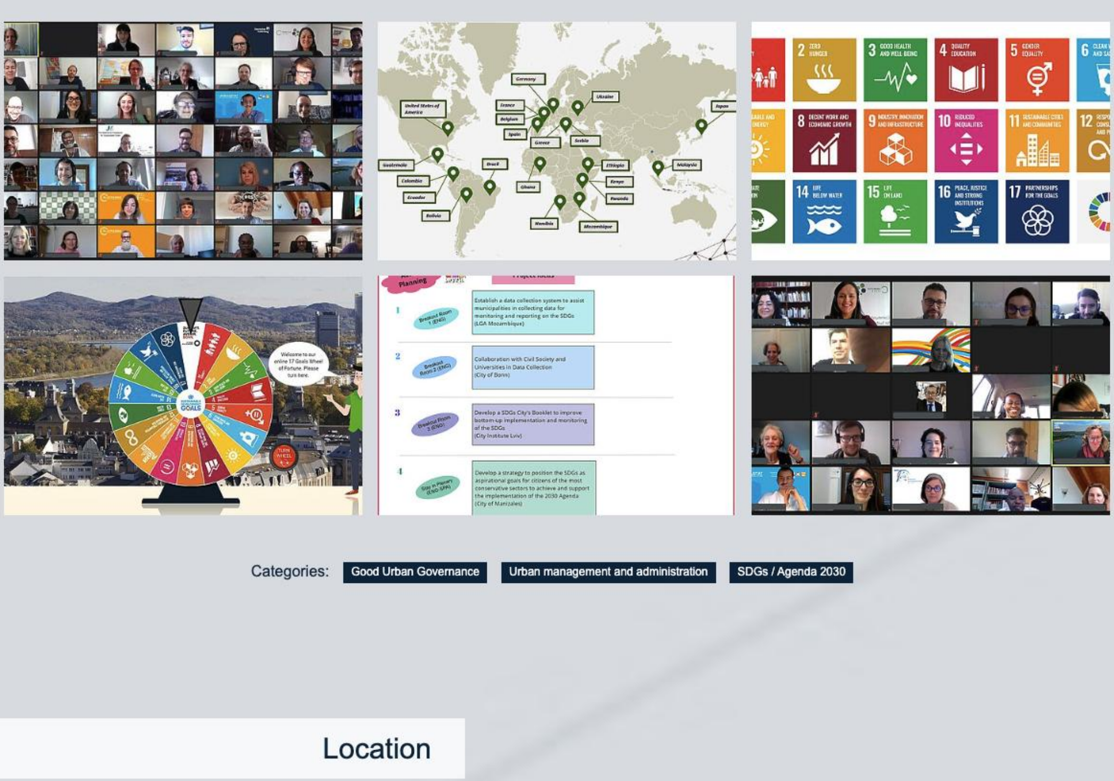



## Report

**Strengthening the local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through local reviews and monitoring**
Author: Dr. Susanne Reiff | Editorial revision: Salomé Bravo Ortega, Alexander Wagner
18 pages | 6,3mb

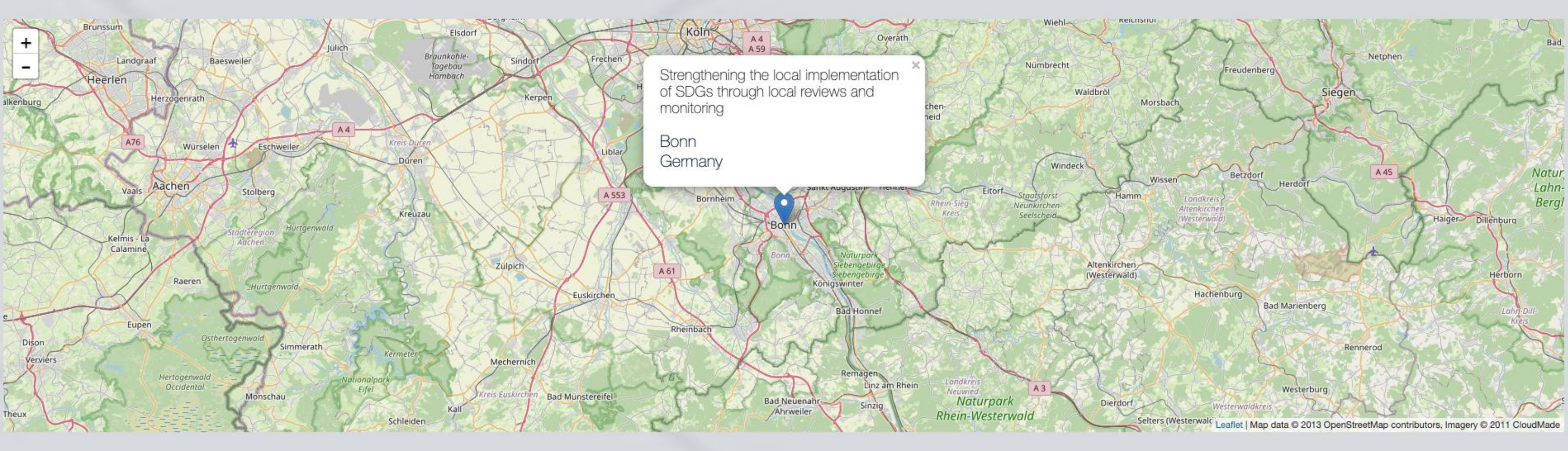
**Strengthening the local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through local reviews and monitoring**
Summary of the Connective Cities virtual dialogue event in cooperation with the City of Bonn, UCLG and PLATFORMA
26, 27 and 29 April 2021

## Gallery



Categories: Good Urban Governance | Urban management and administration | SDGs / Agenda 2030

## Location




## Related events

## Related Good Practices