

22nd ESDN Workshop Discussion Paper

**Governance Transformations for
More Effective SDG Implementation**

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Contact us at:

office@esdu.eu

Visit our website: www.esdn.eu

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Introduction

This Discussion Paper will provide participants taking part in the 22nd European Sustainable Development Network Workshop with some background information on the Workshop's focus, the topics that will be covered by speakers and presenters, as well as how the Workshop's interactive parts will run and the results the ESDN hopes to have by the end of the event.

This year, the Workshop title is "Governance Transformations for More Effective SDG Implementation". The Workshop will take place in Budva, Montenegro on 26-27 March 2024, and is being organized by the European Sustainable Development Network together with the Government of Montenegro and UNDP Montenegro.

As the world finds itself past the halfway mark to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, efforts need to be undertaken to further enhance governance mechanisms that make sustainable development possible and enable truly transformative policies to be undertaken. This theme of transformative policies does not only form the backdrop to this Workshop, but also forms the main focus area of the ESDN for the first six months of 2024. The Workshop is the first ESDN event of the year that will deal with this topic. The other events taking place on the theme of transformative policies is the first ESDN Young Civil Servants Workshop, which will focus on transformative policies for intergenerational equity, and will take place in Vienna on 15-16 April. The ESDN Conference 2024, whose title is "Upgrading Europe: Building Transformative Policies to Reach the Sustainable Development Goals", will, as the title suggest, also deal with transformations, and is taking place in Brussels on 05-06 June.

The ESDN wants to build on the work that has been done by governments at the SDG Summit in 2023, take the lessons learned from the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, and use them to underline the importance of transformations for sustainable development in the run-up to the Summit of the Future, which is taking place in September of this year. Chapter 1 of this Discussion Paper will focus on the main takeaways from the SDG Summit and the transformations and levers of change that have been set out in the 2019 and 2023 Global Sustainable Development Reports, as well as what to expect from the Summit for the Future in September.

Chapter 2 will focus on the keynote presentations from the Western Balkan countries of Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republic of North Macedonia. These presentations will focus on the overarching topic of SDG coordination mechanisms within the government and how they deal with challenges, opportunities, and visions of sustainable development into the future.

Chapter 3 will focus on keynote presentations of good practice examples and experiences on governance mechanisms for sustainable development. One of the good practice examples comes from Luxembourg, where the focus will be on how the country builds inclusive stakeholder partnerships. Another example comes from UNDP Montenegro on financing for the SDGs. The good practice from Finland will focus on government mechanisms to strategically promote the circular economy. Lastly, the presentations focusing on governance mechanisms for sustainable development will end with a good case example from Switzerland on the two Agenda 2030 toolboxes that were created for cantons (subnational level) and municipalities, as well as for businesses.

Chapter 4 takes on a more future oriented approach to the topic of transformations towards sustainability and what is needed for the future as 2030 draws ever closer. The keynote presentation from Romania will

focus on the Romanian Sustainability Code. The keynote presentation from Montenegro will target business transformations from a startup perspective. The keynote from the city of Tallinn, which was the EU Green Capital in 2023, will focus on building sustainable development governance hubs. A final keynote presentation from Montenegro will focus on innovation and transformations.

Chapter 5 will outline the Workshop's interactive segments, as the exchange amongst participants is one of the most fruitful ways to share knowledge, reflect on keynote presentations, and produce outcomes for the Workshop. Overall, the Workshop will offer three separate opportunities for networking, interaction, and exchanges.

The final Workshop documentation will be uploaded to the [ESDN website](#) under Workshops in the events menu. After the Workshop, keynote presentations will be uploaded to this page once consent has been provided by the speakers. An ESDN Policy Note will also be published shortly after the Workshop concludes and can be found on the [ESDN website](#) under publications and policy briefs.

Chapter 1: Background on Transformations for the SDGs

This chapter focuses on providing the backdrop of why transformations for the SDGs are important and why they are the focus of the ESDN over the first half of 2024 as the world approaches the Summit for the Future and draws increasingly closer to 2030 with many of the SDGs set not to be met at current levels of engagement. This will be done by looking at what came out of the SDG Summit, which took place in New York City in September 2023, which attempted to convince countries and heads of state to accelerate efforts to address the SDGs at the halfway point. September 2023 also marked the release of the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, which highlights the transformations and levers that are needed to achieve sustainable development and reach the SDGs. Finally, as time has passed since last September, it is important to keep looking ahead to the upcoming Summit of the Future, which will be taking place in September this year and to assess if governments and societal actors have begun to accelerate actions towards reaching the 2030 Agenda and begin to plan the way forward until 2030 and beyond.

2023 SDG Summit

The 2023 SDG Summit was the second such SDG summit, the first one having been in 2019, and is where heads of state met to review the progress towards the SDGs and further accelerate their implementation. The SDG Summit convenes every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly to “provide high-level political guidance on the 2030 Agenda and its implementation, identify progress and emerging challenges and mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation”.¹

The Summit resulted in a Political Declaration, reaffirming governmental efforts to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs and uphold all principles enshrined in it, while also recognizing the many crises the world has experienced since the 2030 Agenda’s adoption in September 2015. However, it was also recognized that urgent action is necessary to reverse the negative impacts these crises have had on the SDGs, requiring continuous, fundamental, transformative actions at all levels and by all stakeholders to realize the SDGs.

In an informal summary by the United Nations of the 2023 SDG Summit, key messages were outlined.² Of the ten key messages that were mentioned in the informal summary, seven of them address the topics that will be covered by this Workshop, further underlining the need for transformations for sustainable development in order to reach the SDGs and unlocking financing for the SDGs. The key messages from the summary that the Workshop addresses can be found in figure 1 below. All bolded text was done by the ESDN Office for the purpose of highlighting the synergies between the Workshop and the key messages.

¹ “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, A/RES/70/1, paragraph 87.

² https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/2023%20SDG%20Summit%20Summary.pdf?_gl=1*364t7z*_ga*MjYwMDE0OTc5LjE2ODAwMDM3NjU.*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*MTcxMDk0Mjc0S044LjEuMTcxMDk0MjkwNC4wLjAuMA. p. 2.

Key Messages from the SDG Summit 2023

- There is a need to reinvigorate progress across the 2030 Agenda. Compounding and multifaceted crises are slowing, and in many cases setting back, progress on the SDGs, which are off track to be achieved by 2030. Only 15 per cent of the SDG targets are on track, and several previous gains have been reversed. **Bold and transformative actions** on the SDGs must be prioritized and brought to scale.
- Transformative action** can be pursued through science, technology and innovation. Achievements in enabling technology to act as accelerators of the SDGs, and STI need to be at the front and centre of the SDG action plans. STI also need to include women, girls and youth, citizen-science, local communities, and indigenous knowledge. Governments should “double down on digital,” as digital solutions can accelerate 70 per cent of the SDG targets.
- The **strengthening of integrated policies and public institutions** to address the cross-cutting dimensions of sustainable development are necessary to enhance SDG implementation. **Enhancing coordination among institutions** is needed to implement integrated policies. The responsibility for SDG implementation should span all public institutions.
- Progress was highlighted in “nationalizing” the SDGs through various **institutional mechanisms**, accompanied by robust follow-up and review, including the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR). **Partnerships** are needed to support Government-led country platforms to localize SDGs, including in conflict-affected and fragile countries.
- Climate change remains an existential threat. This critical challenge must be addressed through **transformative action**, mitigation and adaptation, renewable energy systems, decarbonization, disaster preparedness and management, and an **increase in climate financing**.
- There is an urgent need to address the worsening **gap in financing the SDGs**. **Strategic investment in the SDGs is essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda**. In addition to effective allocation of domestic resource mobilization, reforming the international financial architecture is key to promoting affordable and stable financing across the Global South. Investing in the SDGs has cross-cutting benefits that positively impact all of society.
- The **mobilization of finance and investment** and the means of implementation for SDG achievement are **urgently needed to underpin SDG action plans**. The Secretary-General’s SDG Stimulus Plan needs to be fully funded and implemented. Climate finance, debt relief and long-term mission-oriented lending are also necessary. **New forms of finance are needed**, such as through carbon pricing. **Unlocking private capital** is another avenue, including through de-risking private investment.

Figure 1: Key Messages from the SDG Summit 2023

Global Sustainable Development Report 2023

The Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2023, which was released in September, built upon the 2019 Report, and still calls for much needed transformations to occur in order to reach the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Both Global Sustainable Development Reports highlight six entry points: (1) human well-being and capabilities, (2) sustainable and just economies, (3) food systems and nutrition patterns, (4) energy decarbonization with universal access, (5) urban and peri-urban development, and (6) the global environmental commons. These entry points offer opportunities for social and technological innovation and changes in human behavior that lead to transformative pathways. The GSDR 2023 argues that incremental and fragmented change is not sufficient and will not achieve the transformations necessary to reach the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, with the way forward being identified as transforming how we, as societies, think, live, produce and consume in order to achieve a new balance that is more sustainable.

The GSDR 2019 then identified four levers: (1) governance, (2) economy and finance, (3) individual and collective action, and (4) science and technology that could be used alongside the six entry points. The GSDR 2023 then added a fifth lever, which is capacity building, with the arguments being that all countries need the knowledge and skills to understand, enable and navigate context-specific transformative change. Supporting the transformation process entails enhancing capacity in all countries for strategic direction and foresight; innovation and the generation of new alternatives; orchestration, engagement, and negotiation; identifying and overcoming impediments; and in learning and resilience.³

Summit for the Future 2024

The aim of the Summit is twofold: accelerate efforts to meet existing international commitments and take concrete steps to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. This will be achieved through an action-oriented outcome document called the Pact for the Future, which will be negotiated, and endorsed by countries in the lead-up to and during the Summit in September 2024. The result will be a world – and an international system – that is better prepared to manage the challenges being faced now and, in the future, for the sake of all humanity and for future generations.⁴

The Pact for the Future Zero Draft was published 26 January 2024, and as stated above will become the output document from the Summit for the Future and will be developed over the coming months. The Pact for the Future will already commit to concrete actions in 5 overarching areas: (1) Sustainable development and financing for development, (2) International peace and security, (3) Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation, (4) Youth and future generations, and (5) Transforming global governance.⁵

Much of the language over the past years has been focused on transformations across many different areas to reach the SDGs. Governance and financing for sustainable development are becoming increasingly

³Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, Global Sustainable Development Report 2023: Times of crisis, times of change: Science for accelerating transformations to sustainable development, (United Nations, New York, 2023). p. 104.

⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future>.

⁵ https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sotf-co-facilitators-zero-draft_pact-for-the-future.pdf

more important in assuring that the world does sustainable development right: The world can no longer afford incrementalism.

Through this Workshop, it is hoped to gain more insights into how governance mechanisms are contributing to achieving the SDGs, as well as how governance can enable transformations to take place, also in the future. The following chapters will offer brief insights into the topics that keynote presenters will discuss, as well as how interactions between participants will take place to get at the root issues and ensure that governance mechanisms can remain a transformative force for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda, and the SDGs.

Chapter 2: SDG Coordination Mechanisms - Challenges, opportunities, and vision

This chapter focuses on the three Western Balkan countries, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republic of North Macedonia and the SDG coordination mechanisms that have been developed within the governments. Keynote presenters will look at challenges and opportunities these mechanisms had for the government and for stakeholders, as well as the transformations that could be achieved for more effective SDG implementation. Speakers will also touch upon how they see the mechanisms changing or improving over the next years and what achievements could look like in the future.

Montenegro

Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

The Office for Sustainable Development was established in 2005, within the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro. In 2011, the Office was integrated into the then Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism as a Department for the support of the work of the National Council. With the 2021 reform, the Office for Sustainable Development was once again returned to the General Secretariat of the Government. The Office for Sustainable Development deals with coordination and direction, monitoring of implementation and reporting and evaluation of the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the Action Plan that accompanies it.

National Council for Sustainable Development

The National Council for Sustainable Development is a body that should be the largest forum for the exchange of opinions and knowledge and offers the possibility of considering the burning development issues of Montenegro and making decisions and solutions through the consensus of all interested parties of Montenegrin society. The NSOR has the role of harmonizing sectoral, strategic, planning and program documents and regulations with the goals of sustainable development and promoting dialogue and building partnerships for development with key actors who have an important role in the transition to sustainable development (international partners, vulnerable social groups, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, representatives of workers and trade unions, economy and industry, entrepreneurs, the scientific community, young people and others).

Reporting

Montenegro submitted to the United Nations two Voluntary National Reviews on the implementation of the sustainable development policy in 2016 and 2021.

In 2023, as one of the 32 members, Montenegro prepared a Statement on Montenegro's commitment to meeting the goals of sustainable development as part of the Summit on Sustainable Development Goals, which was held on September 18 and 19, 2023, at the UN headquarters in New York.

Current Initiatives of the Chancellery

The current initiatives of the Chancellery are as follows:

- Strategic partner coordination system
- Launching and maintaining the Information System for Monitoring and Reporting - ISPI
- Improving the information platform for monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Organization and holding of the 37th session of the National Council for Sustainable Development in accordance with the theme of the future Summit on Sustainable Development "Summit for the Future".
- Strengthening the capacity of the Office for Sustainable Development,
- Implementation of projects financed from the Accelerated Development Fund is planned
- Drafting of the Action Plan and responsibilities of all departments and relevant institutions for the implementation of the Statement of Commitment to Implementation.
- Introduction of classification and budget targeting with Sustainable Development Goals - Financing for sustainable development in cooperation with UNDP and the Ministry of Finance.
- The preparation of the Communication Strategy for Sustainable Development will be started, the aim of which is to support the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development as one of the necessary conditions for the achievement of that goal through the long-term intensification of public advocacy of this concept at all levels of society.
- Memorandum on cooperation with the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which includes cooperation on the UAE Government Experience Exchange Program (Government Experience Exchange Program).
- Inclusion of additional interested parties in the implementation of sustainable development policy, primarily the academic community, the economic sector, young people and citizens.
- Work on the development and improvement of project proposals for potential financing from domestic and international funds and available financial resources.
- In the following period, the Report on the work of the Office for Sustainable Development for the period 2022/23.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Despite a lack of coordinated development planning and initial challenges due to Bosnia and Herzegovina's complex constitutional structure, the country has made significant progress in implementing the UN's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Through extensive collaboration between government representatives and UN support, Bosnia and Herzegovina established a clear roadmap and key documents like the SDG Implementation Framework. Additionally, a dedicated SDG Council was formed to oversee progress.

A major focus now lies on securing financing for these goals. The government is developing a framework to leverage public funds and attract private and international investments in key areas like infrastructure and technology.

Local participation is also crucial. While coordination issues were initially a concern, the biggest hurdle seems to be raising awareness among local authorities and businesses about the benefits of sustainable practices.

The long-term goal is to fully integrate the principles of Agenda 2030 into everyday life and decision-making across all levels of government and society. Bosnia and Herzegovina recognizes the need to unify its existing tools and strategies to achieve this ambitious goal.

Republic of North Macedonia

National Strategy for Sustainable Development

The National Strategy for sustainable development was adopted by the Government at the 132 Governmental session on 12.01.2010, according the article 186 (2) from the Law on environment (Official Gazette nr. 53/05, 81/05, 24/07, 159/08).

With Governmental decision (Official gazette nr. 08 from 21.01.2010 and amendment nr. 186 from 08.10.2018), the Government established an implementing body - the National council for sustainable development, consisted of national institutions - ministers, academia, business sector and NGO. The Structure of the National council for sustainable development was defined in the National Strategy for sustainable development.

Readiness of the institutions and bodies of the Republic of North Macedonia to implement the goals of sustainable development from the 2030 Agenda: Full compliance (coverage of all sub-goals of a specific SDG) is determined by SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 9 (infrastructure and industrialization) and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions/ inclusive governance).

National Development Strategy

On February 6th, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted the Law on the National Development Strategy. On February 21st, constitutive session of the National Council for Development was held as the next step in the process of starting the implementation of the National Development Strategy. On Governmental session held on 28.02.2024, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted the text of the National Development Strategy.

The National Development Strategy will be a guide and vision for the Republic of Northern Macedonia in the period 2024 – 2044. The strategic areas, goals and national priorities in the National Development Strategy are fully aligned and compatible with: The findings and recommendations in the Country Progress Report prepared by the European Commission (European Integrations) and United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Chapter 3: Good Practice Examples and Experiences on Governance Mechanisms

This chapter provides short introductions to the keynote presentations that will focus on good practice examples and experiences on governance mechanisms and how they work, why they were established, and the practical experiences that have been made so far, as well as the results. Speakers will also focus on how initial challenges were overcome and what next steps are foreseen to ensure future progress is being made, and what could be recommended to countries that might like to set up similar mechanisms.

Building Inclusive Stakeholder Partnerships

Luxembourg has many years of experience in the introduction of governance for sustainable development policy. The law of 25 June 2004 created three instruments that are essential for the coordinated implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Luxembourg: The National Plan for Sustainable Development (NPSD), the Interministerial Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) and the High Council for Sustainable Development (HCSD), a body made up of representatives of civil society and the private sector that advises the government on its actions.

In addition to these bodies, the Parliament discusses and comments on the draft NPSD and takes note of the national report on the implementation of sustainable development. In addition to sustainable development governance and stakeholder participation, there is a strong link with other stakeholders dealing with climate and environmental issues, which is crucial for identifying coherent solutions and compromises.

Financing for the SDGs

As noted in Chapter 1, financing for the SDGs is an important area for sustainable development to be ready for the challenges of the future.

Government Mechanisms for Strategic Promotion of the Circular Economy

As also stated in Chapter 1, transformations in how the world consumes resources need to happen. The circular economy can be one such approach. In Finland, there is cooperation between the ministries and the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra regarding the strategic promotion of circular economy.

Sitra, through its work with its Finnish and international partners, is the first in the world to offer the means for a new kind of daily life, where companies' business models are based on the circular economy and offering services rather than just manufacturing new products. Sitra helps people find their own ways of living sustainably, increase the demand for environmentally friendly solutions and challenge the public sector to create a functional framework for the new economic model – a carbon-neutral circular economy. The aim is for Finland to be an international trailblazer for a new kind of sustainable society in 2025.

Finland is also concentrating on multi-stakeholder cooperation between ministries, research institutes, industry, and regional actors on creating a Circular Economy Green Deal towards 2035.

2030 Agenda Toolboxes

The Swiss 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy (2030 SDS) sets out the guidelines for the Federal Council's sustainability policy and establishes sustainable development as an important requirement for all federal policy areas. As a transversal strategy, it formulates priorities and sets goals for the period up to 2030. All federal offices are called upon to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 2030 SDS within their areas of responsibility and to integrate the principles and goals into their regular planning, budgeting, and policy management processes.

Agenda 2030 Toolbox for cantons and municipalities

Switzerland is a federally organized country and sustainable development is therefore a joint task for all levels of government. Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda can only be achieved through coherent cooperation between the various stakeholders. The cantons and municipalities are primarily responsible for many of the policy areas enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and therefore have an important contribution to make. At the local level, cities in particular also have an important role to play.

Institutional cooperation and targeted logistical, technical, and financial support for the actors involved are key elements of on the Confederation's sustainable development policy. This is why the federal government has launched the 2030 Agenda Toolbox for cantons and municipalities in 2022.

Switzerland's 26 cantons and 2,136 municipalities all have their own specificities and characteristics, but essentially face the same challenges when it comes to implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The toolbox supports all cantons and municipalities in their pursuit of the 2030 Agenda. It provides a collection of measures and examples of how cantons and municipalities are already implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to background information, it provides numerous innovative management tools to strengthen sustainability. The Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) developed the toolbox together with experts from the cantons and municipalities, the Network of Cantonal Sustainability Offices (NKNF), the Association of Swiss Communes (SGV) and the Swiss Association of Cities (SSV), as well as other stakeholders.

Agenda 2030 Toolbox for businesses

Businesses can and must make a significant contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda because of their significant economic, environmental, and social impact.

The requirements for sustainable corporate management are constantly increasing. Not only for large multinational companies, but also for the approximately 610,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their more than 4.5 million employees that characterize the Swiss economy. In order to meet these challenges, it is important to analyze not only the obstacles, but above all the enormous opportunities that arise for the business model. By operating in a sustainable manner, companies can conserve resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and thus make their contribution to combating the climate crisis. Doing business sustainably also has many benefits for the companies themselves. For example, sustainability pays off financially by reducing energy and raw material costs, enabling companies

to improve their competitiveness and increase their productivity. In addition, sustainable business practices allow companies to meet the changing consumer demands and tap into new markets. Finally, sustainable companies are attractive employers, helping them to compete in times of skills shortages.

The toolbox for businesses provides motivation, support, and guidance for companies on their path to greater sustainability. The toolbox presents sector-specific sustainability goals and appropriate measures to achieve them. It also provides practical examples of companies that have already embarked on the path to greater sustainability. Finally, it provides an overview of key tools, standards as well as support and funding programs.

Chapter 4: Transformation Towards Sustainability – What is needed for the future?

Chapter 4 reflects the keynote presentations that will look more at transformations towards sustainability in a more future-oriented manner. Presentations will focus on good practice examples, and the characteristics that make them interesting, as well as the goals in the short -, medium -, and long-term. Presentations will also focus on what the practice has achieved so far and what can still be achieved.

Romanian Code of Sustainability

All companies with more than 500 employees in the European Union must annually submit a non-financial statement or publish a sustainability report. The Department of Sustainable Development has the solution for sustainability reporting to be available to everyone, easy to navigate and understand.

The [Romanian Sustainability Code](#) was developed based on the German Code of Sustainability to increase the degree of transparency and comparability of data reported by reporting entities, as well as to encourage entities that voluntarily wish to make their non-financial information public.

The Romanian Sustainability Code supports users who are looking for best practices in the field of sustainability and those who make business decisions based on the importance an entity attaches to this topic and helps all-size companies to prepare for the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), reporting that will start in 2025.

Business Transformations Towards Sustainability from the Startup Perspective

The definition of a successful startup is evolving in today's world. This presentation challenges the traditional approach that prioritizes profit over all else. This presentation proposes a paradigm shift towards the rise of the SDG-driven startup. These innovative companies integrate a positive social or environmental impact into their core business model from the very beginning, achieving profitability alongside sustainability.

The presentation will draw on the presenter's own experience as co-founder of Flourish, an impact startup recognized by UNDP experts for its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It will explore the limitations of the traditional profit-first approach and showcase the numerous benefits of building an SDG-driven startup. This includes attracting top talent, securing impact investments, and building brand loyalty with socially conscious consumers.

The presentation will provide entrepreneurs with a practical guide on integrating SDGs into their businesses from the very beginning. This includes identifying relevant SDGs, designing an impact model, and establishing clear metrics to track progress. Through compelling examples and actionable insights, this presentation should inspire new and existing founders to embrace a future where entrepreneurship drives innovation for a more sustainable world.

Building Sustainable Development Governance Hubs

All the EU countries have endorsed the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the EU Green Deal is considered as one of the cornerstones of the EU's sustainable development. All the SDGs include targets and indicators that have direct linkages with the responsibilities of cities, and the OECD estimates that 65% of the 2030 Agenda targets can only be reached with the proper engagement of and coordination with local and regional governments. Regional and local governments are urged to set ambitious sustainability and climate goals, yet the support to actually deliver on these goals is often fragmented and sectoral, failing to provide concrete tools and mechanisms to achieve policy coherence for sustainable development within and between government levels. The SDSN SDG Index for European Cities (2019) shows that no European capital city or large metropolitan area has yet fully achieved the SDGs. Nordic European cities – Oslo, Stockholm, Helsinki, and Copenhagen – are closest to the SDG targets but still face challenges in achieving the SDGs. What is more, the EU's overall progress on the SDGs has stalled since 2020 (SDSN, 2022).

To address this “action gap”, the city of Tallinn has been working to integrate SDGs into the strategic planning and activities of the city. In 2021, the Tallinn City Council adopted the Tallinn Development Strategy “Tallinn 2035”. Tallinn 2035 provides the direction for all other plans in the city, including the development plans for different areas in the city. Tallinn 2035 has the vision "Tallinn - Green and Global" and includes six strategic and value-based goals: 1. Friendly urban space; 2. Creative global city; 3. Healthy mobility; 4. Green transformation; 5. Kind community; 6. Home that includes the street.

To monitor the success of the implementation of Tallinn 2035, the city has constructed an all-encompassing KPI system to work with long-term, short-term and medium-term strategic planning tools such as development plans, operational programs and budget strategies, the city budget, etc. The KPI package includes around 300 indicators, some of which are directly linked with the SDGs. The city does not plan to create a separate monitoring system for UN SDGs, but rather include SDG indicators in the city's strategy implementation and providing a basis for Tallinn's future Voluntary Local Review (VLR), planned for 2026. Every year the city's annual financial report gives an overview of the current state of indicators as well as the actions taken during the past year.

As part of the Tallinn European Green Capital year 2023, Tallinn launched a flagship project on Sustainability Governance, which includes the creation of a competence center and peer learning hub focused on sustainability governance. This is based on the recognition that no city alone will be able to close the action gap. Focus for Tallinn's sustainability governance work include further developing the “Tallinn model” for SDG-based governance, embedding holistic sustainability in the organizational culture and mindset of the city administration.

Innovation and Transformations

This keynote presenter will focus on real-life experiences made in the innovation sector and how innovations can lead to transformations. In 2019, they founded the organization Montenegro Robotics with the aim of popularizing the STEM discipline, organizing numerous workshops and schools in all cities of Montenegro. In 2021, with the synergy of the company "Codepixel" and the organization Montenegro Robotics, the foundation "Montenegro Makers" was formed in partnership with IRIM from Croatia, and it is launching the first robotics league for elementary school students in Montenegro. Through robotics, the idea for space research was born, and in 2022, the organization "Montenegro Space

Research" was founded, within which was implemented the CUBESAT project, as the first stage for the development of the first Montenegrin satellite.

Chapter 5: Workshop Interactive Exchanges

Chapter 5 outlines the three different interactive components of the Workshop that will take place on both days. The first networking and interactive space will take place before the official start of the Workshop. This will allow participants to get to know one another, as well as exchange on sustainability issues, in general.

Pre-Workshop “Networking Space”: Barcamp on Sustainability Issues

The Pre-Workshop networking space will be from 10:00 – 12:00 CET on Day 1 (26 March) of the Workshop. Here, participants will be able to introduce themselves to the group and suggest 1-2 topics they might like to discuss with their colleagues. These topics will be collected and then discussed in parallel. Colleagues with experience in particular topics are highly encouraged to come forward and make suggestions. Those suggesting the topics will serve as topic moderators by introducing the topic, the challenges this topic faces and the questions they might have on this topic. Exchange and contributions from fellow participants are highly welcome. This will repeat over two separate rounds.

Café to Go: Interactive Group Work – What have we learned so far from governance mechanisms and SDG implementation?

The main objective of this interactive exchange is to reflect upon the different keynote presentations in the Welcome & Opening, Session 1, and Session 2 of the Workshop on Day 1. Participants will split into 4 groups and will have the chance to discuss and contribute to answering the four questions on “What have we learned so far from governance mechanisms and SDG implementation”. The questions that will be discussed amongst participants are:

1. What works well, and where do we see positive change?
2. What has potential but needs more attention?
3. What does not work well, and how to change course?
4. What is the message to the Summit for the Future?

There will be four stations set up around the room. Participants will split up into groups and head to the four tables and will be greeted by a table host, who will provide a brief introduction before participants begin the discussion and make contributions on moderation cards to answer the question. Each round will last for 15 minutes before participants will be asked to switch to another table and work on another of the four questions. The station hosts will then cluster the contributions.

With each switching of the rounds, table hosts will briefly show the newcomers what has been said and contributed by the previous groups.

After all four rounds are through, the station hosts will give a short presentation on the main outcomes of their particular question over the rounds, with the main aim to share common positions and insights, as well as aspects that might have been surprising and stood out. If there were any aspects and responses that triggered debates amongst the participants or the different groups, then these can also be shared.

Café to go: Toolbox for Effective SDG Governance for the Future – Interactive Group Work

The main objective of the second interactive exchange is to provide suggestions for effective SDG Governance for the Future in pre-selected topic areas. By doing so, participants can, and will, reflect upon presentations given on Day 2 but will also bring in aspects discussed on Day 1.

The participants will split into groups the same way they did on Day 1's Café to go. However, instead of answering pre-set questions, this interactive group work will enable participants to develop a toolbox on issues they consider important for effective SDG Governance that is fit for the future.

Some pre-defined topics that could be discussed are:

1. Effective governance frameworks & institutional set-ups
2. Engaging stakeholders & building partnerships
3. Identifying main areas of necessary transformations and innovations
4. Financing for SDG implementation

However, if other topics come up during the Workshop, then these could change.

Apart from the slightly different focus, this Café to go functions in exactly the same way as the one above. Participants will shift from topic to topic every 15 minutes, and there will be a feedback round by the table hosts afterwards.