



Bridging the Green and Digital Agendas in Cities to Drive more Ambitious and Inclusive Transitions

6-7 October, 2021

Online workshop streamed on CIDOB's Youtube channel

Organised by: CIDOB, Barcelona City Council, Glasgow City Council and the British Embassy in Spain, in partnership with C40Cities and Eurocities

Background

With economies around the world entering a post-lockdown restart, the acute climate and biodiversity crises demand the laying of the foundations for a sustainable recovery. Digital innovation promises to be a great enabler and accelerator in this process. However, a truly sustainable recovery will depend on properly integrating the digital and green transitions in ways that foster equity and inclusiveness, as well as the physical and emotional well-being of communities. In a century in which global warming and pandemics will be increasingly entangled, the twin green and digital transitions need to support both the health of the planet and its people.

City lessons with the twin green and digital transitions are vital for securing a more sustainable and resilient future. As climate leaders and hubs of the digital economy, cities are at the forefront of efforts to better connect the two agendas in a sustainable and just manner. From developing urban data centres that support energy-efficient services to low-carbon intelligent mobility solutions and the scale-up of the circular economy, cities are acting to formulate integrated solutions that bridge environmental and technological challenges.

Cities are also beginning to address the risks the green and digital transformations present to one another. While digital technology can effectively support climate mitigation and the dematerialisation of the economy, rising demand for cloud computing and energy-intensive devices by ever larger urban populations has a substantial environmental footprint in itself. In turn, as the world gets hotter and cities become more prone to flooding, internet connectivity and data centres will be among the first casualties. Already felt in regions troubled by climate disasters, these risks will soon become a reality for most cities.

But a sustainable green recovery that is joined up with the digital transformation does not only require macro-level technological and infrastructural innovations. Without public buy-in the much-needed shift towards a low-carbon economy will not happen. As the closest level of government to the people, cities are well positioned to engage citizens and relevant stakeholders in assessing the needs and concerns of their communities, and in supporting them to adapt to technological change and the reconfiguration of entire industries and employment sectors. City-scale participatory processes that place equity and inclusion at the centre and seek to maximise the benefits and minimise the disadvantages for local communities, will be vital if no one is to be left behind in the transitions.

An “Urban Green and Digital Just Transition Action Plan” for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)

As countries prepare to move towards a low-carbon economy, bridging the climate, digital and urban agendas will be key to raising the ambition of the COP26. To this end, Barcelona City Council and CIDOB, in collaboration with the British Embassy in Spain (in capacity as COP26 Presidency) and Glasgow City Council (as the COP26 host city), and in partnership with C40 Cities and Eurocities, organise a two-day preparatory workshop to explore how cities can act as laboratories for integrating and accelerating environmental and digital agendas in coherent policy frameworks, and in ways that are truly sustainable and just.

Based on the workshop results, an Urban Green and Digital Just Transitions Action Plan—a set of guiding principles for a people-centred twin transition—will be formulated. The Action Plan will be launched at an event at Glasgow City Council during the COP26.

Programme

All sessions will be held online and streamed on CIDOB’s Youtube channel. English-Spanish simultaneous translation will be provided during all sessions.

Day 1: Wednesday, 6 October 2021

INTEGRATED AND INCLUSIVE URBAN GOVERNANCE FOR A JUST TRANSITION

18:30–20:00 CEST

The opening session will discuss the need to formulate more integrated and inclusive urban governance approaches that respond to the interactions between the climate and digital transitions and support communities and stakeholders in the adaptation process. On the one hand, the session will address opportunities for identifying mutual reinforcements, trade-offs and compromises between green and digital agendas through collaborative thinking and action across relevant city authorities and public-private partnerships. On the other, it will explore how the principles of inclusion, engagement and equity can be better incorporated into the design and implementation of policies. The discussion will build on previous experiences with cross-sectoral and inclusive governance approaches for urban sustainability, especially in the context of the localisation of the UN 2030 Agenda. It also encourages discussion on local-to-national and supranational cooperation for leveraging urban governance innovations to successfully implement catalytic sustainability solutions.

- Moderator* **Hannah Abdullah**, Senior Research Fellow, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB
- 18:30–18:35 **Opening Remarks**
Pol Morillas, Director, CIDOB
- 18:35–19:15 **Keynotes**
Hugh Elliott, British Ambassador to Spain
Angus Millar, Councillor & Chair of the Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Committee, Glasgow City Council
Jeanne Holm, Deputy Mayor of Los Angeles
Laia Bonet, Deputy Mayor of Barcelona
- 19:15–19:30 **First reactions**
Edgar Pieterse, Director, African Centre for Cities
Tony Pipa, Senior Fellow, Centre for Sustainable Development, Global Economy and Development Program, The Brookings Institution
- 19:30–20:00 **Discussion**

Day 2: Thursday, 7 October 2021**MORNING SESSIONS: ACCELERATING THE TWIN TRANSITIONS IN KEY SECTORS OF THE URBAN ECONOMY**

The morning of day two consists of three sessions that examine how the green and digital transitions are implemented and linked in key sectors of the urban economy: *energy*, *mobility* and *the circular economy*. Each session serves to showcase good practices and innovations implemented by cities in these three areas and promotes knowledge-sharing amongst the participants.

SESSION 1: Intelligent and energy-efficient buildings and infrastructure

09:00–10:30 CEST

Digital technologies play an important role in upgrading the energy efficiency of urban building stocks and in decarbonizing heating and cooling systems. The session explores how cities are promoting the use of smart sensors and Internet of Things (IoT) applications in buildings and infrastructure to improve overall energy performance, and how data from sensors and IoT applications can underpin a “whole system” approach to delivering social, economic and environmental sustainability. Among other things, it will address the question of how cities can help transform the construction sector by promoting public and private investment in innovative technologies that enable smart ready building solutions. Further, delving into the social dimension of the energy transition, the session addresses the question of how energy-efficient building and renovation can tackle energy poverty in the long-term.

- Moderator* **Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Global Cities Programme, CIDOB
- 09:00–09:30 **Keynotes**
Kaisa-Reeta Koskinen, Head of Climate Unit, Director of the Carbon Neutral Helsinki Program, City of Helsinki
Miquel Rodríguez Planas, Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda, Barcelona City Council
- 09:30–10:00 **First reactions**
Johanna Lehne, Senior Policy Advisor, E3G (Third Generation Environmentalism)
Roland Hunziker, Director, Sustainable Buildings and Cities, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, WBCSD
Victoria Burrows, Director of Advancing Net Zero, World Green Building Council
- 10.00–10.30 **Discussion**

SESSION 2: Mainstreaming inclusive digital mobility solutions

11:00–12:30 CEST

Digital technologies today power mobility services in cities across the world. The session examines how the digitalisation of mobility services is opening new pathways towards decarbonised urban transport systems that centre on automated, connected, electrified and shared (ACES) vehicles. The focus is on strategies for regulating and mainstreaming decarbonised shared mobility services in ways that benefit all citizens. A majority of shared mobility services are provided by private sector companies that operate according to the logic of data producers rather than public transport providers. City governments face the task of regulating these services in ways that enforce data security and transparency criteria, establish public space use regulations, and integrate the new shared mobility services with existing public transport networks without stifling investment and innovation.

At the same time, cities need to ensure equal accessibility to ACES mobility services. With transport becoming ever more digitalised, this involves developing new indicators for evaluating transport accessibility, such as digital equity and literacy, as well as methods for analysing how they interrelate with people's socioeconomic capabilities and gender.

Moderator **Guillem Ramírez Chico**, Policy Advisor to the Deputy Mayor for the 2030 Agenda, Digital Transition & International Relations, Barcelona City Council

11:00–11:30 **Keynotes**
Natalia Ciciarello, Paris Mobility, City of Paris
Vanessa Harrison, Principal Policy Officer for Transport, Greater London Authority
N M Dhoke, Director for Rolling Stock, Operations and Maintenance, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited

11:30–12:00 **First reactions**
Daniel Serra, Director, EIT Urban Mobility Innovation Hub South
Thomas Deloison, Director for Mobility, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, WBCSD
Maruxa Cardama, Secretray General, SLOCAT

12.00–12.30 **Discussion**

SESSION 3: Enabling the circular city through digital technologies

13:00-14:30 CEST

The session explores how peoples' increasing use of digital technologies (and greater availability of data) represents a major opportunity to scale-up the circular economy in cities, moving beyond the traditional focus on waste recycling and towards more holistic approaches to circular urban development that encompass areas such as mobility, food and the build environment. In particular, it will explore how cities can promote the transition towards a more sustainable digital economy by applying circular principles to a sector that is characterised by notoriously short product lifespans and high resource demand. Notably, the sessions aims to look beyond Cities in the Global North that are leading on the use of digital solutions for the circular transition, by exploring how cities in other regions – especially environmentally stressed ones – can deploy affordable technologies to boost circularity in ways that foster resource security and opportunities for growth and innovation, and decrease import dependency.

Moderator **Keiran Bowtell**, Climate Change and Energy Attaché, British Embassy Madrid

13:00–13:30 **Keynotes**
Aado Altmets, Head of Smart City Projects Competence Centre, Tallinn City Council
Francisco José Moura de Castro, Special Advisor for Sustainability, São Paulo City Council
Gavin Slater, Head of Sustainability, Glasgow City Council (TBC)

13:30–14:00 **First reactions**
Elizabeth Kelly, Senior Programme Manager, Thriving Cities Initiative, C40 Cities
Oriana Romano, Head of Unit, Water Governance and Circular Economy, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Cities and Regions, OECD
Markus Bjerre, Special Advisor, Circular Innovation City Challenge, Danish Business Authority

14.00– 14.30 **Discussion**

AFTERNOON SESSION – URBAN DATA CENTRES AND URBAN DATA PLATFORMS FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION

16:00-17:30 CEST

Urban data centres, buildings that house computer servers and storage devices, and *urban data platforms*, technologies that connect, analyse and visualise data from the urban fabric, stand at the heart of cities' digital transformation. This session explores how both interact with the green transition. With estimates suggesting that by 2025 data centres will account for one-fifth of global electricity consumption, green and energy efficient solutions are ever more important. Especially data centres located in cities provide many opportunities for becoming net-zero service providers by acting as energy prosumers at the interface with smart energy grids and other smart infrastructure. For example, several cities have begun to channel excess heat generated by data centres into district heating networks. At the same time, urban data platforms that pool and standardise data flows across city systems and public and private infrastructure, can facilitate informed decision making and data-driven solutions in key sectors of the green transition. Data platforms that have enough data sources and active users are likely to become an essential feature of a sustainable and resilient city in the future. The session will discuss the opportunities and challenges of urban data platforms for accelerating and monitoring climate mitigation and adaptation measures.

Moderator **Federica Bordelot**, Policy Advisor for Digital Policy and Smart Cities, Eurocities

16:00–16:30 Keynotes

Jiří Hoskovec, Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Prague

Felip Guzman, ICT High Councillor, Bogota Mayors Office

Grant Ervin, Chief Resilience Officer, City of Pittsburgh

16:30–17:00 First reactions

Ursula Eicker, Professor for Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering & Canada Excellence Research Chair in Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Communities and Cities, Concordia University

Patricio Reyes, Senior Researcher, Barcelona Supercomputing Center

Naomi Morishita-Steffen, CEO, Mo-St Transformative Futures

17.00–17.30 Discussion