

Concept Note

6th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities

Enhancing Connectivity for Low-Carbon Urban Transformation amid Paradigm Shifts

23-24 November 2026, Moscow, Russian Federation

Organizers

The City of Moscow, Incheon Metropolitan City, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Subregional Office (as Secretariat for NEASPEC)

Supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation

With Collaborative Partners (tbc) CityNet, Climate Change Center, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Institute for Global Decarbonization Progress (iGDP), Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), The Incheon Institute, World Resources Institute (WRI)

Background

The Asia-Pacific region is undergoing profound paradigm shifts driven by rapid technological advancement, demographic change, climate challenges and evolving patterns of economic and regional integration. These shifts are increasingly concentrated in urban areas, where growing populations, expanding infrastructure needs and climate and environmental pressures are creating both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development¹.

In this context, cities play a critical role in advancing sustainable development while responding to increasingly complex urban challenges. As the primary sites where policies on land use, housing, transportation, public services and local governance are designed and implemented, cities are at the forefront of translating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into tangible outcomes. To track and strengthen this progress, an increasing number of local governments are undertaking Voluntary Local Reviews, highlighting the important role of cities in advancing and monitoring SDG implementation². Meaningful progress toward sustainable development depends largely on the capacity of cities to mobilize stakeholders, coordinate local action and scale up effective solutions, with the cumulative impact of these efforts contributing to broader regional and global transitions toward a more sustainable future³.

¹ Huang, C.Y.; Eisenberg, R. M.; Velasco, G. (2025). Reimagining Central Asian Cities for a Resilient and Low-Carbon Future (English). World Bank Group. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099020525094063731>.

² Ortiz-Moya, F., Yang, Y. (2025) Cities' review of the sustainable development goals and insights from voluntary local reviews. npj Urban Sustain 5, 58. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42949-025-00243-7>.

³ United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2020). Urbanization and Cities: Trends of a New Global Force. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18356/93e0a206-en>.

Aligned with the theme of the eighty-third session of the ESCAP Commission in April 2027, “*ESCAP at 80: Navigating paradigm shifts, promoting connectivity and accelerating sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific*,” the Sixth International Forum on Low-Carbon Cities (IFLCC-6) will explore how enhanced connectivity can support low-carbon urban transformation. Connectivity is an essential enabler of sustainable, resilient and inclusive urban development. It is also inherently multidimensional, as such, connections through physical infrastructure across transport systems, energy networks, digital structure is equally as important as connections through partnerships, institutional cooperation and knowledge-sharing networks.⁴

Connectivity should be viewed not only as an enabler of urban development, but also as a transformative instrument for accelerating climate action. It can support climate change adaptation, strengthen urban resilience, advance sustainable mobility, enhance ecological monitoring and enable integrated ecosystem management, thereby helping cities respond more effectively to complex and interconnected environmental challenges. Experiences from cities across Asia demonstrate that successful urban transitions depend not only on the deployment of smart technologies and physical infrastructure, but also on effective connectivity enabled by data sharing, institutional coordination and cross-sectoral collaboration. Strengthening these multidimensional forms of connectivity can help cities translate sustainable development objectives into concrete actions and accelerate progress toward low-carbon and resilient urban futures⁵.

Looking ahead, there is also a need for new development approaches that can advance resilient, inclusive and green development pathways in the face of compounding risks and challenges. Cities are well positioned to drive such paradigm shifts, ensuring that decarbonization goes beyond achieving environmental objectives to also serve as a catalyst for economic growth, resilience, innovation and social inclusion.

Objectives/Expected Outcomes

The Sixth International Forum on Low Carbon Cities aims to:

1. enhance knowledge exchange of experiences and good practices on multidimensional forms of connectivity (i.e., infrastructure/physical connectivity, institutional linkages, multi-networked coordination) in accelerating low-carbon urban transformation in cities;
2. showcase city-led approaches that leverage decarbonization as a catalyst for achieving broader development objectives, including economic growth, resilience, innovation and social inclusion; and
3. identify practical opportunities of city-to-city partnerships and collaborative initiatives to strengthen connectivity and accelerate sustainable development through city-led decarbonization efforts.

⁴ ESCAP (2026). Dates and venue of and theme for the eighty-third session of ESCAP (2027): Note by the secretariat, ESCAP/82/89. Available at: <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/2600047E.pdf>.

⁵ Shadiya A. (2024). Integrating Smart Transportation and Sustainable Development Goals: A Literature Review, 4th International Conference on Smart City and Green Energy (ICSCGE). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICSCGE64239.2024.11064301>.

Programme

Monday, 23 November	
09:30-10:00	Registration (<i>Light refreshments to be offered</i>)
10:00-10:30 [30mins]	Opening - Opening and welcome remarks - Moscow City - ESCAP - Incheon City - Keynote remarks (tbc) - Group photo
10:30-12:00 [90mins]	Session 1: Harnessing Connectivity for Low-Carbon Urban Transformation The session will showcase city-led experiences and stakeholder initiatives demonstrating how physical and digital connectivity can accelerate low-carbon urban transformation. It will highlight innovative approaches to sustainable transport, clean energy infrastructure, digital solutions and smart urban systems that strengthen connectivity while reducing emissions and, in turn, fostering economic dynamism, enhancing urban resilience and promoting inclusive development. Guiding Questions: - How are cities leveraging transport, energy and digital connectivity to accelerate low-carbon urban transformation? - How have low-carbon solutions and infrastructure investments enhanced connectivity, accessibility and efficiency within and across cities? - What innovations and enabling conditions are needed to scale integrated connectivity solutions for low-carbon and resilient cities? Moderator: Presentation [5-6 speakers, 12 minute-presentation each] - City representatives from Asia-Pacific region - Private sector representatives (involved in connectivity-related low carbon solutions for cities) Q&A
12:00-13:00 [60mins]	<i>Lunch</i>
13:00-14:30 [90mins]	Session 2: Connectivity for Collective Action: Strengthening Partnerships, Knowledge and Multi-Networked Cooperation The session will explore connectivity in its broader sense, encompassing partnerships, institutional cooperation, knowledge-sharing networks, and cross-

Monday, 23 November	
	sectoral collaboration. By highlighting practical experiences and successful initiatives from cities and other stakeholders, the session will examine how connected approaches can help cities mobilize resources, scale solutions, strengthen institutional capacities and translate knowledge into action. It will also reflect on how city-led decarbonization efforts can foster new partnerships, networks and forms of cooperation. Guiding Questions: 1. How has connectivity—through partnerships, institutional cooperation, knowledge-sharing or other networks—helped accelerate low-carbon transformation in your city or initiative? 2. What new forms of connectivity, collaboration or partnerships have emerged as a result of city-led decarbonization efforts, and how have they contributed to wider urban transformation? 3. What lessons, institutional mechanisms and opportunities can strengthen collaboration and translate shared knowledge into collective action for low-carbon urban transformation? Moderator: Presentation [5-6 speakers, 12 minute-presentation each] • City representatives from Asia-Pacific region • LCC Partners
14:30-15:00 [30mins]	<i>Break</i>
15:00-16:30 [90mins]	Session 3. Navigating Paradigm Shifts: From Challenges to Opportunities for Low-Carbon Cities The session will examine how cities can navigate these paradigm shifts and turn emerging challenges into opportunities for low-carbon urban transformation. Cities are operating in a rapidly evolving development landscape, from conventional growth-centred approaches towards development models that place greater emphasis on decarbonization, resilience, resource efficiency, digital and technological innovation, inclusiveness and quality of life. At the same time, emerging economic, technological, and environmental changes are creating new uncertainties as well as opportunities for cities. Guiding Questions 1. What major shifts in development paradigms, priorities and approaches are shaping the future of cities and their pathways towards decarbonization? 2. How are cities adapting their development strategies and leveraging emerging trends to turn challenges into opportunities for low-carbon transformation?

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	3. What lessons and enabling factors can help cities anticipate and navigate future paradigm shifts while maintaining momentum towards their low-carbon goals? Moderator: Presentation [5-6 speakers, 12 minute-presentation each] • City representatives from Asia-Pacific region • Academe, policy thinktank institutes • Other stakeholders
16:30-17:00 [30mins]	Closing session • Closing remarks ○ Moscow City ○ ESCAP ○ Incheon City
Tuesday, 24 November	
	Technical Tour

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