



UCLG CONGRESS
WORLD SUMMIT OF LOCAL
AND REGIONAL LEADERS

New Generation
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Public Services

Tangier
Local4Action

From Local Innovation to Industrial transformation: the Global ScaleX Alliance & Bridge for Cities

Dialogue

Date and time: Wednesday, 24 June 2026, 12:00–13:30 Local time

Venue: Room D / Kasbah

Duration: 70 min

Lead organizer (Name / Institution): UNIDO

Co-organizers: Bridge for Cities

Background (Max 300 words)

The UNIDO–UCLG partnership provides the political and operational frame for this session, bringing together UNIDO’s mandate on inclusive and sustainable industrial development with UCLG’s role in representing the organized constituency of local and regional governments. The partnership connects industrial innovation with sustainable territorial transformation, enabling cities to move from dialogue to deployment and from isolated pilots to scalable action pathways.

Bridge for Cities and the Global ScaleX Alliance for Cities are complementary pillars of this partnership. Bridge for Cities provides the political space to connect cities, national governments, partners and innovation actors around shared priorities for sustainable industrial transformation. ScaleX provides the deployment mechanism to aggregate demand, share institutional capacity, connect solutions and support scaling across territories.

Together, they respond to a **common challenge**: cities are the engines of industrial transformation and innovation, yet their potential is often constrained by fragmented demand, high institutional costs, and isolated knowledge.

This 90-minute dialogue will explore how this combined political and operational approach can bridge the deployment infrastructure gap that prevents promising solutions from scaling. It will open with the launch of the advanced paper “**Cities as Innovation and Industrial Policy Agents**”, setting the conceptual frame for the discussion. A short introduction will then present the **ScaleX Alliance for Cities**, its role in aggregating demand, sharing institutional infrastructure and facilitating cross-city learning, and the Western Balkans corridor as the first pilot application of this approach.

Building on this framing and pilot case, a moderated panel will discuss why ScaleX Alliance for Cities is needed and how cities can access operational support, pilot solutions and



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connect with a global network of innovation actors. The session will emphasize **Innovation Scaling Corridors** as a way to enable differentiated testing, active learning and shared deployment infrastructure, making it possible for cities to act as industrial policy agents even with limited resources. The Western Balkans pilot corridor will illustrate how this logic can move from concept to implementation through Mission Studios, challenge identification, innovation sourcing, piloting and the dissemination of lessons learned.

Participants will contribute to shaping the Alliance's priorities, engage with the corridor approach and help build a broader movement for sustainable urban development. The discussion will also look ahead to **Bridge for Cities 2026** as the political milestone to consolidate the Alliance, showcase first lessons and mobilize cities, partners and innovation actors around the next phase of ScaleX Alliance for Cities.

Objectives / Expected outcomes (max 100 words total)

- **Present** the UNIDO–UCLG partnership through its complementary pillars: Bridge for Cities as a political space for dialogue and coalition-building, and the ScaleX Alliance as a deployment mechanism for urban industrial innovation.
- **Introduce** the Advance Paper “Cities As Innovation and Industrial Policy Agents”
- **Align cities and partners** on key challenges and pilot priorities for Innovation Scaling Corridors.
- **Mobilize commitments** from cities and partners to join the Alliance's pilot phase and share knowledge.



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Agenda (Include confirmed speakers with full name and title)

Moderator: Kanishka Raj Rathore, Programme Officer, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, UNIDO

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|--------|---|
| 10 min | Opening and political framing
<i>Opening remarks framing the UNIDO–UCLG partnership and Bridge for Cities as the political space to connect cities, industry and innovation around sustainable industrial transformation.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Representative from UCLG (TBD) |
| 5 min | Launch of the advanced paper & Introducing the ScaleX approach:
<i>Brief introduction to the ScaleX Alliance for Cities – in alignment with Bridge for Cities - as a practical pathway to move from shared urban challenges to piloted and scalable solutions, with the Western Balkans corridor mentioned as the first testing ground.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Adnan Seric, Head, Innovation Lab, UNIDO |
| 35 Min | Panel discussion: from shared challenges to scalable solutions
<i>Exchange with cities, partners and innovation actors on the deployment gap, the role of pilot corridors, and how Bridge for Cities can help mobilize political visibility, partnerships and support for scaling.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Zhang Rui, Executive Vice President of Xi'an People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Xi'an, China● Emiriana Sako, Mayor, Durrës, Albania● Milka Areba, Councilor, Mombasa, Kenya (TBC)● Representative, Municipality of Querétaro, México (TBC)● Javier Ayala, Mayor, Fuenlabrada, Spain (TBC)● Adnan Seric, Head, Innovation Lab, UNIDO |
| 10 Min | Interaction with the room and closing remarks |