



## **Call for expression of interest to contribute to the Pilot Project “REGIONS2030: Monitoring the SDGs in the EU regions - Filling the data gaps”**

**1 September 2022**

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### **Subject of the call for expression of interest**

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is inviting EU regions to express their interest to contribute to the Pilot Project "REGIONS2030: Monitoring the SDGs in the EU regions - Filling the data gaps", supported by the European Parliament.

## Introduction

The European Commission is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>1</sup> lie at the heart of its policymaking across all sectors. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015, the European Commission set out its ambitious and comprehensive approach to SDG implementation in a communication on '*Next steps for a sustainable European future*'<sup>2</sup>, a reflection paper '*Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030*'<sup>3</sup>, the 2017 European Consensus on Development, for its external action, as well as, most recently, the staff working document '*Delivering on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals – A comprehensive approach*'<sup>4</sup>. In parallel, EUROSTAT has upgraded its annual 'Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context' and complemented it with products addressing different users, including a digital publication and a dedicated website<sup>5</sup>.

The availability of a coherent and comprehensive monitoring framework with a related set of indicators, like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is key to design better place-based policies able to foster sustainable development. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important it is to use timely and accurate data to monitor these indicators in a comparative way, and to evaluate public policies and actions.

Building on existing work done in the framework of the cooperation with relevant Commission services on the localisation of the SDGs<sup>6</sup> and their local monitoring (URBAN2030), as well as on the establishment and annual review of the EU SDGs indicator set and report<sup>7</sup> carried out by Eurostat, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) will develop the REGIONS2030<sup>8</sup> with the support of the European Parliament, benefitting from the expertise of European scientific organisations and partners. The SDG indicators for EU regions will be selected starting from the indicators identified by EUROSTAT in the EU monitoring Framework for the national level and available for NUTS2 regions<sup>(en)</sup> and other official indicators used to monitor EU policies, to avoid duplication of work and to ensure consistency and alignment to other actions. This set will be further enriched considering other available datasets. Then, the Pilot Project will involve a group of pilot regions contributing to finalising and consolidating this common set of SDG indicators. These pilot regions will also collect and analyse data for the aforementioned indicators. The resulting framework of indicators will be proposed as a reference for all EU regions, and the resulting database will shed light on the progress of European regions towards the achievement of SDGs.

Pilot regions will be identified on the basis of this call for expression of interest, which lists the expected actions and objectives. The intention is to have a maximum of ten (10) regions/sub-national authorities participating in the Pilot Project, representing different types in terms of prior work on the SDG monitoring, geographic location, size, socio-economic conditions and statistical capacity.

A group of experts, including Commission services, will define the methodology and identify the relevant existing indicators covering the NUTS2 level: the intention is to cover all goals and most of the 169 targets - particular focus will be given to indicators that have not yet been used at regional level. The resulting set of indicators will be used by the pilot regions as a reference guide, yet they will have the chance to include additional indicators, in order

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. 2015. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A/RES/70/1

<sup>2</sup> COM(2016) 739

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2775/647859>

<sup>4</sup> SWD(2020) 400

<sup>5</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-statistical-books/-/ks-09-22-019>

<sup>6</sup> <https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sdgs/?lng=en>

<sup>7</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi>

<sup>8</sup> [Database - Sustainable development indicators - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

to both benchmark themselves with other regions and to monitor specific phenomena that might be relevant in their territory. A specific online platform will be designed to harmonise and disseminate indicators, data and results of the Pilot Project.

The REGIONS2030 Pilot Project is designed to deliver these results:

- (1) Select and test a harmonised set of existing indicators for EU regions to monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in order to verify the possibility to cover all EU Regions
- (2) Increase the knowledge and capacities of EU regions to monitor and report on the SDGs

## **The REGIONS2030 Pilot Project**

The REGIONS2030 Pilot Project will be carried out, inter alia, through the involvement of up to 10 European regions, which i) share a strong ambition to monitor the achievement of the SDGs and ii) are willing to explore the synergies of SDGs monitoring, policy-making and sustainable regional development.

The participating regions are expected to work with experts and partners to develop, test and improve a framework of indicators for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs at regional level. They will contribute to define the method and identify the relevant indicators at NUTS2 level, which will be eventually used in the whole of the EU. Where relevant, regions could propose additional customised indicators to reflect different contexts. The overall aim is to cover all SDGs and the majority of the 169 targets.

At the same time, regions are expected to enhance the relationship with national authorities and other stakeholders that could help to enrich the Pilot Project output and contribute to future collaborations.

Furthermore, the REGIONS2030 Pilot Project includes training and dissemination activities that the selected regions are expected to actively participate in.

### **The JRC will:**

- Cover the experts' cost for undertaking the data collection and analysis<sup>9</sup>.
- Provide training on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to meet the needs of the regions' departments and interested stakeholders and will enhance the peer-to-peer coordination among regions.
- Organise events to facilitate the dissemination of the project in the different countries/regions and the engagement with local actors.
- Publish and translate individual regional technical reports (both in the local language and in English).
- Publish a final report summarising the results of the overall pilot project.
- Integrate collected data that are openly available into the Urban Data Platform Plus (UDP+), the urban and regional knowledge and data repository jointly developed by JRC and DG REGIO.
- Put in place any Intellectual Property (IP) agreement in terms of data dissemination and regulating Intellectual Property aspects.
- Cover the costs of a regional representative for assisting during the events, workshops or any other activities organised by the JRC in the framework of the Pilot Project, according to the EC rules for the invitation of experts.
- Develop communication and dissemination activities throughout the entire pilot project, to ensure transparency and achieve a greater impact.

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<sup>9</sup> The JRC will contract directly to the experts via specific EMI expert contracts (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert>).

**The participating regions will be expected to perform the following activities:**

- Attend and participate actively in the workshops, meetings and events organised by JRC, other institutions and regional entities (throughout the course of the pilot project 2022-2023)
- Facilitate the experts' work (for example: providing access to datasets, reports, and also facilitate the collaboration with partner institutions that could help to gather information for the project as regional institute of statistics, regional observatories, agencies, etc.) - indicatively between Autumn 2022 and Spring 2023.
- Contribute to the development of the report/project and review the deliverables from the expert - indicatively between Spring and Summer 2023.
- Collaborate in the organisation of the regional events - indicatively between Autumn 2022 and Summer 2023.

**The outputs of the Pilot Project will be:**

- A set of indicators including both harmonised and tailored ones for EU regions to monitor the achievement of the SDGs.
- A synthesis report for each participating region that will include the assessment of the regional data availability and the analysis of trends of all SDGs.
- The integration of all accompanying data and indicators of the final indicator set in the Urban Data Platform Plus (UDP+), the urban and regional knowledge and data repository jointly developed by JRC and DG REGIO.
- A report including the main findings and lessons learnt of the overall activity and future steps and recommendations regarding SDG monitoring at European regional level.

**Through these outputs, the REGIONS2030 Pilot Project is expected to:**

- Increase the engagement of European regions in the monitoring process of the SDGs taking into consideration the importance of timely, granular, reliable, relevant and up-to-date data for the success of the 2030 Agenda.
- Support and enhance the capacities of European regions with regard to the identification of SDG indicators, the collection and statistical analysis of data and the monitoring, and the assessment of the achievement of the SDGs.
- Increase the regional ownership of the SDGs and promote the openness and transparency of achieved results.
- Support evidence-based policy-making by using the SDG framework for identifying areas and sectors for intervention.
- Enhance the dialogue among and between EU regions on good practices for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Create a reference for other European regions willing to monitor the SDGs.

English will be the working language with the JRC.

## How to apply

European regions are invited to express their interest in participating in the REGIONS2030 Pilot Project.

Applicants abide to the terms of reference described in this document by replying to the call and shall demonstrate a high level of commitment to participate in the project. The lack of previous activities on the regional monitoring of the SDGs will not be a reason for exclusion.

Interested regions are invited to complete the application form provided in Annex 1 of this Call with maximum 10 pages, describing:

1. the reasons why the region wishes to participate in the project and what it aims to achieve through its participation;
2. a short description of the region's and its stakeholders' involvement in the localisation of the SDGs, if any;
3. a description of the SDG monitoring activities already carried out, if any;
4. the application should also include a statement of support from a high-ranking elected official (e.g. the governor, president of a region or a relevant minister, commissioner) assuring that the participating region will count with a strong commitment in the activities relevant to the Pilot Project;
5. other relevant documentation, also in form of hyperlinks to official documents, webpages, etc.

The application should be signed by a region official having the power of legal representation of the territorial entity.

The application form shall be completed in English.

The expression of interest should be submitted electronically to the following email address: [JRC-URBAN2030@ec.europa.eu](mailto:JRC-URBAN2030@ec.europa.eu)

The deadline for submitting an expression of interest is 30 September 2022 (midnight CEST, Brussels time).

Expressions of interest submitted after the date indicated will not be considered.

### Eligibility criteria:

All regional entities established under the constitutional order of EU Member States or Associated countries to Horizon Europe are eligible.

Joint applications from groups of regions will not be considered.

The selected regions will be announced in October 2022.

## Selection of regions

The JRC, in close collaboration with DG REGIO and EUROSTAT, will consider applications from regions regardless of the maturity of localizing the SDGs at regional level, monitoring the achievement of the SDGs, their experience in defining and developing pertinent indicators or their capacity to collect and statistically process data. This is in order to ensure the participation of regions with a different level of familiarity in the localisation of the SDGs. A panel consisting of representatives of the JRC, DG REGIO and EUROSTAT will carry out the selection. Each applicant will be informed about the decision taken.

The panel will take into consideration the following points for the selection process:

- Demonstration of willingness to participate in the pilot
- Pertinence of the objective of the region's participation in the pilot with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs
- Demonstration of willingness to facilitate the work of external expert(s) to accessing regional data and to collaborating with regional stakeholders

## Indicative timeline of the project

- 30 September 2022: Call for expression of interest closed
- 14 October 2022: Selection of regions participating in the pilot project
- November 2022: Kick-off event (hybrid in Brussels)
- November 2022 – June 2023: SDG related data collection (official and experimental data), analysis and reporting
- Spring/summer 2023: Regional events
- Autumn 2023: Final event

In case of any questions, please contact [JRC-URBAN2030@ec.europa.eu](mailto:JRC-URBAN2030@ec.europa.eu).

All information related to this Call will be published online at:

[https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/news/call-expressions-interest-contribute-pilot-project-%E2%80%9Cregions2030-monitoring-sdgs-eu-regions\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/news/call-expressions-interest-contribute-pilot-project-%E2%80%9Cregions2030-monitoring-sdgs-eu-regions_en)