

OECD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

Local Economic Development Agencies: Driving Economic Growth in Latin America and Beyond

JULY 8 | BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA



IDB SIDE EVENT AT OECD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

IDB Side Event Title: Local Economic Development Agencies: Driving Economic Growth in Latin America and Beyond

Date: July 8th 2025, 13:30 to 15:00

Venue: Puerta de Oro, room 3

Language: English, Spanish and Portuguese (simultaneous interpretation).

Streaming: to be confirmed.

Side event contacts: Maria Camila Uribe, IDB Cities Network Coordinator, Inter-American Development Bank, muribe@iadb.org, +12024310824. Karin Villarroel, IDB Cities Network Consultant, Inter-American Development Bank, karinv@iadb.org

Expected audience: Open side event for Forum participants, targeting policymakers, local officials, private sector, urban planners, and economic development professionals from Latin America, the Caribbean, and beyond.

Teaser:

This session will showcase how Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) can be a catalyst for economic growth in Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) cities, leveraging investment, optimizing urban assets, and revitalizing underutilized spaces. By bringing experiences from different regions, the session will provide practical implementation examples from both LAC and other parts of the world, demonstrating how lessons learned can serve as models for cities across the region.

Objectives:

1. Showcase LEDA experiences from Latin America and North America to provide practical examples of implementation and adaptation.
2. Demonstrate how LEDAs can address urban sprawl and revitalize central areas to unlock economic growth in LAC.
3. Highlight governance models and financial mechanisms that enable LEDAs to attract investment and drive long-term economic transformation.

Speakers:

- Juan Pablo Bonilla, Manager, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Sector, Inter-American Development Bank
- Maria Camila Uribe, Principal Technical Leader and Coordinator of the Cities Network, Housing and Urban Development Division, IDB.
- Dr Tim Moonen, Co-Founder & Managing Director, The Business of Cities, London, UK.
- Anna Rubin, Manager of the Local Development Forum, OECD.
- Marcel Negret, Director of Land Use at Regional Plan Association, NY, USA.
- Ana María Aljure, City Manager at Alcaldía Distrital de Barranquilla, Colombia.

Side Event Agenda:

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKER	DURATION
1:30 – 1:35	Opening and initial engagement with the audience	Maria Camila Uribe , Coordinator of the IDB Cities Network, IDB	5 min
1:35 – 1:40	Opening remarks	Juan Pablo Bonilla , Manager, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Sector, IDB	5 min
1:40 – 1:50	Keynote speaker	Dr Tim Moonen , Co-Founder & Managing Director, The Business of Cities	10 min
1:50 – 2:10	Discussion panel: - Experts on LEDAs	Maria Camila Uribe , Coordinator of the IDB Cities Network, IDB Dr Tim Moonen , Co-Founder & Managing Director, The Business of Cities Anna Rubin , Manager of the Local Development Forum, OECD	20 min.
2:10 – 2:30	Presentations panel: - LAC City and USA City	Ana María Aljure , City Manager at the Alcaldía Distrital de Barranquilla Marcel Negret , Director of Land Use at Regional Plan Association	20 min
2:30 - 2:55	Q&A	Everyone	25 min
2:55 – 3:00	Closing of the session	Maria Camila Uribe , Coordinator of the IDB Cities Network, IDB	5 min

Panel Discussion Questions:**For Dr. Tim Moonen – The Business of Cities**

1. *What factors make LEDAs successful in attracting long-term investment and building public-private trust?*
→ Expectation: He'll draw from global experience and highlight elements like governance, institutional credibility, and continuity.
2. *How can cities position their assets strategically to become more investable and globally competitive?*

→ Expectation: Tim could reference lessons from London, Rotterdam, or Toronto on asset mapping and storytelling.

3. What emerging trends should Latin American cities consider when shaping new models of public-private collaboration for local economic development?

→ Expectation: A forward-looking answer touching on digital transformation, climate-smart investment, cross-sector coordination, and inclusive growth frameworks.

For Anna Rubin – OECD

1. What role have you seen local development agencies play in building more inclusive and resilient economies?

→ Expectation: She may reference OECD case studies and inclusive growth frameworks.

2. What strategies can help LEDAs maintain continuity and impact over time?

→ Expectation: Insight into institutional design, cross-sector collaboration, and mechanisms that promote consistency and resilience in implementation.

3. What lessons from OECD countries could help Latin American cities strengthen local economic development and drive successful urban regeneration?

→ Expectation: Examples of adaptable governance models, integrated planning approaches, capacity-building strategies, or innovative financing tools that support long-term transformation.

General context: This is a Side Event of the OECD Local Development Forum. The [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) is an international organisation dedicated to improving lives through better policies. With over 60 years of experience, the OECD supports policy reform and fosters equality, prosperity, and well-being. Working with more than 100 countries, it provides evidence-based standards, trusted statistics, and a platform for collaborative policy development. Housed within the [OECD Local Employment and Economic Development \(LEED\) Programme](#), within the [Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities](#), the [OECD Local Development Forum](#) is a community of thousands of individuals worldwide. Its flagship event is its meeting, convening approx. 400-500 participants from a range of sectors (see chart) and 40+ countries. The 2025 Forum will take place on the 9-10 July in Barranquilla, Colombia, with side events on 8-11 July. Check out our recent annual meetings to get an idea on what to expect: [Greater Copenhagen, 2024](#) and [Cork, Ireland, 2022](#).

Background Information: This session will explore how Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) can serve as a strategic tool for economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). LAC cities are experiencing rapid spatial expansion, leading to urban sprawl, infrastructure deficits, and deteriorating central areas. This dual reality presents both challenges and opportunities—while peripheral expansion requires better planning and investment, urban centers offer key spaces for regeneration and economic revitalization. LEDAs provide a long-term framework for coordinating investments, strengthening local business ecosystems, and integrating economic planning with territorial development. By fostering public-private partnerships and leveraging financial tools, LEDAs can facilitate urban transformation, enhance economic resilience, and attract both local and foreign investment. To illustrate these concepts, the session will provide an overview of policy frameworks and financial strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of LEDAs beyond

electoral cycles. It will feature experiences from a Latin American City and American City, highlighting the importance of maximizing the economic and social value of public assets to promote coordinated and sustainable urban and economic development.

Case Summaries:

New York (RPA – Marcel Negret): The Regional Plan Association (RPA) is a non-profit civic organization that has shaped planning and development in the New York–New Jersey–Connecticut region for over 100 years. RPA's work aligns closely with the goals of Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs), offering a metropolitan-scale model of how to coordinate land use, housing, infrastructure, and investment across jurisdictions to drive inclusive growth. Marcel Negret will present four core themes: (1) RPA's unique role in convening public, private, and civic actors across a fragmented tri-state region of 20+ million people; (2) the use of urban planning and technical research to support regeneration and economic development, particularly around land use reform; (3) the governance structure that enables RPA to influence decision-making without direct implementation power; and (4) emblematic projects such as Hudson Yards, Gateway, and the *City of Yes*, which demonstrate how cross-sector collaboration and data-driven planning can unlock long-term regional economic transformation.

Barranquilla (Ana María Aljure – Puerta de Oro): Barranquilla has led a landmark urban regeneration initiative through the revitalization of its Magdalena River waterfront, transforming underutilized land into a dynamic hub for cultural, commercial, and social activity. Ana María Aljure will present how the Mayor's Office has coordinated public and private actors under a model similar to a Local Economic Development Agency (LEDA), aligning infrastructure investment, land use planning, and economic development objectives. The case highlights how local governments in Latin America can spearhead inclusive growth by reclaiming strategic urban areas and activating them through public-private collaboration. Through strong municipal leadership, long-term planning, and cross-sector coordination, Barranquilla demonstrates a replicable approach to leveraging urban assets for sustainable local economic development.

Speakers:



Juan Pablo Bonilla, Manager, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Sector, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Juan Pablo Bonilla is the Manager of the IDB's Climate Change and Sustainable Development Sector (CSD). Previously, he was Chief of Staff to the Executive Vice President of the Inter-American Development Bank.

Dr. Bonilla has worked on environmental sustainability, climate change and energy for more than 20 years. He led the IDB's Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Initiative, a major strategic step for integrating climate change and sustainability as a priority for the Bank. Before joining the IDB, Dr. Bonilla worked as Senior Specialist at the World Bank, and was a member of the United Nation's CDM Executive Board.

In Colombia, after serving as the Executive Director of a new think tank Fundesarrollo, and as National Environmental Manager of ANDI, Dr. Bonilla launched new initiatives such as the National Climate Change Policy and the National Biotechnology Policy as principal advisor to the country's Vice President. Dr. Bonilla served as Deputy Minister of Environment, and acting Minister of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development.

Dr. Bonilla obtained a B.A. in Civil Engineering from the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia, and then received a M.Sc. in Engineering Management and Systems Engineering and a Ph.D. in Environmental and Energy Management from George Washington University.



Maria Camila Uribe, Principal Technical Lead of the Housing and Urban Development Division and Coordinator of the IDB Cities Network, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Maria Camila Uribe is Principal Technical Lead of the Housing and Urban Development Division, and the Coordinator of the IDB Cities Network of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). She holds both a bachelor's and studies in master's degree in Economics from Los Andes University in Colombia, a master's degree in Public Administration from the Kennedy School at Harvard University and a master's degree in Cities at the London School of Economics. Previously, she served as Representative for the IDB in Chile and then as Principal Advisor of the Office of Strategic Planning and Development Effectiveness (SPD) and Chief of Services to the Boards, Committee and Management in the IDB's Office of the Secretary. She has over 18 years of experience in the Colombian public sector, having served as Bogota's Secretary of Planning, Director of Cadastre, and Tax Director, as well as serving as an advisor to the Colombian Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Department. Local and urban fiscal matters stand out amongst her many specializations



Dr Tim Moonen, Co-Founder & Managing Director, The Business of Cities, London, UK

Dr Tim Moonen is the Co-Founder & Managing Director of The Business of Cities, which provides urban intelligence and advice to more than 100 cities, companies, districts and global institutions. Tim has co-authored more than 50 reports and books on city competitiveness, innovation, governance and performance, and worked with urban teams at OECD, World Bank, ULI, World Economic Forum, Brookings Institution and Connected Places Catapult. He has worked with Development Agencies in London, New York, Toronto, Bilbao, Melbourne, Singapore, Auckland and Rotterdam among others. Tim teaches executive-level education at UCL, LSE Cities and University of Oxford.



Anna Rubin, Manager of the Local Development Forum, OECD

Anna Rubin is Manager of the OECD Local Development Forum, part of the Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) programme. In this role, she facilitates global dialogues and leads research on innovative strategies to strengthen local economies and communities.

In over a decade at the OECD, Anna has held several key positions, including Counsellor to the Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, and Analyst in the Inclusive Growth team within the Office of the OECD Secretary-General. As project lead for the 2019 Regional Development Policy Ministerial Meeting, she coordinated efforts that resulted in over 40 countries adopting the Declaration on “Building Better Futures for Regions, Cities, and Rural Areas.”

Before joining the OECD, Anna gained broad experience working at various policy levels, from the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Families to UNESCO. She holds a B.A. in Psychology and a Master of Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley.



Marcel Negret, Director of Land Use at Regional Plan Association, NY, USA

Marcel Negret is Director of Land Use at Regional Plan Association (RPA), where he leads research and planning projects on housing, economic development, and land use. He previously served as Senior Project Manager at the Municipal Art Society of New York and has experience in stormwater and waterfront planning. Marcel holds a master's in Urban Environmental Systems from Pratt Institute and a bachelor's in Architecture from Universidad

de Los Andes. He has lectured at Princeton, NYU, and other institutions, and is a recipient of an ASLA research award. He also teaches at Pratt and is a proud parent and drum machine enthusiast.



Ana María Aljure, City Manager at Alcaldía Distrital de Barranquilla

Ana María Aljure is City Manager at the Alcaldía Distrital de Barranquilla, with over 16 years of experience in the public sector. A lawyer specialized in Administrative Law, she holds a Master's in Law and Business Administration. She has held key roles such as Vice Minister of Talent at the Ministry of Science, Director General of IGAC, and Director of Procurement at INVIAS. In her current role, she leads impactful initiatives including *CrediChévere*, *Inclúyete Más*, and *Mi Techo Propio*, along with decentralized programs that bring municipal services directly to neighborhoods across Barranquilla.