



EUROCITIES Statement on Smart Cities and Communities Communication

The launch of the European Commission's Smart Cities and Communities Initiative is clear recognition of the essential role cities have to play in delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Through a strong and ambitious Smart Cities and Communities Initiative there is a real opportunity to exploit the potential for connectedness and systems integration and apply advanced smart and ICT-based solutions to improve energy efficiency, sustainable mobility and deliver future internet enabled services to Europe's citizens and companies.

The initiative will be crucial in providing fertile ground for ambitious, large scale actions to reach the EU 20/20/20 goals and enabling Europe's cities to lead in the deployment of advanced smart and ICT based technologies.

Cities at the heart of the Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) Initiative

The Innovation Partnerships should focus on major cities where:

- strategic investments will deliver greater results more quickly and be visible to a greater number of people
- a critical mass of activities can be found to allow economies of scale
- a critical mass of SMEs are innovating on a small and large scale; and innovation clusters can most effectively develop
- the best opportunities for public-private partnerships exist to develop innovative solutions and green led technologies in ICT, transport and energy

City governments must have a central role in the initiative's strategy and projects. City authorities are not simply facilitators for or customers of industry; rather they should be acknowledged as leaders and innovators in their own right.

The nature and extent of the role of cities in the proposed consortia and lighthouse projects is unclear from the Communication. There must be, at the very least, an equal partnership between industry and cities. There should be clarity from the beginning on the working process of the consortia and the roles of all stakeholders.

Maintaining a strong link to the demand side of production and consumption is essential as it will help ensure a citizen-driven approach, avoiding the risk of weak take-up sometimes associated with supply-led initiatives. Technological solutions and innovation should meet the needs of citizens.

Too much of the smart city agenda so far has been led by producers; competing corporations offering their own technology to cities as an ostensibly comprehensive solution to every urban 'problem'.

Solutions must work within the complex urban environment of integrated planning, policy-making and delivery, taking advantage of the opportunities for connectedness and systems integration. An integrated approach addressing social, economic and environmental issues together will remain important in this respect.

It is vital for future take-up of technologies that we can demonstrate the benefits to citizens, such as the potential to improve quality of life, foster social innovation and connect and empower citizens.

City governments have the direct link to the citizens and will play an important role in communicating the benefits of technologies to citizens.

The spread of social media and use of location technologies could be used to create a pool of demand led problems.

Implementation and funding

Standards and interoperability

There should be minimum levels of standardisation, developed in coordination with cities, which are flexible enough to allow cities to adapt those standards to local circumstances.

Technical standards are of course a major factor for 'smart' technologies and in creating economies of scale, however it must be ensured that any corrective action at EU level does not punish the pioneers.

We strongly support the lighthouse projects commitment to open standards, the need for scale up and replication and the need to avoid vendor lock-in. This focus will facilitate interoperability across systems and foster competition.

Scale-up & replication

The scale-up and replication of projects will be essential to the success of the SCC initiative. We welcome the objective of demonstrating and scaling up at least 20 major innovative solutions that combine energy, transport and ICT technologies by 2020.

For successful scale-up and replication to be achieved, the potential for city partnerships with industry should be supported through EU funding. This should also include direct access for cities to new financial instruments that can help them drive forward delivery.

A test-site strategy could be implemented to aid scale-up and replication whereby we could have a limited number of test-sites for R&D but a large number of early adaptors.

Strong public relations and dissemination strategies to facilitate citizen acceptance could be developed together with successful projects.

Local SMEs are important partners for up-scaling. If local SMEs do not believe in or trust new innovation, up-scaling will be difficult.

While some projects might include an equal balance of activity on energy, transport and ICT, others might be more heavily weighted towards just one or two aspects. There should be balance and flexibility in the projects chosen for support.

Funding

Horizon 2020: For the SCC to be implemented effectively and maximise its potential, it is vital that it is well supported through Horizon 2020 funding. Due to the clear cross-sectoral nature of

Smart Cities, it should be included in the cross-cutting and complementary actions under the Horizon 2020 funding scheme to allow for the maximum use of synergies.

Regional policy and structural funds: If structural funds are to play a complementary role in the rollout of the SCC initiative then it is imperative that there is a strong urban dimension in the future cohesion policy, with a central role and funding support for city governments. There must be an obligatory direct involvement of cities in the partnership contracts nationally, and greater use of instruments delegating funds directly to cities. Cities must play a direct role in determining the investment priorities on an equal footing with regions and managing authorities.

Smart specialisation: To achieve a high level of coherence between the SCC and smart specialisation there must be a strong urban dimension in regional smart specialisation strategies. Many of the smart specialisation and innovation clusters will be located in cities and large urban areas so it is important that the urban perspective is included.

Cross-Cutting Themes

The approach taken in the cross-cutting themes includes many of the high impact areas identified by cities such as: district heating and cooling; low energy construction of buildings and large-scale building retrofitting; green ICT and sustainable urban mobility.

Additional work strands could be:

- changing energy behaviour - educating and training employees, families and students can have long term benefits which stretch beyond the lifetime of a project
- a focus on open systems, open data and open networks - this can increase transparency and allow for public data to be used for developing new applications, whilst safeguarding the private data of citizens

Measurement

We welcome the SCC commitment to building on already existing methodologies and metrics used in the Covenant of Mayors and indeed the Green Digital Charter. This will be important in assessing which approaches have had most impact and thus act as a guide to other cities.

Governance

The Smart Cities High Level Group and the Stakeholder Platform must include proper city representation. City governments and city leaders understand the needs on the ground and bring a wealth of experience, including on issues of funding, standards and public procurement. They have the capacity and legitimacy to lead and coordinate projects on a large-scale and are best placed to identify bottlenecks in the development and deployment of technologies and indeed the appropriate solutions. They should have a strong role in both groups, and in the development of the Strategic Implementation Plan.

The High Level Group has an important strategic role in overseeing the initiative as it develops. The input of city leaders will be essential to its success and we are convinced of the role EUROCIITIES can play in supporting this forum, by contributing the views of Europe's major cities.

The Stakeholder Platform Roadmap Group must ensure clear city representation each time it meets, regardless of the theme under discussion. This will be important to make sure that the city perspective is taken into account.

For the Stakeholder Platform working groups to be a success the working processes should be clearly defined. Participants need agendas and working documents well in advance of the meetings in order to prepare. This will ensure that networks such as EUROCIITIES can consult internally and mobilise the full multiplier effect of their networks.